A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING GAINS OF CHINESE MBA STUDENTS IN THE ENGLISH AND CHINESE PROGRAMS AT AN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN THAILAND

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Abstract: This quantitative study aimed to investigate whether there was a significant difference in the perceptions of learning gains held by Chinese MBA students, according to their semester and program, at an international university in Thailand. This study's sample comprised 176 Chinese MBA students from the English Program and 128 Chinese MBA students from the Chinese Program. The Questionnaire on Students' Perceptions of Learning Gains (QSPLG) was used to measure the perceptions of learning gains held by the participants at the end of Semesters 1, 2, and 3 of their MBA Program at the target international university. The results of the data analysis indicated that there was no significant difference in the perception of learning gains between Chinese MBA students in the English Program enrolled in Semesters 1, 2, and 3, who were all found to hold a neutral perception of the learning gains they made in the MBA English Program. However, there was a significant difference in the perception of learning gains between Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program enrolled in Semester 1 and those enrolled in Semester 2. The former group having a significantly more positive perception of the learning gains they made in the MBA Chinese Program than the latter. The obtained research findings provide recommendations for MBA students, professors, administrators, and future researchers.

Keywords: Perceptions of learning gains; Chinese MBA students, MBA English Program, MBA Chinese Program, cross-border education, Thailand.

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Introduction

Thailand and China have maintained a long and friendly relationship for many centuries. In the 13th century, many Chinese people went to Thailand to work or settle down, and Thailand gradually became one of the countries with the largest Chinese migrant population in the world (Wuttiphan & Ting, 2013). This phenomenon has led to a surge in Chinese language education in Thailand, with many primary and secondary schools currently offering Chinese language courses for their students and many universities offering undergraduate and graduate programs using the Chinese language as a medium of instruction (i.e., Chinese Programs), targeting Chinese students (Wuttiphan & Ting, 2013). The number of Chinese students enrolling each year in Thai universities has doubled since 2012, according to Thai government figures (Wongcha-um, 2019).

Since 1996, Thailand has implemented education reforms in four areas (i.e., schools, curriculum, teachers, and administration), which were initially completed by 2007. Under these novel reform plans, the English language became a compulsory course for Thai primary school students. In addition, due to the increasing popularity of the English language around the world and its use as one of the main languages for global communication, more and more international schools are appearing in Thailand, and more Thai universities are currently offering undergraduate and graduate programs using the English language as a medium of instruction (i.e., English Programs; Wiriyachitra, 2002).

The increased student mobility between countries to enroll in different educational programs has become the main trend for higher education worldwide (INQAAHE, 2008; Knight, 2006, 2012). Within this context, Thailand has become one of the preferred destinations for cross-border education in Asia, particularly for Chinese students pursuing higher studies abroad, because of the variety of undergraduate and graduate programs offered by Thai universities using either English or Chinese language as the medium of instruction, and the more affordable fees of Thai universities, in comparison with other popular destinations for cross-border education, such as Australia, the United States or the United Kingdom (Pimpa, 2009; Study International, 2019). Among the many English and Chinese programs in different fields offered by Thai universities, the Master of Business and Administration (MBA) Program has become one of the most popular programs for international business education in Thailand for both local and international students (Pimpa, 2009; Wongcha-um, 2019). Therefore, it is expected to see an increment in the number of Chinese students choosing to study an MBA Program in Thailand in the future. This implies that Chinese MBA students

may have a positive perception of the change they can achieve while enrolled in an MBA program in Thailand, regarding student engagement in learning, understanding concepts, and developing skills, content knowledge and learning attitudes, and self-efficacy (i.e., their learning gains; Vermunt, Ilie, & Vignole, 2018). Then, by examining the perception of learning gains held by Chinese MBA students about studying an MBA program in Thailand, it will be possible to recognize their assessment and perspectives regarding different aspects of the program (Goldstone, 1998).

Research Objectives

This research aimed to address the following objectives.

1. To determine the level of perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students in the English Program at an international university in Thailand.
   1.1. To determine the level of perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students in the English Program Semester 1 at an international university in Thailand.
   1.2. To determine the level of perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students in the English Program Semester 2 at an international university in Thailand.
   1.3. To determine the level of perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students in the English Program Semester 3 at an international university in Thailand.

