

## Original Paper

# Factors Affecting Parents Decision to Send Their Children Abroad for Studies: A Case Study of Parents in Ho Chi Minh City

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### Abstract

*The study aims to identify factors influencing the parents' decision in Ho Chi Minh City to send their children to study abroad. The study used the exploratory factor analysis method to examine and estimate regression coefficients on sample 243 observations from parents whose children study abroad. Research has identified 6 factors affecting the decision to send a child to study abroad. The paper shows that the parents' decisions to let their children study abroad are not only based on the parents' desire but also on the students' desire. In addition, factors such as the family's financial capacity, training programs, career prospects, and self-reliance also affect the parents' decisions to send their children to study abroad. Interestingly, the study found that factors of self-reliance have negative impacts on parents' decisions to send their children to study abroad. When they realized that their child may have good self-reliance, great success would be obtained regardless of study location. As a result, motivation for the overseas study was no longer found by them. Since then, domestic training programs need to increase opportunities to practice English, the opportunity to practice independence and flexibility in training programs will limit your children to study abroad.*

### Keywords

*Parents' decision, students' desire, overseas study, parents' decision, parents' decision in Ho Chi Minh City*

### 1. Introduction

According to the general statistics of the Ministry of Education and Training, it is estimated that each year Vietnamese people spend 3-4 billion USD for their children to study abroad (Note 1). Institute of

International Education's report for the 2017-2018 academic year shows that Vietnam remains the sixth leading country of origin for all international students in the United States, with 24,325 students, up 1,887 students since last 2016-17, an 8.4 percent increase (Note 2). Furthermore, in (2019-2020), Vietnamese international students contributed nearly 827 billion USD, down 17% over the same period last year due to the effects of the Covid epidemic. This shows that the increasing trend of parents sending their children abroad to study means that families' willingness to pay for education is increasing. It is also the basis for domestic universities to re-recognize the quality of training and ways to keep Vietnamese learners in the country.

Enrollment in 2020, domestic universities will add new trend-oriented disciplines and international training programs (Note 3). It shows that universities have invested heavily in training activities towards demand. Attracting international students to study in Vietnam is also a way to affirm the quality of training and how to retain Vietnamese learners to select the onsite overseas study forms. Whether the quality of training and the variety of international training forms at universities in Vietnam can retain learners who choose the onsite overseas study forms is what domestic higher education institutions care about.

Currently, there is no research in Vietnam on factors influencing the decision of parents to send their children to study abroad. In the country, a few papers study the factors that affect learners' decisions to study abroad (Do & Nguyen, 2020; Nghia, 2019; Vo, 2017; Sen, 2015; Tu & Hang, 2016). Overseas research also focuses on the determinants of students' study abroad (Kakkad & Nair, 2015; Mpinganjira, 2009). There are also some studies investigating the decision-making process to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2009; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002), or research on study abroad trends (Lee & Tan, 1984; Bourke, 2000). Meanwhile, allowing children to study abroad depends a lot on the family's financial potential that the parents can decide. On the other hand, Vietnam has a profound influence on Asian culture in the way of raising children. According to this tradition, Vietnamese students of high school age are still not used to the independence to make decisions but need advice and guidance from parents. Therefore, it can be said that sending their children abroad to study is an important decision of the parents. Experimental studies have not paid attention to this issue, so this is a research gap to carry out. According to the Ministry of Education and Training, in 2015 up to 90% of foreign students go by way of self-sufficient study abroad (Note 4). In addition, Ho Chi Minh City is a major economic center for the whole country of Vietnam (Note 5). Stemming from the above reasons, the topic "Factors affecting parents decision to send their children abroad for studies: A case study of parents in Ho Chi Minh City" is studied with the desire to identify important factors affecting the parents' decisions to send their children to study abroad. From there, proposing necessary solutions for domestic universities to have international training programs to retain learners, retain talents. By the way, contribute to the development of higher education in the country, contributing to Budget savings for home and country.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Literature

Some studies abroad also focus on the determinants of students' study abroad (Kakkad & Nair, 2015; Mpinganjira, 2009). There are also some studies investigating the decision-making process to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2009; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002), or research on study abroad trends (Lee & Tan, 1984; Bourke, 2000). In which, financial resources from family is the decisive factor to the student's intention to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2009; Kasravi, 2009).

