UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DETERMINANTS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' CHOICE OF

UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA: A CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF GHANA AND

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

LORETTA PADIKWOR PADDY

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BY

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Thesis submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, of the school of Educational Development and Outreach of the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Administration in Higher Education.

JULY 2019

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature   …………………… Date ………………………

Name: Paddy Loretta Padikwor

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis research laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal supervisor's Signature: …………………   Date:………………

Name: Prof. Rosemary Serwaa Bosu

Co- Supervisor's Signature: …………………   Date:………………

Name: Dr. Francis Ansah

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ABSTRACT

The current study examined the determinants of international students' choices to public universities in Ghana. With migration system theory and push-pull theory as lenses, the findings of the study were based on surveys with 435 international students (University of Ghana=166; Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology =269) randomly selected and the data was analysed using the IBM SPSS 21. The study found that, in both University of Ghana and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, the cost of tuition was one of the major factors that influenced their choice. Also meeting people with diverse culture, the search for new experience, the reputation of the institution stood tall among all the social factors that influenced their choice. In terms of academic factors, the value of the degree influenced international students' choice into University of Ghana and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The respondents were satisfied with the fact that teaching and learning was practical. International students had good communication and interaction with the local people and the lecturers respectively. The high cost of living, acts of discrimination and unavailable flexible banking were some of the challenges that international students' face. The study therefore recommends that university authorities should conduct students need assessment to identify their basic needs as international students. To cure the problem of discrimination, the universities should organise games and programmes for both native and international students to build social networks.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my siblings and friends

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Determinants of international students' choice of tertiary education are a widely studied phenomenon in the field of education and migration. The introductory chapter of this study examines scholarly works done in the Western world, Africa and Ghana. The chapter identifies the gap in literature, which makes the current study worthwhile. It states the purpose of the study, definition of terms and organisation of the rest of the study.

Background to the Study

The global demand for higher education has been an immemorial phenomenon (Frempong, 2015; Phang, 2012). Over the past decades, the internationalisation of higher education has attracted the attention of national, state, and institutional decision-makers throughout the world (Bodycott, 2009; Shanka, Quintal & Taylor, 2005). This is because international students are seen as one of the important stakeholders in higher educational institutions. As stakeholders, international student contribute both academically and financially to their host universities and country. Academically, international students often contribute significantly to excellence in education and research, bringing a diversity of perspectives, experiences and languages that enhance the university experience for all students. Financially, international students pursuing their education pay fees to their host universities buy and spend on goods and services which positively bring a significant economic boost to the host nation. It has therefore become imperative for decision makers to seek their welfare. In line with the above, Nyarko and Ephraim (2016) asserted that

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international students form a critical element of the international dimension of higher education.

In examining mobility trends, the number of internationally mobile higher education students reached 4.5 million worldwide (OECD, 2014) and estimates suggest that 7.2 million students will be seeking higher education abroad by 2025 (Engberg et al., 2014; Shanka et al., 2005). This trend means that more people will be seeking higher education in developed countries. Dominant among these countries with higher international students pursuing their education are the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, China and Russia (Australian Education International, 2000). Among these countries, the Observatory of Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) in 2007 reported that the United States, United Kingdom and Australia served as a provider of education to 45% of the total international students worldwide. This is followed by the middle powers like Germany and France capturing 20 percent of the international education market while evolving destinations like Japan, Canada and New Zealand with 13 percent of market share (Yee & Mokhtar, 2014).

Issues of globalisation have reinforced the quest for students to seek university education across national borders. The transformation of the global economy from its industrial roots to knowledge-based practices has changed the higher education landscape worldwide (Gürüz, 2011). Each year, young people over the world travel across international borders for different purposes such as tourism, education, adventure, family reunifications and job opportunities. This is evident in the yearly outflow of students mainly from developing countries to developed countries for studies (Frempong, 2015).

Traditionally, various reasons have influenced the demand for international education. International education has been driven by expectations to raise the graduate's economic and social status, especially within the higher education sector. Also, lack of access to higher education in many countries in Asia and Africa has been a key driver for international student flow. In addition, the historical or colonial links between host and home countries has also played a role in determining where students travel for study (Phang, 2012). In furtherance, Gomes and Murphy (2003) provided two important drivers of internationalisation of education as the prospects of charging higher student fees and globalisation initiatives.

Three waves of globalisation have also been identified to be a key influential factor in the international education industry. The first wave is when students travel to a host nation at a selected institution. The second wave occurs when education institutions establishes alliances or coalitions through 'twinning' programmes with other institutions to have a presence in the international market. It is referred to as forward integration in the international education industry. The third wave is intensified when new branch campuses are created in foreign markets and information and communications technology (ICT) is used to deliver 'online' courses (Phang, 2012).

The leap in demand for international student education has increased in tandem with the supply of international education providers (Nyarko & Ephraim, 2016; Yee & Mokhtar, 2014). The "market" for international students is one of the most dynamic of all world markets and in the last 10 years has seen such an unprecedented growth that governments from a range of countries now prioritize involvement in this market through their own

Ministries of Education or dedicated international education promotional agencies (Kemp, Archer, Gilligan, & Humfrey, 2008). The potential benefits of having international students are linked to skill migration, economic growth, public diplomacy and more importantly to research and innovation for a "knowledge society" (Nyarko & Ephraim, 2016).

Internationalisation of higher education has also been a major influence on the economic growth to host countries worldwide (Bodycott, 2009). It has emerged as one of the more significant service industries (Phang, 2012). Colleges and universities are recognizing the contributions of international students in term of cultural, educational, and, quite importantly, financial resources; they are actively engaging in the fierce competition for international students. According to Shanka et al. (2005) the increase in global demand for higher education has been a major contributor to the export earnings of the host economy. For instance, in Australia, full-fee-paying students generate exports revenues of about $3.7 billion on yearly basis (Australian Education International, 2001). Full-fee-paying international students have been identified as a lucrative source in helping institutions to make up for the shortfall in higher education funding and nearly all universities relied on income from overseas students to subsidize their services.

On the whole, it can be said that internationalisation of education doesn't occur in developed and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries alone; it does occur in developing economies as well. There are counter streams of students moving from developed countries to developing ones (Frempong, 2015). For instance, Ghanaian

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universities have also been the destination for students from other African countries such as Nigeria, Gabon, Benin, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Cameroun and Togo (Nyarko & Ephraim, 2016). This is in addition to the number of international students from United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, Cuba, France and Australia on various exchange programmes in Ghanaian universities.

Until the beginning of the twenty-first century these universities were predominantly public (government) owned but the growth of privately owned higher educational institutions has been profound since early 2000 (National Accreditation Board, 2014). This has further increased the intensity of competition for both local and international students in higher educational institutions in Ghana (National Accreditation Board, 2014). It is increasingly becoming crucial for management of higher educational institutions in Ghana to understand the context-specific variables that strongly influence international students' choice of programmes of studies in higher educational institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Scholars and practitioners in the field of international education marketing and student recruitment concur that the selection of the higher education destination is similar to a service purchase (Choudaha, Chang & Kono, 2013; Anctil, 2008). While statistics exist on the volume of international students from developing countries to developed ones, very limited empirical research has been conducted on the motivations behind movements of students from developed countries to developing countries and their implications for the destination countries. The current study fills this gap

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by examining the factors that influence international students' choice of tertiary education. In Ghana, the number of international students who visit to pursue their education in public universities has been increasing over the past years (Frempong, 2015).

However, statistics shows that there have been steady variations of international students' enrolment into public universities in Ghana. Focusing on statistics from the three premier public universities in Ghana for instance, in the 2014-2015 academic year, University of Ghana (UG) enrolled 1,550 international students this increased to 2,967 in 2016-2017 academic year. However, the 2017-2018 academic year saw a declined in enrolment to 745 (University of Ghana Basic Statistics, 2018). On the other hand, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) enrolled 1,507 international students in the 2014-2015 academic year. However, this declined to 1,229 in the 2015-2016 academic year.

Again, enrolment of international students within the same institution declined to 961 by the 2016-2017 academic year, and further declined to 820 in the 2017-2018 academic year (KNUST Basic Statistics, 2018). Unlike the above statistics, which depicts variations of enrolment of international students, the University of Cape Coast has also witnessed a constant decline in enrolment of international student. This is because in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic years, the university recorded 638 and 49 international students respectively. In the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years, the university enrolled 25 and 29 international students.

It is clear from the above statistics that enrolment of international students in these three most prestigious universities in Ghana is on the decline.

However, what influences international students choice of universities and the challenges students face in these universities in Ghana has not yet received any academic interrogation. Given the importance of international students' enrolment in every tertiary education system, it is therefore imperative to conduct a study on the determinants of international students' choice of tertiary education in the prestigious public universities in Ghana experiencing a decline in international students' enrolment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the determinants of international students' choice of public universities, explore their experiences and examine their challenges in public universities in Ghana experiencing a decline in international students' enrolment so that evidence-based decisions can be made to boost international students' enrolment.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What determines international students' choice of a particular public university in Ghana?

2. How do the international students' experiences in the universities meet their expectations?

3. What challenges do international students face in pursuing university education in a public university?

Significance of the Study

Throughout the world, universities are striving to internationalise their campuses and compete to attract the best and brightest global minds amidst the declining public funding for higher education institutions (Szekeres, 2010).

Although the growing numbers of internationally mobile students (i.e. south-north migration) is a well-documented trend (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2014) at the expense of the (i.e. north south migration) increasingly number of student pursuing university education in developing countries like Ghana. Given the number of international students' in public universities in Ghana, this study examines the determinants of international students' choice of tertiary education in public universities in Ghana. The study aims at informing Ghanaian university leadership with what can boost international students' enrolment and also to add to the limited literature available on international students' decision to study in African countries especially Ghana.

Researchers such as Nyarko and Ephraim (2016), Frimpong (2015), Mbawuni and Nimako (2015), and Landau and Moore (1998) have conducted some research into international students' experiences and this study is complementing their work by focusing on the determinants of international students' choice of public universities in Ghana in two different universities namely the University of Ghana and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. This approach is probably one of the innovations introduced by this study. This approach allows for an examination of the similarities and differences in international students' reasons, motivations, and educational experiences of international students in two different study areas.

Also, the main contribution of this research is expected to extend empirical research on relevant factors underlying international students' choice of university in developing countries, in order to contribute to the literature in higher education management in developing countries. The

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finding of this study provides evidence-based information for scholars and practitioners, especially in education leadership and management of universities towards developing competitive strategies for managing student enrolment and retention in universities. Regarding this research, the findings will bridge the deficiency of literature and the body of knowledge on internationalisation of education as well as contribute to the academic debates on understanding the process and factors that motivate prospective international students to make their institutions of choice.

Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on all international students who have travelled from their various developed and developing countries and are studying in the University of Ghana and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology for the award of degrees in diverse academic disciplines. The study looks at the reasons for choosing Ghana as a destination country for their higher education. Geographically, the study covers the University of Ghana, which is in Accra, the capital of Ghana and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana. As stated earlier, these two public universities have a higher enrolment rate of international students as compared to the other universities in Ghana. Therefore it is important to examine the factors that influence their choice.

Limitations of the Study

The study is quantitative in nature but it focused on only two most prestigious universities in Ghana and therefore it is not representative of the entire public university system even though that could have been an ideal

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situation. Nonetheless, the reason and rigour of the study make it scholarly significance worthy.

Definition of Terms

International/Foreign Student: A student who is not a Ghanaian citizen or permanent resident and is enrolled or proposes to enrol in a tertiary institution in Ghana.

Student Mobility: An internationally mobile student is a student who has crossed a national or territorial border for the purpose of education and is now enrolled outside his or her country of origin. In general terms, a mobile student can be defined as a student who has crossed a national border for the purpose of study.

International Education: International education as the "situations where the teacher, student, programme, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional boarders".

Higher/Tertiary education: To pursue high level of education (post-secondary education) such as diploma, graduate and postgraduate degree programmes done abroad.

Destination country: Is a place or country foreign/international students enrol and pursue higher educational degrees.

Adaptation: The internal transformation of an individual challenged by a new cultural environment in the direction of increasing fitness and compatibility in that environment. This definition is of significance to this study because it involves the process of socio-cultural adaptation by international students to the socio-cultural environment in Ghana.

Educational experiences: This refers to any interaction, course, program, or other experience in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in traditional academic settings (schools, classrooms) or nontraditional settings (outside-of-school locations, outdoor environments), or whether it includes traditional educational interaction (students learning from supervisors) or nontraditional interactions (students learning from the environment).

Organisation of the Study

The study is organised into five chapters. The first chapter comprises the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation, limitations of the study, definition of terms and organisation of the study. The second chapter contains a review of related literature comprising the empirical, theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Chapter three focuses on the research methods while Chapter Four comprises data analysis and discussion. Chapter five focuses on the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature related to the study. The focal point of the chapter seeks to review relevant literature on factors influencing international students' choice of tertiary education in destination countries. The review is categorised into three parts; the empirical review, theoretical framework and the conceptual review. Empirically, the study further reviews other research studies on factors influencing international students' choice of tertiary education. The theoretical framework for this study is the migration systems theory and push-pull theory. The conceptual review covers explanations and definitions on factors that influence international students' choice of tertiary education.

Empirical Literature

The section looks at the works of scholars on the international student's sources of information on foreign universities, factors influencing international students' choice of tertiary education, educational experiences of international students, challenges faced by international students. Research works on this topic are discussed from an international to the African perspective. Upon review of literature, there is little scholarly work in Ghana specifically looking at the factors that influence international student's choice of tertiary education.

International Student's Sources of Information on Foreign Universities

This aspect of the study seeks to elaborate on the avenues and sources of information for international students to pursue higher level of education in

destination countries. Literature has identified advertising, friends and family/ relatives as the main sources of information for international students to pursing higher education (Atarah & Peprah, 2014; Kotler & Keller, 2009; Nan & Faber, 2004).