2. To determine the level of perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program at an international university in Thailand.
   2.1. To determine the level of perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program Semester 1 at an international university in Thailand.
   2.2. To determine the level of perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program Semester 2 at an international university in Thailand.
   2.3. To determine the level of perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program Semester 3 at an international university in Thailand.

3. To determine if there is a significant difference in the perception of learning gains between the Chinese MBA students in the English Program and Chinese Program, according to their program, at an international university in Thailand.

4. To determine if there is a significant difference in the perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students, according to their semester and program, at an international university in Thailand.

Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted based on the following supporting theories: the cross-border education framework, the learning gains framework, and the theory of perceptual learning.

Cross-Border Education Framework (Knight, 2006)

Cross-border education refers to the movement of people (i.e., students, professors, scholars, researchers, experts, consultants), programs (courses, undergraduate degrees, postgraduate degrees), providers (institutions, organizations, companies), knowledge, ideas, projects (academic projects, services) across national boundaries. Cross-border education is a subset of the "internationalization of higher education" and can be a key part of developing partnerships, academic exchange programs, and business initiatives (Knight, 2006).

Learning Gains Framework (McGrath, Guerin, Harte, Frearson, & Manville, 2015)

McGrath et al. (2015) defined learning gains as a kind of "value-added" between two stages of a student's study in the following five areas: student engagement learning, understanding concepts; skills; content knowledge; and learning attitudes and self-efficacy. Learning gains are commonly used to evaluate an instructor or educational institution's ability to improve student learning.

Theory of Perceptual Learning (Goldstone, 1998)

Perceptual learning is the improved processing by a person of specific stimuli from the environment as a result of exposure to those stimuli. Through this processing, a person acquires information or knowledge from the environment, which sometimes benefits the person's use of information from sensory stimuli, improving the person's ability to respond to, process, and collect information from the environment.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the current study.

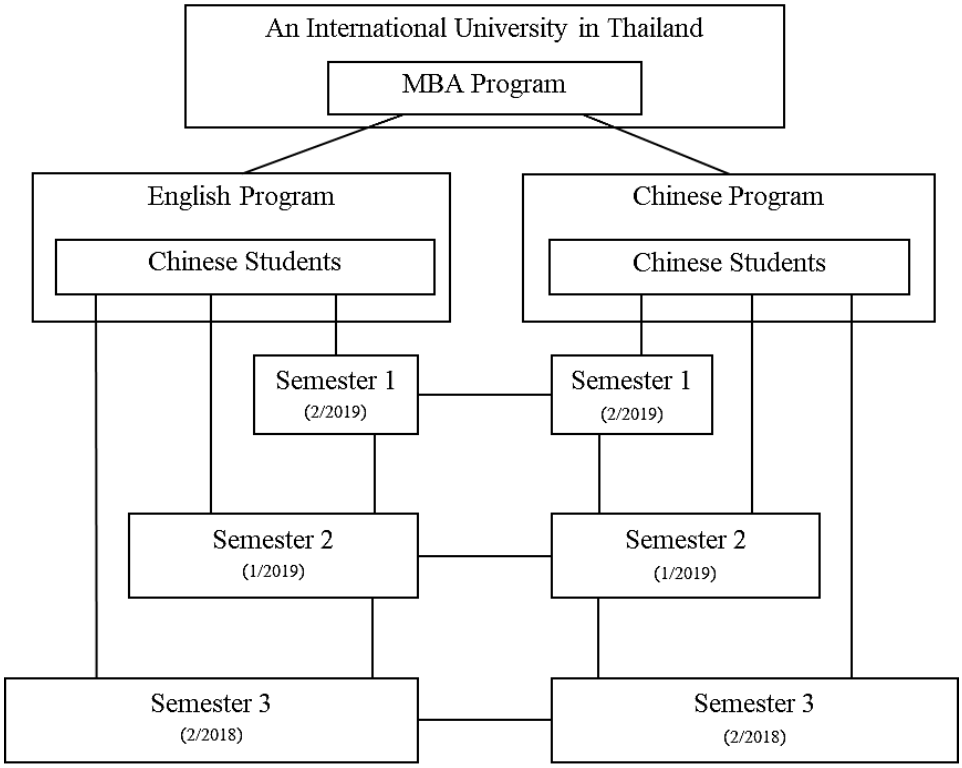

Figure 1. ***The Conceptual Framework of the Present Study.***

Literature Review

This section summarizes some previous key studies on the perception of learning gains.