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) identified 14 factors influencing students' decisions to study in Australia in some Asian countries. In particular, the student's desire to learn about the culture and outward-looking interests are the core factors in making decisions to study abroad. In this view, Cubillo et al. (2006) also determined that when students decide to study abroad, studying and living in another country and being given the opportunity to learn a variety of cultures from new friends becomes an environment. It brings a lot of excitement to students. At that time, cultural experiences are an integral benefit of studying abroad and will be factors affecting students' intention to study abroad. In addition, Movassaghi et al. (2014) and Bodycott (2009) also affirm career prospects, personal career development and the desire to study in advanced education are decisive factors for students' intention to study abroad.

Besides, the quality of education, training program is also an important factor affecting the decision to choose the country in which students will study abroad. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) showed that training programs in schools in different countries will have a lot of differences, especially universities famous for specific disciplines. Asian students choose to study in Australia because they want to study specialized programs that are not available in their countries. Students choose to study abroad instead of studying in the country because they also believe that the foreign educational environment helps them access a more advanced education (Li & Bay, 2007; Cubillo et al., 2006; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Chen & Zimitat, 2006). In addition to their desire benefits of modern education, international students value their chosen school diploma as globally recognized. This opens them up a big and reliable chance in the future (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003).

According to the author's review results, there are currently no studies in the country on factors influencing the decision of parents' parents to let their children study abroad. Researches in the country about the decision to study abroad are also only accessible from the perspective of learners (Huong & Cong, 2018; Tu & Hang, 2016; Sen, 2015). Recently, there are a number of studies related to students 'overseas study published in international newspapers that are only accessible from the learners' side. Vo's (2017) research on the current situation overseas also shows that the trend of overseas Vietnamese students is strongly increasing. The study also mentioned difficulties faced by international students while studying abroad and proposed solutions to attract learners to return to Vietnam to work. Hoang et al. (2019) studies trends in developing countries to study abroad in the UK and compares Vietnam with other countries. Research shows that the main reason why Vietnamese students want to study abroad is due to the need of parents and the English proficiency of higher education. Then it is because students

want to gain better qualifications in order to improve job prospects. Nghia (2019) also studies Vietnamese students' motivation to study abroad, confirming that students want to achieve better professional qualifications for the chance to settle.

In the domestic scope, the research on factors influencing the decision to study abroad is too few and only studies on learners. Foreign studies also only focus on the direction of accessing information from students, there are no studies accessing information from students' parents. Researches also confirm the learners' desire to develop themselves and their family's financial capacity are key factors in deciding to study abroad. While in Vietnam, there is a profound influence in East Asian culture about parenting. Vietnamese students of high school age are still not used to independence to make decisions but need advice and guidance from parents. Therefore, it can be said that in Vietnam in general and Ho Chi Minh City in particular, the sending of children to study abroad is an important decision of the parents' parents that has not been paid attention to by researchers in the past. Research on what factors influencing the parents' decisions to study abroad in Ho Chi Minh City will fill this gap.

## 2.2 Model and Data

According to the hierarchy of needs theory of Maslow (1943), everyone has the desire to be shown and asserted themselves. Parents' children to study abroad are also consistent with the student's desire to assert themselves. Towler's (2010) rational decision-making theory shows that only parents are mature enough to make decisions for their children to study abroad or not. The theory decision-making strategy of Ahmed and Omotunde (2012) shows that the parents' decision-making for their children to study abroad is a balance between benefits and risks. The group of interests includes the future expectations and expectations of the students and the parents; The group of risk factors is the difficulties in life and learning in the new environment. Combining the above three theories with the summary results from experimental studies, the author proposes a research model:

**Figure 1. Research Model**

The proposed research model is rewritten:

$$Y = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 X_1 + \alpha_2 X_2 + \alpha_3 X_3 + \alpha_4 X_4 + \alpha_5 X_5 + \alpha_6 X_6 + \alpha_7 X_7 + \alpha_8 X_8 + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

With X as observable factors:

$X_1$  refers to the student's overseas study desire

$X_2$  refers to the parents' desire to offer their children a better education environment

$X_3$  refers to the student's foreign immigration desire

$X_4$  refers to the conditions to support the overseas study

$X_5$  refers to the family's financial capacity

$X_6$  refers to the student's self-reliance

$X_7$  refers to the foreign training program

$X_8$  refers to the occupation prospects

The survey questionnaire has 34 research questions of 8 factors and 3 qualitative questions to identify parents with children studying abroad and which country their children study abroad. Research surveys opinions of 243 parents in Ho Chi Minh City, whose children are studying abroad.

