Factors Affecting Student Decision To Study Abroad And Its Economic Impact: A Case Study In Turkey[1]

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ABSTRACT

In decision making theory, under uncertainty individual decision makers have to choose one of a set number of alternatives with complete information about their outcomes with the lake of the probabilities of the various state of nature. This paper examines a decision making under uncertainty with the decision about studying abroad. In addition, we have discussed the decision making process of higher education system for the international students with the case study in Turkey.

In the decision making area, if the probabilities of the possible outcomes are not known, it can be used the some of the calculations; Maximax, Maximin, Criterion of Realism, Equally likely, Minimax Regret. Using these calculations, the article is concluded with aggregate the results of all observed criteria and alternatives in the conditions of uncertainty with the field of decision studying abroad for a student. The purpose of the study is not only to show all the calculations have mentioned but also to exhibit the potential of the universities in Turkey. It also aims to emphasize this attractive destination between Asia and Europe Region for international students living in surrounding area.

Keywords: *International Students, Study Abroad, Decision Making.*

INTRODUCTION

Government, business, and education leaders have long argued that study abroad participation can increase to ensure the nation's future security, economic prosperity, and global leadership (The Lincoln Commission Final Report 2005). Study abroad is a fast growing phenomenon in the world because of the political issues, cultural interactions and economic needs, religious problems (Byram, 2006). In the global current soceiities, studying abroad is considered effective practice for students to improve their different types of skills (Carlson et al.1990).

According to a new Study portal Research Report, international students contributed US $300 billion to the global economy in 2016. The report, authored by Dr Rahul Choudaha, is entitled *Beyond $300 Billion: The Global Impact of International Students*. According to Table 1, USA has got a biggest share from this economic race.

Table 1: Country share for International Students Mobility

US $ 57.3 billion to the USA
US $ 25.5 billion to the UK
US $ 19.8 billion to Australia
US $14.5 billion to France
US $ 14.4 billion to Germany
US $ 11.1 billion to Canada
US $ 5.3 billion to the Netherlands
US $ 60 million to the Turkey

When we examined the numbers on the Table 1, it can be seen clearly that Turkey has not yet realized the potential of international students fully. Turkey was part of a great Ottoman Empire which was comprised of more than 50 countries so that it has rich cultural history. Mostly neighboring countries have cultural bonding with Turkey one way or the other that's why they prefer Turkey as a study destination. Turkey is also promoting Turkish Culture and bringing foreign investment in Turkey by means of "Study in Turkey" project. Education in Turkey is less expensive compared to Europe because of exchange rate and many scholar ship opportunities offered by Turkish government.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the literature there are some studies related with our topic both nationally and internationally level.

Some researchers in academic area concentrate on student mobility (e.g., Chen 2006; Liand Bray 2007; Kondakci et al. 2008), addressing as a major question "why international students tend to choose certain countries for study abroad and "what are the main push–pull factors on student mobility issue?".

Chen et all (2006) investigated the motivators for Taiwanese students to study higher education in a western society by doing a survey analysis. They've founded that the cost of university, cost of living plays an important factor when they decided to study over seas. In addition, the length of time taken to complete their degree and to maintain sufficient contact with their family plays an important role when they decided to study over seas. Students also feel financial problems in the case of loss of scholarship opportunities, low work opportunities, increase of tuition fee etc (Smith and Khawaja, 2011). Financial conditions are very important in the initial years of the education as described in the published report of McLachlanand Justice (2009). According to Cubillo, Sanchezand Cervino, there are five basic factors; personal reasons, the effect of country image, influenced by city image; institution image and the evaluation of the programme of study which plays important role in decision making process to study abroad (Cubillo et al., 2006:12).

Discrimination, race and ethnicity are very important factors as international students maybe face with these issues. Degree of intensity increases from more developing countries to less developing countries (Poyrazlı and Lopez, 2007). Language is also one of the factors for international students (IS). Students are unable to participate in the class discussions and find it hard to complete the writing assignments, which leads to academic failures (Butcher and McGrath, 2004; Duru and Poyrazli, 2007; Li and Kaye, 1998). This issue gives birth academic failure.