Anderson (2006) carried out a study to assess the perception of learning gains of 74 female freshmen students, from Semester 1 to Semester 4, enrolled in an introductory course in nutrition and food science at the College for Women, Kuwait University. The results indicated that the participants held an overall positive opinion of their perceived learning gains from the course, with the average ratings ranging from a low of 3.3 ("skills" scale, Semester 4) to a high of 4.2 ("student engagement in learning" scale, Semester 1) over the 4-semester period of the study. Moreover, the overall mean scores for the "student engagement in learning" and "learning attitudes and self-efficacy" scales decreased numerically over the 4-semester period of the study, from 4.2 and 4.0 in Semester 1 to 3.9 and 3.7 in Semester 4, respectively. The participants' perceptions of learning gains over the entire instrument also decreased numerically as the students progressed to the next semester, from an overall mean score of 4.0 in Semester 1 to 3.7 in Semester 4.

Bonney (2015) examined the relationship between the teaching method and the perceptions of learning gains of 56 undergraduate students in the first semester of an introductory biology course at Kingsborough Community College in New York, United States. The results indicated that teaching methods in which students had a higher level of engagement in learning (e.g., teaching with case studies, in comparison with classroom discussions and textbook readings) increased students' perception of learning gains. A similar conclusion was drawn regarding teaching methods promoting the understanding of key concepts in biology, developing written and oral communication skills, and mastering content knowledge.

Cobb, Heaney, Corcoran, and Henderson-Begg (2009) examined the perception of learning gains in virtual and non-virtual biosciences laboratories of 85 final-year undergraduate and master's students registered for the Commercial Biotechnology module at the University of East London, United Kingdom. No significant difference in perception of learning gains between the virtual and non-virtual laboratory groups was found. However, both groups showed a significant increase in learning gains over the pre-and post-tests after engaging in a laboratory experiment requiring significantly less instructor assistance and more students' practical work. Students using the virtual laboratory reported a higher level of student engagement in learning and a higher overall perception of learning gains than those using the non-virtual laboratory.

Süzük, Çorlu, and Gürel (2011) examined the perceptions of learning gains of 92 first-year undergraduates taking Physics I in the Technical Education Faculty at Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey. The results indicated that even though the students' overall perception of learning gains was moderate, it was more positive for those topics that students were familiar with, had learned before, or were related to everyday life, compared to new ones.

Wingert et al. (2011) studied how offering cross-course, cross-disciplinary projects and shared activities focused on food affected university students' perceptions of learning gains. The participants were 106 students enrolled in a cluster of ten courses in natural sciences, health sciences, social sciences, and humanities that addressed food themes over three semesters (Fall 2008, Spring 2009, and Spring 2010) at the University of North Carolina Asheville, United States. The results indicated that the student's perception of learning gains was significantly impacted by taking cluster courses, which emphasized student engagement in learning through collaborative and interdisciplinary learning, offering students the opportunity to integrate learning from diverse fields and to develop as holistic thinkers as well as through the interaction of

students and faculty beyond the classroom walls. Moreover, it was found that students' perceptions of learning gains were enhanced through supporting and reinforcing student interest.

Methodology/Procedure

Population and Sample

In this study, a population sample comprised of 128 Chinese MBA students enrolled in the Chinese Program (Semester 1 = 36 students; Semester 2 = 44 students; Semester 3 = 48 students) and 176 Chinese MBA students enrolled in the English Program (Semester 1 = 52 students; Semester 2 = 60 students; Semester 3 = 64 students) of an MBA Program in an international university in Bangkok, Thailand, for a total of 304 Chinese MBA students.

