Influencing Factors on the Selection of Language Learning Centres: Empirical Evidence from Myanmar

Aye Mya Mon

Abstract

This study aimed to analyse the factors considered by the learners in choosing a language learning centre in Myanmar as an overview of the competitive advantage in the rapidly transforming cutthroat and globalised market competition. Deductive approach was applied as the base of conducting the study with exploratory research design using survey questionnaire in which the related quantitative and qualitative questions distributed to 108 students. The qualitative and quantitative data interpreted revealed two prominent factors, TV advertising and financial factor, have no impact on the students' selection decision. However, the other three factors, social media advertising, academic quality, and social influence, have significant impact on the students' decision of selecting a language institute. The competitive advantages based on the user experience have been identified as well. Because the research area is limited to only five influential factors, the number of variables can merely cover the narrow scope of the research area to foreground the whole resemblance of the students' selection behaviour and attitude. However, the results imply that competitive advantage in the highly competitive market requires strategic formulation of marketing strategies.

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1. Introduction

The vast number of choices are likely to overwhelm the customers to heave between the states of compelling the disposal and making purchase decision while shopping (Hanaysha, 2018). To gain market share, providing variety of products attempting the individual customers' needs leads to beneficially satisfy the customers (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017; Afroz, 2019). The ultimate customer's buying behaviour is influenced by various factors of specifications, and thus, the purchase decision is generated as the reflective result of those factors (Oke et al., 2016; Stankevich, 2017). The marketer's capability of identifying and understanding the influencing factors on the targeted customers' purchase decision, is an asset to set the strategies and meet the needs of the customers, enabling the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation's benefits (Brata et al., 2017; Al-Huwaishel & Al-Meshal, 2018). Knowing exactly what to allocate is key to winning the customers (Ramees & Safeena, 2016). Therefore, the knowledge-based analyses on what customers need, expect and decide to choose certain institution are dominant to persuade students' decision (Punj & Staelin, 1978; Kotler, 1997 as cited in Florenthal, 2011). For instance, the institutional resources should be allocated accordingly to leverage organisational strengths and weaknesses (Mullins & Walker, 2013). Similarly, the execution of the strategic marketing plan can be smooth by anticipating the customers' needs and wants; the consequences lead to potential customer loyalty and reputation of the organisation (Rudhumbu et al., 2017; Abiodun & Kolade, 2020).

In the educational context, it is highlighted that an institution should be set out by identifying and understanding its customers. Lancaster and Massingham (1998 cited in Lancaster & Massingham, 2011; Ogbeide, 2015) suggest that it is based on the notion of the customers' sovereignty so that the marketers can create the satisfaction of the customers along with the fulfilment of consumer needs. Kotler (2003 cited in Apuke, 2016) and Kalimullin and Dobrotvorskaya (2016) argue that an institute adopts customer-oriented policies and strategies to acquire the competitive advantages in the cutthroat marketplace and to take greater attentions of the customers.

Language institutes are highly demanded in Myanmar, in which English, Japanese, and Korean languages took the wide portion of the market because of the firms' globalised expansion worldwide. With the recent projection of the government, the massive transformation of the country's economy and the entry of the foreign investments hold high

possibility of the skilled labours employability (Dahm, 2017; Myanmar Investment Comission, 2018). Hence, communication and language skills become prominent in the international workplaces. This also equates to the rise in the language institutes leading to increase in the number offering similar courses to potential customers and intense competitions in the local market (Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business, 2018; Ministry of Education, 2019; Seth, 2020). With a number of institutes offering similar programmes, changes in consumers' buying behaviour seems to drive the marketers to track down the customers' interest and needs on the account of the demographic composition complexities (Kumar, 2019; Qazzafi, 2020).

Although English language is included as a major subject in state schools, the students are not trained enough to communicate fluently. Similarly, all the test systems in schools are only focused on the reading and writing skills. This is primarily the reason for taking language courses especially English. The students taking English language courses believe that it is necessity to get well-paid at the international organization and demanded as one of the essential skills (Tin, 2013; Phyu, 2017; Cameron, 2018). While Myanmar's education system still cannot fill the gap of industrialised knowledge and experience of the fresh graduates to the workplace (Win, 2015; Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2016; International Labour Office, 2017; The World Bank, 2018; Seth, 2020), language learning institutes fill the gap of skills development to address employability of graduates. The school fees charged at the institutes, which are accredited internationally and guarantee the standardised and customised curriculums and course systems taught and trained by academically strong faculty members, are much more than the other language classes run by local language teachers. While there are more options to choose from in the market (Eusafzai, 2015; Imaniah & Gunawan, 2017; Nguyen & Dang, 2019), the dramatic increase in the number of institutes offering English language lead to the game of proper marketing.

