



**EXPECTATIONS OF THAI UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS ON FUTURE EMPLOYABILITY BASED ON
THEIR TOEIC SCORE: EVIDENCE FROM A HUMAN
RESOURCE PERSPECTIVE**

BY

MS. NATYAPORN SITTISUWAN

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2019
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ENTITLED

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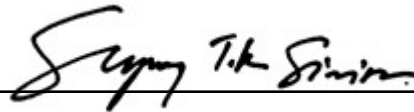
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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to find out: 1) how can Thai undergraduate students' TOEIC score affect their expectations towards future employability and 2) the reasons for Thai undergraduate students to choose TOEIC for English proficiency testing and for employers to use it for recruitment purposes. The respondents of the study were 200 undergraduate students from Walailak University, Thailand, and 10 different companies' HR departments. The participants responded through a questionnaire and their responses are analyzed and presented in this study qualitatively. The results of the study are: 1) Thai undergraduates recognize the potential dependability of their future employment on their TOEIC test scores as most companies are found to be using the TOEIC test as one of the employment requirements and most of them are in need of English speaking employees, and 2) the reason for choosing TOEIC by both students and employers is because of the simplicity of TOEIC compared with the other English proficiency tests.

Keywords: TOEIC test, expectation, employability.

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Miss Natyaporn Sittisuwan

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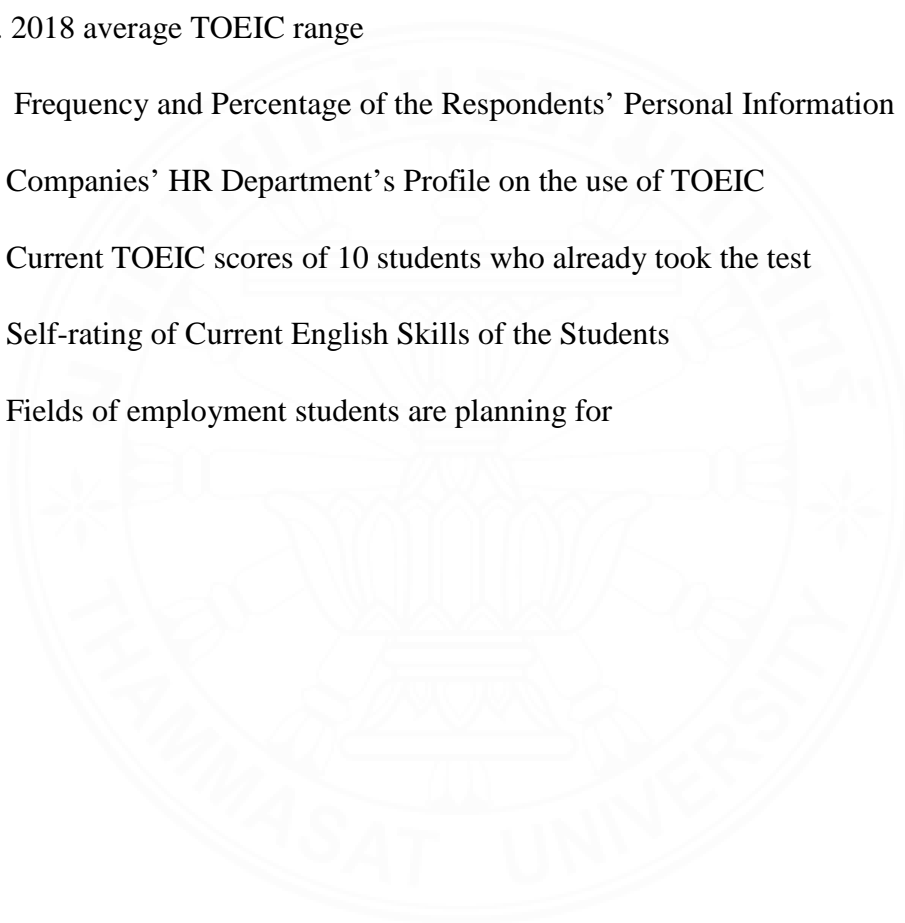
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Symbols/Abbreviations	Terms
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
OPI	Oral Proficiency Interview
OPIC	Oral Proficiency Interview by Computer
CAE	Cambridge Advanced English
CU-TEP	Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency
TU-GET	Thammasat University General English Test
HR	Human Resources (person)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 History of English Language in Thailand

English became acquainted with Southeast Asia together with the development of the British frontier empire in the area. The Straits Settlements including Penang, Singapore, and Malacca, were used for territorial exchange focuses of the British East India Company in 1786, 1819, and 1824 respectively (Crystal, 2003). In Thailand, English was known to the nation by the eighteenth century, brought by the European Empire which aimed to approach the regional kings for the countries' wealth in farming production, as well as natural resources (Chris Baker, Pasuk Phongpaichit, 2009).

Moreover, Thais encountered the impact of English through the Protestant preachers from the US who landed in the reign of King Rama III (1824-1851) in the 1830's (Phongsakorn Methitham, Pisarn Bee Chamcharatsri, 2011). Nevertheless, Protestant preachers' lack of success pushed them to divert their course into making a few commitments in Thai instruction, with the presentation of a primary printing machine and Thai current affairs innovation with the introduction of the principal Thai newspaper. These innovations won King Rama's assurance and approval with the belief that these were essential assets to win over the country's regional and global competitors. English then was recognized in parts of Thai society.

The goal of pursuing education in Europe and America had become prevalent during the years between 1893-1931 for wealthier members of Thai society. This meant English came to be accepted in Thai society and education. Since 1895, English had been proposed as a compulsory subject, instead of being an elective subject, in a primary and secondary schools (Phongsakorn Methitham, Pisarn Bee Chamcharatsri, 2011), as detailed in table 1. The growing number of westerners in the country made the knowledge of English essential.

This setup changed in 1921 as English became a compulsory subject for students from fifth grade and above. The perception towards the availability of English language teaching, being limited to certain groups or elites, changed to the universal need of all Thai children to learn the foreign language. The aim of making English language learning more accessible to everyone was to develop the children's English language skills in a classroom context and to produce modern thinkers for the benefit of the country. (Aksornkool, 1981). Also, the rapid growth in international business and tourism made Thai graduates want to acquire English as their first foreign language to succeed in job application, work, and study performance.

Table 1 A brief history of English in Thailand

Year	Events
1800	English was first introduced to Thailand
1830	Missionaries attempted to convert Thais from Buddhism to Christianity and distributed English language in Thailand
1895	English became an optional subject in secondary school.
1909	English was studied in primary schools
1921	English became a mandatory subject in all government schools beyond Grade 4
1980	English became the preferred first foreign language
1996	The revised version of English language curriculum was introduced

(Source: (Waluyo, Thai First-year University Students' English Proficiency on CEFR Levels, 2019))

1.2 English Proficiency in Thailand

In today's world, English demonstrates a strong network effect: the more people use it, the more useful it becomes (EPI, 2019) English proficiency in Thailand is not a strong point. Based on the annual English Proficiency Index developed by EF Education First World Education Society, the English proficiency level of the Thai people, in comparison to other countries, has been declining for three consecutive years now.

Global Ranking of Countries and Regions

● Very high	● High	● Moderate	● Low	● Very low
01 Netherlands	15 Hungary	30 Costa Rica	47 Belarus	70 U.A.E.
02 Sweden	16 Romania	31 France	48 Russia	71 Bangladesh
03 Norway	17 Serbia	32 Latvia	49 Ukraine	72 Maldives
04 Denmark	18 Kenya	33 Hong Kong, China	50 Albania	73 Venezuela
05 Singapore	19 Switzerland	34 India	51 Bolivia	74 Thailand
06 South Africa	20 Philippines	35 Spain	52 Vietnam	75 Jordan
07 Finland	21 Lithuania	36 Italy	53 Japan	76 Morocco
08 Austria	22 Greece	37 South Korea	54 Pakistan	77 Egypt
09 Luxembourg	23 Czech Republic	38 Taiwan, China	55 Bahrain	78 Sri Lanka
10 Germany	24 Bulgaria	39 Uruguay	56 Georgia	79 Turkey
11 Poland	25 Slovakia	40 China	57 Honduras	80 Qatar
12 Portugal	26 Malaysia	41 Macau, China	58 Peru	81 Ecuador
13 Belgium	27 Argentina	42 Chile	59 Brazil	82 Syria
14 Croatia	28 Estonia	43 Cuba	60 El Salvador	83 Cameroon
	29 Nigeria	44 Dominican Republic	61 Indonesia	84 Kuwait
		45 Paraguay	62 Nicaragua	85 Azerbaijan
		46 Guatemala	63 Ethiopia	86 Myanmar
			64 Panama	87 Sudan
			65 Tunisia	88 Mongolia
			66 Nepal	89 Afghanistan
			67 Mexico	90 Algeria
			68 Colombia	91 Angola
			69 Iran	92 Oman
				93 Kazakhstan
				94 Cambodia
				95 Uzbekistan
				96 Ivory Coast
				97 Iraq
				98 Saudi Arabia
				99 Kyrgyzstan
				100 Libya