Research Instrument

This study was conducted using the Questionnaire on Students' Perceptions of Learning Gains (QSPLG), based on the Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG; Anderson, 2006; Lim, Hosack, & Vogt, 2012; WCER, 2001). To measure the perceptions of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students participating in this study, the post-survey version of Lim et al.'s (2012) Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG) was adapted since that instrument was originally designed for students in an introductory computer course.

The QSPLG is comprised of 35 items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .97$), all positively worded, organized into five subscales: student engagement in learning (Items 1-9; Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$); understanding concepts (Items 10-15; Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$); skills (Items 16-22; Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$); content knowledge (Items 23-31; Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$); and learning attitudes and self-efficacy (Items 32-35; Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$). Each of these subscales is linked to a particular guiding question (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Items Comprising the Questionnaire Used in the Present Study*

Item No.	Item statement
1. How much did each of the following aspects of the program's classes help your learning?	
1	How the material was approached
2	How the class activities, internship, reading, and assignments fit together
3	The pace at which you worked
4	The class activities
5	Tests, graded activities, and assignments
6	Resources
7	The information you were given about
8	Individual support as a learner
9	The way the classes were taught overall

Item No.	Item statement
2. As a result of your work in this program's classes, how well do you think you now understand each of the following?	
10	Concepts in management
11	Concepts in marketing
12	Relationship between entrepreneurship and international business
13	The importance of business administration
14	The importance of management and marketing
15	Global issues in business administration
3. How much have this program's classes added to your skills in each of the following?	
16	Writing communications
17	Speaking communications
18	Answering questions in simple English
19	Taking class notes
20	Critically reviewing articles
21	Participating in class discussions
22	Comprehending basic concepts of business administration
4. To what extent did you make gains in any of the following as a result of what you did in this program's classes?	
23	Understanding the main concepts of business administration
24	Understanding the relationship between concepts of business administration
25	Understanding how ideas in this program's classes relate to those in other fields
26	Understanding the relevance of this field to real-world issues
27	Appreciating this field
28	Ability to think through a problem or argument in business administration
29	Confidence in your ability to work in this field
30	Feeling comfortable with complex ideas in business administration
31	Enthusiasm for subjects in business administration
5. How much of the following do you think you will remember and carry with you into other classes or aspects of your life?	
32	Understanding concepts in business administration
33	Understanding concepts in management and marketing
34	The relationship between entrepreneurship and international business
35	Global issues in business administration

Participants were asked to express their opinions on each item statement using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1= *not at all*, 2= *just a little*, 3= *somewhat*, 4= *a lot*, 5= *a great deal*). The QSPLG was administered in English to the Chinese MBA students in the English Program and Chinese to the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program.

Research Findings

This section summarizes the findings from the data analysis performed on the collected data. Overall mean scores were interpreted on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 signifying a positive perception of learning gains.

Findings from Research Objective 1
It can be concluded that the level of perception of learning gains of Chinese MBA students in the English Program (Semesters 1-3) at an international university in Thailand was neutral (*M* = 3.13, *SD* = 1.12).

Findings from Research Objective 1.1. It can be concluded that the level of perception of learning gains of Chinese MBA students in the English Program (Semester 1) at an international university in Thailand was neutral (*M* = 3.19, *SD* = 1.14). Regarding the subscales of this construct, the following results were obtained: on the "Student engagement in learning" subscale, *M* = 3.13, *SD* = 1.13; on the "Understanding concepts" subscale, *M* = 3.05, *SD* = 1.13; on the "Skills" subscale, *M* = 3.26, *SD* = 1.09; on the "Content knowledge", *M* = 3.23, *SD* = 1.16; on the "Learning attitudes and self-efficacy" subscale, *M* = 3.30, *SD* = 1.17.