There is a need to understand the reasons customers choose specific products to manage offerings effectively and efficiently (Padhy & Sawlikar, 2018; Poturak & Softić, 2019). The ultimate customer's buying behaviour is influenced by various factors (Oke et al., 2016; Stankevich , 2017). It is the marketer's capability to identify these factors in order to formulate strategies and meet the needs of the customers (Brata et al., 2017; Al-Huwaishel & Al-Meshal, 2018). For instance, it is found out that social media nowadays influence customers' buying behaviour and digital marketing strategies deliberately work to some extent (Ashley & Tuten,

2015; Pütter, 2017). As an aggressive marketing technique, persuasion is needed to initiate decision (Schivinski, et al., 2016). In terms of the language institutes, providing detailed information through the proper marketing channel fits students' standard criteria (Kwame & Kweku, 2019).

While there are several studies on the influencing factors on the customers' purchase decision in the different industries (Ramya & Ali, 2016; Indriani, 2016; Kumar, 2016; Hanaysha, 2018; Rachmawati et al., 2019; Al-Ghaswyneh, 2019), local researches in this research area and institution have not been undertaken in Myanmar. Hence, these study addressees this gap by identifying key factors affecting the students' selection of language institute and the proper marketing integrated.

2. Literature Review

2.1. VRIO Model and Purchase Decision

VRIO Model. It is generally acknowledged that Barney (1991 cited in Barney & Hesterly, 2015) is the very first scholar who developed the theoretical tool explanatory of resource-based view (RBV). The original VRIN framework suggests that the identifying resources can be the sources of the sustained competitive advantage. The scholar argues that the non-substitutability of valuable, rare and imperfectly imitable resource is essential for making that resource to be a source of the sustained competitive advantage. Barney (1995, 1997) later replaces the non- substitutability dimension of VRIN with the organisation embeddedness dimension, and then the VRIO framework is introduced. However, it does not mean the scholar diminishes the VRIN framework; it is supposed to look inside for the competitive advantage (Marinov & Marinova, 2012; Gong, 2013). Barney (1991) repeatedly claims the term "resource bundle" resulted from the consolidation of resources. The main emphasis is on the resource level in VRIN, but in VRIO, the functionality and the usefulness of the resources are down-streamed focus. Nevertheless, both VRIN and VRIO analyse the resource unit. Furthermore, Barney (2001) states that if the resources are not rare or difficult to imitate, then those resources cannot be used as the source of the competitive advantage (Sanchez, 2008; Boyes, 2011; Pathak, 2020). The integration of the two existing theoretical frameworks: the positioning perspective and the resource-based view forms the mechanism called VRIO which is the primary tool to accomplish the internal analysis. The four main

components: value, rarity, imitability, and organisation, are included to determine the competitive potential of a resource or capability of a firm owing to VRIO framework (Gupte, 2007; Farinha, et al., 2020). The dimension "V" stands for the valuable resource which enables a firm's conceivability of and implementation strategies improving efficiency and effectiveness. Rare representing the dimension "R" is to measure if a firm's resource has the virtue of rarity as the competitive advantage so that it is impossible for the others to obtain. In the dimensions "I" and "O", the imitability and organisation, a firm's valuable and rare resources are tended to be more difficult to imitate; if not, the potential for the competitive advantage might disappear. On the same hand, the competitive advantage is also derived from how a firm operates and interrelate strategies to resources to exploit the organisational processes (Peng, 2009; Afuah, 2014; Barney & Hesterly, 2015). This study aimed to apply this model to identify which resources of the language institute are helpful to take competitive market advantage.

Purchase Decision. Consumer behaviour is always the core area to study in business because customised and strategic marketing plan is structured towards the pattern of customer behaviour; how a customer or a group of customers select, buy, use and dispose ideas towards the goods and services that satisfy the individuals' needs and wants (Wright, 2006; Khan, 2007; East et al., 2017). Purchase decision involves a sequence of choices contrived by the customers to fulfil the needs: (1) problem recognition, (2) information search, (3) evaluation of alternatives, (4) purchase decision, and (5) post-purchase behaviour. The customer's decision-making process can be described as the phase that the customer buys goods or services in the market making the final purchase decision through three segments of timeline: before, during and after (Havaldar, 2005; Ferrell & Hartline, 2008). The most important task of a marketer is to focus on the whole decision-making process instead of solely on the purchase decision, and it is because the customer experiences different junctures before reaching a conclusion (Vinayagamoorthy, 2005; Verma, 2007; Ingram et al., 2008).