Figure 1: Global Ranking of Countries and Regions

Proficiency trend

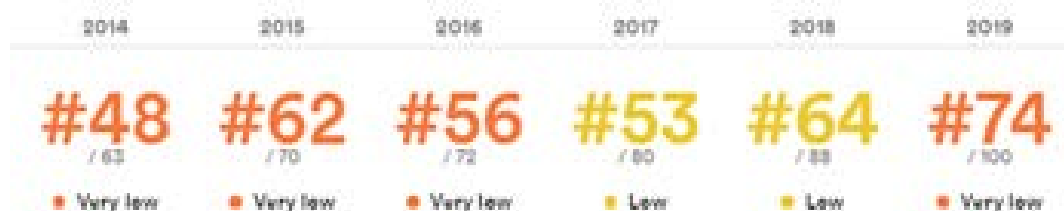


Figure 2: English Proficiency Trend (Source: www.ef.com/epi)

The report shows that Thailand is the 74th out of 100 countries with a 10 point drop compared to 2018. In 2019, Thailand scored 47.61, which is regarded as very low proficiency (EPI, 2019), while in 2018, Thailand scored 48.54, considered “low” competence. Thailand had the third lowest score in Southeast Asia, behind Indonesia but ahead of Myanmar and Cambodia, and ranked 17th out of 25 countries in Asia, showing the persistence of one of the key competitive weaknesses of the Thai economy. Poor English skills indicate the small base of competent adult English speakers necessary for a globalized workforce. “Comparison of countries with their neighbors, trading partners and rivals provides a fascinating study in divergent national priorities and educational policies worldwide,” Christopher McCormick, head of EF’s Academic Affairs and Research Network has said (Nation, 2019)

Therefore, in order to enhance employability, this study explores the impact of English Test Scores in the HR perspective. Test scores might be different from those in exams to check student’s understanding after finishing their courses, but they should emphasize the strengths or weaknesses of the students. Thus, the English Proficiency Index does not only have a great impact in education, but it also has a significant impact on business, as well as job employability. Knowing their own weaknesses, students can improve their skills to meet the requirements of the courses that they study, and for those who are seeking for a job improvement, it can lead them to the career that is most suitable for their skills. In this case, an English international test score, or the English Proficiency Score, will show students their own ability in every English skill.

1.3 English Proficiency Tests for Undergraduate Students

There are numbers of English proficiency tests available for undergraduate students, used for different purposes. The English proficiency tests for education differ to English proficiency exams for specific work or immigration. Different exams meet different needs. Here are some of them:

- 1) Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS) are both applicable for the use of applying to study at institutions located in a country with English as its first language, and for taking courses with content written using the English language. IELTS is also offered in a non-

academic version, but this is not frequently used compared with its academic version. Meanwhile, TOEFL is the most widely used academic English Test but its perceived inaccuracy in testing English levels causes other countries like UK to prefer IELTS (WIL, 2019).

2) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and Oral Proficiency Interview by Computer (OPIC) tests the fluency of the takers when it comes to English speaking. It is commonly preferred to be used for business or to test the English speaking skills of English teachers (WIL, 2019).

3) Cambridge Advanced English (CAE) is backed by teaching and research from Cambridge University and is aligned with the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) for an international standard for describing language ability (AECC Global, 2019).

4) Pearson Test of English (PTE) is a computer-based English language proficiency test aimed at non-native speakers of English looking to study abroad. It tests writing, reading, listening and speaking (AECC Global, 2019).

5) Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) examines the English communications skills of takers and it is preferred by companies in hiring new employees as it emphasizes business English. It is necessary to assess the applicants' capability to communicate with English-speaking clients and colleagues. As TOEIC test results are valid for two years, individuals often take the exam once every two years when employers require them to do so (WIL, 2019).

From the different types of English proficiency exams available for undergraduate students, this study focuses on TOEIC test as the subject of the study is Thai undergraduate students and their TOEIC test score's relation to their future employability.

1.4 Importance of English Tests

1.4.1 Global issue

Over the decades, the increasing use of English as an international language has been significantly developing in many fields around the world. This means that English standardized testing has been used in companies and institutions. They employ the English Proficiency (Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)) as requirements in the job recruitment process for international business, or even local business, which require English as one of the communication languages, and for exchange and scholarship programs, both overseas and in the international programs in the home country. The use of the English Test Score (TOEFL) has been implemented to measure the English-language ability of people who do not speak English as their first language and those who plan to study at international colleges and universities, either as undergraduate or graduate students (Deborah, 2003). Also, some people need to apply for a job which requires an English test score. Nowadays, English becomes a language for globalization, so it is not only important in class, but it is also important in the workforce. In recent years, there has been a growing concern for national standards of educational achievement in a competitive global economy. This concern has been reflected in tertiary foundations; the utilization of the English Proficiency Test as the graduation requirement has been considered. To reach the market needed, the universities need to ensure higher standards of English proficiency among students graduating from each country.

1.4.2 National Issue

Some Thai students never got the chance to study English in the past, but nowadays, English has a great impact in all aspects of both education and work. Furthermore, it can be said that taking an English test score can provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their language skills. In addition to this, they should also be aware that they can identify weaknesses and focus on the skills that they need to improve.

In order to improve and reach the goals in English, Thai institutions have developed their own standards of evaluation, and assessments such as the Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency (CU-TEP) and the Thammasat University

General English Test (TU-GET), are mostly benchmarked with one of the international standards. There is rarely continuation of the standards at the national levels. Learners' and users' abilities in English, therefore, are gauged by a variety of standards and criteria used to measure the English ability of a number of professionals using four standards such as understanding, interpreting, spoken, and written language on a work topic (Hiranburana, 2017).

For high school students in Thailand, they need a Thai National and English Proficiency Score to enroll for their undergraduate programs. For the students from undergraduate programs, they are required to have those scores in order to enroll for their graduate programs or even to apply for a job.

1.4.3 Employment opportunity

Having a good English test score, students have more chance to work in a good company and it will be easy to find a job in different countries. The English Proficiency Score has been considered as one of the most important criteria for employee recruitment, and it leads to employment opportunities. Low English proficiency will impact on future possibilities in career where English plays an importance role and is required in the workplace. The ability to use English efficiently is very much required to remain employable because English is the most commonly used language in the corporate world and the skill to speak and write in English is considered to be essential in the recruitment process because companies need people who can express information in both oral and written form. Therefore, an English test score is the first important key to future employability because those tests can encourage students to develop or improve their skills to meet the requirements of the job that they want to apply for.

1.5 Research Gap

Research on this topic has not been explored extensively in the academic literature world, especially in Thailand. Most of the research that has looked at English proficiency among Thai students mainly focuses on how students can improve their English skills, and which tools teachers can use to motivate learners and enlighten learners about the importance of English. To analyze the effects of TOEIC score on future employability, there is only a few researchers who have explored this issue.

Therefore, the existing literature gap is covered in this research to provide understanding and analysis of the English test score in the Thai context.

1.6 The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)

The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) is recognized as an international standardized exam to assess the English language proficiency of non-native speakers. It is purposively structured to test and interpret the daily conversational English skill of people that are working in an international context.

There are two distinct TOIEC exam formats which vary in structure and purpose. First, the TOEIC Listening and Reading Test aims to measure the comprehension skills through the use of two equally graded tests with the highest possible score of 990. Then, there is also the TOEIC Speaking and Writing Tests comprised of test instructions to evaluate the test takers' accuracy when it comes to pronunciation, intonation and stress, vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, relevance of content and completeness of content. The TOEIC writing test is structured with activities to evaluate grammar, relevance of sentences to the pictures, quality and variety of sentences, vocabulary, organization, and whether opinion is supported with reason and/or examples. Both evaluations use a scoring scale of 0-200(ETS).

1.7 TOEIC in Thailand

The TOEIC test is also available for takers within Thailand. It is facilitated by the Center of Professional Assessment from Mondays through Saturdays at 9:00AM and 1:00PM (local time). Two types of tests are administered to evaluate the listening comprehension and reading comprehension of the examinees. There is a total of 200 questions with 100 questions with multiple choices for both type of exam and should be answered within the two-hour time limit. Independent marks are given to both the listening test and reading test using a scale of 5 to 495 points. In total, the examinee can get a minimum score of 10 points up to a maximum of 990 points ((TCiAP), n.d.)

1.8 Problem Statement

TOEIC is a widely used English proficiency testing in Thailand, in terms of recruitment process, by HR departments for employment. Since TOEIC is important in employability of the graduates, they should take a TOEIC test. This study is attempting to investigate how Thai undergraduate students' TOEIC score affects their

expectations towards future employability and why both students and employers tend to choose the TOEIC test. This is the problem addressed by this study.

1.9 Objectives of the study

The aims of this study are as follow;

- 1.9.1 To find out the expectations of Thai undergraduate students on future employability based on their TOEIC test score.
- 1.9.2 To analyze the reasons for choice of the TOEIC test by Thai undergraduate students for English proficiency testing and by their potential employers in the recruitment process.

1.10 Research Questions

The importance of English proficiency in work and vocational advancement has brought about Thai graduates wanting to be outfitted with a perceived capability of English proficiency. There are limited studies of empirical evidence on the impact of English test scores on employability of college graduates and to guide students to achieve their preferred future employment.

- 1.10.1 How does Thai undergraduate students TOEIC score affect their expectations towards future employability?
- 1.10.2 Why Thai undergraduate students and employees prefer TOEIC Test for English Proficiency testing and recruitment purposes?