Advertising is noted to be a source of information for student's choice of higher education. This definition is limited to the print media. This is as a result of the fact that the only available media at the time was print media (Nan & Faber, 2004), and the other forms of media, as we know today, did not exist at that time (Atarah & Peprah, 2014). Richards and Curran (2002, P. 74) defined advertising as a "paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action now or in the future". They focus on the persuasive role that advertising plays in the communication process. Kotler and Keller (2009, p.538) see advertising as "any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor". Similarly, Richards and Curran (2002) and Kotler and Keller (2009) viewed advertising from its functional perspectives, hence they define it as a paid, non-personal communication through various media by business firms, non-profit organization, and individuals who are in some way identified in the advertising message and who hope to inform or persuade members of a particular audience.

Advertising is used to establish a basic awareness of the product or service in the mind of the potential customer and to build up knowledge about it (Atarah & Peprah, 2014). Advertising's main aims are usually to make known the availability of a product, an idea or a science on offer to the target audience and influence their awareness, attitude and buying behaviour

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(Akanbi & Adeyeye, 2011). Tertiary institutions therefore advertise to create awareness on their websites to their prospective customers (the students) and their parents of the academic courses they offer in the schools, to persuade and remind them (Boone & Kurtz, 2001) of the advantages they would get in the advertising institutions than in other institutions offering same or similar programmes. Television and radio advertising have proven to be particularly effective in helping institutions build their image and visibility especially in specific geographical areas (Ayanwale, Alimi & Ayanbimipe, 2005). Other literature such as Pasternak (2005) seeks to suggest that the information given by the institution's own printed materials is also very influential in student choice process.

After the student has identified his/her educational programme to study in a tertiary institution, the search for information about the providers of such services (tertiary education) begins. This search can either be internal or external. Internally the student begins to search from his own memory the various providers of the types of education he seeks (Atarah & Peprah, 2014). According to Brennan and Dellow (2013), this internal search is usually based on the student's own experience and knowledge. The student's quest and problem level for the information and his or her involvement are the determinants of the amount of information gathered. Some students will be satisfied with a little amount of information whilst others would want to have a whole great amount before they can conveniently and confidently make a choice.

After the internal search, if the student realises that the information gathered is not enough to base on and make a decision, external sources of

information are also considered. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008), the sources of information available to prospective customers are as follows: (i) personal non-marketer controlled sources. These include family, friends, acquaintances, teachers, colleagues among others; (ii) personal marketer controlled sources whose examples include sales representatives; (iii) non-personal non-marketer controlled, publicity in the mass media is an example of this source; (iv) non-personal marketer controlled, examples include but not limited to advertisements, prospectuses, websites. Students start by exhausting the personal sources of information before supplementing it with the non-personal sources.

Familiar groups or parental preferences and friends are also considered as key sources of information for international students. Familial groups such as parents and relatives serve as an influential source and significant factor in the choice of education (Obermeit, 2012). Atarah and Peprah (2014) are of the belief that friends' advice is the major source of information influencing students' choice of tertiary educational institutions. Foskett (2009) pointed out the importance of the role played by career advisers in the provision of information on higher educational institutions. An institution's own members of staff, through telephone conversations and email correspondences to prospective students, also play a major role in influencing student choice decision. Most students also turn to their families for advice as to which institution to choose (Pimpa, 2005). Despite these numerous sources of information, there is still a general lack of adequate information for prospective students and their parents to make meaningful comparisons among universities offering the same or similar academic programmes (Eckel, 2007).

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He attributes this to poor promotional materials designed by educational institutions that are less informative.

Atarah and Peprah (2014) sought to find out if advertising had an influence on students' enrolment decision in private tertiary institutions in Ghana through various media. The results showed that advertising in addition to serving as a source of information to students also influenced the enrolment decision of some students. There were however other factors that influenced the enrolment decision of students such as family, friends, current students, etc. that could be exploited by these institutions to their advantage.

Specifically, the findings revealed different numbers of respondents said they were informed about the institutions that they have enrolled in by different sources. Advertising had the biggest percentage of 35% as being a source of information to the respondents. This confirms what Akanbi and Adeyeye (2011) asserted that advertising serves to inform potential customers about the availability of products or services as offered by the advertising marketer. Following advertising is recommendation by family, friends or colleagues with a percentage of 26.7 percent (n=32). This indicates that family members, friends and colleagues are also a very potent and important source of information to potential students seeking admission to tertiary institutions. These findings are in line with Choi, Raley, Muller & Riegle-Crumb, (2005) and Pimpa (2005) that family and or friends of students can also be a very important source of information and or motivation for their need for tertiary education and the institution they would enrol in.

Current students are also said to be a source of information for potential students. Campus visit also had a significant percentage of 4.2

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percent as being the source of information to respondents before they enrolled. These together represented 2.5 percent of the respondents on their source of information. This confirms the suggestion by Pasternak (2005) that the information given by the institution's own printed materials is also a very influential source of information to prospective students and their choice process.

The study further revealed that a total of 14.2 percent of the respondents had more than one source of information. It should however be noted that all these included advertising in their sources of information. If this is added to advertising's percentage of 35 percent, the total percentage of respondents who heard about their institutions through advertising rises to 49.2 percent making it the leading source of information to potential students as per the findings of this study. This finding seems to go contrary to the assertion of Kitchen (2003) that mass media advertising is rapidly making way for more personal form of communication such as personal selling and direct marketing.

Factors Influencing International Student's Choice of University

The factors influencing the choice of university involve significant decisions that set the basis for success in life and career of students (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015; Obermeit, 2012). A review of studies of university choice factors indicate that there are common elements across nations in that mass-media, location, cost and characteristics of the host countries are significant, with the top factors being learning environment, political environment, concern for students, cost of education, facilities, and location in descending order. The choice process is dynamic and has changed

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significantly as a result of changes in student demographics as well as the development of institutional admissions and marketing practices especially during the past half-century (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015).

Reputation of the institution is regarded a factor to international education. Study decisions by international students tend to be closely influenced by related institutional decisions. The reputation of an institution involves a range of factors such as graduate satisfaction from the institutional courses or programmes; graduate employment opportunities from the course; the quality of teaching in the course assessment from the course including opportunities for flexible educational career (Atarah & Peprah, 2014). Ciriaci and Muscio (2011) agree that "good" universities may act as a magnet for good brains. Kusumawati, Yanamandram and Perera, (2010) suggests that the reputation of the institution was the most significant factor in a student's decision for further study. Similar factors on student choice of university include degree program flexibility, academic reputation and prestige reflecting national and international recognition, physical aspects of the campus such as the quality of the infrastructure and services, career opportunities upon completion, location of the institution and the time required for the completion of the program (Kusumwati et al., 2010).

Two different perspectives have emerged on institutional reputation. One approach focuses on how to decide and where to apply (Niu & Tienda, 2008). The second approach such as cost, size, distance, the quality of programs, and factors most commonly associated with comprehensive college choice, student background characteristics, aspirations, educational achievement and institutional climate. For example, preferences, course and

institutional reputations, course entry, institutional characteristics are very significant to influencing student's choice of university. This implies that easy access to home and institutional characteristics significantly influence choice of tertiary education.

In addition to the reputation of universities, other factors including approaches to teaching, understanding the complex college admission criteria influence the enrolment decisions of international students. Excellence in teaching is also viewed as a strong determinant of choice (Keskinen, Tiuraniemi & Liimola 2008; Sidin, Hussin, & Soon, 2003). Drewes and Michael (2006) conducted a study on how students choose a university in Ontario, Canada. They found a negative correlation between research performance and applications indicating that applicants expect that the boast as being a top research institution conversely means that the institution does not have faculty who are fully engaged with their teaching. On the contrary, Ciriaci and Muscio (2011) argue that research quality has a positive effect on employability upon graduation. Hagel and Shaw (2008) provide a similar set of characteristics which include academic reputation, course availability, location, tuition costs as well as campus amenities with the most important three attributes being study mode, tuition fees and the university itself, this last factor being especially important for international students.

Also, finances are a basic consideration for students and the effect of school fees varies. Studies show that demand for private universities tends to be at a higher level of price sensitivity than public ones (Agrey & Lampadan, 2014). Agrey and Lampadan (2014) research results are intuitive in that they indicate high-income students are less sensitive to price changes than those

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who are lower income students. Long's (2004) study, illustrates that the relative importance of price depends on the income and quality of the student, as measured by their Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score. Scholarships have a desired impact on student choice although it is usually limited to the high school scholar group due to the fact that those with lesser grades would find these less relevant to their situation (Drewes & Michael, 2006). Foskett (2006) found that students consider more carefully economic factors in times of distress and financial difficulty. These factors include job opportunities to supplement their incomes, accommodation costs and family home proximity (Poutvaara, 2005). Field of study preferences scores, easy access to home and applicants' choice of institution are more important for college students

A concomitant factor with finance is distance from home to the selected institution. Gibbons and Vignoles (2009) assert that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds have a lower attendance rate of high quality research institutions largely because these universities are usually further from home, which increases costs. Drewes and Michael (2006) indicates that students prefer universities closer to home as the additional costs of living away make further afield institutions less attractive. Gibbons and Vignoles (2009) claim that commuting or re-location costs are important choice factors with lower income students and may deter some students from attending university at all. Although the same study indicates that locale usually does not have a negative impact on participation but rather where the students will attend, with the nearer institutions receiving the higher rate of attendance.

Sociologists assume a utilitarian decision-making process that students go through in choosing a college, specifying a variety of social and individual factors leading to occupational and educational aspirations (Paulsen & St John, 2002). This emphasize how socialization processes, family conditions, interactions with peers, the commonality of the language and opportunity to improve second language and school environments help shape students' college choices. Social related factors of tertiary education have more interaction between variables that measure the traits of individual students and variables that assess broad social constructs. The behavioural variables of students such as students' academic performance interact with background variables (such as the social status of parents) to determine students' educational aspirations (Briggs, 2006).

Influences and recommendations from family members, relatives, friends and professors also play an important role in a student's decision-making process for higher education (Chen, 2007; Chen & Zimitat, 2006; Maringe & Carter, 2007). Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) suggested that personal recommendations or word-of-mouth referrals of former alumni are main influences. Even though the final decision to study abroad is mainly decided by students themselves, their family members, relatives and friends influence them significantly by providing information and suggestions (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Pimpa (2003) indicated that the influence of family on the students differed depending on the level of education they planned to study.

Another vital factor to influence international education is the socioeconomic status of students. Keskinen, Tiuraniemi and Liimola (2008)

indicate the socio-economic status of students is also primary determinants. Society of origin attaches much respects and higher social accords to students with foreign education. The academic achievement of high school students based on their grades or standardized examination results is also significant.

Sanchez, Fornerino, and Zhang's (2006) study received usable data from 477 respondents in the U.S., France, and China. Their study indicates that the motivations of studying abroad for the students included improving their professional and social situations, searching for a new experience, searching for liberty and pleasure, and learning a new language.

Also, Phang (2012) examined the factors influencing international students' study destination decision abroad in Sweden. The findings indicate three groups of factors that influence international students' decision on study destination, which include communication, location and social factors. The sub-categories of these factors entail quality of communication, study destination's attractiveness and social network. The data analysis demonstrates that it is important to understand the motivations and reasons international students choose certain programmes/courses at a specific university. The major contribution of this study is to highlight the significance of the category communication factors that has an important influence on international students' decision of study destination.

Another study by Agrey and Lampadan (2014) discovered the factors that influence students' choice of university in central Thailand. Using a sample of 261 respondents through an interview questionnaire, five factors emerged as being those that significantly influenced decision-making on which institution of higher learning to attend. These include support systems,

both physical (e.g. bookstore, guidance/counselling office) and non-physical (scholarships, credit transferability, spiritual programming); secondly, learning environment (modern learning environment and facilities, reputation, beautiful campus, library and computer lab) and job prospects i.e. high rate of graduates being employed; thirdly having good sporting facilities; fourthly, a strong student life program (health care services, residential accommodation) and activities (wide range of extracurricular activities) and finally a safe and friendly environment (safe campus as well as supporting faculty).

Additionally, Mbawuni and Nimako (2015) explored the factors underlying students' choices in accessing higher education in Ghana. The study was a cross-sectional survey of students offering different masters' programmes in a public university in Ghana. It utilized exploratory factor analysis to identify seven latent factors that play critical role in students' choice of master's programmes. These factors are cost, student support quality, attachment to institution, recommendation from lecturers and other staff, failure to gain alternative admissions, location benefits, among others.

In the same vein, a study conducted by Frempong (2015) to examine the reasons and factors that influence international students' mobility from developed and emerging economies to Ghana for studies, with the University of Ghana as a case study. With mixed method approach as the data collection process, the study finds that among others, programme and duration of study constitute the major motivating factors for international students selecting Ghana as a destination of choice. In addition, peace and stability in the country and Ghana's rich cultural heritage are cited by international students as pull factors in their migration decision making processes. Among others, the study

concludes that opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges shape the migration trajectories of the international students more than their perception of the level of socio-economic development of the destination country.

A study by Wintre, Kandasamy, Chavoshi and Wright (2015) investigated 64 international students studying in a Canadian university. Their findings on students' motivations presented eight themes as follows: education, new experience, qualities of the university, future prospects of career/immigration to the host country, friends/relatives in host country, and characteristics of the country, financial concerns, and location. Among these themes, the most frequently cited motivation of studying abroad for international students was educational (78.1%). These students expressed that they chose to study in Canada to get a better education, and to improve their English. Gaining new experience and the quality of the university were the next common responses (67.2%).

These studies indicate that students use a variety of factors in making their final selection of university with the five listed above as the criteria making the greatest impact on choice. Based on these studies, it seems that students' motivations for studying abroad are similar, with the notion of accessing "better" education and engaging "new experiences" as common features.