Findings from Research Objective 1.2. It can be concluded that the level of perception of learning gains of Chinese MBA students in the English Program (Semester 2) at an international university in Thailand was neutral (*M* = 3.07, *SD* = 1.15). Regarding the subscales of this construct, the following results were obtained: on the "Student engagement in learning" subscale, *M* = 3.06, *SD* = 1.09; on the "Understanding concepts" subscale, *M* = 3.04, *SD* = 1.17; on the "Skills" subscale, *M* = 3.13, *SD* = 1.17; on the "Content knowledge", *M* = 3.04, *SD* = 1.16; on the "Learning attitudes and self-efficacy" subscale, *M* = 3.07, *SD* = 1.18.

Findings from Research Objective 1.3. It can be concluded that the level of perception of learning gains of Chinese MBA students in the English Program Semester 3 at an international university in Thailand was neutral (*M* = 3.15, *SD* = 1.09). Regarding the subscales of this construct, the following results were obtained: on the "Student engagement in learning" subscale, *M* = 3.17, *SD* = 1.05; on the "Understanding concepts" subscale, *M* = 3.11, *SD* = 1.09; on the "Skills" subscale, *M* = 3.08, *SD* = 1.14; on the "Content knowledge", *M* = 3.20, *SD* = 1.12; on the "Learning attitudes and self-efficacy" subscale, *M* = 3.15, *SD* = 1.09.

Findings from Research Objective 2
It can be concluded that the level of perception of learning gains of Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program (Semesters 1-3) at an international university in Thailand was neutral (*M* = 3.43, *SD* = 1.08).

Findings from Research Objective 2.1. It can be concluded that the level of perception of learning gains of Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program

Semester 1 at an international university in Thailand was positive (*M* = 3.64, *SD* = 0.94). Regarding the subscales of this construct, the following results were obtained: on the "Student engagement in learning" subscale, *M* = 3.54, *SD* = 0.98; on the "Understanding concepts" subscale, *M* = 3.71, *SD* = 0.89; on the "Skills" subscale, *M* = 3.60, *SD* = 0.98; on the "Content knowledge", *M* = 3.69, *SD* = 0.91; on the "Learning attitudes and self-efficacy" subscale, *M* = 3.67, *SD* = 0.93.

Findings from Research Objective 2.2. It can be concluded that the level of perception of learning gains of Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program Semester 2 at an international university in Thailand was neutral (*M* = 3.15, *SD* = 1.13). Regarding the subscales of this construct, the following results were obtained: on the "Student engagement in learning" subscale, *M* = 3.09, *SD* = 1.12; on the "Understanding concepts" subscale, *M* = 3.12, *SD* = 1.14; on the "Skills" subscale, *M* = 3.13, *SD* = 1.16; on the "Content knowledge", *M* = 3.20, *SD* = 1.11; on the "Learning attitudes and self-efficacy" subscale, *M* = 3.21, *SD* = 1.07.

Findings from Research Objective 2.3. It can be concluded that the level of perception of learning gains of Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program Semester 3 at an international university in Thailand was positive (*M* = 3.53, *SD* = 1.19). Regarding the subscales of this construct, the following results were obtained: on the "Student engagement in learning" subscale, *M* = 3.46, *SD* = 1.09; on the "Understanding concepts" subscale, *M* = 3.52, *SD* = 1.12; on the "Skills" subscale, *M* = 3.52, *SD* = 1.07; on the "Content knowledge", *M* = 3.62, *SD* = 1.10; on the "Learning attitudes and self-efficacy" subscale, *M* = 3.50, *SD* = 1.05.

Findings from Research Objective 3

Regarding this research objective, the following findings were obtained.

English Program. There was no significant difference in the perception of learning gains of Chinese MBA students enrolled in Semesters 1, 2, and 3 in the English Program at an international university in Thailand, $F(2, 130) = 0.33$, $p = .72$.

Chinese Program. There was a significant difference in the perception of learning gains of Chinese MBA students enrolled in Semesters 1, 2, and 3 in the Chinese Program at an international university in Thailand, $F(2, 125) = 4.75$, $p = .01$. Moreover, the perception of learning gains of Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program, the Semester 1 group (*M* = 3.63, *SD* = 0.57) was significantly more positive than the one of the Semester 2 group (*M* = 3.15, *SD* = 0.83).

Findings from Research Objective 4
Regarding this research objective, the following findings were obtained.