1.11 Definitions of Terms

They key terms used in this study are defined as below:

1. Expectation: the feeling that good things are going to happen in the future (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).
2. Employability: the skills and abilities that allow you to be employed (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.)
3. TOEIC test: Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) is an assessment designed to measure English communication skills and is commonly used by business (WIL, 2019).

1.12 Significance of the Study

Since it is generally known that TOEIC is widely used by Thai employers in their employees' recruitment process, Thai undergraduates will be able to set expectations and prepare to meet the requirements for a better chance of employment after graduation.



CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The different English proficiency tests have different purposes and they have significant differences on the models and applicability. Below are the literature reviews of different kinds of tests including standardized tests. The focus is on the TOEIC test as it is the subject of this study.

2.1 Defining English Test Score

2.1.1 Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a test to quantify the English language competency of non-native speakers who wish to apply for universities that use English as the speaking-language. TOEFL is one of the two most important English-language tests in the world; IELTS is the other one. TOEFL was first established by the National Council on the Testing of English as a Foreign Language. Instructors and administration officials designed it in 1962 in order to generate an English-language assessment for students worldwide who desire to continue their studies at universities in the United States. The Ford and Danforth Foundations granted funding to support the council. TOEFL was first offered to students in 1964 and was initially administered by the Modern Language Association, an organization established in 1883 to promote the study of language and literature (Mahattan Review, n.d.). The TOEFL presently has two versions: the internet-based test (IBT) and the paper-based test (PBT). Both versions comprise of reading, writing, speaking, and listening sections.

2.1.2 International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

Cambridge English Language Assessment and the British Council launched IELTS in 1980. The format of IELTS replicated changes in language learning and teaching, including the growth in ‘communicative’ language learning and ‘English for specific purposes’. Test tasks were intended to reflect the use of language in the ‘real world’ (Mandyam, n.d.). IELTS is the world’s most popular English language proficiency test for those who want to enroll in universities or to apply for a job. IELTS

is divided into two versions, IELTS Academic and IELTS General Training. Both versions were designed to measure the ability of test takers. The academic version was created for test takers who want to use the score to enroll in courses in English-speaking countries. The General Training version is for test takers who need to apply for a job in English-speaking countries or in an international company.

2.1.3 Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)

The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) originated from the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry and it was developed by the Educational Testing Service in the middle 1970's (Gilfert, 1996) . It is purposefully intended to quantify the ordinary English skills of people working in an international environment (Wilson, 1993) . TOEIC is a multiple-choice test of English language proficiency for non-native speakers. It consists of two sections: Listening Comprehension and Reading. Separate scaled scores are provided for each section of TOEIC. The TOEIC test provides great benefits to individuals, schools, and companies. It offers an objective assessment of English language proficiency, a measurable standard of performance recognized around the world. For individual test-takers, TOEIC tests are required in order to apply for new positions and monitor their improvements in English. Schools use the TOEIC test to test language learning levels of the students and determine the progress of English language students, along with evaluating the effectiveness of their programs. Companies use a TOEIC test to recruit and promote employees.

English has become a globalization language which has a great impact in business and education in Thailand. Certainly, English has been set as one of the most significant qualifications for employee recruitment. TOEIC is very useful as a tool to recruit employees and motivate student's awareness of how business operates worldwide (Yi Ching Pan, 2017) . TOEIC is one of the reliable tests of English proficiency among the four most recognized English tests: TOEIC, CEFR, TOEFL, and IELTS. The TOEIC test is designed for non-native speakers English. It is focused on English skills which are required and impact directly in an international working

environment. There are many jobs in Thailand that uses TOEIC as one of the most important criteria in hiring new employees (Table 1).

Table 2 *Range of TOEIC scores needed in order to apply for a position in local and international companies in Thailand.*

Standards score requirement	Job positions
300-400	Waiter and Waitress in the hotel, Room Service Agent, Operator, Information Officer at the airport.
500	Maintenance Engineer.
550	Customer Service Agent, Government Officer
600	Flight Attendant, Sales Manager
650-750	Accounting Officer, Sales Coordinator, Logistic Engineer, Customer Service Manager, IT Business Application Consultant
800	Senior Accountant, General Manager, Executive Secretary, IT Platform Engineer, Legal Counsel, HR Analyst

Source: (Puengpipattrakul, Chiramanee, & Sripetpun, 2007)

Based on the 2018 TOEIC test score results, Thailand is in the low level of English proficiency. Thai test takers received a low-level score when compared with test takers from other Asian countries such as Korea, Malaysia, India, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Japan. English proficiency is currently a significant problem for Thai students in the college level in order to reach the requirement for recruitment in any given position.

Table 3 *2018 average TOEIC range*

Country	Average range (Total score is 990)
1. Korea	673
2. Malaysia	649
3. India	609

4. China	578
5. Taiwan	554
6. Hong Kong	540
7. Vietnam	533
8. Japan	520
9. Thailand	478
10. Indonesia	464

Source: (2018 Report on Test Takers Worldwide, 2019)

According to Table 3, the average range of Thai TOEIC test takers in 2018 was 478, which was at the ninth place among 10 Asian countries. The average range shown means that Thailand was classified in the low level of English proficiency. Moreover, the TOEIC score range of Thai test takers only reaches the requirements for some positions such as the waiter and waitress in the hotel, room service agent, operator, or information officer at the airport (Table 2). Hence, because English proficiency is very significant in employability, Thailand must take serious action in order to develop Thai college level graduate students' English proficiency in various career scenarios because many jobs requires more ability to communicate in English, especially in the companies where English is an essential language.

2.2 English Proficiency and employability

English at the workplace is vital when the business operations are carried out in a multilingual context. (Durga M. V., 2018). The use of English varies between certain contexts such as the workplace or just for general conversation. Each industry requires different communications tools or even language structure. For example, there are reports unique to a specific domain or methods required to communicate to the customers based on corporate policy. Based on this scenario, it is more effective to carry out a workplace English course with the use of materials from the workplace itself. Currently, employees undergo an English training program conducted by their own employers in order to achieve the company goals and help the employees with their career growth. This is due to prevalent use of the English language in the corporate

industry and the recognition of English language skills as an asset for a higher level of employability.

According to a study in the Australian job market context (Mohammad Moninoor Roshid, 2013), language skills play a major role in in the labor market, specifically during the recruitment process. It was concluded that individual English language skills have a significant impact on the probability of employment and quality of job in terms of security and preferability. Aside from this, English performs its part in building social networks through social interaction that could determine “better” job opportunities for migrant communities.

2.3 English in Thai Workplace

A study by Kulaporn Hiranburana found out that the use of email as a medium for the use of written English is more common among Thai business people in comparison to the usage of spoken English. Additionally, this medium possesses features similar with spoken English. According to the results of the study, Thai business participants more frequently uses English in writing memos (66%), attending meetings (65.3%), and writing reports (63.9%). Moreover, other studies analyzed the perceived issues in other job professions when it comes to the usage of the English language and it was found out that Thai employees, for example, cabin crew and bank employees, encounter problems in terms of speaking and listening caused by barriers like accents of individuals influenced by their home countries. (Hiranburana, Use of English in the Thai workplace, 2017).

2.4 Relevant Research Studies

Waluyo (2019) conducted a study that investigated the adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) for English teaching and learning growth among European countries. There is no such research that has been conducted on English proficiency and CEFR with a specific focus on any country or region. Waluyo intended to close that gap by studying English proficiency of Thai EFL learners on CEFR levels. The study assessed students’ English proficiency levels by using a university standardized test named “Walailak University - Test of

English Proficiency (WU-TEP) framed by CEFR and Classical Test Theory (CTT). The results showed that the CEFR level of students were at the basic levels (A1 and A2). Those levels are equal to the English competence of primary and junior high school students in the Thai education system, while their skills should be at the levels of 'Independent Users' of English.

Mary Ellis (2013) conducted a study that considered the writing proficiency levels of graduating teachers as measured by their IELTS scores. IELTS comprises of 4 skills section: speaking, reading, listening and writing. The results of the study showed that students received the lowest score in the writing section. This indicated that writing skill needs further development because it is an important skill.

From both studies discussed, it was shown that there are many ways of evaluating the English proficiency skill. Hence, this present research will be focused on using the TOEIC score as our key factor in order to ascertain the results.

The study is not only focused on how English test scores can be evaluated, but also to examine and analyze how an English test score impacts and relates to future employability of the college student from Walailak University in Nakhon Si Thammarat.

There are many studies that have examined how English proficiency is related to employment. (Durga, 2018) conducted a study about the need of English language skills for employment opportunities. *“As a multinational company we have business around the world. Employees with a good standard of English can connect and communicate with each other effectively, since everyone speaks the same common language, Chloe Gan HR Director, Arvato Systems, Malaysia”* The study mentioned stated the importance of English in the modern world.

Zenyka Viedeyona Zebedeus (2020) examined the impact of English language proficiency on the recruitment and selection process. The data collection of the study were questionnaires and interviews administered to the human resources manager of

the company. The result of the study showed that English language proficiency has a positive impact on both recruitment and selection.

Roshid (2013) explored the relationship between English language proficiency and employment in the Australian job market. The study aimed to understand the significant role of English language skills of university students in defining their job opportunities and career prospects in Australia. The results of the study came out that English language skills influence scenarios of employment in order for students to get a better job.