The first stage is the need or problem recognition in consumer buying decision process. It comes up with the basic need or might be a step ahead of it (Govindarajan, 2007). The second stage information search is germane to the customer's past experience with the products or services used or perceived to choose the same products or search the information of the new products (Tyagi & Kumar, 2004; Liu, 2007). After collecting the information of the products

or services, the customers contemplate the grades of products, services or brands, and then this is the third stage, evaluation of alternatives (Pride & Ferrell, 2006). The fourth stage, purchase decision, is affected by the surrounding environment, and the consumer completes the buying process when the highest ranked goods or services are purchased. Post-purchase decision is the fifth stage of the process, and in this stage, the customers' perception have to be analysed because those customers can inform the others about the use of the products or services. It might also create the retention or loyalty if the result leads to the customers' satisfaction, otherwise, the dissatisfaction of the customers may cause the negative consequences to the organisation (Havaldar & Cavale, 2007; Stokes & Lomax, 2008; Pride & Ferrell, 2010). Comprehending the consumers' behaviour is still not a simple quest as there are several factors which influence the consumers' purchase decision. Having knowledge of what really the customers' characteristics and preferences are, can enable the marketers to foster the competitive advantage for the long-term survival (Prasad, 2009; Tyagi & Kumar, 2004).

VRIO-driven Competitive Advantage. "All assets, capabilities, organisational processes, firm attributes, information, knowledge which are controlled by it and allowing it to implement strategies that are not met by current and potential competitors" are defined as the firms' resources (Barney, 1991 cited in Barney & Hesterly, 2015). To provide the materialisation of the organisational objectives, the possession of specific resources, the distinctive capabilities, and the strategic and combined progesssion of both perspects are in need as the fundamental basis to create the strategic organisational asset (Flanagan et al., 2007). Exceptational acceptance to those being capable of idenfying and developing the competence of the organisation, every resource cannot be regarded as the neither strategic assets nor critical resources. Owing to Teec et al. (1997 cited in Helfat et al., 2007), "the collective knowledge of the organisation, and coordination skills to produce products and intergration of the different technological levels" relate to the distinctive competencies of the firm.

Building up an opportune system in a firm is a must to ensure effective changes and reconfigure the internal resources and competencies in a dynamic external environment; and such kind of ability is regarded as "dynamic capabilities", the factor to process strategic resources in VRIO framework and competitive advantage Peteraf (1993) cited in (Barney & Clark, 2001). The areas of market, technology, innovation, organisational and managerial competencies as functional competences are defined as "zero-order opportunities that ensure

the company's operational efficiency". Those competencies play a role of mediator between dynamic apabilities and performance (Barney & Hesterly, 2005 cited in Marichova, 2018).

Accordingly, resources determining competitive advantage are classified into two theoretical concepts: the first is based on the recoginition of the firm's adaptability to the external environment in accordance with Porter (1980 cited in Porter, 1990) and the second is the originated phenomenon of the internal resources and capacities to defend the superior performance of the organisation – claimed by Barney (1991 cited in Pathak, 2020). These are derived from the three sources: (1) targeted market size, (2) primary access to resources or consumers, and (3) competitors' choice limitation (Ghemawat, 1986 cited in Ariyani et al., 2018).

To take competitve advantages over current and potential competitors, any firm should develop dynamic capabilities and regarding to this basis, the dimensions of VRIO – high value, rarity, difficult to immitation and organisation, are major fators to consider to acquire competitive advantages and performance (Gong, 2013). Consequently, the sustainable competitive advantage is generated as a function of the stimultanous execution of the firm's resources measured by VRIO framework (Hussain et al., 2020). In addition, Ciftci and Zhou (2016) indicate the fact that the intangible assets such as brand equity and marketing innovation which improve the market performance of the organisation, are the main sources for the sustainable competitive advantage of the firm.

Gap in Literature. Previous studies have examined the students' purchase decision on the selection of the institutes to study; the area mostly focused is on the tertiary level institutions. The deep-down analysis on the former researchers' works indicates that the several factors are observed as the factors influencing the students' purchase decision to choose the proper institutes. However, the reviewed findings and literatures in which the argumentative and contradictive facts are mentioned, still have the research gap to be addressed. Therefore, it is identified that there is no record of previous studies on the factors influencing on the students' purchase decision on the selection of the language institute in the context of Myanmar Education Sector, and the influencing factors: financial factor, social influence, academic quality, and advertising (Social Media and Television) on Myanmar students' purchase decision on the selection of a particular language institute.