Turkey is recognized as a source country in terms of sending students abroad (Kondakci 2011). This situation should be reversed. Mostly students think of what they will get back in return (in terms of opportunities) after their

degree completion. Will they be able to get the job? Will they able to get settled and this is very important factor of any student while choosing any university or country for higher education.

FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT DECISION TO STUDY ABROAD & IN TURKEY

Turkey was part of a great Ottoman Empire, which was comprised of more than 50 countries so it has rich cultural history. Mostly neighboring countries have cultural bonding with Turkey one or the other way that's why they chose Turkey for study destination. Turkey is also promoting Turkish Culture and bringing foreign investment in Turkey by means of Study in Turkey project.

Visa is not issue for neighboring countries and even for some neighbors there is no visa for Turkey such as Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Jordan, Algeria, Tunisia and Bulgaria etc. For those who need visa is also not a big issue as Turkish government is destined to promote Study in Turkey that is why, they are making easy for students who are interested to get Higher Education in Turkey. Also, students from above mentioned countries are allowed to stay up to 90 days in Turkey without any visa. International students are required to get visa in Turkey and mostly the visa processing has extensive bureaucracy and its long and uncertain which discourage the students to choose Turkey.

Student satisfaction is one of the important factors of promoting education in any country. It is a cycle, which repeats over and over again. Universities should provide more scholarships to international students on the basis of merits of students with good academic background should come to study rather than running after number of students (Smith and Khawaja, 2011).

There should be a proper strategy for "Study in Turkey" and all the universities in Turkey should follow it. A very good example for it is "Study Malaysia", which is independent in his decisions and all the universities in Malaysia are following the strategies and decisions of theirs. This way Malaysia Education has grown too much and they have achieved a milestone in higher education of international students.

When we examined the numbers It can be seen decline in the number of international students from 1997 – 2003 due to the measures take for Internationalization of students by Turkish government (Vural & Alkan, 2009). According to Figure 1, After the years of 2008 the students number is increased with sharply. This trend is very meaningful for the Turkish universities.

Figure 1: 1983-2013 Total International Student in Turkey
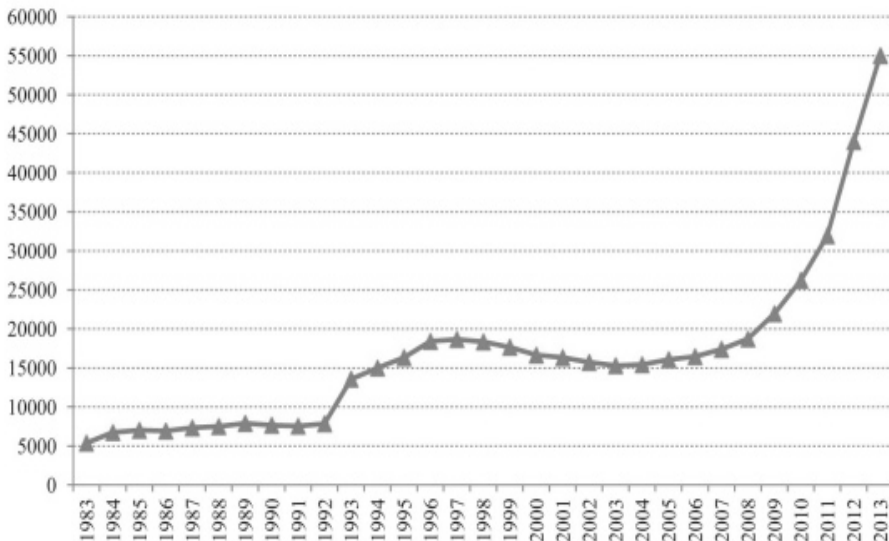
Source: Çetinsaya (2014)

To promote higher education one of the important thing is to have a unity among universities and higher education institutions. There is a need to make strategies al-together to take out common goals for higher perspective. After study opportunities are one of the key factor for international Students for choosing a country or university to study abroad. Students who travel abroad for Higher Education are always willing to work along with their education to get exposure and experience which helps themselves in grooming, shaping their capabilities and to financially support themselves. Many families works so much and send money to their children so they can manage their expenses while studying abroad. But it's not the case with all the students as the affordability ratio is low so students themselves

chose the country in which they have after work opportunities in terms of work permit or after study visas (Smith and Khawaja, 2011).