Shobikah (2017), conducted a study on the topic of the importance of English language in facing the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The study aimed to develop the understanding of the students and workers about the importance of English language in both skills - writing and speaking - and to prepare students and workers to be ready to compete with the others in ASEAN countries in finding a job that requires those two skills. From the results of the study mentioned, it was found out that English is an important language which is the most widely used by many countries around the world.

According to the relevant studies about English test scores and the relation between English proficiency and career prospects, English plays a significant role in employability. There are not many previous studies that have analyzed English test scores or the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) for Thai college level graduates to enhance future employability.

Some related research which is well known in Thailand literature explored the challenge faced by Thai graduates and their potential for an English-Required workforce (Puengpipattrakul, Chiramanee, & Sripetpun, 2007). The study examined the subjects' English proficiency measured by TOEIC scores which are required for most positions in the Thai workforce. The findings revealed the average range of TOEIC and English Proficiency, classified as an "intermediate" level (462 out of 990

score) with limited career prospects for Thai employability where English is required as the communication language.

Another study from (Yi Ching Pan, 2017) investigated the use of TOEIC as the exit exam which may impact with the future employment at a technological university in Taiwan. The findings disclosed that students are able to perform the English skills required for the workplace as reported by the participants of this study; alumni and employers. Therefore, the TOEIC test showed that an English proficiency test is related to job recruitment. However, the researcher said that the test only focused on the test preparation and four English skills but did not focus much on helping students to acquire skills such as the oral communication required at work.

However, these two studies did not clarify the importance of TOEIC and how TOEIC has a significant impact on students future employability. Therefore, the existing literature gap will be covered in this research, providing an understanding of, and analyzing, the English test scores in the Thai context. The present study will pioneer research in English test scores for college level graduates to enhance their future employability and analyze the impact of an English test score for potential employability.

From the studies mentioned above by many scholars, it is expected that TOEIC test scores can possibly influence the future employability of Thai undergraduate students; not only the prospective employability, but also several aspects of employment, such as levels of earnings and career developments of employees, as well as employers' success, are influenced.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research method employed in this study. The research method is categorized in four parts:

- 3.1 Research Design
- 3.2 Research Context
- 3.3 Participants
- 3.4 Research Instrument

The detailed description of the methodology is provided below.

3.1 Research Design

The research is designed using the HR perspective on employability of the undergraduates in the future, based on their TOEIC test score. Since the human resources department is the responsible section regarding recruitment process of the employees in the service sector or industry, they have key effects on screening the job applicants' English proficiency recruitment. Also, university English courses for the undergraduates have potential influence on the preparation for TOEIC tests and the score afterward.

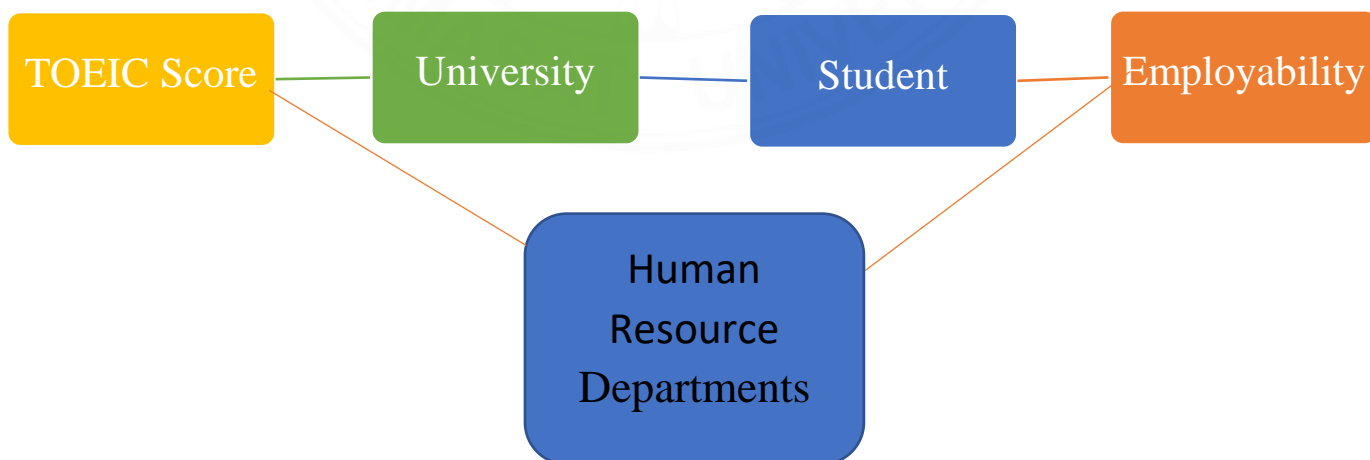


Figure 3: Research Design

3.2 Research Context

3.2.1 Human Resource Departments

This study will collect the information from human resource departments from the industrial sector because nowadays there are many companies in Thailand which require English speaking employees. They have been using a TOEIC test score as one of the requirements for applicants to join their business.

3.2.2 Thai Undergraduate Students

The 4th year students are the key factor of this study because after their graduation, they are about to face the real-life situation, which is the job hunting. They have to work in order to earn and use their capability. Normally, job experience is required in applying for any position, but the newly graduated students do not have any experience. Therefore, an English test score and their GPA are required. This research selects the university leaver as the sample because after their graduation, they are going to enter employment with the support of their TOEIC Score. This is significant in the analysis of the TOEIC score's impacts in the employability of the fresh graduates.

3.3 Participants

In order to provide appropriate answer to the research questions, this study explores two most important participants namely:

A group of population comprised of employers whose company requires a TOEIC score in order to recruit the employees. In this study, the information will be collected from 10 different companies in Thailand who have as one of the important criteria for recruitment a satisfactory TOEIC score.. The participants are HR departments of those 10 companies.

Another group of the population is the third- and fourth-year university students of Walailak University, Nakhon Si Thammarat. The total number of students was 3,456, out of which 1,640 s were third-year students, and 1,816 were fourth-year students. 200 students from Walailak University accepted an invitation to take part in the questionnaire survey. This number of the population is a sufficient sample to reflect all the students from the Walailak University's graduate level study programs.

3.4 Research Instrument

3.4.1 Questionnaire Survey

In order to collect information from both employers and students, a pre-designed questionnaire was used in this research. The questionnaire was different for employers and students. However, both sets of questionnaires contained 3 sections. The first section of the questionnaire collected relevant personal information of the participants, the second section collected the responses necessary to answer the research questions, and third section was to gather opinions from both employers and students.

The questionnaire was designed in consultation with the English language instructors from the Walailak University Language Institute (WULI) and were distributed among 10 students from Walailak University International College (WUIC). The results from the pre-survey came to be in line with the later full survey .

The items of the questionnaire instrument:

- I. Personal/General Information Questions Section**
- II. Responsive Questions Section**
- III. Opinion Questions Section**

Instruction: Please type your information and responses or choose from the options as the question indicates.

Questionnaire to Employers

Personal Information

- a) Name of your Company (will be kept anonymous)

Response Section

- a) What is the minimum TOEIC score to enter your company?
- b) Why do you choose to use TOEIC in your recruitment process?
- c) How long have you been using TOEIC as the criteria?
- d) Are TOEIC takers the main applicants for your company's vacancies?
- e) Do you need more English-speaking graduates as your future employees?

Opinion Section

- a) How satisfied are you from your current employees' TOEIC score and their performance?
- b) Beside TOEIC score, what do you expect from your prospective applicants?

Questionnaire to Students

Personal Section

- a) Name of your program
- b) Age
- c) Sex
- d) Current TOEIC Score? If you don't have one, leave it blank.

Response Section

- a) Why did you take TOEIC? If not, why are you thinking to take it? Or why don't you want to take it? Please type.
- b) Rate your current English level.
- c) Is your college English course enhancing/improving your English skills?
- d) Are you planning to look for jobs which need English?
- e) What field/industry are you looking to enter for the job?

Opinion Section

- a) Do you think your TOIEC score is important for your future employment? How? Please type.
- b) Are you preparing for other English tests? Why? Why not? Please type.

3.5 Data Collection

In this study, responses from the respondents through the pre-designed questionnaire were the main source of data to answer the research questions. The answer responses provided by the respondents provided the data to analyze the expectation and impact of TOEIC test scores among undergraduates and assess their employability in the future. Information related to students' level of English and employers' requirements to employ graduates are important in the analysis of necessary curriculum to be modified to meet the needs and requirement of both students and employers.

3.6 Data Analysis

The information collected from the questionnaire with both students and employers was analyzed qualitatively. To examine the impacts of TOEIC score in college level graduates and their potential place in the future job market, answers from

the students were compared to the answers from the employers and analyzed in a qualitative format as mentioned below:

- Content analysis: the general information and responses were represented in graphical form, i.e. pie charts, and then summarized in content by themes.
- Narrative analysis: the opinions were analyzed descriptively with an overall summarization of each question.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results from the questionnaires that were provided to the students and HR departments of the companies participating in this study. The results are divided into three main parts which are: 1) general information, 2) response questions, 3) opinion questions.

4.1 Respondent's General Information of the undergraduates and employers

General information of the respondents includes study program, sex, age, and have respondents ever taken a TOEIC test. Table 4.1 presents frequency and percentage of the respondents' personal information.