2.2. Theoretical Background and Conceptual Framework

Stimulus Response Theory. Stimulus response theory sees the human behaviour as the reaction to the stimulus, stimulus to response. Stimulus response theory in its origins, was developed as a laboratory theory of the contributions of the psychologists: Ivan Pavlov, John B. Watson and Edward L. Thorndike in 1927 (Quinn, 2000). The experiment of Ivan Pavlov proved that food as a biologically significant stimulus (the unconditioned stimulus) consistently followed a bell as a neutral stimulus (the conditioned stimulus), and then, the salivation of dog gradually started upon the perception of the initially natural stimulus. This process was termed as the "classical or Pavlovian conditioning" (Wallace et al., 2007). J. B. Watson then combined the ideas developed with the Pavlov's principle of conditioning, and presented the position called behaviourism (Unger et al., 2010). Meanwhile, Edward Thorndike highlighted that the prominence of reward and the punishment in the process as the "law of effect" which became the modern learning theory (Johnson, 1956). It is supposed that "the learner responds to the conditioned stimulus as if it is the unconditional stimulus" (Osselaer, 2008). This view of associative learning is implicitly or explicitly taken in many consumers learning studies (Blythe, 2013; Sethna & Blythe, 2019). Therefore, this concept is applied in this study to measure the impacts of the influencing factors (financial factors, social influences, academic quality and advertising – social media and television) as stimuli to the purchase decision (response) of the English language students.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study
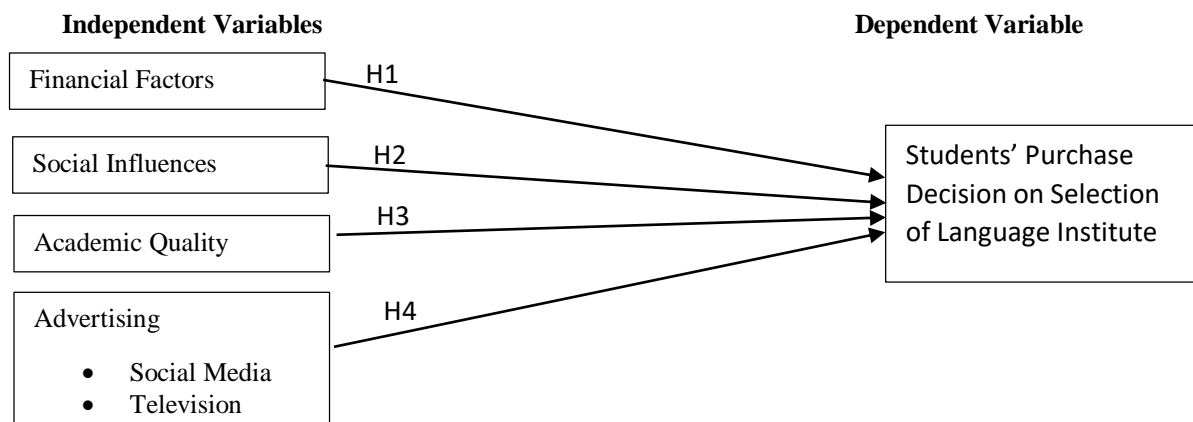
Source: The Studies published by Rika (2016); Mustafa et al. (2018); Sokoli et al. (2018) & Tukur et al. (2019)

Conceptual Framework. The conceptual framework is constructed based on the relevant empirical studies and literatures. The three independent variables: financial factor, social influences, academic quality and advertising are regarded as influential factors on the dependent variable, students' purchase decision on selection of the language institute as shown in figure 1.

2.3. Hypothesis Development

Impact of Financial Factor on the Students' Purchase Decision. The direct and indirect costs and the income of the family members have a significant impact on the students' purchase decision. Obligatory and voluntary cost can be included in the direct costs, expenses which are directly related to the studies. In addition, direct cost can differ from the discipline from one institute to others. Indirect costs become the fact when the one does not have income during the study period. This kind of cost have negative effect on the students' purchase decision in the consideration of long-term or short-term studies, because it is rather difficult for the students who do not have another option related to financial resources or support if it comes to repeat the academic or module (Frimpong & Kofi, 2014; Gyamfi et al., 2016; Kotler et al., 2019; Baker, 2019). As a result, those students prefer to start the academic journey by choosing an easier discipline. Baker et al. (2017) argue that the high cost has significant negative influence for the students who are working for some basic needs but Frenette (2005) claims that the cost is not counted for the students from high-class community. Baker and Montalto (2019) confirm that the cost as one of the influencing factors on the students' choice to institution, additionally, the cost, location, facility and academic quality are conducted as the factors influencing on the students purchase decision.