### 2.3 Methodology

After testing the reliability of the scale through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the factors, the study analyzed data according to the Exploratory Factor Analysis method (EFA) and estimated regression coefficients to determine which factors affect the decision of parents to allow their children to study abroad in Ho Chi Minh City. From there, proposing appropriate solutions to help universities in Vietnam improve the quality of training, retain the learners in the on-site overseas study form and facilitate the budget savings for the family and the country.

### 3. Result

The descriptive statistical results of the classification questions are shown in Table 1. Among the countries that their children study abroad include 30.29% belong to the United States, 22.12% belong to Australia, and 39.9% belong to Asian countries (such as Singapore, Korea, Japan, China), the rest 7.69% belong to European countries (such as Germany, France)

**Table 1. Classification of Survey Area and Country of Study Abroad**

Countries of study	Frequency	Continents	Percent
1. America	87	America	35.80%
2. Australia	71	Australia	29.22%
3. Singapore	22		9.05%
4. Korean	20	Asia: 28.81%	8.23%
5. Japan	18		7.41%
6. China	10		4.12%
7. Germany	8		3.29%
8. Bristain	5	Europe: 6.17%	2.06%
9. France and other countries	2		0.82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>243</b>		<b>100%</b>

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients shown in Table 2 to test the reliability of the 9-factor scale (including 1 result factor and 8 observation factors) in the model (1) according to the survey results of the study. Among 9 factors measured by the model (1), factors  $X_3$ ,  $X_4$  have unreliable scales because of

Cronbach's alpha coefficient  $<0.6$ . Therefore, these factors are excluded from the research model.

**Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha**

Factor group	Y	X <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	X <sub>4</sub>	X <sub>5</sub>	X <sub>6</sub>	X <sub>7</sub>	X <sub>8</sub>
Number of Variable	4	5	5	4	4	3	3	4	3
Cronbach's alpha	0.763	0.867	0.886	0.572	0.543	0.806	0.735	0.926	0.869
N	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243	243

Research conducted EFA to consider the relationship between all factors with reliable scales. Thereby, the study will discover observable variables that upload many factors or observed variables with differences in factors from the beginning. The results of EFA are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

**Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.803
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Sig. 0.000
Extraction sums of squared loadings	Cumulative % 79.018

KMO coefficient in Table 3 gives the value  $0.803 > 0.5$ , which indicates that the factors analyzed are appropriate. Bartlett's test for sig coefficients  $<0.05$  indicates that the measurement variables are correlated with the observed factors. Extraction sums of squared loadings, i.e., 79.018, show that the variables used in the study explain 79.02% of the observed factors. The remaining 20.98% are other variables that have not been considered to explain the observed factors.

**Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix**

Variable	Variable name	Component					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
MMHS_2	Students prefer to study in a more progressive country	0.884					
MMHS_4	Students love to experience a new cultural environment	0.841					
MMHS_1	Students like to study abroad according to the trends of their friends	0.744					
MMHS_3	Students love to study abroad to assert themselves	0.733					
MMHS_5	Students like to study abroad	0.653					

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	because they are afraid of Vietnamese exam pressure	
CTDT_4	The training program has many flexible options	0.832
CTDT_1	The training program is not bound to study politics	0.830
CTDT_3	The training program has many practical experiences	0.789
CTDT_2	The training program trains learners' initiative and activeness	0.776
MMPH_4	Students' parents want their children to assert themselves	0.861
MMPH_3	Students' parents want their children to learn in a better environment	0.759
MMPH_1	Students' parents want their children to practice their English skills	0.751
MMPH_5	Students' parents want their children to be developed comprehensively	0.733
MMPH_2	Students' parents want their children to practice independence	0.689
TVNN_2	This field of study will be favorable for setting up a career in Vietnam	0.843
TVNN_3	This field of study will be more valuable when studying abroad	0.827
TVNN_1	This field of study has not been properly trained in the country	0.555
NLTC_2	Students' parents allowed their children to study abroad	0.867

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	because they found a scholarship at the school	
NLTC_3	Students' parents allowed their children to study abroad because they had relatives in foreign countries	0.709
NLTC_1	Students' parents allow their children to study abroad from financial resources that have been prepared in advance	0.547
KNTL_3	Students have the ability to solve problems when facing difficulties	0.791
KNTL_1	Students actively equip knowledge of English to study abroad	0.783
KNTL_2	Students are independent, so they can adapt to life away from home	0.744

The results in Table 4 show that the scales after exploratory factor analysis are restructured with 6 factors. Therefore, a model suitable for the study includes the following 6 factors:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_5 + \beta_4 X_6 + \beta_5 X_7 + \beta_6 X_8 \quad (2)$$

The regression results estimate the impact of factors on the parents' decisions to study abroad in HCM City are shown in Table 5. The results show that all factors are statistically significant. The adjusted R square value of 0.856 indicates that the factors in the model explained 85.6% of the parents' decision to send their children to study abroad in HCM City.