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage of the Respondents' Personal Information

School	Frequency	Percentage
Science	10	5
Informatics	10	5
Liberal Arts	10	5
Architecture and Design	10	5
Management	55	27.5
Engineering and Technology	105	52.5
Total	200	100

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	64	32
Female	136	68
Total	200	100

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
20-30 Years	200	100
Total	200	100

TOEIC Test	Frequency	Percentage
Taken	10	10
Not taken yet	190	90
Total	200	100

According to Table 4, over 52.5% of respondents were students from the School of Engineering and Technology (105 respondents), 27.5% of respondents were students from the School of Management (55 respondents), while there were 5% from the School of Science (10 respondents), 5% from the School of Informatics (10 respondents), 5% from the School of Liberal Arts (10 respondents), and 5% from the School of Architecture and Design (10 respondents). More than half of the respondents were female (136 respondents, 68%), while 32% of respondents were male (64 respondents). 100% of respondents were in the age of 20-30 years old (200 respondents). From the overall 200 respondents, only 10% had taken a TOEIC test before (10 respondents) and 90% had not taken TOEIC yet (190 respondents).

Table 5: Companies' HR Department's Profile on the use of TOEIC

S.N.	Company	Minimum TOEIC score for job application (in number)	Use of TOEIC score as requirement (in years)
1	A	400	10
2	B	400	5
3	C	450	5
4	D	500	5
5	E	350	3
6	F	400	4
7	G	550	10
8	H	400	10
9	I	350	10
10	J	500	4
Average		430	6.6

As shown in Table 5, 10 companies' HR departments responded with their minimum requirement of the TOEIC score number to apply for their jobs. The lowest was 350 and the highest was 550. 5 companies' responses show that their minimum TOEIC score is 400-450, making 50% of the companies requiring their job applicants to be the holder of TOEIC score of 400-450. The average of minimum TOEIC scores was 430. Similarly, 5 companies responded that they have been using TOEIC test scores as one of the requirements to enter their employment sectors. The average is 6.6 years for companies using TOEIC test scores.

The use of the TOEIC test in Thai job markets has been revealed in the studies such as (Narasak Sirikanjanawong, 2018). Several websites such as jobsDB.com, careerjet.co.th have more than 500 companies advertising jobs that require TOEIC test scores.

4.2 Response Sections from the Students and Employers

4.2.1 Responses from the students

This section contains the responses that were given by the students to the questions related to their English skills and their plans and expectations on future employability on the basis of their English scores.

Table 6: Current TOEIC scores of 10 students who already took the test

Student	Current TOEIC Score
I	50
II	270
II	375
IV	455
V	450
VI	450
VII	500
VIII	300
IX	150
X	399

Average	339.9
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Similarly, out of total 200 student respondents, only 10 responded that they have already taken a TOEIC test. The lowest score was 50 and the highest score was 500. Only 4 students' current TOEIC scores were above 400. The average TOEIC score is 339.9. This does not meet the minimum average TOEIC test score of the employers in this study, i.e. 430.

Table 7: Self-rating of Current English Skills of the Students

Skills	Frequency/Percentage					Mean	SD
	(5) Very High	(4) High	(3) Moderate	(2) Low	(1) Very Low		
Listening	3 (1.5%)	35 (17.5%)	122 (61%)	34 (17%)	6 (3%)	2.97	0.69
Speaking	2 (1%)	17 (8.5%)	123 (61.5%)	52 (26%)	6 (3%)	2.76	0.68
Reading	7 (3.5%)	65 (32.5%)	103 (51.5%)	22 (11%)	3 (1.5%)	3.24	0.73
Writing	3 (1.5%)	30 (15%)	105 (52.5%)	51 (25.5%)	11 (5.5%)	2.80	0.79
Total	200 (100%)					2.94	0.05

Table 7 shows the current English skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing as rated by the students themselves. The rating criteria is classified as “5” being “Very High” level of skills, “4” being “High” level of skills, “3” being “Moderate” level of skills, “2” being “Low” level of skills, and “1” being “Very Low” level of skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Most of the students were “Very Low” in writing skills (5.5%) while only 1.5% of students in reading, and 3% of students in both speaking and listening had “Very Low” skills.

Only 1.5% of the students had “Very High” skills in listening and writing. 1% students had “Very High” level of skills in speaking and 3.5% students had “Very High” level of reading skills.

The average numbers of the students showed that they are more skilled in reading (3.24) and the average numbers of the students showed that they were less skilled in speaking (2.76).

The student’s self-evaluation reflects that most of the students have moderate level of skills in all category of skills: 61% of students in listening, 61.5% of students in speaking, 51.5% of students in reading, and 52.5% of students in writing.

The moderate level of skills in reading has been found in previous study (Saengpakdeejit, 2014). The study also found that among all the students, the skills of reading were at moderate level. This study also has found that the level of reading skill is moderate, i.e. 103 out of 200 students rated themselves at moderate level.

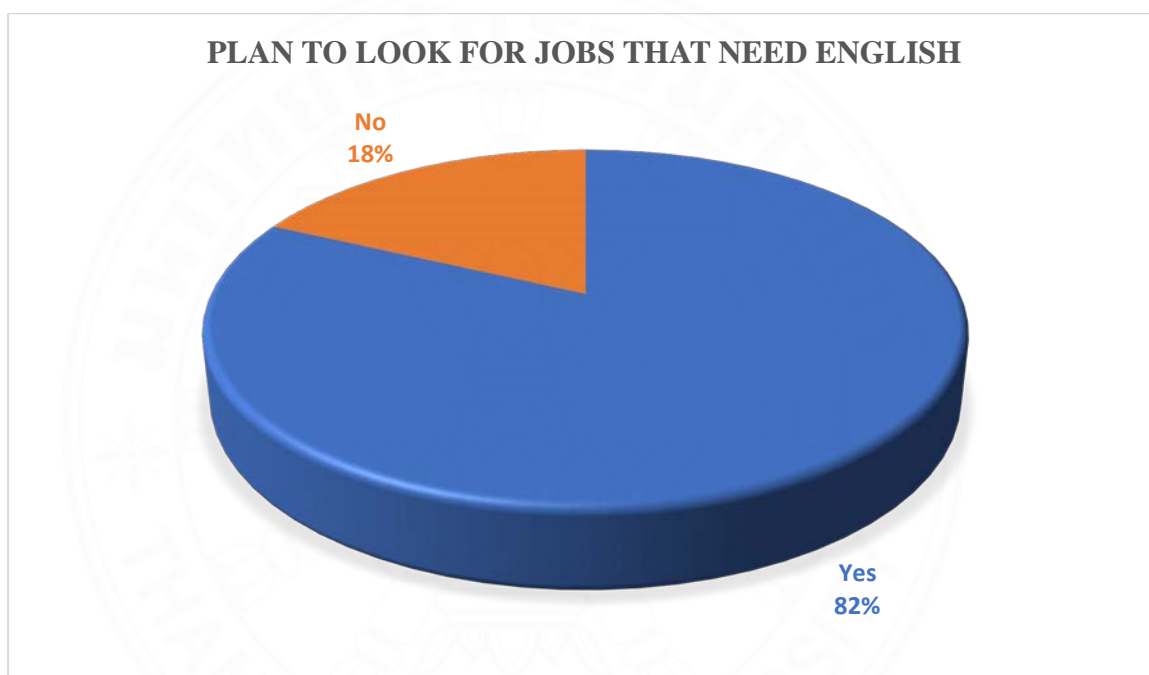
Table 8: *Field of employments students are planning for*

Field of Employment	Frequency	Percentage
Education	35	17.5
Hospitality and Tourism	5	2.5
Industrial	122	61
IT	28	14
Others	10	5
Total	200	100

Table 8 shows the job sectors in which students are interested to get employment in the future after their graduation. The industrial sector is the field in which 61% of the students were planning to apply for jobs. This is the highest number (122) of students indicating their employment. Hospitality and tourism was the area where the least number planned to seek a job, i.e. only 2.5% of the students were planning to get employed in this field.