Accordingly, this study hypothesized that:

H1: Financial factor has a significant positive impact on English Language students' purchase decision at the Language Academy.

Impact of Social Influences on the Students' Purchase Decision. Social factors affect the students purchase decision significantly because someone around is always influencing every individual's purchase decision (Rika, 2016). The recommendation of the experienced students of the certain university significantly influences the decision of the potential students' enrolment because these kinds of aspirational groups aspire the students to choose the

institution. Guilbault (2016) and Krezel and Krezel (2017) find that the social influences such as peer-to-peer communication through social communication mediums are imperative having a significant impact on the students' choice to the institute. Familial, social and personal factors are resulted as the highly significant influencing factors towards the students' decision-making process to choose the institute (Domino et al., 2006; Jabeen & Rafiuddin, 2015). Family members, moreover, take the role of forming the values, developing and shaping the personality, in such way, the family members create the first perception of the students on products or services (Hegna & Smette, 2017). Based on these studies, the current study argues that:

H2: Social influence has a significant positive impact on English Language students' purchase decision at the Language Academy.

Impact of Academic Quality on the Students' Purchase Decision. Academic quality is assumed as the prioritised fact of the students to consider before the enrolment to the institute (Hill, 2015). The reputation of an institute related to the academic quality: faculty members' qualification, teaching styles, methods and visible development of the students after graduation are contemplated by the potential students (Ivy, 2017). The quality and reputation of the institute, and the recognitions of the academic credibility are the most important factors to the students (Hill et al., 2013) and (Galloway, 2015). The studies of Cubillo et al. (2016) say that the academic image of institute, qualified faculties, and admission restrictions and requirements have a significant positive impact on the students' choice to the institution. The research of Price et al. (2013) and María Cubillo et al. (2016) affirm the finding expresses that the factors such as personal attitude, value-added expectation and development related to the academic quality provided by the institute are distinct in the students' decision-making process on the selection of institution. Based on the previous studies, hypothesis of the study is:

H3: Academic Quality has a significant positive impact on English Language students' purchase decision at the Language Academy.

Impact of Advertising on the Students' Purchase Decision. Advertising is the activation form of interaction which urges the customers to respond the evidence for the addressee (Hansen et al., 2007). Students' attitude towards advertising and the influence of the effectiveness of the advertising forms either positive or negative impact to the purchase

decision. Cognitive ability of the students towards advertising reflects the individuals' thoughts and feelings. In the research of Jan and Ammari (2016), the advertising persuasiveness through ad attractiveness, ad recall and attitude towards floor ads creates ad effectiveness making a significant positive contribute to the students' purchase decision. Moreover, the critical findings of Harikumar (2015) and Ogunyombo et al. (2017) predicate that the students' intention to purchase the certain products or services offered by institutes is significantly impacted through the advertising channels: billboard advertising, television advertising, and celebrity endorsement. Hence, the hypotheses developed are:

H4: Social Media Advertising has a significant positive impact on English Language students' purchase decision at the Language Academy.

H5: TV Advertising has a significant positive impact on English Language students' purchase decision at the Language Academy.

3. Methodology

The research framework is developed in the concept of positivism and interpretivism. If the positivism and interpretivism are combined together in the research, it can provide both the causal "what" and the causal "how", thus, this combination can lessen the weaknesses overcoming the limitations of quantitative and qualitative research analyses (Grix, 2002; Mukherji & Albon, 2010). It is considered that the deductive approach is suitable with this study because the existing and previous literatures, theories and related research studies are firstly reviewed and analysed before the conceptual framework development. Hypotheses are tested to prove the fact that the reviewed theoretical concepts are verifiable or not.

The study utilises mixed method approach; apart from collecting the required quantitative data to achieve the research objectives, the respondents' personal perceptions which are openly described in individuals' languages without limitations were also collected. In such way, the study exposes the findings of the research derived from both numerical and non-numerical data.

3.1. Research Strategy

Survey. The purpose of survey method is to produce the statistical, quantitative, numerical, qualitative data and description in the aspects of the targeted population. Using

formal list of questions, this method is comprehensive and easy to assess using large sample size while the respondents remain anonymous. However, there are still inconvenient issues to manage; for instance, the respondents lack of related knowledge and interest, and the researcher cannot control the respondents for not giving the honest answers on the questions (Hymel, 2006).

Time Horizon. According to Saunders et al. (2009), time horizon in the study can be defined as being cross-sectional and longitudinal. At one point in time, examining many cases to gain information related to the research area is called cross-sectional study. Otherwise, across more than one point in time, attempting to collect required information from many units or cases is described as longitudinal study. Starting from September to the end of December in 2020, the study was conducted within time constraint. Therefore, the study is cross-sectional because the researcher has to collect the data in the timeline only and complete a fixed image of the phenomenon under the study at that time.