International Office staff is very important as very few universities has very low trained International staff such as lack of training in how to handle international students, good communication skills etc. Mostly International Office does not know which documents are required for Online Application system, which documents are required for finalizing registration, what needs to be done for resident permit etc. These are reasons, which create discomfort among international students. No arrangements are made on arrival of international students which leave them on their own once they arrive so they have to look for their alternative source of arrival which some how end up having first bad experience.

We can promote study in Turkey by improving Education System (ES) of Turkey and by making more collaboration with the other countries HEC to create a common ground for students. Prefect example of EU Education System, a standard for all the neighboring countries. Turkey is also a part of EU Education System (ES) that has given her recognition all over the world and students who complete their education in Turkey are care free of their diploma recognition except few of Health Science Programs.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN UNCERTANITY
Game theory is the formal study of decision-making where several players must make choices that potentially affect the interests of the other players and it considers situations where agents, households or firms make decisions as strategic reactions to other agents' actions. It is composed of players (more than one), rules (strategies), outcomes and payoffs (as utility functions). Game theory is a technique of how people, firms, government should behave in strategic situations in which they must interact with each other. In whole perspective, game theory closely connected with decision theory, equilibrium theory and mechanism design theory, which are main branches of economic theory (Myerson, 2013).

In another words, to make a distinction between both theories we can consider as a situation that two people go to a restaurant. Assume before going to the restaurant they have already decided to pay their own bill, this situation is a topic of decision theory because everyone has their own

budget and it is their own incent to spend all of their budget or make some saving for later events. If we assume before going to the restaurant, they will split the bill equally. Now this situation is the topic of game theory. In this game the people who are going to the restaurant are the players of the game and the meals in the menu are the strategies of the game, whereas the price of the meals are the outcomes of this game. In this game the people who orders first can be think as the first player and the other is the second player so in this game players cannot choose their strategies at the same time. Consider the situation that if the first player orders an expensive meal than the second player has to take the decision according to the first player's strategy and with respect to his own condition. Taking into consideration of the second players' decision making process, if second player has enough budget to pay for an expensive meal he can decide to order an expensive meal. Also, instead of paying some part of first player's bill but also he can decide to order a cheaper meal than the first player which shows that he accepts to pay some part of the first players bill. Assume second player does not have enough money as the first player than he has to order a cheap one. So in this type of game we cannot conclude that the first player has advantage but he has a decisive role in this game. First mover advantage is an important tissue in game theory and this advantage states that a player who can become a leader (first mover) is not worse off than in the original game where the players act simultaneously. In other words, if one of the players has the power to commit, he or she should do so (Turocy L. &Stengel B, 2001). In other words, we can think that decision making process is very crucial part of game theory.

To understand the concept of game theory in detail, first we need to understand the definition of the game in the literature. A game is a formal description of a strategic situation and it consists of players, strategies and outcomes.

Choosing which program in which university, in which city, in which country, they are going to study by any international student is very important decision-making process (DMP). They can consider the quality of the professors, institutional prestige, international recognition, campus facility, program cost, scholarships opportunities, program course structure, social and academic reputation, program recognition, number of students in the program, program specialization, city in which university

is located, city dimension, living cost of city, city image, socio-economic level, cultural proximity & communication.

First of all to analyze the aim of this study, we need to see what decision is and what decision theory is. We can classify them as a good decision or a bad decision. A good decision is based of reasoning and proper data will be available with possible alternatives. However, a bad decision is not based on reasoning. Good decision is based on reasoning; it considers all available data & possible alternatives and employs quantitative approach. Bad decision is not based on reasoning, it does not consider all available data & possible alternatives and do not employ quantitative approach.