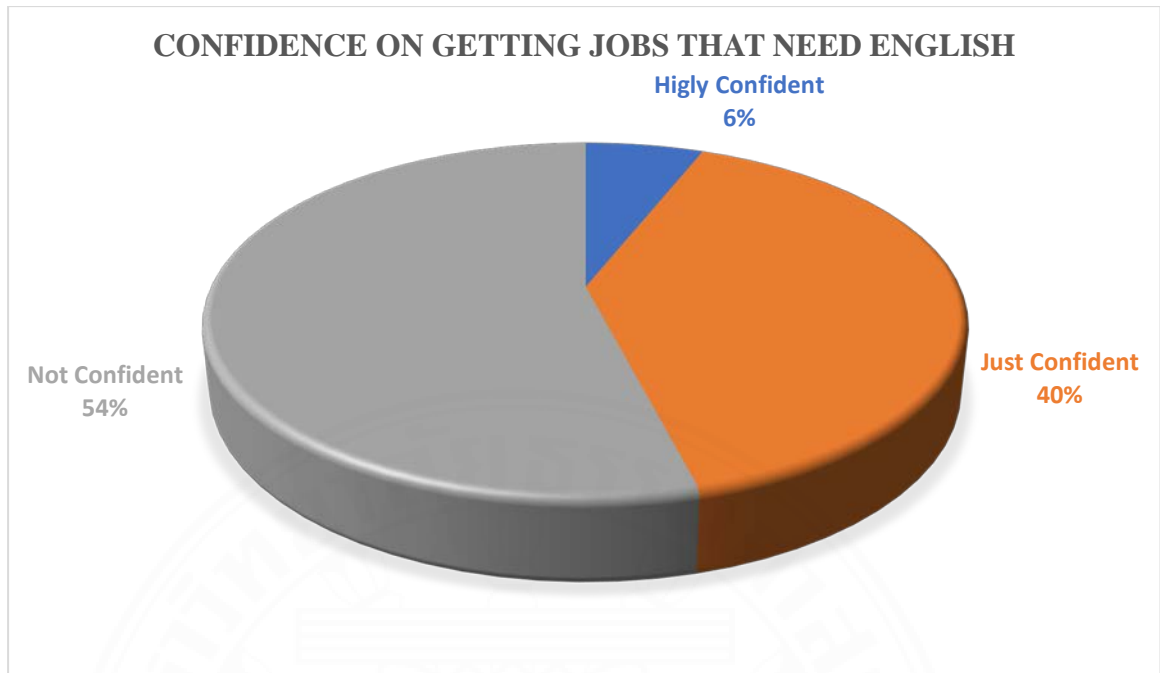
Education and IT sectors were reported with 17.5% and 14% whereas 5% of the students responded that they were planning for other sectors such as aviation and international business, for which English is one of the most important requirements. Among all, the industrial sector such as engineering and mechanical work is the biggest attraction for the students, and these also need a certain level of skills of English as found in the study of (Supang Chantavanich, 2010).

Figure 4: Students' plans for entering into the jobs that require English



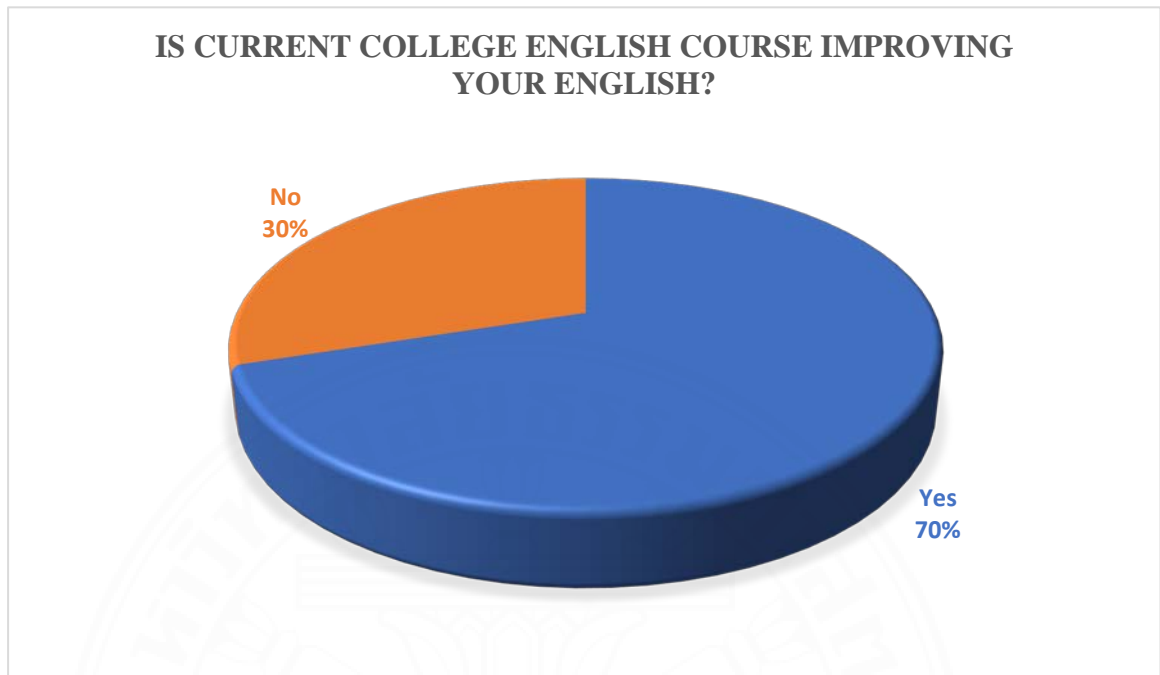
The figure shows that 82% of the students are planning to look and apply for the jobs that require English language after their graduation. Only 18% of the students responded that they would not look or apply for jobs which have English language as one of the requirements. Relatively larger number of students wanted to pursue employment in English speaking environments as revealed in the study of (Daranee Choomthong, 2015) in which students said that they have been influenced by the globalization and current trend of employments requiring English language.

Figure 5: Confidence of Students on getting jobs that require English



The figure 5 shows that only 6% of the students were highly confident of getting jobs that will require English language. 40% of the students were “just confident” whereas 54% of the students were not confident at all of getting jobs in the future that would require English language. This is because most of the students self-evaluated as being only moderately skilled in English language, and since 190 out of 200 students have not taken a TOEIC test yet, their confidence seems to be relatively low.

Figure 6: Current College English Course helping to improve Student’s English

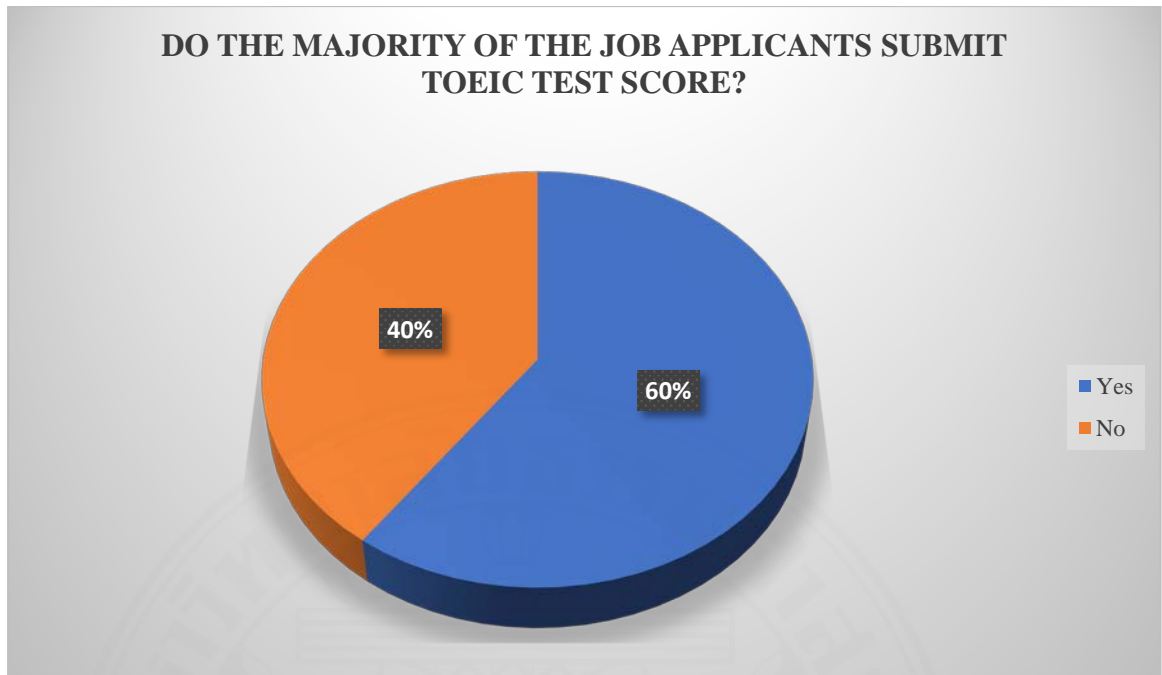


The figure 6 shows that on the question “is your current college English course improving your English?”, 70% of the students responded that their current college English course was improving their English skills whereas 30% of the students found that their current college English course was not helping to improve their English skills. Even when foreign students were satisfied with Thai universities English-taught courses, as found in the study of (Ruangkanjanases, 2015), it is obvious that the majority of these Thai students were satisfied with their university’s English courses.

4.2.2 Responses from the Employers

This section collected the responses from the HR department employers as the representatives of the companies that participated in the study. Their responses were to reflect the place of the TOEIC test in their recruitment process in fulfilling human resources needs.

Figure 7: Type of English Proficiency Test of the majority of job applicants



The figure 7 shows that 60% of the companies have experience of having TOEIC test takers as their main job applicants. 40% of companies said that not only TOEIC but other test takers, such as TOEFL and IELTS examinees, also apply for their employment.