Educational Experiences of International Students in their Host Institutions

According to Adekalu and Oludeyi (2013), international students are referred to as students who live and study in foreign countries. These students have different national identities such as background, cultural heritage,

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religion, race and gender who are eligible to have the minimum and maximum entry requirements and adequate resources to seek for educational empowerment outside the purview of their nation's boundaries from an approved academic programme that is recognised by the host institution and other educational authorities worldwide. In this regard, studying abroad may give a different lifestyle and set of experiences for most international students. These experiences are heightened for international students (Guilfoyle, 2004).

While student retention is frequently used to measure the quality of educational experiences, retention rates may not be the best indicators for the experiences of those from abroad or for their future enrolment patterns (Lee, 2010). Lee (2010) conducted a study on international students' experiences and attitudes at a United State host institution: Self-reports and future recommendations. Thus, Lee (2010) examined international students' experiences at a US university and how these might influence them to recommend or not recommend that others from their home country attend it. Data were collected via online survey at a large public university in the US Southwest.

Students from predominantly non-White regions of origin had more negative experiences with academics. Findings suggest that perceptions of unequal treatment with respect to academics are a major factor influencing international students' attitudes. Although online survey was adopted, using it to gather data from students might affect the response rate which might adversely affect the findings of the study.

In a study of Nigerian nurses studying in the United State of America, Sanner, Wilson and Samson (2002) found that they experienced social

isolation and language barriers, but maintained that they persisted despite these obstacles. Interviewees in this study suggested that future attendees keep an open mind and accept people for who they are as well as their differences (Sanner et al., 2002). The most important advice they could give future international students was to be persistent (Sanner et al., 2002). These Nigerian nurses did not feel the need for support services in adjusting to the campus because they learned to rely on one another. As this research reveals, many international students have learned to find non-institutional forms of support (e.g. international networks and friends from their home country) to compensate for the lack of university support. The authors argued that universities assume foreign students are resourceful and resilient, and therefore do not require additional assistance. Although it was a good strategy for students to rely on each other, it would have been appropriate for them to make the university aware of their situation and seek for support services for easy adjustment. Since the researchers conducted interviews, they could not solicit for more information from a larger group of international students.

Olutokunbo, Ismail and Suandi (2013) explored academic experience of international students on scholarships in a private university college in Malaysian Universities. An in-depth interview was conducted among a group of international students in Malaysia with a particular focus on Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) scholarship recipients studying at a Private University College. The study revealed that, the scholars are generally satisfied and able to cope and adjust to the classroom teaching as well as academic environment at Linton University College (LUC) while adapting to host challenges. They are able to comply with renewal of students' visa

regulations in Malaysia. Their study suggested among other things, an initiative to improve international student academic experience studying in Malaysian Universities with an effort to enhance their academic performance and career opportunities, when the scholars returned to their respective countries.

In another study, Palmer (2016) explored the learning experiences of international students in Canada. The author discusses the learning experiences and processes of selected international graduate students within a Canadian university as they progressed from student to scholar. Inspired by social learning theorists Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of apprentice to masters in situated learning and communities of practice, the student to scholar framework sheds new light on the phenomenon of being an international graduate student. The arguments within Palmer's study counter traditional views of learning as occurring solely through classroom engagements and offers that international graduate students learn and achieve "scholar" status through situated practice, professor mentoring and triple learning. Data were captured through observations and in-depth phenomenological and semi-structured interviews.

Ho, Li, Cooper and Holmes (2007) conducted a study on the experiences of Chinese international students in New Zealand. They adopted a qualitative approach using face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions as the two primary data gathering techniques. A total of 83 Chinese students from the People's Republic of China (PRC) (46 males and 37 females) with ages ranging from 16 to 33 years volunteered to participate in their study. They carried out a total of 80 interviews and 3 focus group discussions. They

found that most of the participants had to adjust their study plans after arrival. Most reported being satisfied with the learning environment, specifically the quality of teaching, interaction and openness of their teaching staff and independent learning. They recommended that there is the need to improve homestay services to enhance social support for young students who are living away from home for the first time.

In Pakistan, Janjua, Malik and Rahman (2011) investigated into the learning experiences and academic adjustment of international students. They employed qualitative approach to explore the classroom learning experiences of the foreign students in a Pakistani University. The research employs a case study design with the data collected through an essay writing task set for international students and interviewing their teachers. 103 foreign students and 10 teachers constituted the sample of the study. The study found that the majority of international students acculturate the learning experiences they brought with them from their homelands in order to adjust in the academic environment of the host university.

In Australia, Hellsten (2002) provided insights into ways of understanding various implications of international students' transition into their new Australian study environment. The study explored aspects of enculturation, socio-cultural adaptation, adjustment, language, communication and/or any learning difficulties encountered by the students. The author explored how students negotiate these aspects into their ethnic and cultural identities as well as their academic learning practices. Finally, the study discussed how best to cater for international student needs within the context of cross-cultural sensitivity and academic quality assurance directives.

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Osikomaiya (2014) looked at Sub-Saharan African students and their experiences in American higher education. The study was explored qualitatively through interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), which is an appropriate method of inquiry to understand how Sub-Saharan Africans have been shaped by their experiences in U.S. graduate schools and in their post graduate careers. The research found that American-style education had a transformative impact on Sub-Saharan African students who have graduated from U.S. universities and who now live in the US as citizens. They were able to navigate their school and work environments successfully by understanding the implications of racial attitudes and in effect developed coping skills that allowed for growth and increased opportunities in the country.

In Ghana, Aklamanu (2017) conducted a phenomenological study of international undergraduate students from Ghana experiences at Southern Illinois University Carbondale Illinois. Based on semi-structured interviews of six Ghanaian undergraduate international students, the qualitative research created an awareness of the social, financial and academic experiences of international students at an American college. The researcher concluded that the types of experiences are varied among the participants, yet there was a high consistency of the themes: learning and studying, perception of faculty, expedited learning, online learning, language and communication issues, financial and a lack of social interaction with native students. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded. The participants checked the transcripts for accuracy of the recorded data. The descriptive qualitative results and educational implications were discussed.

Challenges International Students Encounter when Studying Overseas

Globalization has reformed the world into a smaller global village; where people are brought together from various traditions and cultures in a significant manner in every part of the world (Ozturgut & Murphy, 2009). There exist the use of different interaction methods and communication strategies, which leads to discrepancies in language, body language, conflict resolution, directness, and closure (Chan & Ryan, 2013). Many international students face challenges as they pursue higher education outside of their home countries (Ozturgut & Murphy, 2009).

They face obstacles, such as different food, unfamiliar living circumstances, financial problems, balancing work, studying schedules, learning styles, or any difficulties related to language, culture, and personal barriers. A series of transitional difficulties can be from daily life to cultural adaption (Cheng & Erben, 2012). These difficulties include, but are not limited to, language difficulties, difficulties adjusting to the academic culture, misunderstanding, and complications in communication with faculty and peers; stress, anxiety, feeling of isolation, social experiences, culture shock, financial hardships, lack of appropriate accommodation and any adaption in their daily life (Akanwa, 2016). The next section takes this up for discussion.

Cultural Differences

Mismanaging cultural differences can be frustrating, confusing, and ineffective when studying and living in different cultures (Andrade, 2006). However, if successfully managed, differences in culture can also lead to innovative practices, better learning within the community, and to maintaining one's competitive advantage. International students' adjustment and

adaptation has always been an issue (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011). Due to the increasing interest, the literature on international student adjustment has expanded greatly in the past decades. Culture varies dramatically between nations, and cultural insensitivity causes serious problems for individuals in different environments (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011).

Some of the challenges international students' face is socio-cultural (Russell, Rosenthal & Thomson, 2010; Liu, 2011). Arriving from a different country, international students may face many difficulties in their daily life. Coming to a new country, international students are faced with the reality of needing to find places to live and finding banks to deposit and withdraw money and transportation by finding buses or buying cars to move around and applying for credits cards. Surviving in a new community is the first lesson they have to deal with, and they need to have a support system when they newly arrive. After settling in a new place, international students will also experience cultural shock (Liu, 2011).

One of the most significant and common phrases labelling the dilemma of cultural differences is culture shock; a disease suffered by individuals living in a new cultural environment. According to Chapdelaine and Alexitch (2004), culture shock results from the loss of well-known cultural signs and symbols, causing individuals to experience anxiety, frustration, and helplessness. The issue of culture shock is important to this study, because most international students experience it in some degree during the adaptation stage. However, at some point in time, failure of adjustment may result in international students feeling homesick or lonely (Akanwa, 2016).

In a recent study conducted among 900 international students in Australia, Russell, Rosenthal and Thomsonet (2010) found that 41 percent of international student's experience substantial levels of stress. This stress could be from homesickness, cultural shock, or perceived discrimination. Yi, Lin and Kishimoto (2003) conducted a study in a major university in Texas on the utilization of counselling services by international students. This study aimed at understanding why international students seek counselling services. The data collected over six years of the study indicated that many international students, when having difficulties or psychological concerns, lean on family and friends.

Unfortunately, not all students have the support they need and many people were not empathetic for hosting international students. Although the university provided a counselling service, it was not widely used by international students. Many saw counselling as a replacement for family and friends, only to be used if a student did not have any friends or relatives. An implication from this study could be that international students should be provided an understanding of possible options such as counselling as professional advice to assist in adapting to their new life in the host universities.

Language within the Academic Setting

Many challenges also occur in the academic setting. Language is considered one of the greatest academic issues hindering smooth adjustment for international students (Akanwa, 2016; Galloway & Jenkins, 2005). The following studies highlighted international students' challenges in their academic learning (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002). Language barriers can hinder

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socio-cultural adaptation and academic achievement of international students. Language differences may cause possible confusion among people from different nations. The adjustment challenges are mainly related to English language proficiency and culture. Several studies in the past have indicated that overseas students have problems understanding and communicating in English (Hegarty, 2014; Wang, 2004). Language is a major problem encountered by international students who come from a non-English-speaking background. Often their lack of proficiency in English causes great difficulties in their studies (Wang, 2004).

In Wang's (2004) investigation of international students studying in America found that students experience uneasiness and embarrassment when studying overseas. It has also been observed that Asian students are known to be quiet members in classrooms who rarely participate in discussions. They conclude that one reason may be the lack of proficiency in spoken English that prevents students from speaking up (Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000). Similarly, writing style differences may also result in plagiarism, as students might not understand the real meaning of plagiarism or even at times because it is acceptable in some cultures to copy an expert (Bamford, Marr, Pheiffer, & Wever-Newth, 2002), or sometimes students may lack confidence in using their own words.

Similarly, Kown (2009) pointed out that international students were faced with challenges including reading and writing as well as difficulties in adjusting to the Western educational traditions that consists of independent learning, critical analysis, and linear development of ideas. These factors

contribute to the reasons for failure to achieve academic success by international students (Akanwa, 2016; Andrade, 2006; Holmes, 2004).

Terui (2011) examined six international students' struggles in interacting with native speakers using ethnographic methods. Findings from this study showed that international students had to pretend to understand the conversational contents exchanged with native English speakers due to their limited language proficiency. At times, a low English proficiency level would result in a negative impression from a professor because the professor perceived that the international student was not well-prepared for class.

Prejudice and Discrimination

International students still experience prejudice and discrimination by host students. According to Hsiao-ping, Garza and Guzman (2016), in many aspects, international students perceive the isolation and loneliness when they are studying in host countries. Beoku-Betters (2004) observed that international students' inability speak the accent of host nations lead to isolation and loneliness. This normally affects the academic performance of students in terms of their contributions in class as well as submission of assignment and term papers on time.

The result of this type of treatment on part of the university professor prompted international students to feel that they did not have the support needed from the school, and they perceived these responses from the professor as prejudicial attitudes toward them. These studies show that international students lack support in their academic learning. Racism and stereotypes still exist for international students, and this is an important finding that

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universities should consider when hosting international students (Akanwa, 2016).

Robertson, Line, Jones and Thomas (2000) surveyed staff's experiences with international students. The findings indicated that staffs were not empathetic due to the students' language proficiency. They criticized international students for not taking responsibility for their academic advancement. Many studies have also discussed students' challenges in language and their new life in the US. Liu (2011) used her own experiences as an example to discuss her struggles as an international student in Canada. Liu expressed that her lack of English proficiency became a barrier for successful participation in host community. She could not understand what her instructors and classmates were talking about in her graduate-level classes. She even had difficulty solving everyday problems, such as taking the correct buses, grocery shopping, or asking for help.

Charles-Toussaint and Crowson (2010) examined 188 American students' negative attitudes toward international students. Findings indicated that American students worry that international students pose threats to their economic, education, physical well-being, beliefs, values, and their social status from anti-immigrant prejudice. Namely, the lack of intercultural communication causes anxiety to interact with people from different groups. When people have anxiety to interact with people from different cultures, they will create a negative stereotype concerning the behaviour of newcomers.

Hitlan, Carillo, Z´arate and Aikman (2007) studied the relationship between realistic and symbolic threats and prejudice against Mexican and Arab immigrants in the Southwestern US. Findings revealed that prejudice

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against Mexican and Arab immigrants was related to realistic and symbolic threats. On the contrary, Severiens and Wolff (2008) found that students who feel at home, who are well-connected to fellow students and professors and who take part in extracurricular activities are more likely to be retained in school and successfully graduate from the university. Namely, support from family and society has a positive influence on the study success of students**.**

Theoretical Framework

One key element underpinning social science research is theoretical perspectives; ways of viewing their phenomena of interest. According to Schutt (1999) theory is seen as a logically interrelated set of propositions about empirical reality. To Simon (1996), theory also gives us a language to talk and communicate about a phenomenon. The migration systems theory and the push-pull theory of international migration were used explain the factors that influence international students' choice of tertiary education in destination countries. Therefore, this theoretical framework seeks to provide logically interrelated set of propositions to the empirical findings of this study.