3.2. Research Instruments

The questionnaires of the study are designed as following:

Section A. 7 questions are asked related to demographic profile, financial information and the perspective of the respondents' gender, age, occupation, the factors driven to choose the institute and financing modes to join the programme.

Section B. 38 quantitative and 8 qualitative questions are included in this section designed to analyse the students' level of satisfaction and opinion on the individual influential factors: financial factors, social influences, academic quality and advertising (TV and social media) after purchasing the services or products.

Section C. 6 quantitative and 2 qualitative questions identify the most and the least significant factors among financial factor, social influences, academic quality and advertising (TV and social media) to the students' purchase decision.

Five-point Likert scale is applied in the questionnaire rating with 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree). Close-ended questions are asked for the quantitative data collection and open-ended questions on qualitative data. The

questionnaire is modifications from the questionnaires of Liaw (2012), Yakaboski et al. (2017) and Kumar (2018).

3.3. Population and Sampling

Either individuals or groups of people having the set of specialised characteristics which the study targets are the population of the study (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). Knowing the exact data of the target population, the study uses Yamane (1967) formula at 95% of confidence level and 5% margin of error. Among the total number of 120 students from August, September and October 2020 batches, 108 students of the learning centre are targeted to become sample. These particular groups of students were chosen because they are the currently active recent enrollees and they are opinionated in terms of customer experience after post purchase period. Since the definite population is known, the study uses probability sampling frame. The sample size of 108 students are proportionally calculated and selected according to simple random sampling technique which enables the selection without bias (Thomson, 2012). Sampling design is basically the groundwork of the selection stage of the specific audience. The final decision on choosing the data collection method and the calculation of the appropriate sample size is carried out in this stage (Lohr, 2010).

Table 1

Sample Frame of the Research

Teams	Number of Population	Number of Sample
Students from August (2020) Batches	56	32
Students from September (2020) Batches	49	35
Students from October (2020) Batches	29	27
Total	**120**	**108**

Source: Language Learning Centre

3.4. Data Collection & Procedure

Pilot Test. After the questionnaire is developed, five respondents who have the previous experience in the research field are requested to answer the questionnaire. The errors identified and feedbacks given are considered for the amendments of the questionnaire under the supervision of the research supervisor.

Survey. As to the first stage, the researcher requests the approval of the learning centre to conduct the survey. In compliance with the social distancing rules, the researcher distributes the questionnaires in the Google Form, which is ethically structured and arranged to be anonymously answered by the respondents. The form link is distributed to the respondents with the help of the student service manager through the school's portal. A total number of 108 questionnaires are answered by 108 selected respondents; thus, a response rate of 100%. The contact information such as researcher's phone number and email address are provided for the inquiry.

3.5. Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration takes essential role of the dissertation because it might lead disruption to the research project if this part is missing (Saunder et al., 2012; Bell et al., 2018). The three rules of ethical consideration: confidentiality, reliability and validity are strictly followed by the study. The researcher asks the learning centre's permission for the data collection. The main aim of the data collection is initially explained to the participants in comprehensive way and it is ensured that the consent and ethics forms are secured. It is allowed that the respondents are able to quit from the process time. Furthermore, the answers and feedbacks of the respondents are kept confidentially and the questionnaire structure is set up to be answered anonymously as well. The researcher assures to keep away from bias whilst in the research process and data report. The researcher cares to mention the scholars' previous works, participants, and the supervisor who have involved and helped to accomplish the research project. The researcher prioritises the fact that the discrimination and the irritation to the participants have to be forbidden. The information is only used for the study purpose.

3.6. Data Analysis

The evaluation on the collected data is assessed to check whether those are reliable or not. The process is done following the advice of the experienced researchers and supervisor. The finalised quantitative data are coded and inputted using the SPSS statistics tool version 20. The qualitative data are interpreted and supposed to minimise bias by peer checking.