**Table 5. Coefficients and Model Summary**

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.	Collinearity
	Coefficients		Coefficients			Statistics
	B	Std.Error	Beta			VIF
Constant	-0.406	0.200		-2.027	<b>0.044</b>	
X <sub>1</sub>	0.059	0.027	<b>0.065</b>	2.217	<b>0.028</b>	1.397
X <sub>2</sub>	0.609	0.034	<b>0.597</b>	17.995	<b>0.000</b>	1.799
1 X <sub>5</sub>	0.309	0.034	<b>0.285</b>	8.948	<b>0.000</b>	1.664



X <sub>6</sub>	-0.075	0.025	<b>-0.084</b>	-3.022	<b>0.003</b>	1.256
X <sub>7</sub>	0.072	0.035	<b>0.073</b>	2.041	<b>0.042</b>	2.095
X <sub>8</sub>	0.120	0.028	<b>0.144</b>	4.363	<b>0.000</b>	1.770
Model Summary						
Predictors: Constant, X <sub>1</sub> , X <sub>2</sub> , X <sub>5</sub> , X <sub>6</sub> , X <sub>7</sub> , X <sub>8</sub>				<b>R Square: 0.856</b>		
Dependent Variable: Y				<b>Adjusted R square: 0.852</b>		
Std. Error of the Estimate: 0.21104				<b>Durbin-Watson: 1.884</b>		

The regression coefficients estimated from the model show that factors such as student's desire, parent's desire, financial capacity, training program, and career prospects all have a positive impact on parents' decisions to study abroad. The factor of the independent ability of students has a negative impact on the parents' decisions to send their children to school. This shows that when students have good self-reliance, the parent no longer has the pressure to orient their children to study abroad. In relation to the study on factors affecting the student's overseas study decision, the desire of students to study abroad, training programs, career prospects, and financial resources also positively affects their decisions for student's study abroad (Nghia, 2019; Hoang et al., 2019; Movassaghi et al., 2014; Bodycott, 2009, Salisbury et al., 2009; Kasravi, 2009; Li & Bay, 2007; Chen & Zimitat, 2006, Cubillo et al., 2006)

#### 4. Discussion

Experimental research results show that parents' decisions for their children to study abroad are not only based on parents' wishes but also on their children's wishes, on the family's financial capacity, on training programs and career prospects, as well as your independence. Thus, the parents expect their children will practice independence, will have a better training program, and have confidence in a better career prospect when they study abroad.

An interesting thing discovered from this study is that the independent ability of students has a negative impact on the parents' decision to send their children to study abroad. This shows that the way of raising children of Vietnamese people in general and Ho Chi Minh City, in particular, is not able to practice independence for their children. The parents expect their children to practice independence while studying abroad. When the parents evaluate their children have good independence, they believe that their children can be successful no matter where they study, so the parents have no motivation for their children to study abroad. However, the way of raising children of most rich people in Ho Chi Minh City cannot forge independence for their children. They expect studying abroad will be a better way for their children to practice independence to succeed in the future. Since then, it shows that universities in Vietnam need to further strengthen the self-reliance training for students as well as the opportunity to use English so that learners can expand their working opportunities in many places. These will be the points to convince parents to let their children select the onsite overseas study forms.

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## Notes

- Note 1. <http://hanoitimes.vn/vietnamese-students-spend-us3-4-billion-a-year-on-overseas-study-minister-3963.html>
- Note 2. <https://vn.usembassy.gov/vietnamese-students-in-the-united-states-increase-for-17th-straight-year/>
- Note 3. <https://www.guide2research.com/research/trends-in-higher-education>
- Note 4. <http://www.thanhniennnews.com/education-youth/nearly-all-vietnamese-study-abroad-with-private-funds-31582.html>
- Note 5. <https://en.nhandan.com.vn/business/item/9185402-ho-chi-minh-city-strives-to-maintain-role-as-vietnam%E2%80%99s-economic-engine.html>