Decision making process (DMP) is a process of proper reasoning and one can define it in following steps:

- First of all list all the possible alternatives
- Identify the possible out comes (utilities)
- List the all possible reward or profit
- Choose a decision making model
- Apply the model
- Make your decision

There can be different methods for decision-making process depending on the different personalities such as optimistic, pessimist, neutral and etc. and in addition there are methods, which can be applied on different state of natures.

STUDY CASE
A case study, which is related to decision-making process of student study abroad choices, is constructed to understand each decision criteria. We created a person wants to decide to study abroad with the name of Ali. Ali has three options to make decision such as; either he can go abroad to do Higher Education (A_1), either he can stay back in the home country (A_2) and study there or he can get the work experience before continuing further studies (A_3). In this example, "A" refers to Alternatives "S" refers to nature of status. The other assumptions are denoted by S_1, S_2 and S_3, which represents the state of nature and their definitions are given as follow:

- A_1: Preferring to study a board for Masters Program.
- A_2: Staying back in own country for Masters Program.
- A_3: Decision to gain work experience before further education.
- S_1: Unstable economic conditions
- S_2: Growing economic conditions
- S_3: Stationary economic conditions

Unstable economic condition (S_1) illustrates that the economy is volatile which also means that it is difficult to find job and market players are reluctant to invest which can create unemployment rate higher in the market. Growing economic conditions (S_2) illustrates that economy is improving and acting bullish, which bring new players in the market and it implies to provide opportunities for freshmen and new graduates. Stationary economic conditions (S_3) illustrates that economy is not so good not so bad, maybe we can say that it is difficult to find new jobs for freshmen and new graduates but overall market remains stable.

These states of natures are formed hypothetically but of course number of state of natures can be increased or decreased. In other words, they have to be constructed according to given situation.

We can see that if student will study abroad he will have better work opportunities, gaining high salary chances after studies, diverse experience multicultural environment. Outcome in the decision matrix are constructed only to simplify the each criteria and to make them understandable. The values are chosen as they have the same relation as of real life, as mentioned in Table 2.

Table 2: Maximax Criteria (Hypothetical Example)

	S_1	S_2	S_3	Max
A_1	100	**150**	40	*150*
A_2	50	120	100	*120*
A_3	20	140	80	*140*

To find which alternative is best according to Maximax criteria; the decision maker thinks that if he/ she chooses alternative A_1 since he/ she is lucky enough that the state of nature is in perfect condition and outcome will be the best suitable outcome (150). In all the alternatives same pattern will be seen in maximax criteria because of the assumption that best will be happen. In other words from Table 1 which illustrates the decision matrix and last column constructed by calculating maximum value of each row and finally the last decision is maximum value of the last column (150 = Max)

We can conclude that an optimistic student in this situation who is considered as a rational, choses alternative A_1 which is preferring study abroad.

Maximin Criterion states that select the decision that's gives you maximum of the minimum results / rewards. It is also known as pessimist decision criteria. It includes the least favorable conditions of decision and outcome.

Table 3: Maximin Criteria (Hypothetical Example)

	S_1	S_2	S_3	Min
A_1	100	**150**	40	*40*
A_2	50	120	100	***50***
A_3	20	140	80	*20*

To find which alternative is minimum according to maximin criteria; the decision maker thinks if he/ she chooses alternatives A_1 since he/she is not lucky enough that the state of nature will be in worse condition and outcomes will be the worse outcome (40). In all the alternatives same pattern will be seen in maximin criteria because of the assumption that worse will happen. In other words, Table 3 illustrates the decision matrix and last column constructed by calculating minimum value of each row and finally the last decision is maximin value of the last column (50).

Equal Likelihood Criterion states that all states of nature are equally likely to occur which means that the probability of state of natures are equally distributed. In short it is the average reward.

Table 4: Equal Likelihood Criterion (Hypothetical Example)

	S_1	S_2	S_3	**Average**
A_1	100	**150**	40	***96.6***
A_2	50	120	100	*90*
A_3	20	140	80	*80*

To find which alternative is best according to Equal Likelihood Criterion; the decision maker thinks if he/ she chooses alternatives A_1, A_2 and A_3 and divide them by all three (all 3 situations) to take the average so outcomes will be the average of all three situations will be (96.6). In all the alternatives same pattern will be seen in Equal Likelihood Criterion because of the assumption to take the average. In other words Table4 which illustrates the decision matrix and last column constructed by calculating average value of each row and finally the last decision is average value of the all columns (96.6).