4. Results

Table 2

Overall Agreement Level of the Respondents on the Influencing Factors

Factors	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agreement Level (%)
Financial Factors	0.0	1.4	37.1	60.0	1.5	61.5
Social Influencing Factors	0.0	1.5	8.3	70.2	20.0	90.2
Academic Quality Factors	0.0	0.0	6.0	72.2	21.8	94.0
Social Media Advertising Factors	0.0	4.6	8.4	77.0	10.0	87.0
TV Advertising Factors	0.0	5.2	11.3	73.5	10.0	73.5
Students' Purchase Decision	0.0	0.0	2.8	72.5	24.7	97.2

Source: Survey Data of Aye Mya Mon (2020)

In Table 2, the calculation of the level of agreement shows that academic quality takes the highest rank of 94.0% as the most satisfying factor on the students' purchase decision and social influences, advertising (social media) and advertising (television) follow in the second (90.2%), third (87.0%) and fourth (73.5%) places sequentially. The least satisfying factor (61.5%) is financial factor in fifth place. Interview results show that students accept internationally recognised programmes, influence of family, public influencers, friends and relatives, and academic quality/competency of teachers and staff as unique factors of the learning centre which made the students to choose over others.

Table 3

Multiple Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	St. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.586	0.55		4.76	0.000
Financial Factors	0.064	0.115	0.062	0.44	0.67
Social Influencing Factors	0.345	0.106	0.440	3.27	0.002
Academic Quality Factors	0.452	0.170	0.287	2.78	0.008
Social Media Advertising Factors	0.391	0.120	0.489	3.359	0.001
TV Advertising Factors	0.150	0.076	0.310	1.990	0.060

Source: Survey Data of Aye Mya Mon (2020)

Table 3 shows the multiple regression analysis to test the research hypotheses.

The critical value of t with 64° of freedom and significance (α) value = 0.05 is 1.9977 as for two-tailed test.

H1: Financial factor has a significant positive impact on students' purchase decision.

The t-test value of the financial factor is 0.44, smaller than the critical value, while the significant value is 0.67. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted while the alternative one is rejected.

H2: Social Influence has a significant positive impact on students' purchase decision.

The t-test statistic value of social influence is 3.27 larger than the critical value while the significant value is 0.002. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative one is accepted.

H3: Academic Quality has a significant positive impact on students' purchase decision.

The t-test value of academic quality is 2.78, larger than the critical value, while the significant value is 0.008. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative one is accepted.

H4: Social Media Advertising has a significant positive impact on students' purchase decision.

The t-test value of academic quality is 3.359 larger than the critical value of 1.9977, and the significant value is 0.001. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative one is accepted.

H5: TV Advertising has a significant positive impact on students' purchase decision.

The t-test value of TV advertising is 1.990 smaller than the critical value, and the significant value is 0.060. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted while the alternative one is rejected.

Social media advertising has the largest beta coefficient value of 0.489, which is affirmed as the most significant factor impacting on the students' purchase decision. The second most significant factor is social influence with its beta coefficient value of 0.440 followed by academic quality with the beta coefficient value of 0.287. Despite having beta

value of 0.062 and 0.310, the significance values of financial factor and television advertising are larger than 0.05. Therefore, those factors have no impact on the students' purchase decision.

Accordingly, the study proposes the formulated the multiple regression equation following:

PD = A + SIF(X1) + AQF (X2) + SMA (X3)

PD = 2.586 + 0.345SIF + 0.452AQF + 0.391 SMA

Where:

PD = Purchase Decision

SMA = Social Media Advertising Factor

AQF = Academic Quality Factor

SIF = Social Influence Factor

A = Value of Y when X equal Zero (constant value)

X = Dimension of Purchase Decision

Table 4

VRIO Analysis on Competitive Advantage

Resource/ Capability	Is it valuable?	Is it rare?	Is it hard to imitate?	Is the firm organized around?	What is the result?
Alumni Association/ Friends/ Relatives/ Colleagues	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Realised Competitive Parity
Social Media Presence	Yes	No	No	Yes	Realised long-term competitive advantage
Financial Support	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Realised Temporary Competitive Advantage
Internationally recognized programmes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Realised Competitive Parity
Academic Faculty Members	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Realised Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Source: Survey Data of Aye Mya Mon (2020)

The results of the VRIO analysis in table 4 shows that the realized sustainable competitive advantage of the language learning centre is the academic faculty members.

5. Discussion

In the context of the study, the most influencing factor on the students' purchase decision is academic quality. In the composition of multiple aspects: perception on quality of faculties or teaching standards, public recognition on the academic reputation of the institute, academic quality takes the vital role to be advantageous to the implementation of marketing strategies which aim to attract and attain both current and potential customers. The growth of expectation on the better performance in teaching and efficient production of competent students is identified (Mcghee, 2003; Hazelkorn et al., 2018), and high-quality assurance of the institute is one of the key facets the students ponder before the enrolment – the standardised academic policies, structured curriculum, assessment standards, entry restrictions and tuition are all criteria measured for this feature (Kahveci et al., 2012). Competitive admission as entry restriction is a reputable characteristic of an institute, attracting the potential intention as the institute' recruitment put focal point on those whose aptitude is the same with that of the institution standards and policies (Machumu & Kisanga, 2014). Sokoli et al. (2018) denote that the quality of the academic faculty members is one of the influencing factors on the students' decision of the institutional choice.