Migration Systems Theory

The migration systems theory is built on Mabogunje's (1970) approach to migration process. A migration system refers to a set of places linked by streams and counter streams of flows of people, services, goods and information which have a tendency to promote further and future movements of people between the places (Mabogunje, 1970). Migration systems theory has largely been shaped by feedback mechanisms, a phenomenon that deals with the flow of information from a destination to an origin that may alter the social construct of both sending and receiving places depending on the type of

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message sent. In his analysis, the significant role of information flow (feed backs) in the migration system cannot be underestimated since it is necessary in encouraging more flows. On the other hand, negative feedbacks from the destination also have the tendency to reduce the flow of people from the destination as well as reduce the flow of people from the origin or a change in the pattern of flow.

Fawcett (1989) and Kritz, Lim and Zlotnik (1992) have expanded the concept of migration systems theory beyond the framework or context of the continent into an international migration systems framework that consists of places within various countries that are linked by cost and flow of people, data, information, goods and services. Ivy (2010) suggests that migration system plays an important role in the motivation of students to go to University depending on their ethnic origin. For example, African and Asian Pakistani students are strongly influenced by their family in selecting Higher Education abroad. On the other hand, Afro-Caribbean students' motivation display a stronger association with their career and Asian Indian students are more strongly associated with social aspects (Ivy, 2010).

There are a few personal factors that influence students' decision, which are academic performance, ethnic group, gender, parental involvement, and financial constraints (Ivy, 2010). China's one child policy and Confucian heritage have the potential to significantly affect the Higher Education abroad decision making of their children (Bodycott, 2009). Chinese parents ensured the best for their only child through Higher Education abroad, which would provide long-term social and economic benefits in return. Lee and Morrish, (2011) suggest that higher education marketers should target Chinese students

and parents in different ways. For instance, Higher Education institutes could highlight the institution's ability to provide the best for their children to Chinese parents while emphasising the institution's ability to assist. Feedback mechanism plays a role in international students' mobility to Ghana.

Linking the migration system theory to this study, this theory helps outline and explain migratory processes to influencing choice of higher education. It explains how significant flow of information from host countries to origin countries could shape and motivate the process of pursuing higher education. This flow of information could be extended to academic performance, ethnic group, gender, parental involvement, and financial constraints. If prospective international students receive positive information about host University or country, it is likely to influence their decision to choose that university or country as a place for career advancement.

For instance, given that language is one of the factors that informs the decision to study in a country, as literature suggest, when a prospective international student receive the information that it will be easy to communicate with natives or other students in the host university or country, that can influence his or her decision to study in that country. However, when he or she realises that it will be difficult to communicate with others, it can deter him or her from choosing that university or country as a place of study. Similarly, the academic system or environment might influence the kind of feedback they receive as international students. For instance, former international students are likely to send a positive feedback and sometime make recommendation to prospective international students when the academic system of Host University is flexible and their certificate is highly

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recognised. This might influence the choice of university for prospective international students.

Push-pull Theory

The push-pull theory of migration was first coined by Ravenstein of England in the 19th century. The theory stated that people migrate because of factors that push them out of their existing nation and factors that pull them into another. The theory was later redefined by Everette Lee in 1966. Lee formulated some factors that led to spatial mobility of population in any area. These factors included among others factors associated with the place of origin, place of destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors. To Lee (1975), each place possesses a set of positive and negative factors. While positive factors are the circumstances that act to hold people within it, or attract people from other areas, negative factors tend to repel them.

The push-pull factors are those factors that attract or repeal people from a particular concern. As this study is looking at the factors that encourage or discourage international students from selecting and participating in particular tertiary institutions outside their home countries, it was found that the push-pull theory of international migration is most suitable theory that can underpin the study. The push-pull theory of international migration is a classic model that is commonly used to explain student migration, as it allows identifying push and pull factors that work in conjunction to affect student decision-making (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Push factors are the social, political, and economic forces within the home country that initiate a student's decision to pursue education overseas, such as high levels of student competition for university entrance due to overpopulation (Bodycott & Lai,

2012). Pull factors, on the other hand, are those that induce students to choose one particular country over another, such as the knowledge and awareness of an institution's reputation, recommendations by peers and relatives, and ability to work in the host country (Mazzarol, Soutar, & Thein, 2001).

Most extant studies on international student migration flows focus on one level of analysis, such as examining push-pull factors influencing students' decision to study overseas (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002), or marketing strategies employed by individual institutions (Mazzarol, Soutar, Smart, & Choo, 2001) for the purpose of international student recruitment. Some examples of the push factors and pull factors in the current study were cost of tuition, cost of living in the host country, reputation of institution, political stability of the host country, medium of instruction, failure to gain alternative admission among others. Such approach implicitly neglects the fact that students' choice to study overseas is affected by numerous, complex, and often interrelated factors that operate at several levels. For instance, the push-pull model tends to treat pull factors as immutable and clearly apparent to the students. This study contributes to the literature by examining these complex phenomena. In particular, it synthesizes the micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis, which are all interconnected.

This current study discusses the micro level from the perspective that, essentially every decision to study abroad is made by the individual student, often with input from his/her immediate family (Mazzorol & Soutar, 2002; Bodycott, 2009). The role the family plays is very instrumental in the decision of the international student to study abroad. In our sub region, our culture demands that children, and for that matter students, must obey and respect

parents/the family (Bodycott, 2009). That is, parents and family members are involved in most of the decisions. As such, when one decides to study abroad, the person is more likely to consult the family.

At the meso level, most institutions are increasing under pressure to intrenationalise and diversify their campuses, with the rationale that this shift would ensure graduates are internationally knowledgeable and competitive beyond their borders (Hudzik, 2010). Also many universities have assumed greater autonomy in devising methods to secure operating funds, and most have adopted increasing tuition fees as the main strategy as a result in the decrease in government funding (Magnusson, 2000; Godard, 2010). However, many also strive to increase the number of international students and have started offering language programs to assist with this process (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2010). This creates an environment in which universities compete with each other to attract and retain students in order to maximize their competitiveness in the global market and to achieve a worldwide reputation as an excellent and renowned higher education institution (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2010; Newson, Polster, & Woodhouse, 2012). Hence, the competition for international students among universities characterizes the meso-level of internal competition within Ghana.

The macro level analysis considers issues of national marketing for international students (Chen, 2008). Providing education at the tertiary level in Ghana is largely the university's responsibility but issues of immigrant visas and identification cards as international students fall under the remit of the government. It also uncovers the rationales and the broader context within which international students are choosing to study in Ghana. The theory will

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help explain some of the push and pull factors that international students would consider as influencing their choices.

Conceptual Framework

This section looks at the conceptual framework of the study and how it relates to the theory discussed. This section is essential because the conceptual link of factors influencing the choice of tertiary education cannot be underestimated. The conceptual framework establishes the relationship between concepts in a pictorial form (Blaikie, 2009). Researchers use the conceptual framework to demonstrate and explain the relationships between the variables used in a study. The main variables in this study are determinants of choice of tertiary institution (economic, social and other related factors) among international students. The rate of turnover of international students' quest for tertiary education in host countries depends largely on their ability to experience these influencing factors.
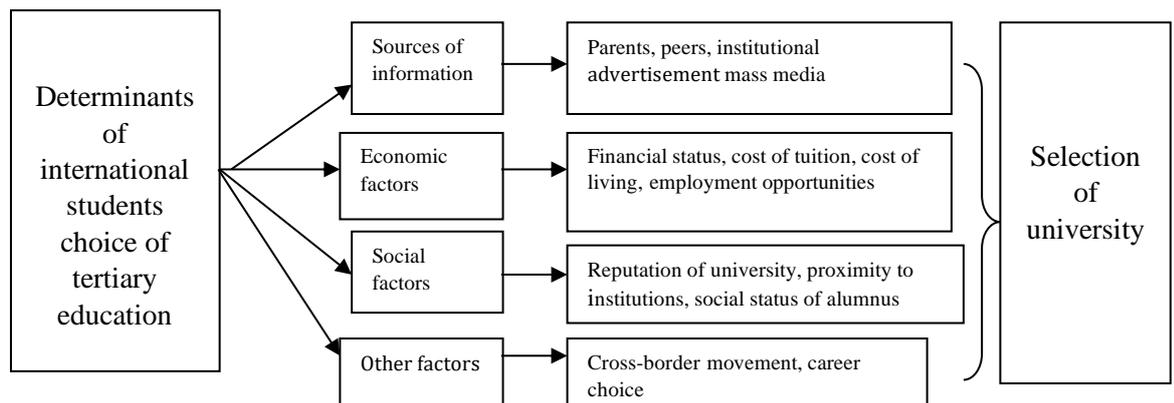
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework on the Determinants of International Students' Choice of Tertiary Institutions

Source: Authors construct based on literature (2018)

In Figure 1, the conceptual framework of the study depicts that there are multiple factors that influence international students' choice of tertiary education. These factors according to the conceptual framework are

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categorised as; sources of information, economic, social and other related factors. This means that international students faced relative factors that affect their university choice and decisions. These have been identified as "push and pull" factors, which operate along the students' decision-making process in the global market. Therefore, linking the migration systems theory to the conceptual framework, one can deduce that the flow of information from host countries to origin countries could shape and motivate the process of pursuing higher education. The information can be obtained from parents, peers, institutional advertisement and the media. In addition, information from their alumni, in the form of career choice, reputation of the university, cost of living, proximity to the institution among others, can influence the choices made by prospective international students about a tertiary institution.

Chapter Summary

The above literature had discussed different examples from different populations, and these studies demonstrated the international students' acculturative stress. The acculturative stress refers to a variety of negative outcomes for international students. For example, the literature has noted that the challenges experienced by international students often trigger feelings of uneasiness, insecurity, depression, anxiety, and loss or academic pressures, language difficulties, feelings of inferiority, difficulties in adjusting to new food or cultural values, lack of support, perceived discrimination, and homesickness. The theory discussed that underpins the study is the migration system theory and the push-pull theory of migration. The conceptual framework also underlined the different determinants of international students' choice of tertiary institution for their higher education studies.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter describes the research paradigm and approaches used to undertake the study. It also covers discussions on the research design including the study area, the target population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data processing analysis as well as ethical considerations.

Research Design

One important element in social science research is to consider the important differences between research paradigms and matters of ontology and epistemology (Flowers, 2009). Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality. Epistemology, on the other hand, concerns what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study. The research paradigm adopted for this study is derived from the philosophical position namely positivism. The positivist position is derived from that of natural science and is characterised by the testing of hypothesis developed from existing theory (hence deductive or theory testing) through measurement of observable social realities. It follows from the positivist ontology that 'objective knowledge' is possible, for there is a fixed and unchanging reality which research can accurately access and tap. Thus, the fundamental characteristic of positivism is the contention that the methods, concepts and procedural rules of the natural sciences can, and should be applied to the study of social phenomena (Bryman, 2002; Grix, 2004).

The positivisists philosophy therefore justify the researcher's use of quantitative methods to explain and examine the factors that affect

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international students' choice of tertiary education. The choice of the method was informed by the objectives of the study. These objectives required that the research embraced the quantitative method to understand the factors that motivate international students to pursue university education. Thus, employing the quantitative method to address these objectives was appropriate. These factors would best be explained using numbers or figures.

Based on the research paradigm, the study adopted the quantitative approach. The quantitative method is based on positivism which is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond (Bryman, 2004) and perceives knowledge about the social world as gained by observation and the recording of social facts. As stated earlier, the researcher adopted the quantitative methods in order to obtain quantitative data to address the objectives of the study.

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Descriptive surveys are a type of research design involving the collection and analysis of large amounts of quantitative data from a sizeable population using descriptive and inferential statistics (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). One intention of the descriptive survey design is that, it tries to identify relevant educational phenomena and the variables that intervene at a first step for further studies in foreign universities (Owens, 2002).

The survey design is a unique research method because it gathers information from first-hand sources, and uses the most unbiased representation of its population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Surveys are typically selected when information is to be collected from a large number of people or

when answers are needed to a clearly defined set of questions as the case of this study. Surveys are good tools for obtaining information on a wide range of topics when in-depth probing of responses is not necessary, and they are useful for both formative and summative purposes.

The survey design was employed because, it allowed for a wide range of data collection strategies including the use of questionnaires and interviews and a combination of methods providing a quicker rate of responses and the strategy provides cost effective means of collecting data and handling them. It has the added advantage that it describes, explains and explores the research purpose (Pickard, 2006). Hence, this design helped obtain data that will describe, explain and explore the factors that influence international students' choice of tertiary education in University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Also, the research approach for the study is the quantitative research approach. The quantitative approach operates by developing testable hypothesis and theories, which lend themselves to generalisation. It is usually applied in the natural sciences and useful for data of numeric nature. Questionnaires, surveys, personality tests and other standardised research instruments are some of the data collection techniques used under this approach.

Study Areas

University of Ghana (UG)

The University of Ghana (UG) is the University of interest and it is the oldest and has the largest population of international students of the over fifty (50) Universities in Ghana (University of Ghana Basic Statistics, 2018). It is

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prestigious and one of the best in West Africa. It was founded in 1948 as the University College of Gold Coast, and was originally an affiliate of the University of London, which supervised its academic programmes and awarded degrees. The University is situated in Accra, which is the capital of Ghana. It became an autonomous institution in 1962.

The University offers both undergraduate and post- graduate academic programmes and currently has a student population of about 40,000 enrolled on regular sandwich and distance education and other students from affiliate institutions (University of Ghana Basic Statistics, 2018). The growing number of international students come from over seventy countries and enrol in programmes offered in the university and other special programmes designed for them. Its vision is to become a world-class research – intensive University over the next decade as well as making it attractive for international students and its mission is to create an enabling environment that makes the University increasingly relevant to national and global development through cutting-edge research as well as high quality teaching and learning.