Semester 1. There was a significant difference in the perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese and English Programs, Semester 1, at an international university in Thailand, t (82) = -2.87, p = .005. The Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program (M = 3.63, SD = 0.57) had a significantly more positive perception of learning gains than those in the English Program (M = 3.19, SD = 0.79).

Semester 2. There was no significant difference in the perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese and English Programs, Semester 2, at an international university in Thailand, t (97) = -0.49, p = .63.

Semester 3. There was a significant difference in the perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese and English Programs, Semester 3, at an international university in Thailand, t (106) = -2.52, p = .013. This result indicated that, in Semester 3, the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program had a significantly more positive perception of learning gains (M = 3.53, SD = 0.82) than those in the English Program (M = 3.15, SD = 0.75).

Discussion
This section discusses the findings obtained from conducting the current study, placing them in context with previous studies.

Perception of Learning Gains of the Chinese MBA Students in the English Program
The Chinese MBA students enrolled in the English Program held an overall neutral perception of learning gains made in Semesters 1, 2, and 3 at an international university in Thailand. The overall perception of learning gains was numerically found at its highest level for students enrolled in Semester 1 and decreased as the students progressed to Semester 2. This result is similar to the one reported by Anderson (2006), who found a similar trend in the perception of learning gains held by female nutrition and food science students at Kuwait University, but over four semesters, from Semester 1 to Semester 4.

As the Chinese MBA students enrolled in the English Program progressed from Semester 1 to Semester 3, their overall mean score for the "Skills" scale decreased, from 3.26 in Semester 1 to 3.08 in Semester 3. This result differs from that obtained by Anderson (2006), who reported a numerical decrease in the overall mean scores of the "Student engagement in learning" and "Learning

attitudes and self-efficacy" scales over the 4-semester period of his study.

The results obtained from the Chinese MBA students enrolled in Semesters 1 to 3 in the English Program revealed that the level of perception of learning gains ranged from a low of 3.04 ("Understanding concepts" and "Content knowledge" scales, Semester 2) to a high of 3.30 ("learning attitudes and self-efficacy" scale, Semester 1). These results are different from those reported by Anderson (2006). He found that his participants' overall level of perception of learning gains ranged from a low of 3.3 ("Skills" scale, Semester 4) to a high of 4.2 ("Student engagement in learning" scale, Semester 1).

Finally, since no significant difference was found in the perception of learning gains of the Chinese MBA students enrolled in Semesters 1 to 3 in the English Program, the perception of learning gains held by a student from this group is independent of the semester the student is enrolled in. Therefore, the semester in which these students are enrolled appears to have no statistical effect on their perception of learning gains.

Perception of Learning Gains of the Chinese MBA Students in the Chinese Program

The Chinese MBA students enrolled in the Chinese Program held an overall neutral perception of learning gains made in Semesters 1, 2, and 3 at an international university in Thailand. The overall perception of learning gains was numerically found at its highest level for students enrolled in Semester 1 and decreased as the students progressed to Semester 2. This result is similar to the one Anderson (2006) reported regarding the perception of learning gains held by female nutrition and food science students at Kuwait University.

As the Chinese MBA students enrolled in the Chinese Program progressed from Semester 1 to Semester 3, no monotonous decrease in mean score was found with any of the subscales of the perception of learning gains. This result differs from that obtained by Anderson (2006), who reported a numerical decrease in the overall mean scores of the "Student engagement in learning" and "Learning attitudes and self-efficacy" scales over the 4-semester period of his study.

The results obtained from the Chinese MBA students enrolled in Semesters 1 to 3 in the Chinese Program revealed that the level of perception of learning gains ranged from a low of 3.09 ("Student engagement in learning" scale, Semester 2) to a high of 3.71 ("Understanding concepts" scale, Semester 1). These results are different from those reported by Anderson (2006), who found that his participants' overall level of perception of learning gains ranged from

a low of 3.3 ("Skills" scale, Semester 4) to a high of 4.2 ("Student engagement in learning" scale, Semester 1).