TOEIC has been used in Thailand by the employers widely as revealed in (TOEIC, n.d.):,

Figure 8: Reason for choosing TOEIC in recruitment process



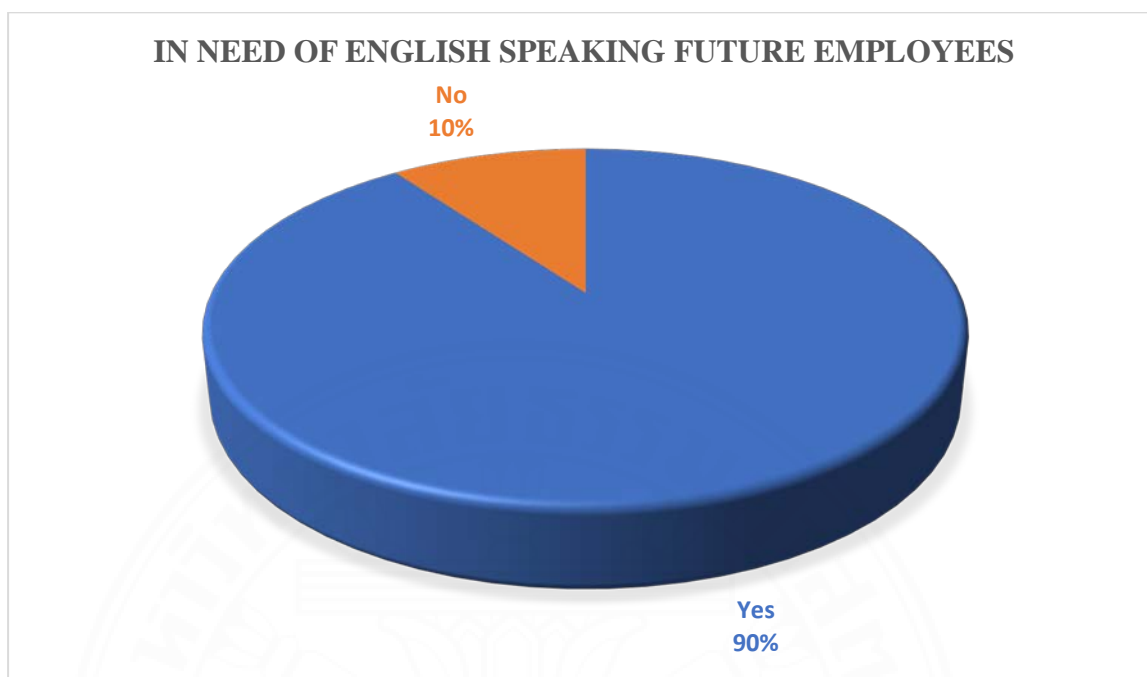
The figure 8 shows that 70% of the companies chose to use the TOEIC test as one of the entry requirements in their recruitment process in screening the job applicants because TOEIC is simple compared with other tests. 10% of companies gave the reason that TOEIC is a famous English test so they have been using it to adjust and meet their needs in human resources. 10% of the companies said that TOEIC makes their applicant screening process easier and another 10% of companies said TOEIC is comprehensive in fulfilling the English skills of their required employees. This is supported by (WIL, 2019) which says “Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) is a test of English for communication and it’s usually used for business. Companies, especially in Asia, like people to have a certain TOEIC score to prove their English is good enough to work with and understand English-speaking clients and colleagues.” Also, the study of (Puengpipattrakul W. , 2007) has revealed that TOEIC is chosen for its simplicity.

Figure 9: Expectation to get employees with strong English



The figure 9 shows that 70% of the companies have average expectation for getting future employees with strong English skills. 20% have high expectation whereas 10% of the companies have low expectation to get strongly skilled employees in English language. Interestingly, where 54 % of students (see fig 4.3.5) are not confident of getting jobs with their current level of skills, 70 % of the employers are averagely confident of getting job applicants with strong English skills. The TOEIC test score is the central role player here to reveal the reality, thus, students should be expecting to exceed the TOEIC test scores for getting jobs, with extra preparation even after their graduation.

Figure 10: In need of English speaking employees



The figure 10 shows that 90% of the companies need English speaking employees. Only 10% of the remaining companies responded they had no need of such employees. This result shows that very many employers in Thailand require English speaking employees so Thai undergraduates can expect that they have better possibilities of getting employment if they have a satisfactory TOEIC test score.

4.3 Opinion Section of the Students and Employers

4.3.1 Opinions of Students

This section summarises the collection of the opinions of the students who participated in the study. They were provided with 2 different questions.

For the first question, “Do you think your TOIEC score is important for your future employment? How? Please type.” Most of the students said that a TOEIC test score is very important for their future employment. Their reasons were: for better salary and employment opportunities, for working abroad, for their career development, and to internationalize.

Student X: *“Seek for high paid job and knowing English is a tool to communicate foreigner.”*

Student Y: *“Employer will give you a chance to work with them if you have this score.”*

Student Z: *“Nowadays, English will make our company grow wider and we can make connection with many international organizations from all around the world.”*

However, a few students responded that they did not find a TOEIC test score was important for their future employment because:

Student A: *“Not every company require TOEIC Score.”*

Student B: *“There are another test such as TOEFL, IELTS or CEFR.”*

For the second question, “Are you preparing other English tests? Why? Why not? Please type”

Only 20% said that they were preparing for other tests as well, such as IELTS and TOEFL. Their reasons vary as:

Student P: *“IELTS because is one of high quality test and if I can get a high score, it will be good for myself.”*

Student Q: *“TOEFL and IELTS because plan to continue Master degree abroad so they require those score not TOEIC score.”*

Interestingly, 80% of students reported that they are not preparing for other tests of any kind. They find that TOEIC is important and easy for getting jobs in Thailand. Their reasons were such as:

Student S: *“Because TOEIC is the easiest test and easy to prepare for the test.”*

Student T: *“TOEIC is a great standardize test and very famous in Thailand.”*

Student U: *“I want to try TOEIC first because it’s very important to apply for a job.”*

The same result has been found in the study of (Daranee Choomthong, 2015) in which students responded that English is important for them to get jobs.

4.3.2 Opinions of Employers

This section reports the collection of the opinions of the employers who participated in the study. They were provided with 2 different questions.

For the first question, “How satisfied are you with your current employees’ TOEIC score and their performance?”, most of the companies responded that they are satisfied and they don’t have particular complaints about their employees. Some of the responses were:

Company F: *“We are satisfied with the performance of our employees whose job application history shows that they took TOEIC test to apply for the job in this company. We have many other employees who had taken TOEFL as well but there is no difference in particular in between those employees who had taken TOEIC and TOEFL.”*

Company G: *“I am HR department manager and I, myself had TOEIC test to enter in this company.”*

Company H: *“This company does not require high standard of English use so for basic operation in English language, TOEIC as per our experience is the best.”*

For the second question, “Beside TOEIC score, what do you expect from your prospective applicants?”, responses varied from company to company. However, most of the companies pointed out that they look for employees who will be willing to improve their English language skills.

Company C: *“We want our future employees who will want to improve their English skills as their part of the employment because it is important for both sides”.*

Company D: *“We always have training and seminars on English language improvement. So, our future employees should be interested to participate in such events. They should have positive mindset that language learning is the continuous process.”*

The data analysis, hereby, concludes positively that the reason for choosing TOEIC testing by students as their English proficiency test and by employers in their recruitment process is because of the simplicity of the TOEIC test compared with other tests. The study of (Karachedee, 2017) has pointed out that fluency in English

communications in employees would benefit both the company and the employees themselves concerning self-development and career advancement. Undergraduates can expect to be employed on the basis of a TOEIC test score above 430, as many employers accept around this score as their standard.



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter consists of four sections: a summary of the study, a summary of the findings, discussion, conclusions, and recommendation for further study.

5.1 Summary of the study

The aims of the study were to find out the expectations of Thai undergraduates on future employability based on their TOEIC test score and the reasons for choosing TOEIC testing by both students and employers. The research questions were:

- How does Thai undergraduate students TOEIC score affect their expectations towards future employability? What are the reasons for Thai undergraduate students to choose TOEIC for English proficiency testing and for employers to use it for recruitment purposes?

The participants of the study were 200 4th year university students who were studying in many different faculties and who would graduate within 1 year. Other participants were 10 companies' human resource departments where most of them require a TOEIC test score as one of the recruitment criteria.

This study used a pre-designed questionnaire. The data collection started by asking for permission from the dean of each school or faculty from Walailak University for academic officers and students in each school to share the link to access online the questionnaire.. The researcher collected the data in a qualitative method. The pre-designed questionnaire was distributed to the participants in the form of Google form. Students and HR departments were provided different questionnaires with the intention to analyze the different expectations of students and HR departments in terms of employment that requires a TOEIC test score as one of the recruitment criteria.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Respondents' General Information

The respondents in this study were of two different groups. One group was 200 4th year university students and the other was 10 companies' HR departments as potential employers.

5.2.1.1 Students' General Information

The student respondents consisted of 200 students who were 64 males and 136 female students. All of them were in the age group of 20-30 years. The students were from six different study programs: Science (10), Informatics (10), Liberal Arts (10), Architecture and Design (10), Management (55), and Engineering and Technology (155). Only 10 out of 200 students had taken a TOEIC test.

5.2.1.2 Employers' General Information

The employer respondents consisted of 10 different companies' HR departments. All companies used TOEIC test scores in screening their job applicants. The lowest minimum TOEIC test score was 350 and the highest TOEIC test score required was 550. The companies were named alphabetically as A, B, C up to J. The average minimum TOEIC test score was 430. The maximum number of years using TOEIC by the companies was 10 years and the minimum years of using TOEIC test scores was 3 years. The average of years using TOEIC as one of the criteria in the recruitment process was 6.6 years.

5.2.2 Students' Responses on TOEIC test, current level of skills in English, and future employability

The result shows that only 10 students had taken a TOEIC test and the average test score of those students was 339.9. The remaining 190 students are potential TOEIC test candidates.

The result shows that most of the students' current level of English skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing is moderate. Only 15 students reported "very

high” level of skills in all English skills, whereas 26 students had “very low” level of skills in all English skills.