There are currently a number of international and Ghanaian institutions that hold affiliation with the University and it has established several links with Universities in Africa, Europe, and North America for students, faculty and staff exchange as well as collaborative research (University of Ghana, 2018). It is situated at Legon, about twelve kilometres northeast of the centre of Accra. The medical school is in Korle-Bu, with a teaching hospital and secondary campus in the city of Accra. It also has a graduate school of Nuclear and Allied Sciences at the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission, making it one of the few universities in Africa offering programmes in nuclear

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sciences. It also has facilities such as the Balme library, which is the biggest library in the sub region, and the International Programmes Office and the Institute of African Studies. Starting from 2014/2015 academic year the University of Ghana adopted the collegiate system and thus categorised all schools and departments under four colleges which are College of Basic and Applied sciences, College of Humanities, College of Education and College of Health Science.

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology is a university in Kumasi, Ashanti, Ghana. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology is the public university established in the country, as well as the largest university in Kumasi Metropolis and Ashanti region. The University has its roots in the plans of the King Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh I to establish a university in Kumasi as part of his drive towards modernization of his Ashanti kingdom. This plan never came to fruition due to the clash between British Empire expansion and the desire for King Prempeh I to preserve his Ashanti kingdom's independence. However, his younger brother and successor, King Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh II, upon ascending to the Golden Stool in 1935, continued with this vision.

The dream of the Prempehs became a reality when the building started on what was to be called the Kumasi College of Technology (www.knust.edu.gh). The Kumasi College of Technology offered admission to its first students to the engineering faculty in 1951 (they entered in 1952), and an Act of Parliament gave the university its legal basis as the Kumasi College of Technology in 1952. The main university campus, which is about seven

square miles in area, is about eight miles (13 km) to the east of Kumasi, the Ashanti Regional capital (www.knust.edu.gh). The principal officers of the university are the chancellor, chairman of the University Council and vice-chancellor. Governance is carried out by the University Council, primarily through the Academic Board.

Students participate in the administration of the university through their representatives serving on the University Council, Academic Board, the Welfare Services Board, Faculty and Departmental Boards, Residence Committee, Library Committee and on the Hall Councils. KNUST has, since January 2005, transformed from its previous centralized system of administration into a decentralized collegiate system. Under this system, the faculties have been condensed into six colleges including College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, College of Health Sciences, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Arts and Built Environment, College of Engineering and College of Science (www.knust.edu.gh).

Population

According to Fink (1995), the criteria for the inclusion of a unit in a survey are based on characteristics of respondents who are eligible for the participation in the survey. For this reason, the target population for the study consists of all international students of University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. This target population is made up of undergraduate and graduate international students in University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. These universities were chosen because of their relatively high population of international students. They attract a lot of students from neighbouring

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countries as well as other continents of the world. According to data as at 2017/2018 academic year from the University of Ghana there are 745 registered international students (UG Basic Statistics, 2018). Similarly, in the same academic year the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology has a total number of registered international students to be 820 (KNUST Basic Statistics, 2018)

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

The study used stratified sampling technique to select respondents. Based on the quantitative methods, the stratified sampling technique was adopted. In this regard, international students were categorized into two stratum namely undergraduate and postgraduate students. Students pursuing various programmes at the undergraduate level constituted the undergraduate strata whilst those pursuing Master's and Doctoral degrees constituted the postgraduate strata. The stratified random sampling technique was used to eliminate bias in the selection of the respondents. This is because the technique gave all respondents in the various stratum the chance of being selected for the study.

In arriving at the respective sample size for each level (undergraduate and graduate), the researcher employed the proportionate sampling technique. The proportionate sampling technique is given by: P= (target population)/ (total population) × sample size. After applying the formula in the respective levels, the numbers generated for each institution included UG undergraduate international students=156; graduate international students=10; KNUST undergraduate international students=244; graduate international students=25.

Considering the fact that it would be cumbersome to study the entire population, a subset of the population i.e. sample size was chosen so as to represent the whole population. Sample is viewed not as a whole in itself but as an approximation of the whole. In determining the sample size of this research, Yamane's (1967) Statistical Formula was applied as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N\,(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size

N = population of the study= UG=745 and KNUST=820

e = % level of significance or margin of tolerable error= 0.05

The researcher chose 5% as level of significance or margin of tolerable error.

The translation of the formula is as follows:

University of Ghana

$$n = \frac{745}{1 + 745\,(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 165.93$$

$$n = 166$$

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

$$n = \frac{820}{1 + 820\,(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 268.85$$

$$n = 269$$

Therefore, a sample size for University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology was 166 and 269 respondents respectively. Thereafter, the simple random technique was employed to select the sampled respondents and gave each respondent the equal chance of being

selected. In doing so, the researcher numbered pieces of papers from 1-745 for University of Ghana and 1-820 for Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. These papers were folded, placed in an enclosed box and shuffled frequently. The researcher invited a third party to pick 166 and 269 respondents made up of both undergraduates and graduate students for University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology respectively. With the help of a sampling frame (register), the researcher was able to trace the numbers to their respective respondents. In sum, the sample size for the study was 435.

Table 1: Breakdown of Sample According to Methods and Instruments

Respondents/programmes	Methods	Instruments	Sample (n)
University of Ghana			
Undergraduate	simple random	questionnaire	156*
Graduate	simple random	questionnaire	10*
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology			
Undergraduate	simple random	questionnaire	244*
Graduate	simple random	questionnaire	25*
Total			435*

Source: Field work, Paddy (2018)

Data Collection Instruments

Considering the objectives of the current study, the nature of the data required answering the research questions and the fact that this study employed the quantitative approach, the appropriate ways to collect adequate data for the research was via questionnaires. The study, therefore, employs survey questionnaire, drawing upon the strengths of this method to improve the quality or validity of the data. Structured questionnaire was used as instruments for the study (See Appendix A). The choice of the instruments was influenced by the research design adopted for the study. The development

of the instruments is informed by the literature and the research objectives. The structured questionnaire instrument comprises five sections, with reference to respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and the study objectives. The first section contained questions on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The remaining four sections targeted the study objectives and elicited responses in that regard.

Validity and Reliability

Considering the choice of study design, which adopts quantitative methods of data collection, some measures are put in place to ensure validity and reliability of the methods. According to Bhattacherjee (2012), validity refers to the extent to which a measure adequately represents the underlying construct that it is supposed to measure. For the quantitative component of the research, validity was ensured as follows:

Internal validity is the extent to which the effects detected in the study are a true reflection of reality rather than the result of the effects of extraneous variables (Burns & Grove, 1995). In this study, internal validity is ensured by pre-testing the instruments on a different group and also making sure that maturation do not take place on the field as the data collection.

Construct validity examines the fit between the conceptual definitions and operational definitions of variables (Burns & Grove, 1995). The study assured validity by training the field assistants to collect data, pre-testing the instruments and ensuring that the researcher personally collects most of the data. External validity is concerned with the extent to which study findings can be generalized beyond the sample used in the study (Burns & Grove, 1995). In this study, it is enhanced by the choice of quantitative approach to

ensure representativeness and higher response rates. Besides, the phenomenon under investigation is fairly homogeneous within the population.

Reliability is the quality of measurement method that suggests that the same data is collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomena (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Reliability is assured by using the same instruments with the same set of questions for all the respondents. Attempts are also made to maintain the same degree of objectivity. The Cronbach's alpha test was done to check the reliability of the instrument. Instruments for data collection were pre-tested among 15 international students at the University of Cape Coast. The snowballing method was adopted to select international students. The researcher was able to identify other international students with the help of the 1st respondent. This is done to ensure the congruence and reliability of data collection methods (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). It enabled the researcher identify ambiguity if any, among the questions asked. Again, it assessed the clarity in questions that are going to be posed to respondents during the fieldwork, whether the respondents understood questions asked to solicit appropriate responses.

Data Collection Procedures

A letter of introduction (Appendix B) from the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, University of Cape Coast enabled me to seek permission from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Centre for International Education (CIE) and University of Ghana, Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), to first collect information from all their international students in order to get total population of student for the study. Secondly, the letter also assisted me

to introduce myself and seek permission from all the respondents before the due date.

The researcher trained two field research officers to assist in the fieldwork. I introduced my field officers and myself and asked for permission from the Centre's in charge of international students in the various institutions to conduct the data collection exercise. In doing all these, I addressed all requests for clarification on the questionnaires. The respondents were comfortable in responding to the questionnaire because I assured them confidentiality. The duration for the data collection was two months. That is, one month at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and the remaining at University of Ghana.

Data Analysis Procedures

For the quantitative analysis, the data collected were edited manually to correct any duplication. The edited data were coded and statistically analysed using Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) software (version 21). Basic descriptive statistics were performed and the results were presented in frequencies and percentages using tables and charts as well as mean and standard deviations. The relationships between variables were analysed using chi-square test to show which among the factors play an important role in influencing the choices of international students regarding university education in University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Ethical Considerations

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), research ethics relates to questions about how to formulate and clarify a research topic, design a research and gain access, collect data, process and store data, analyse data and write up research findings in a moral and responsible way. Ethical consideration in the field is inevitable when the work involves others, whether they are colleagues, respondents, assistants, or people in positions of authority (Perecman & Curran, 2006). Ethical issues are highly relevant and require due considerations.

Ethical considerations involved the process of submitting the instruments for the data collection to the various stakeholders at both universities for scrutiny to ensure accuracy. The researcher carefully identified herself with a job identity card and request for an introduction letter from the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, U.C.C. Respondents were informed about the research objectives, the type and the sensitivity of the questions. Questions on issues that might inconvenient respondents were avoided. Respondents were given the opportunity to withdraw from the research when uncomfortable questions are asked. Anonymity was also ensured while information gathered from the respondents was under lock and keyed and properly stored by the researcher for the sole purpose of the study. Authorities cited in the work were properly acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This section presents the findings from the field. Data were analysed and discussed based on the research objectives. The chapter is divided into various subsections. The first subsection focuses on the background characteristics of respondents. The other subsections are presented by research questions which focused on the determinants of international students' choice of a particular public university, how international students' experiences in a public university meet their expectations and the challenges international students face in pursuing university education. Although these research questions were discussed separately, the findings in both University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology were sparingly compared.

Background of Respondents

The background of respondents is in relation to age, sex, marital status, level of students, programme or department of study in both universities. The subsequent section takes this up for discussion.

Age of Respondents

According to the Ghana Statistical Service [GSS] (2012), the majority of the youth population in tertiary education in Ghana ranges between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The ages of respondents for this study fall within this range although the unit of analysis are international students. The results gathered from the field were categorised into age intervals of six. This helped the researcher identify the majority of international students

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who fell within a specific age interval. Table 2 presents the age categories of respondents in University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

Years Percent	UG			KNUST	
	Frequency	Percent			Frequency Percent
15-20	65	39.2	151	56.1
21-25	79	47.6	81	30.1
26-30	10	6	25	9.3
31-35	15	7.2	12	4.5
Total	166	100	269	100

Source: Field work, Paddy (2019)

The age categories of international students in both study sites depict quiet a similar trend. Given the age range of 15 and 35 years, the majority of international students fell between 15-25 years. As shown in Table 2, almost 48 percent aged between 21-25 in University of Ghana while approximately 56 percent of international students aged between 15-20 years in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The least age category recorded in both study sites was international students between 26-30 years and 31-35 years. They constituted 6 percent and 4.5 percent in University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology respectively. It can be deduced that the greater number of international students are within their teen and youthful age.

Gender of Respondents

Information on the gender of respondents helped the researcher determine the majority of the sex group enrolled into Ghanaian universities.

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The sample of 166 respondents from University of Ghana (UG) consisted of 79 (47.9%) males and 87 (52.4%) females. On the other hand, form a sample of 269 respondents in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), 149 (55.4%) were males and 120 (44.6%) were females. The gender enrolment of international students in both universities appears to be different. This is because the study showed that the majority of the respondents in UG were females while KNUST recorded higher number of male international students.

From a gendered perspective, the researcher wanted to compare the sex group (men or women) and factors that influenced international students' choice of their current institution. In doing so, the researcher selected one variable each from the economic, social and academic factors and related it to sex. Table 3 displays the relationship between sex and economic, social and academic factors that informed their choices. The researcher combined the responses into Yes and No to derive the total percentages. A cross tabulation of sex and determinants of choice into the university showed similar trend in both study institutions. It is observed from Table 3 that as compared to 45 and 49.7 percent of their male counterparts, 55 and 50.3 percent of female international students respectively opted to study in UG and KNUST because they expressed excitement over meeting and learning from people from diverse cultural background.

Table 3: Sex and Determinants of International Students' Choice into Current Institution

		Sex of Respondents		Total
		Male n (%)	Female n (%)	
University of Ghana				
Meeting people with diverse culture	Yes	58(45)	71(55)	129(100)
	No	21(56.8)	16(43.2)	37(100)
Academic value of degree	Yes	63(55.8)	54(46.2)	117(100)
	No	16(32.7)	33(67.3)	49(100)
Economic value of degree	Yes	57(57)	43(43)	100(100)
	No	22(33.3)	44(66.7)	66(100)
Total		79(47.6)	87(52.4)	166(100)
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology				
Meeting people with diverse culture	Yes	94(49.7)	95(50.3)	189(100)
	No	55(68.8)	25(31.3)	80(100)
Academic value of degree	Yes	130 (55.3)	105(44.7)	235(100)
	No	19(55.9)	15(44.1)	34(100)
Economic value of degree	Yes	111(60.7)	72(39.3)	183(100)
	No	38(44.2)	48(55.8)	86(100)
Total		149(55.4)	120(44.6)	269(100)

Source: Fieldwork, Paddy (2019)

A cross tabulation of sex and determinants of choice into the university showed similar trend in both study institutions. It is observed from Table 3 that as compared to 45 and 49.7 percent of their male counterparts, 55 and 50.3 percent of female international students respectively opted to study in UG and KNUST because they expressed excitement over meeting and learning from people from diverse cultural

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background. A critical look at Table 3 showed that apart from the zeal to learn new culture that influenced female's choice into their current institution, it appeared that academic and economic values of their degree programmes was not a major influence as compared to the former. This is because the more than half of male international students (55.8% and 57%) and (55.3% and 60.7%) stated that obtaining academic degree and its economic value were major reasons for choosing to study in both UG and KNUST respectively. It can therefore be deduced that, in both institutions, male international students were very much interested in the academic and economic value of the degree to be obtained from the institutions they enrolled while females were much more willing to assimilate to different cultures.