Finally, a significant difference was found in the perception of learning gains between the Chinese MBA students enrolled in the Chinese Program in Semester 1 and Semester 2. Therefore, being enrolled in either Semester 1 or Semester 2 in the Chinese Program appears to have a statistical effect on the students' perception of learning gains.

The difference in the Perception of Learning Gains Between the Chinese MBA Students in the English and Chinese Programs

For the case of both Semester 1 and Semester 3, the present study found that the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program at the target international university in Thailand had a significantly more positive perception of learning gains than their counterparts in the English Program. This could be because the Chinese language, the mother tongue of the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program, is the language of instruction used in their MBA program. By using the Chinese language as a medium of instruction, the Chinese MBA students in the Chinese Program can have a higher level of student engagement in learning than their counterparts in the English Program. This is in line with the findings reported by Bonney (2015), Cobb et al. (2009), and Wingert et al. (2011), who found that students' perception of learning gains was significantly and positively impacted by the level of student engagement in learning. This result is also in agreement with Whitlow (2017), who found that the perceptions of MBA preparation are influenced by students' level of engagement in communication, critical thinking, data analysis, and teamwork. Another possible explanation for the observed difference in perception of learning gains between Chinese MBA students in the English and Chinese Programs in Semester 1 and Semester 3 is the ability to integrate learning from diverse MBA fields. Using one's mother tongue makes understanding new knowledge easier and integrating it with previous ones (Chomsky, 2007). Because the MBA Chinese Program students use the Chinese language as the medium of instruction, they might be able to integrate learning from diverse MBA fields (e.g., general management, marketing, consulting, entrepreneurship, and finance) more easily than their counterparts in the English Program. Then they can also understand concepts, acquire skills and content knowledge easier than the Chinese MBA students in the English Program. This is in agreement with Wingert et al. (2011). They also found that offering opportunities for students to integrate learning from diverse fields positively affected their perception of learning gains.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations have been provided for MBA students, professors, administrators, and future researchers.

Recommendations for MBA Students

In this study, it was found that the overall mean score of the Chinese MBA students' level of perception of learning gains was neutral (i.e., a mean score with a numerical value between 2.51 and 3.50 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 signifying a very positive perception of learning gains) for both programs, ranging from a low of 3.07 (for Chinese MBA students enrolled in the Semester 2 of the English Program) to a high of 3.64 (for Chinese MBA students enrolled in the Semester 1 of the Chinese Program). So, Chinese MBA students are recommended to try collecting as much information as they can on future courses in their MBA programs and on how they are related to everyday life to be familiar with MBA-related concepts and topics to be studied in the future. This may contribute to a more positive level of perception of learning gains in Chinese MBA students, as reported by Süzük et al. (2011). They found that the level of student's perception of learning gains was more positive for those topics that students were familiar with or were related to everyday life, in comparison to new ones.

Recommendations for Professors

Based on the studies conducted by Bonney (2015), Cobb et al. (2009), and Wingert et al. (2011), there is empirical evidence that there is a significant and positive relationship between the teaching method and the student's perception of learning gains. This study found that the overall perception of learning gains held by Chinese MBA students in both programs decreased as the students progressed from Semester 1 to Semester 2. Therefore, professors in these MBA programs are required to enhance their teaching, particularly in Semester 2, to provide their students with a learning environment conducive to a more effective student engagement in learning, understanding of concepts, skill development, acquisition of content knowledge, and fostering of learning attitudes and self-efficacy.

Recommendations for Administrators

Due to the neutral level of perception of learning gains found by Chinese MBA students in the current study, administrators are recommended to listen to the voice of the Chinese MBA students and faculty in both programs to get a deeper understanding of their academic needs and concerns. The administration of the target international university owes it to them to support and reinforce students' interests, academic needs, and classroom experience. By doing so, administrators will contribute to enhancing the MBA students'

perception of learning gains, as reported by Wingert et al. (2011).

Recommendations for Future Researchers

In the future, researchers wanting to research a similar topic may consider other grouping variables, such as gender and age, which were not considered in the present study. Finally, future researchers could conduct similar studies by administering the Questionnaire on Students' Perceptions of Learning Gains before and after a given semester to enhance the methodology used in this study.

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