The result shows that 122 students (61%) were planning to look for employment in industrial sectors. The need of English in the industrial sectors will influence this group of the students. 35 students were planning to enter the field of education, 28 in IT, 5 in hospitality and tourism, and 10 in other fields of employment.

The result shows that 164 of the students (82%) were planning to look for the jobs that require English whereas 108 students (54%) were not confident about getting jobs that will require English.

The result shows that 140 students (70%) believed that their current college English courses were helping to improve their English skills.

5.2.3 Employers’ Responses on TOEIC test, expectation, and future employability

The result shows that 6 companies (60%) had main job applicants who had TOEIC test scores, and 7 companies (70%) were using TOEIC test scores as the criteria in their recruitment process because TOEIC is more simple than other tests.

The result shows that 7 companies (70%) have an average expectation on getting future job applicants with strong English skills.

The result shows that 9 companies (90%) were in need of English speaking future employees.

5.2.4 Students’ opinions on importance of TOEIC test and plan for taking TOEIC test and other tests

The result shows that most of the students think that a TOEIC test score is important for them to get employment after their graduation, for better salary, and for their career development. However, very few students think other tests are better suited for them.

The result shows that 160 students (80%) are planning to take a TOEIC test because they think the TOEIC test is easy for them and it is famous in Thailand’s

employment context. The rest of the students were planning to take other tests, including TOEIC, TOEFL, IELTS, and their reasons were: the TOEIC test does not help them to study and work abroad and other tests have more appropriate standards.

5.2.5 Employers' opinions on satisfaction of current employees with TOEIC test score and expectation on future employees

The result shows that most of the companies are well satisfied with the performance of their current employees who had taken TOEIC tests. However, some of the companies are of the view that when the workers are needed to operate their jobs abroad, TOEIC is insufficient.

The result shows that all companies are expecting to get future employees who are willing to learn and improve their English skills.

5.3 Discussion

This section presents a discussion of the findings on the following headings.

5.3.1 The level of English skills and the need for a TOEIC test

The current level of English skills of the students was not great as is only 15 students evaluated themselves in the category of “very high” level of skills in all four types of the skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and 28 students had “very low” level of skills in all four types of the skills.

The majority of the students self-evaluated that they were moderately skilled in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English. 140 students (70%) out of 200 thought that their current level of English was being improved by their current college English courses. Similarly, 160 students (80%) out of 200 were planning to take a TOEIC test. Here, students might need TOIEC test scores to evaluate their language level before trying to get into the job markets.

5.3.2 The scope of employability on the basis of TOEIC test

Out of 200 student respondents who were going to be graduate within 1 year, 190 students had not taken a TOEIC test yet. And out of those 190 students, 164

students were planning to look and apply for jobs that require English language. 9 companies out of 10 said that they are in need of employees having English skills.

However, 10 students who have already taken a TOEIC test had the average score of 399.9 whereas the 10 companies which are using TOEIC as their criteria for screening the applicants' language proficiency had the average minimum requirement TOEIC test score of 430. Here, students are below the minimum TOEIC test score requirement.

Most of the students are planning to look for the jobs in the industrial and education sectors. Both of these fields of employment have a special value and position for the English language and 6 companies (60%) experience was having the main job applicants as TOEIC test takers.

160 students (80%) wanted to take the TOEIC test because the test is mostly easy for them, and the test is simple and useful in Thailand. 7 companies (70%) are using TOEIC test scores in their screening process of job applicants because they think TOEIC is simple compared with other tests.

5.3.3 The expectation of students and employers on future employability

108 students (54%) are not confident of getting jobs that require English with their current level of English whereas 7 companies (70%) had an average expectation of getting future employees with strong English skills.

Some of the students think that the TOEIC test does not meet their needs, especially for studies and work abroad, and also some of the companies have experience that the TOEIC test is insufficient if their employees have to operate their duties abroad.

Most of the students wanted to take a TOEIC test for getting jobs because they thought it is easy to get jobs with a TOEIC test score and a TOEIC test score gives them better salary, whereas most of the companies were expecting to get future employees who are willing to improve their English skills further. So, students need to prepare themselves for getting involved in English improvement even after they are employed.

5.4 Conclusion

The results of the study are concluded as:

- Thai undergraduates recognize the potential dependability of their future employability on their TOEIC test score. However, they should score at least above 430 to expect better chances of employment in the future after graduation.
- The reason for choosing TOEIC testing for both students and employers is because of the simplicity of the TOEIC test compare with other tests.

5.5 Limitations

This study has some limitations. Firstly, it was focused only on 4th year undergraduate students because they were going to graduate soon and possibly look for the employment. Secondly, this study does not cover only the students who had already taken a TOEIC test; instead it covered both those who had taken a test and many who had not, and also some who did not want to get a TOEIC score.

5.6 Recommendations

This study focused on the overall TOEIC test scores. However, companies might be focusing only on particular English skills among listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A company who might just be looking for the applicants' writing skills must be different from another company who might be looking only for the applicant's speaking skills, or perhaps focus on listening skills. So, further studies focusing on particular categories of skills would come up with distinct and more concrete results in the field of TOEIC test and employability.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

The expectation of college student on future employability based on TOEIC score: An evidence from HR perspective

This study is a part of Independent Study for Master's Degree in Teaching English as Foreign Language at Thammasat University. The main purpose of the questionnaire is to identify the expectation of student on future employability based on their TOEIC test score and reason for choosing it. Please answer the questions honestly. Your information will be kept confidentially and will be used for educational purposes only.

The questionnaire contains three parts

Part 1: Personal information

Part 2: Response Section

Part 3: Opinion Section

Part 1: Personal information

Instructions: Instruction: Please type your information and responses or choose from the options as question indicates.

1. Name of your program
 1. () School of Management
 2. () School of Nursing
 3. () School of languages and general education
 4. () School of Political Science and Laws
 5. () School of Science
 6. () School of Engineering and Technology
 7. () School of Liberal Arts
 8. () School of Architecture and Design
 9. () School of Allied Health Sciences
 10. () School of Public Health
 11. () School of Informatics
 12. () School of Agricultural Technology
 13. () School of Pharmacy

14. () School of Medicine

2. Sex 1. () Male 2. () Female
3. Age 1. () 20-30 years 2. () 31-40 years 3. () 41-50 years
4. () 51-60 years 5. () More than 60 years

4. Have you taken TOEIC Test?

1. () Yes (If yes please answer the question number 5)
2. () No

5. What is your current score?

Part 2: Response Section

Instructions: Please type your information and responses or choose from the options as question indicates.

2.1) Why did you take TOEIC? If not, why are you thinking to take? Or why don't you want to take? Please type.

2.2) Rate your current English Level.?

- 5 = Very High
 4 = High
 3 = Moderate
 2 = Low
 1 = Very Low

English Skills	(5) Very High	(4) High	(3) Moderate	(2) Low	(1) Very Low
Listening Skills					
Speaking Skills					
Reading Skills					
Writing Skills					

2.3) Is your college English course enhanced/improving your English skills??

1. () Yes
2. () No

2.4) Are you planning to look for jobs which need English??

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

2.5) What field/industry are you looking to enter for the job??

- 1. Industrial
- 2. Hospitality
- 3. Education
- 4. Freelance
- 5. Others _____

2.6 How confident are you on getting job that require English?

- 1. Highly confident
- 2. Confident
- 3. Not confident

Part 3: Opinions and suggestions.

Instructions: Please give your opinions or suggestions.

3.2 Do you think your TOIEC score is important for your future employment? How? Please type.

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3.2 Are you preparing other English tests? Why? Why not? Please type.

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Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

The expectation of college student on future employability based on TOEIC score: An evidence from HR perspective

This study is a part of Independent Study for Master's Degree in Teaching English as Foreign Language at Thammasat University. The main purpose of the questionnaire is to needs and reasons for choosing TOEIC test score in the recruitment process. Please answer the questions honestly. Your information will be kept confidentially and will be used for educational purposes only.

The questionnaire contains three parts

Part 1: Personal information

Part 2: Response Section

Part 3: Opinion Section

Part 1: Personal information

Instructions: Instruction: Please type your information and responses or choose from the options as question indicates.

1. Name of your company _____(will be kept confidential)

Part 2: Response Section

Instructions: Please type your information and responses or choose from the options as question indicates.

2.1) What is the minimum TOEIC score to enter you company?

2.2) Why do you choose to use TOEIC in your recruitment process?

1. It is famous in Thailand.

2. It helps in screening applicants.

3. It is comprehensive in skills.

4. It is simple from other tests.

5. Others _____

2.3) How long have you been using TOEIC as the criteria?

1. 1 – 5 years 2. 6 – 10 years 3. 11 – 15 years

4. 16 -20 years 5. More than 20 years

2.4) Is TOEIC takers are the main applicants in your company's vacancy? Please explain?

() Yes _____

() No _____

2.5) Do you need more English speaking graduates as your future employees?

2.6 How are you expecting to get employee with strong English skill?

() High Expectation

() Average

() Low Expectation

Part 3: Opinions and suggestions.

Instructions: Please give your opinions or suggestions.

4.1 How satisfied are you from your current employees' TOEIC score and their performance?

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4.2 Beside TOEIC score, what do you expect from your prospective applicants?

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Thank you for your cooperation.

BIOGRAPHY

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