Marital Status of Respondents

This study sought to find out the marital status of international students. A display of respondents reported marital status in both study institutions indicated that the majority of international students were single. The findings from UG revealed just two categories in relation to marital status. That is, 146 (88%) were single and 20 (12%) were married. However, in KNUST, aside 227 (84.4%) and 38 (14.1%) being single and married respectively, the study found that a little over one percent of international students (4=1.5%) were divorced. It can be deduced that the majority of respondents who participated in the study were single in both study institutions.

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Level of Students

The level of international student is critical to the current study as it will help identify the experiences of students as well as the challenges they encounter as far as their decision to enrol as foreign students is concerned. This is against the backdrop that the kind of experiences varies according to the level of the international student. In both study areas, the level of student was categorised as follows: 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 800 and above 800. This is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Level of Students

| Level Percent | UG | | KNUST | |
	Frequency	Percent		Frequency
100	39	23.5	39	
14.5				
200	30	18.1	77	
28.6				
300	54	32.5	75	
27.9				
400	30	18.1	42	15.6
500	2	1.2	7	2.6
600	2	1.2	-	-
800	5	3.0	17	6.3
Above 800	4	2.4	12	4.5
Total	166	100	269	100

Source: Source: Field work, Paddy (2019)

Information gathered on the level of international students indicates a similar trend in both study sites. The results indicated that majority of the students were undergraduates from level 100 to 400. Almost 92 percent of the respondents in UG (92.2%) and KNUST (87%) were undergraduates. This is probably because obtaining the first degree for most international students is necessary requirement. It is however not surprising that both study areas recorded eight and 13 percent of international students offering programmes beyond the first degree.

Programmes of Study

As part of the demographic background of the respondents, the study sought to find out the programmes they offer. The rationale behind this demographic characteristic is that the experiences of international students may vary depending on the programme they offer. All other things held constant, international students whose programmes are quite involving and time consuming might have a different experience from those whose programmes are quite manageable. This might also influence the challenges they are likely to encounter as students. For both universities, the programmes of study was categorised into Humanities, Business Studies, Medical Sciences, Physical Science, Educational Sciences and Social Sciences. Table 5 presents the programme of study of international students in UG and KNUST.

International students who offered Humanities in UG were more than a third (38.6%) of the respondents and twice as much as those in KNUST. On the other hand, the least (Educational Sciences= 1.2%) offered

programme by international students was recorded in UG. Perhaps this might be due to the fact that UG is by structure an Arts oriented university.

Table 5: Programme of Study

Level	UG		KNUST	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Humanities/Arts	64	38.6	42	15.6
Business Studies	11	6.6	25	9.3
Medical Sciences	35	21.1	84	31.2
Physical Sciences	25	15.1	99	36.8
Educational Sciences	2	1.2	7	2.6
Social Sciences	29	17.5	12	4.5
Total	166	100	269	100

Source: Source: Field work, Paddy (2019)

In KNUST, it was quiet evident that per the science orientation of the institution, most of the international students (31.2 and 36.8%) offered Medical and Physical Sciences respectively. Comparatively, these figures were much higher in KNUST as compared to UG. Other programmes such as Social Sciences and Business Studies had smaller intake for both universities but comparatively, KNUST recorded higher number of international students (9.3%) offering business studies while UG recorded 17.5 percent offering Social Sciences.

Research Question One: What Determines International Students' Choice of a Particular Public University in Ghana?

The first research question of the study was to explore the determinants of international students' choice of a university in Ghana. Responses from all the sampled students in both study sites indicated that there are a number of factors that determined the choices international

students made as far as applying for university education in Ghana was concerned. One of the factors is sources and availability of information about university. In this regard, international students were asked whether they had information about their respective institutions via social media, adverts in print, peer recommendations and parents or family recommendation among others. The responses revealed that international students have multiple sources of information about their current institutions prior to their enrolment. Their responses are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Sources of Information about the University

	UG		KNUST	
Sources	n	%	n	%
Advert on Social Media	12	7.2	35	13
Advert on Print	3	1.8	2	0.7
Peer recommendation	29	17.5	35	13
Parent/family recommendation	74	44.6	138	51.3
Alumni	6	3.6	38	14.1
Institution's website	57	34.3	55	20.4
Agents	9	5.4	9	3.3
Others specify	33	19.9	5	1.9

Source: Fieldwork, Paddy (2019)

About half of the international students in both study sites identified parents and family recommendations as major sources of information in their choice of university. Thus, 51.3 percent of international students in KNUST compared to 44.6 percent in UG had parents and family recommendations as one of their sources of information on their choice of current university. This confirms literature, which has identified family/ relatives as the main sources of information for international students to

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pursing higher education (Atarah & Peprah, 2014; Kotler & Keller, 2009). Again, it corroborates Obermeit's (2012) and Atarah's and Peprah's (2014) assertions that familial groups such as parents and relatives and belief that friends' advice is the major source of information influencing students' choice of tertiary educational institutions.

The university's websites was also an important source in this regard as more of the international students in both study areas (UG= 34.3; KNUST=20.4%) relied on these sites for information. This confirms Boone's and Kurtz's (2001) argument that tertiary institutions advertise on their websites to create awareness to their prospective customers (the students) and their parents of the academic courses they offer in the schools, to persuade and remind them of the advantages they stand to gain as against other institutions offering same or similar programmes.

It was revealed that agents (UG=5.4%; KNUST=3.3%) and adverts on prints were least reliable sources of information for international students. Comparing the two, the least reported in both UG and KNUST were advert on print media. This contradicts Nan's and Faber's (2004) argument that the source of information for international students' choice is limited to the print media. Similarly, this finding was dissimilar to Pasternak's (2005) assertion that information given by the institution's own printed materials is also very influential in student choice process. This could be as a result of the fact that the only available media at the time was print media but not in today's world where there are other avenues to access information. The findings on agents contradict the argument of Foskett (2006) who acknowledges the important role agents play (career advisers

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and institution's members of staff) in the provision of information on higher educational institutions through email or telephone conversations.

However, international students in KNUST largely consulted their alumni (14.1%) than their counterparts (3.6%) in UG. That is, the proportion of international students who received university's information from alumni was approximately four times higher in KNUST than that in UG. An insignificant proportion, as indicated in the data, on the recommendation by alumni contradicted Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) suggestion that personal recommendations or word-of-mouth referrals of former alumni are main influences of the choices international students make.

The finding of the study also relates well with the migration systems theory by Mabogunje's (1970), which is largely shaped by feedback mechanisms. In his analysis, the significant role of information flow (feed backs) in the migration system cannot be underestimated since it is necessary in encouraging more flows. On the other hand, negative feedbacks from the destination also have the tendency to reduce the flow of people from the destination as well as reduce the flow of people from the origin or a change in the pattern of flow. Ivy (2010) suggests that migration system plays an important role in the motivation of students to go to University depending. Linking this to the findings, it can be deduced that when international students receive positive feedback or favourable information from alumina or agents (career advisers and institution's members of staff) and university's website, it plays an important role in the motivation of students to go to University.

To get further understanding on the sources of information, international students were asked to indicate the kinds of information they received from their various sources. They were asked to indicate a 'yes' or 'no' to some information they had from their sources. This is because these kinds of information could have triggered some behavioural adherence to enrolment into their current institutions. Their responses are summarised in Table 7.

A close look at the data distribution in both study sites gives the indication that a slightly higher proportion of international students in UG had information about their current institution as compared to those in KNUST. For instance, in UG international students had information on the cost of tuition (71.1%), available programmes (85.5%), programme content (65.7%), programme duration (83.1%), safety and security (69.9%), teaching and learning services (65.7%), health services (61.4%) and sporting services (50%). This could probably be stemming from the information they received from the university's websites or had from parents or family members. Although the proportions on the kinds of information with regards to cost of tuition, available programmes (83.3%), programme content (54.6%), programme duration (81.8%), residential accommodation (74.3%), safety and security (62.8%), teaching and learning services (54.3%) international students in KNUST received was relatively higher, it was not as high as it was observed in UG.

Table 7: Statements about the kinds of Information about the University

Statement	Y/N	UG		KNUST	
		N	%	n	%
Cost of tuition	Yes	118	71.1	160	59.6
	No	48	28.9	109	40.5
Available study programme	Yes	142	85.5	224	83.3
	No	24	14.5	45	16.7
Programme Contents	Yes	109	65.7	147	54.63
	No	57	34.3	122	45.4
Programme Duration	Yes	138	83.1	220	81.8
	No	28	16.9	49	18.2
Residential Accommodation	Yes	122	73.5	200	74.3
	No	44	26.5	69	25.7
Safety and Security	Yes	116	69.9	169	62.8
	No	50	30.1	100	37.2
Teaching and Learning Services	Yes	107	65.7	146	54.3
	No	57	34.3	123	45.7
Health Services	Yes	102	61.4	123	45.7
	No	64	38.6	146	54.3
Sporting services	Yes	83	50.0	85	31.6
	No	83	50.0	184	68.4

Source: Fieldwork, Paddy (2019)

The data showed that the majority of international students in KNUST did not receive information of health and sporting services. Whereas half of the sample of UG international students received information about sporting services, about three quarter of those in KNUST did not. It can be deduced from the data distribution that international students in UG and KNUST, to a larger extent, were aware and well informed about their respective institutions prior to their enrolment. Except for health and sporting services in KNUST, international students in both study areas had some form of information about the current information.

In addition to information sources and availability, the researcher focused on the academic, social and economic factors as revealed in the literature and the Migration Theories that guided the study. Responses were

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categorised into Yes or No following a number of questions they were asked. Additionally, the study employed the use of means and average means to compare these factors. To know the level of importance attached to the factors that informed their choices, the researcher compared the averages Means of the economic, social and academic factors. The factor that recorded the highest Mean indicated that international students placed much emphasis on it before making the decision to enroll into the university. On the other hand, the variable with the least Mean played little role in their choice of university. In this regard, Table 8 employed the means and percentage scores to describe the responses of international students. The essence of Mean values is to find the average means under the economic, social and academic categories in order to compare the weight of the average means across universities.

Results from Table 8 gives a description of factors that determined the choices international students made concerning their current institutions. The data showed contrasting variations when it comes to the economic, social and academic factors in both study sites. With regard to the economic factors that influenced their choices, it came out quite clearly that in UG, international students placed more premium on the cost of tuition (0.72, 72.9%), cost of living in the host country in the host University (0.73, 72.9%) and financial status of sponsors (.069, 69.9%). The study arrived at these indicators based on their mean values of their responses that exceeded the average mean for economic factors under University of Ghana. This was not to say that other indicators such as the economic value of the degree to be obtained (0.60; 60.2%), traveling cost to the host university (0.59,

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59.6%) and the job prospects available after completion (0.54, 54.8%) were not relevant.

In response to the job prospect after completion, the outcome of the current study was similar to Ciriaci and Muscio (2011) argument that international students chose their institutions because of its positive effect on employability upon graduation. In a similar vein, it supports Hagel and Shaw (2008) finding that the academic reputation was an important factor for international students. Indeed, although their mean scores fell below the average mean score (0.64), the data depicted that the proportion of international students who responded 'yes' to these indicators were more than half of the sample.

In KNUST, on the other hand, the means and percentage values of cost of tuition (0.76, 76.2%), travel cost to the host university (0.69, 69.5%), and economic value of the degree (0.68, 68%) were higher than the average mean. This implied that international students in KNUST were highly informed by these issues before they enrolled in the institution. Based on the responses of international students in KNUST, the proportions of cost of living in the host country (0.64, 64.3%), financial status of sponsors (0.65, 65.8%) and job prospects (0.56, 56.5%) showed that the majority of international students considered these factors but not that much simply because their mean values compared to the average mean was less.

As stated by Agrey and Lampadan (2014), the finances and scholarships obtained by international students are considered as basic consideration and have desired impact on student choice into tertiary education. The study also contradicts Drewes and Michael (2006) argument

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that students prefer universities closer to home as the additional costs of living away as well as re-location cost make further attending to these institutions less attractive. This is because although the majority of international students were coming from neighbouring countries, they expressed higher cost of living.

Comparing the responses from both institutions, it can be deduced that the cost of tuition was a very important factor for students in both study areas because it runs across universities. Thus, international student in UG and KNUST placed so much premium on the cost of tuition before making the choice to enroll. This might be due to the fact that they also considered the financial status of their sponsors. This assertion is similar to So Jung and Hyun Kyung (2010) finding that one of the most comprehensive factors that informs international students' choice of tertiary education is the cost of tuition involved. This was evident in the data distribution as the mean values of financial status of sponsors (UG=0.69; KNUST=0.65) signal how much they were concerned about the cost involved in pursuing university education, which definitely captures the cost of tuition.

The average means of 0.64 and 0.66 for UG and KNUST respectively also suggest that the economic factors were much influential to the choices international student made in KNUST than in UG. This confirmed their response of the economic value of the degree, as the mean value (0.68) for this response was higher in KNUST than in UG. This could also probably be due to the physical or science programmes run in the KNUST which require a lot of field works; hence demands that students pay huge sum of money to cover that cost. The social determinants of choices

range from the reputation of the institution to the safety and friendly campus

environment as displayed in Table 8. When students were asked to respond

to the social factors that informed their choices, the study revealed that,

aside health care services which appeared not to be a major concern by

international students in both study areas, the majority of them considered

all the other indicators.