Criterion of Realism is a compromise between the optimism or pessimism about the future. The other name of this method is Hurwicz's criteria which is one of the classic decision rules applied in decision making under uncertainty. It has one parameter which is denoted by. represents the probability of being optimistic that means it only takes values between 0 and 1. If this parameter is equal to 0 it means that decision maker is %100 pessimistic that means the Hurwicz's criterion becomes maxi-min criteria. If this parameter is equal to 1 it means that decision maker is %100 optimistic that means the Hurwicz's criterion becomes maximax criteria. In other words this criteria at tends to find the middle ground between the extremes post by the optimist and pessimist criteria. Instead of assuming total optimism or pessimism, this method measures of both by assigning a certain percentage of weight to being optimistic and balance to being pessimistic. Hurwicz's decision rule is followed:

- Select a parameter of being optimistic, the value of
- For every alternative i, compute its Hurwicz weighted average ()
- Chose the alternative which has maximum

Now we will examine the same hypothetical example for Hurwicz method with parameter 0.6 and figure out which alternative is best for this method and with this parameter. With the change of the parameters the best alternatives will change. By the help of sensitivity analysis, one can figure out the parameter which changes the result of the hypothetical example. Table 5 illustrates the steps of this method in details.

Table 5: Criterion of Realism (Hypothetical Example)

	S_1	S_2	S_3	Max	Min	Hurwicz Weighted Average
A_1	100	150	40	150	40	150*0.6+40*0.4=106
A_2	50	120	100	120	50	120*0.6+50*0.4=92
A_3	20	140	80	140	20	140*0.6+20*0.4=92

The last column of Table 5 calculates the Hurwicz weighted average for each alternative. Since the maximum Hurwicz weighted average value belongs to A_1, the best alternative is A_1. From these results we cannot conclude that the second alternative is better than the third alternative.

Table 6 illustrates that the sensitivity analysis criterion of realism in some parameters starting from zero (0) to one (1) increase with 0.1. We decided to do this analysis to see which value of Hurwicz parameter makes the change in the decision of choosing best alternatives. In this hypothetical example if the value of this parameter is between 0 and 0.2, the best alternative is A_2. For the other values the best alternative is always A_1.

Table 6: Sensitivity Analysis Criterion of Realism (Hypothetical Example)

HurwiczParameter	A_1	A_2	A_3	Max	Alternative
0	40	50	20	50	A_2
0.1	51	57	32	57	A_2
0.2	62	64	44	64	A_2
0.3	73	71	56	73	A_1
0.4	84	78	68	84	A_1
0.5	95	85	80	95	A_1
0.6	106	92	92	106	A_1
0.7	117	99	104	117	A_1
0.8	128	106	116	128	A_1
0.9	139	113	128	139	A_1
1	150	120	140	150	A_1

Minimax Regret Criteria is the difference between the optimal reward and the actual reward received. The minimization of regret that is highest when one decision has been made instead of another decision. Some type of personalities always imagine themselves in a situation that better can be achieved and there could be more done to get the better results.

Step 1: In this step for each state of nature the decision maker will decide which alternative is the best. The last row of Table 7 represents these alternatives. In other words, for each columns the maximum value will be calculated by the decision maker.