The second most influencing factor on the students' purchase decision is social influences. Reference group, family, role and status are regarded as the important social factors which highly impact on the students' purchase decision as a simple and direct classification (Davignon, 2016). Rika (2016) raises the finding that positive influences are occurred when the students' decision is influenced by friends and alumni. Taking the recommendations of alumni and current students diminish uncertainty and perceived risk. In the research undertaken by Ruhi Sarpkaya (2010) and Vergolini and Vlach (2017), the parents' academic knowledge and financial support has some extent of power, and the mature level of the students strongly sway the decision. The study of Agrey and Lampadan (2014) find that students are not affected by friends and teachers while making purchase decision, which is not consistent with the findings of the current study.

Advertising (social media) is the third most influencing factor on the students' purchase decision. Brand reputation influences the sales in today's competitive market. Moreover, it helps develop the company's marketing strategy for the continuous brand evolvement. It

provides the marketers make insights of own brand compared to rivals (Kapferer, 2008). Building brand reputation as well as brand investment besides product development should be accessed through advertising. Advertising helps to attract the institutional preference allowing to establish future reputation of the institute as well; if the information provided by the institute is truthful and reflect the actual experience, the trust can be gained from the prospective customers (Ordinario et al., 2018). Advertising is convenient and beneficial to provide the information reflecting the characteristics and opportunities which the students can be advantageous to receive by joining the institute. Being aware of the perceived academic quality can elevate the students' purchase decision (Büyükdoğan, 2015).

The last two factors, advertising (television) and financial factor have no impact on the students' purchase decision at the language learning centre. It agrees with the study of Frenette (2005), which claims that the cost is not counted for the students from high-class community. However, it is against the studies of Frimpong and Kofi (2014), Gyamfi et al. (2016), Baker et al. (2017), Kotler et al. (2019) and Baker (2019) which state that financial factor is one of the main factors students consider before making decision to choose the proper university. The result of the study is similar to that of Simoes and Soares (2010) and Rika et al. (2016) in which students spend more time on the social media rather than watching TV programmes so that the brand awareness cannot be achieved through TV channels.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study found that the influential factors on students' selection of English language learning centre are academic quality, social influences and advertising through social media. The research focuses only on five influencing factors on the students' purchase decision apart from other influencing factors such as location and career opportunities and the context of the research neglects other institutions within the location of the English language learning centre. Therefore, the students' perception, attitude and behaviours towards the provided influencing factors are limited and the comprehensive observation on the respondents' emotion while selecting the institution is neglected. Accordingly, the responses of the selected respondents may not represent all the students attending at learning centre. Hence, future research can focus on other influencing factors such as campus location, facilities and so on to explore the wider research area and compare the students' perception on the institution with other competitors.

After the research findings have been reviewed, the recommendations aligned with the results of VRIO analysis are suggested to the management of the language learning centre.

The unique teaching styles, methods, and qualifications of the academic faculty members attract the students' trust on the English programmes provided. Therefore, it should structure the consistent teaching styles aligned with the standardised curriculums, and support the lecturers and trainers to enhance the personal and professional development so that the quality and capability can be upgraded to sustain the unique strength of the school in the market. More activities such as debate competitions, field trips, workshops, and exchange programmes should be designed and arranged for the sake of the students' better improvement in logical thinking skills, competency and career-oriented professional improvement. As consequences, the performance of the qualified academic members is polished to attain the students' trust and satisfaction. Furthermore, the satisfied students would deliver the positive feedback (word-of-mouth referral) to friends, peers, colleagues, relatives and the closed ones.

The language learning centre has strong business and alumni network the motivates students to register. Hence, the learning centre utilise this strength to promote the school's brand reputation to engage with the potential consumers through marketing platforms. The consumers' attention can be achieved by arranging public events through partnership which the outsiders can participate and gain positive brand awareness. The feedback of the alumni matters towards the students' purchase, therefore, the testimonials and experience-sharing video and talk show about success story would be effective to share positive insight to the current and potential consumers, and the public. The relationship can be built up and maintain with the current, potential and previous customers, and the efficient performance can be tacked down in the market development. The learning centre should promote the brand awareness through traditional advertising media with the combination of the digital marketing, which gain positive feedback from the students.

6. Declaration

The author hereby sincerely declare that the paper is her own work. The adapted sources and reference are explicitly acknowledged and mentioned in the work and any part of my work has not been copied or written by another person.

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