Table 8: Determinants of Choices of Current Institutions

	Y/N	n	UG %	Mean	N	KNUST %	Mean
Economic Factors							
Cost of Tuition	Yes	121	72.9	0.72*	205	76.2	0.76*
	No	45	27.1		64	23.8	
Travel Cost to Host	Yes	99	59.6	0.59	187	69.5	0.69*
University	No	67	40.4		82	30.5	
Cost of Living in Host	Yes	121	72.9	0.73*	173	64.3	0.64
Country	No	45	27.1		96	35.7	
Economic Value of	Yes	100	60.2	0.60	183	68.0	0.68*
Degree	No	66	39.8		86	32.0	
Financial Status of	Yes	116	69.9	0.69*	177	65.8	0.65
Sponsors	No	50	30.1		92	34.2	
Job Prospect	Yes	91	54.8	0.54	152	56.5	0.56
	No	75	45.2		117	43.5	
Average Mean				**0.64**			**0.66**

Table 8 contd

	Y/N	N	UG %	Mean	N	KNUST %	Mean
Social Factors							
Reputation of	Yes	127	76.5	0.76*	213	79.2	0.79*
Institution	No	39	23.5		56	20.8	
Search for New Social	Yes	129	77.7	0.77*	67	62.1	0.62*
Experience	No	37	22.3		102	37.9	
Availability of	Yes	105	63.3	0.63*	144	53.5	0.53
Residential	No	61	36.7		125	46.5	
Accommodation							
Political Stability of	Yes	102	61.4	0.61*	146	54.3	0.54
Host Country	No	64	38.6		123	45.7	
Meting People with	Yes	129	77.7	0.77*	188	69.9	0.69*
diverse Culture	No	37	22.3		80	29.7	
Student Support	Yes	120	72.3	0.72*	186	69.1	0.69*
Services	No	46	27.7		83	30.9	
Health Care Services	Yes	68	41.0	0.41	111	41.3	0.41
	No	98	59.0		158	58.7	
Good Sporting	Yes	118	71.1	0.71*	189	70.3	0.70*
Facilities	No	48	28.9		80	29.7	
Safe and Friendly	Yes	121	72.9	0.72*	188	69.9	0.69
Campus Environment	No	45	27.1		81	30.1	
Average Mean				**0.59**			**0.62**
Academic Factors							
Academic Value of	Yes	117	70.5	0.70*	235	87.4	0.87*
Degree	No	49	29.5		34	12.6	
Medium of Instruction	Yes	84	50.6	0.50*	159	59.1	0.59*
	No	82	49.4		110	40.9	
Quality of	Yes	101	60.8	0.60*	177	65.8	0.65*
Infrastructure	No	65	39.2		92	34.2	
Failure to Gain	Yes	30	18.1	0.18	84	31.2	0.31
Alternative Admissions	No	136	81.9		185	68.8	
Average Mean				**0.49**			**0.56**

Source: Fieldwork, Paddy (2019)

Specifically, the study revealed that the mean values for reputation of the institution (UG=0.76; KNUST=0.79), search for new social experience (UG=0.77; KNUST=0.62), availability of residential accommodation (UG=0.63), political stability (UG=0.61), meeting people with diverse cultural background (UG=0.77; KNUST=0.69), student support services (UG=0.72; KNUST=0.69), good sporting facilities

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(UG=0.71; KNUST=0.70) and safe and friendly campus environment (UG=0.72; KNUST=0.69) indicated that these services influenced the choices of students in both universities.

Among all these findings, the reputation of the university appeared to be the most significant factor. This confirms Kusumawati, Yanamandram, and Perera's (2010) assertion that reputation of the institution was the most significant factor in a student's decision for further study. This is in line of the push-pull theory of international migration, which influences international student's decisions. From the findings of the study, reputation of the university is one of the pull factors that drive international students into the host country to study (Mazzarol, Soutar, & Thein, 2001). In relation to accommodation, the study was limited to its availability but Poutvaara (2005) went beyond to assert that the cost of accommodation could influence the choice of international students into the universities.

It also appeared that in search for new experiences, the findings of the current study conforms Sanchez, Fornerino, and Zhang's (2006) study that received usable data from 477 respondents in the U.S., France, and China and indicated that the motivations of studying abroad for the students included improving searching for a new experience, searching for liberty and pleasure, and learning a new language and culture. Again responses on safe and friendly environment corroborates with Agrey and Lampadan (2014) discovery in Thailand that a safe and friendly environment (safe campus as well as supporting faculty) were among the factors that influence students' choice of university.

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The political stability of the host country appeared to be one of the many factors that influenced the choice of university by international students. The finding of the current study confirms Frempong's (2015) study where peace and stability in the country and Ghana's rich cultural heritage are cited by international students as pull factors in their migration decision making processes. The political forces, which fall within the purview of the push factors that influence international students' decision fit the framework of push-pull theory of international migration. Although economic factors appeared to outweigh social factors with respect to choices international students make, Frempong's (2015) reported that the opportunity and awareness cross-cultural exchanges shape decisions of international students more than their perception on economic factors.

Just like the economic factors, international students in KNUST were much influenced by these social and academic factors as compared to their colleagues in UG. The reason is that the average mean for social and academic factors in KNUST (0.62 and 0.56) was relatively higher than that of UG (0.59 and 0.49) respectively. A vertical outlook of average means within the same university showed that, in UG, international students were much concerned about the economic factors (0.64) as compared to the social (0.59) and academic factors (0.49). The data depicted a similar trend in KNUST where the international students viewed economic factors (0.66) ahead of social (0.62) and academic factors (0.56) to determine their choices prior to university enrolment.

This confirms Foskett's (2006) assertion that international students consider more carefully economic factors in times of distress and financial

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difficulty than social factors when making their choices in terms of what determines their choices of universities. The findings of the study on the economic, social and academic factors were informed by the conceptual framework. Although institutions website, political stability search for new social experiences, good sporting facilities and safe and friendly campus environment have not been captured in the conceptual framework, the findings of the study showed these indicators were important factors that influenced international students choice of university.

The provision of health care service is primary to their academic work. Most importantly international students would be comfortable in an environment where health care services are effective and efficient. Surprisingly international students in both universities did not show much concern about the health care service prior to enrolment. Per the findings of this study, the health care service was mild and least recorded determinant of international students' choices in both UG and KNUST since it recorded the same means of 0.41. Given these findings of the study, it appeared international students were much concerned about the former issues to a larger extent as compared to the latter.

Academic factors were captured in the study as part of the indicators that determined the choices of international students in UG and KNUST. As such, the researcher asked respondents to identify among the academic factors that greatly influenced their choice. One out of the four indicators that measured academic factors recorded low proportion. In both study areas, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (UG=0.70, 70.5%; KNUST=0.87, 87%) argued that the academic value of the degree to be

obtained influenced their decisions to enroll into these universities. Similarly, probably based on their sources of information (university's website, peer and parents recommendations as displayed in Table 6), international students' choices were due to the quality of infrastructure (UG=0.60, 60.8%; KNUST=0.65, 65.8%) and medium of instruction (UG=0.50, 50.6%; KNUST= 0.59, 59.1%) in both universities. On the issue of infrastructure, the finding of the study was akin to the idea that physical aspects of the campus such as the quality of the infrastructure and services and career opportunities upon completion affects international students' choice of university (Kusumwati et al., 2010).

On the contrary, the study found that international students in UG (81.9%) and KNUST (68.8%) chose these institutions because they wanted to but not because they failed to gain alternative admissions to another university. This contradicts Mbawuni's and Nimako's (2015) study in Ghana that indicated failure to gain alternative admissions as one of the reasons behind international student choice of university. Comparatively, the findings on economic factors confirm Keskinen, Tiuraniemi and Liimola's (2008) study, which generally indicated only social and economic factors, outweigh academic factors that determine international students' choice of university.

Social and economic factors such as reputation of institution, search for new social experience, meeting people with diverse culture, student support services, good sporting facilities, cost of tuition, financial status of sponsors, travel cost to the to host university and cost of living in host country within the scope of the current study are some of the push-pull

factors that motivate international students from pursing education overseas (Bodycott & Lai, 2012). This also relates to Lee's push-pull theory that indicated reputation of the institution, search for new experience and meeting people with diverse culture as pull factors and cost of tuition, financial status of sponsors and travel cost as push factors that influences international students' choice of university.

In summary, the main determinants for international students' choice of universities in Ghana cut across economic and social elements. These included are cost of tuition, financial status of sponsors, reputation of the institution, search for new experience, and the desire to meet people with diverse culture.

Research Question 2: How do the International Students' experiences in the Universities meet their expectations?

The second research question of this study focused on exploring whether the experiences of international students in their chosen universities have met their expectations. Prior to their choice of the universities, international students had some expectations. The study therefore sought to find out from respondents in both institutions used for the study whether their expectations have been met based on their experiences. In doing so, the researcher used some indicators derived from the literature to measure the academic and social expectations of international students. These indicators were also measured using Likert scale [satisfied (S) and dissatisfied (D)]. This was used to measure how they were satisfied with their social and academic expectations. In addition to this, the researcher conducted a chi-square test to test the significance level (0.05) of their

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expectations using socio-demographic characteristics of international students. This is displayed in Table 9.

Table 9 showed the satisfaction levels of international students in relation to their social and academic experiences. The study revealed that international students were generally satisfied with their experiences as far as academic expectations was concerned.

Table 9: Satisfaction with Social and Academic Experiences of Students

Experience	UG				KNUST			
	Satisfied		Dissatisfied		Satisfied		Dissatisfied	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Academic								
Practical teaching and learning	134	80.7	32	19.3	240	89.2	29	10.8
Easy adjustment to learning environment	136	81.9	30	18.1	205	76.2	64	23.8
Access to library and internet	115	69.3	51	30.7	234	87	35	13
Mentoring	111	66.9	55	33.1	172	63.9	97	36.1
Interaction with lecturers	137	82.5	29	17.5	178	66.2	91	33.8
Interaction with staff	126	75.9	40	24.1	153	56.9	116	43.1
Academic guidance and counseling	120	72.3	46	27.7	184	68.4	85	31.6
Social								
Treatment from native students	139	83.7	27	16.3	165	61.3	104	38.7
Treatment from people outside the schools community	139	83.7	27	16.3	166	61.7	103	38.3
Integration with native students	133	80.1	33	19.9	170	63.9	99	36.1
Social guidance and counseling	126	75.9	40	24.1	207	77	62	23
Safe and friendly campus environment	153	92.2	13	7.8	229	85.1	40	14.9
Communication with people outside the school community	139	83.7	27	16.3	168	62.5	101	37.5
Transport system on campus	138	83.1	28	16.9	197	73.2	72	26.8
Banking services	161	97	5	3	228	84.8	41	15.2
Availability of market centres and malls	144	86.7	22	13.3	223	82.9	46	17.1
Health care services	148	89.2	18	10.8	217	80.7	52	19.3
Sports centers	140	84.3	26	15.7	213	79.2	56	20.8

Source: Fieldwork, Paddy (2019)

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In UG and KNUST, 134(80.7%) and 240 (89.2%) respondents were satisfied with the fact that teaching and learning is practical. Again, international students who found it easy to adjust into the learning environment were more than four times those who found it difficult to adjust in UG but in the case of KNUST respondents who were satisfied were more than three times those who were dissatisfied.

Comparatively more students in UG were satisfied with 'easy adjusting into the environment' than their colleague in KNUST. These findings on 'easy adjustment' confirms Olutokunbo, Ismail and Suandi's (2013) study in Malaysia that revealed that scholars are generally satisfied and able to cope and adjust to the classroom teaching as well as academic environment at Linton University College (LUC) while adapting to host challenges. This is similar to Janjua, Malik and Rahman's (2011) assertion that majority of international students in Pakistan acculturate the learning experiences they brought with them from their homelands in order to adjust in the academic environment of the host university. These findings also fall within the framework of migration system theory where easy adjustment into the academic system or environment might influence the kind of feedback they receive as international students. That is, former international students are likely to send a positive feedback and sometime make recommendation to prospective international students when the academic system of Host University is flexible and their certificate is highly recognised.

In relation to interaction with lecturers concerning their academics, the study showed that international students were happy; hence met their

expectations. This is because an overwhelming 82.5 and 91 percent of international students in UG and KNUST respectively expressed higher levels of satisfaction. This supports Ho, Li, Cooper and Holmes's (2007) argument that international students in New Zealand were satisfied with the learning environment, specifically the quality of teaching, interaction and openness of their teaching staff. Another indicator that was employed to determine whether international students' experiences met their expectations were the availability of academic guidance and counselling. Obviously, respondents in UG (72.3%) and KNUST (68.4%) were satisfied with the way both institutions guided and counselled them towards academic progress. The outcome on satisfaction with academic experiences contradicts Lee's (2010) study who examined international students' experiences in USA and found that they had negative academic experiences. This according to Lee (2010) was due to perceptions of unequal treatment given to students with regards to their academics.

The social experiences of international students covered issues of their relations with others inside and outside campus, the social provided, and recreational facilities among others. From Table 9, respondents in UG and KNUST were satisfied with all their social experiences. But comparing the proportions between the two study sites clearly shows that international students in UG had higher social expectations than their colleagues in KNUST. Interestingly, international students were satisfied with treatment from native students and people outside the school community. As such, they were able to integrate well with native students as the data showed.

This finding of the study is contrary with the fact that there is lack of social interaction with native students (Aklamanu, 2017)

Although international students were not conversant with the local language, 83.7 percent in UG and 62.5 percent in KNUST were able to communicate with local people who stayed outside the school. This finding contradicts with Sanner, Wilson and Samson's (2002) study that found that they experienced social isolation and language barriers existed and hence affected their integration as international students. This is also similar to Hellsten (2002) study in Australia who explored language, communication and/or any learning difficulties encountered by the students.