Table 7: Minimax Regret (Hypothetical Example)

Alternatives	S_1	S_2	S_3
A_1	**100**	**150**	**40**
A_2	50	120	100
A_3	20	140	80
Max	*100(A_1)*	*150(A_2)*	*100(A_3)*

Step 2: Calculate Regret Matrix: During calculating Regret Matrix for each state of nature, we assume that they are going to be occurred with 100% with this we need to calculate the importance level of each alternative which denote the value of being regretful. For instance if we assume S_1 is going to occur with 100% the best alternative is A_1 because among other alternative A_2 and A_3, the out come of A_1 is the maximum (max (100,50,20)). The same type of calculations must be done for all the state of natures and these values construct the regret matrix of the decision making process (DMP) as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Construction of RegretMatrix (Hypothetical Example)

	S_1	S_2	S_3
A_1	100-100 = 0	150-150 = 0	100-40 = 60
A_2	100-50 = 50	150-120 = 30	100-100 = 0
A_3	100-20 = 80	150-140 = 10	100-80 = 20

Considering the values in regret matrix, first we need to calculate maximum values of each row and then calculate the minimum values from these maximum values.

Table 9: Regret Matrix (Hypothetical Example)

	S_1	S_2	S_3	Max
A_1	0	0	60	60
A_2	50	30	0	**50**
A_3	80	10	20	80

As seen from Table 9, a regret full person chooses A_2.

Probabilistic Uncertainty says that decision maker knows the probability of occurrence for each possible outcome and in short it is an attempt to maximize the expected reward. In other words,

Table 10: Probabilistic Uncertainty (Hypothetical Example)

	S_1	S_2	S_3
A_1	**100**	**150**	**40**
A_2	50	120	100
A_3	20	140	80

These were the fundamentals of decision theory through we can easily understand the steps and basics of decision-making. When student apply or intend to apply to study abroad, he should have done proper research work on where he is planning to study. Which country he is going to study? What are the after study opportunities for internationals students there? Does he check the other possible universities of the destination country?

There are lots of factors we have discussed in our previous chapter which affect their decision-making process of international students. We don't have to discuss all those things again but if you relate them with the fundamentals of decision making process (DMP) you will understand the deep effect of them.

We have quite much examples for such students whose parents want them to be something else but they would be able to decide what exactly they want from life. But it is not the case of majority of unfortunate students who till death don't could not discover what they were expecting from life, what they were supposed to do or what they would like to be. It doesn't mean that they are not successful in their life but they can't be satisfied with their life like this or they cannot achieve big goals in life, they cannot be a role model, they cannot be an example because whatever they have achieved they haven't achieved with passion and love. They have achieved because they have been taught to do so and they have to do this because of some pressure.

On what basis they chose their destination countries? What are the factors that affect the decision criteria and decision process of the students? How we can market and implement new strategies to promote Study in Turkey? Study in Turkey is a potential market and more than 100.000 students are

studying in Turkey in more than 168 universities. This is obvious that for now the target market is neighboring countries and in order to expand the network of students we should work on new developments. In order to recruit students from any market, first step is to study the decision-making process of that region. What students think while making decision to study abroad? This is very important study to work on which normally most universities and countries don't count on. Reason behind is lack of knowledge and lack of experience.

There are couple of things what as a student I would keep in mind while making decision to study abroad, such as; ES, cost of education, scholarship opportunities, visa easiness, demographic realities, language restraints and most importantly after study work opportunities. These are the basic thinking which all the students keep in mind while making decision to study abroad. We will see the true picture of Turkey in order to implement changes and see what we can do more to attract more students and how we can satisfy the current students. Turkey has achieved a milestone in order to promote Study in Turkey label and lot more to achieve.

CONCLUSION

Currently more than 140,000 internationals are studying at Turkey Higher Education Institutions. (2019, Yekta Saraç) Although international students' population in Turkey is increasing year by year, it is still not enough to fulfil Turkey potential. By thinking advantages of our countries we should pay attention to some of the main dis advantages for international students may live. One of the main study about in this area is examined the factors related to the level of psychological distress among international students. Main findings revealed that life satisfaction, integration to social life in Turkey, length of stay in Turkey, and Turkish language proficiency were significant predictors of psychological distress levels of international students studying in Turkey (Cetinkaya, 2011). Another important qualitative study about the reasons on international students to choose Turkey for studying higher education. It was found that pull factors such as cultural, historical, religious and ethnic affinities seem to be very influential for international students' choice of Turkey (Özoğlu ve vd, 2015). By thinking from this side, we should emphasize this important factors to explain ourselves.

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