The finding also fits into the framework of the migration system theory where when a prospective international student receives the information that it will be easy to communicate with natives or other students in the host university or country, which can influence his or her decision to study in that country. However, when he or she realises that it will be difficult to communicate with others, it can deter him or her from choosing that university or country as a place of study. The transport systems on both campus and banking services appeared to be efficient in UG and KNUST since the majority (83.1 percent and 73.2 percent) of the respondents were satisfied with the services rendered. Market centers and malls were available to serve international students when the need arises. Approximately 87 and 83 percent in UG and KNUST were satisfied with these services.

Expectations on the health care service and sports centers were very high because international students argued that they were satisfied. The data

distribution indicated that 84.3 percent of international students were satisfied with the availability of sport centers in UG while 79.2 percent of their colleagues in KNUST said same. With respect to health care service, it was evident from the Table that 89.2 percent were satisfied in UG while 80.7 percent said same in KNUST.

To further understand whether there is a relationship between their expectations and the socio-demographic characteristics, the researcher employed chi-square test. The results are presented in Table 10. The study used socio-demographic characteristics such as age, sex, marital, level of students and programme of study. Also, the researcher used only two variables: One from academic experience (practical teaching and learning) and the other from social experience (integration with native students). One underlying assumption of the chi-square test is that if the probability value (p value) is less than the significant value, it means the test is significant. However, if the probability value (p value) is greater than the significant value, it means the test is not significant (Ofori & Dampson, 2011).

The data output in UG showed that about 83 and 77.2 percent of the respondents within the ages 15-20 and 21-25 respectively were satisfied with the fact that teaching and learning were practical while 11 and 22.8 percent with these age categories expressed otherwise. In spite of the majority of international students within the age category (15-25years) expressing satisfaction with the practical nature of teaching and learning, the study showed that the relationship between these two variables were not statistically significant. In other words, there was not difference between the views international students across the age ranges or categories and the

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level of satisfaction of practical teaching and learning. Thus, whether teaching and learning was practical or not does not really depend on the ages of international students.

Table 10: Relationship between Socio-demographic Characteristics and their Experiences on Practical Teaching and Learning

	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	*p* value
			Practical Teaching and Learning			
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total	
University of Ghana						
Age (years)						0.122*
15-20	23(35.4)	31(47.7)	7(10.8)	4(6.2)	65(100)	
21-25	23(29.1)	38(48.1)	18(22.8)	0(0)	79(100)	
26-30	2(20)	5(50)	3(30)	0(0)	10(100)	
31-35	4(33.3)	8(66.7)	0(0)	0(0)	12(100)	
Sex						0.023*
Male	23(29.1)	46(58.2)	7(8.9)	3(3.8)	79(100)	
Female	29(33.3)	36(41.4)	21(24.1)	1(1.1)	87(100)	
Marital status						0.022*
Single	48(32.9)	66(45.2)	28(19.2)	4(2.7)	146(100)	
Married	4(20)	16(80)	0(0)	0(0)	20(100)	
Level of student						0.001*
100	22(56.4)	14(35.9)	3(7.7)	0(0)	39(100)	
200	6(20)	19(63.3)	5(16.7)	0(0)	30(100)	
300	12(22.2)	29(53.7)	12(22.2)	1(1.9)	54(100)	
400	6(20)	13(43.3)	8(26.7)	3(10)	30(100)	
500	2(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	2(100)	
600	0(0)	2(100)	0(0)	0(0)	2(100)	
800	0(0)	5(100)	0(0)	0(0)	5(100)	
Above 800	4(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4(100)	
Programme of study						0.09*
Humanities/Arts	19(29.7)	30(46.9)	12(18.8)	3(4.7)	64(100)	
Business studies	4(36.4)	4(36.4)	3(27.3)	0(0)	11(100)	
Medical sciences	19(54.3)	12(34.3)	4(11.4)	0(0)	35(100)	
Physical sciences	5(20)	16(64)	4(16)	0(0)	25(100)	
Educational sciences	1(50)	0(0)	1(50)	0(0)	2(100)	
Social sciences	4(13.8)	20(69)	4(13.8)	1(3.4)	29(100)	

Table 10 contd

	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	*p* value
			Practical Teaching and Learning			
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total	
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology						
Age (years)						**0.003***
15-20	62(41.1)	75(49.7)	11(7.3)	3(2)	151(100)	
21-25	31(38.3)	35(43.2)	14(17.3)	1(1.2)	81(100)	
26-30	3(12)	22(88)	0(0)	0(0)	25(100)	
31-35	3(25)	9(75)	0(0)	0(0)	12(100)	
Sex						**0.054***
Male	46(30.9)	84(56.4)	15(10.1)	4(2.7)	149(100)	
Female	53(44.2)	57(47.5)	10(8.3)	0(0)	120(100)	
Marital status						**0.112***
Single	81(35.7)	118(52)	24(10.6)	4(1.8)	227(100)	
Married	14(36.8)	23(60.5)	1(2.6)	0(0)	38(100)	
Separated	4(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4(100)	
Level of student						**0.032***
100	14(35.9)	22(56.4)	3(7.7)	0(0)	39(100)	
200	35(45.5)	30(39)	9(11.7)	3(3.9)	30(100)	
300	22(29.3)	43(57.3)	9(12)	1(1.3)	75(100)	
400	22(52.4)	17(40.5)	3(7.1)	0(0)	42(100)	
500	2(28.6)	4(57.1)	1(14.3)	0(0)	7(100)	
800	1(5.9)	16(94.1)	0(0)	0(0)	17(100)	
Above 800	3(25)	9(75)	0(0)	0(0)	12 (100)	
Programme of study						**0.000***
Humanities/Arts	1(2.4)	36(85.7)	5(11.9)	0(0)	42(100)	
Business studies	13(52)	12(48)	0(0)	0(0)	25(100)	
Medical sciences	43(51.2)	35(41.7)	6(7.1)	0(0)	84(100)	
Physical sciences	36(36.4)	47(47.5)	12(12.1)	4(4)	99(100)	
Educational sciences	2(28.6)	5(71.4)	0(0)	0(0)	7(100)	
Social sciences	4(33.3)	6(50)	2(16.7)	0(0)	12(100)	

Source: Fieldwork, Paddy (2019)

Unlike UG that recorded alpha value of 0.122, the outcome in KNUST showed that there was a statistically significant difference between age and their views on practical nature of teaching and learning. The views of 137(90.8%) and 66(81.5%) international students within the ages of 15-20 and 21-25 years respectively indicated that they were satisfied how practical teaching and learning was. With an alpha value (0.003), it can be

deduced that the views on how teaching and learning was practical varied across ages. The views of those within 15-25 years differ from those within 26-35 years.

Another demographic characteristic that was tested against practical nature of teaching and learning was sex. In UG, the majority of international students were females and the study showed that there was statistically significant difference between how females and males viewed teaching and learning. Thus, females viewed teaching and learning as practical as compared to their male colleagues. This was because at this significant level (0.023), it can be deduced that practical teaching and learning varied across sexes. Contrary to the above, the study showed that the views of male international students in KNUST did not differ from their female colleagues with respect to practical nature of teaching and learning.

At alpha value of 0.022, the views of international students (78.2%) who were single in UG differed from those who were married when asked about their level of satisfaction with practical teaching and learning. Although 87.7 percent of single international students in KNUST argued that they were satisfied with teaching and learning, their views were not different from those who were married and separated. Thus, there was not statistically significant difference between marital status and satisfaction with practical teaching and learning in KNUST.

Comparing the views of international students on satisfaction on practical teaching and learning based on their levels both in UG and KNUST showed significance difference. This is because UG and KNUST respectively had 0.001 and 0.032 alpha values indicating that their

satisfaction on the practicality of teaching and learning differed across all levels. Unlike UG where the views of international students on their satisfaction of practical learning and teaching did not show significant difference in relation to their programme of study, the result from KNUST proved otherwise. In KNUST, the alpha value of 0.000 meant that the view of international students offering science programmes (Medical Sciences=92.9% and Physical Sciences=83.9%) on satisfaction with practical teaching and learning differed from those offering business studies, educational and social sciences. This finding could probably be associated with the nature of the programmes been offered in both universities. Science requires more practical or field works for students to appreciate it as compared to programmes offered in the humanities.

The above discussion looked at the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics of international students and their academic experiences. The subsequent section presents data on socio-demographic characteristics and social experiences of international students. Specifically, the study compared their demographic data with their integration with native students. This is displayed in Table 11.

Table 11: Relationship between Socio-demographic Characteristics and their Experiences on Integration with Native Students

	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	*p* value
			Integration with native students			
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total	
University of Ghana						
Age (years)						0.000*
15-20	17(26.2)	28(43.1)	19(29.2)	1(1.5)	65(100)	
21-25	29(36.7)	42(53.2)	6(7.6)	2(2.5)	79(100)	
26-30	4(40)	6(60)	0(0)	0(0)	10(100)	
31-35	7(58.3)	0(0)	0(0)	5(41.7)	12(100)	
Sex						0.003*
Male	22(27.8)	45(57)	6(7.6)	6(7.6)	79(100)	
Female	35(40.2)	31(35.6)	19(21.8)	2(2.3)	87(100)	
Marital status						0.000*
Single	50(34.2)	68(46.6)	25(17.1)	3(2.1)	146(100)	
Married	7(35)	8(40)	0(0)	5(25)	20(100)	

Table 11 contd

	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	*p* value
			Integration with native students			
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total	
University of Ghana						
Level of student						0.000*
100	15(38.5)	16(41)	8(20.5)	0(0)	39(100)	
200	8(26.7)	17(56.7)	4(13.3)	1(3.3)	30(100)	
300	20(37)	25(46.3)	8(14.8)	1(1.9)	54(100)	
400	8(26.7)	16(53.3)	5(16.7)	1(3.3)	30(100)	
500	2(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	2(100)	
600	0(0)	2(100)	0(06)	0(0)	2(100)	
800	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	5(100)	5(100)	
Above 800	4(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4(100)	
Programme of study						0.009*
Humanities/Arts	20(31.3)	28(43..8)	11(17.2)	5(7.8)	64(100)	
Business studies	4(36.4)	5(45.5)	0(0)	2(18.2)	11(100)	
Medical sciences	20(57.1)	14(40)	1(2.9)	0(0)	35(100)	
Physical sciences	17(28)	14(56)	3(12)	1(4)	25(100)	
Educational sciences	1(50)	1(50)	0(0)	0(0)	2(100)	
Social sciences	5(17.2)	14(48.3)	10(34.5)	0(0)	29(100)	
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology						
Age (years)						0.000*
15-20	25(16.6)	70(46.4)	26(17.2)	30(19.9)	151(100)	
21-25	17(21)	44(54.3)	14(17.3)	6(7.4)	81(100)	
26-30	3(12)	5(20)	5(20)	12(48)	25(100)	
31-35	6(50)	0(0)	0(0)	6(50)	12(100)	
Sex						0.422*
Male	26(17.4)	72(48.3)	25(16.8)	26(17.4)	149(100)	
Female	25(20.8)	47(39.2)	20(16.7)	28(23.3)	120(100)	

Marital status						0.001*
Single	44(19.4)	96(42.3)	44(19.4)	43(18.9)	227(100)	
Married	7(18.4)	23(60.5)	1(2.6)	7(18.4)	38(100)	
Separated	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4(100)	4(100)	
Level of student						0.000*
100	11(28.2)	10(25.6)	9(23.1)	9(23.1)	39(100)	
200	15(19.5)	40(51.9)	105(13)	12(15.6)	77(100)	
300	13(17.3)	37(49.3)	16(21.3)	9(12)	75(100)	
400	8(19)	25(59.5)	3(7.1)	6(14.3)	42(100)	
500	0(0)	5(71.4)	2(28.6)	0(0)	7(100)	
800	0(0)	1(5.9)	4(23.5)	12(70.6)	17(100)	
Above 800	4(33.3)	1(8.3)	1(8.3)	6(50)	12(100)	
Programme of study						0.000*
Humanities/Arts	5(11.9)	15(35.7)	11(26.2)	11(26.2)	42(100)	
Business studies	0(0)	2(8)	6(24)	17(68)	25(100)	
Medical sciences	20(23.8)	34(40.5)	13(15.5)	17(20.2)	84(100)	
Physical sciences	17(17.2)	61(61.6)	13(13.1)	8(8.1)	99(100)	
Educational sciences	5(71.4)	2(28.6)	0(0)	0(0)	7(100)	
Social sciences	5(11.9)	15(35.7)	11(26.2)	11(26.2)	42(100)	

Source: Fieldwork, Paddy (2019)

Responses gathered on the ages of international students and how they were satisfied with integration with native students was important to this study. The data showed that satisfaction with integration with native students varied across ages in UG and KNUST. International students (15-20 and 21-25 years) satisfaction on integration with native students was higher than those who fell within 26-31 years in both study areas. This is evident from their alpha values of 0.000 for both study institutions. The study showed that 118 (80.8%) and 140(61.7%) international students in UG and KNUST respectively who were single were much satisfied with integration with native students as compared to colleagues who were married. Similarly, the study showed similar trends with level of students and whether they were satisfied with their integration.

The reason was that, at alpha levels of 0.000, it could be deduced that in both UG and KNUST, international student's satisfaction with integration with native students differed across levels. That is, the views of

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international students who were pursuing first degree varied from those pursing post-graduate degrees. The programme of study in KNUST showed that there is statistically significant difference between views of international students offering sciences (Medical and Physical Sciences) regarding satisfaction with integration with native students differed from those offering humanities, business studies and social sciences. In other words, international students offering Medical and Physical Science programmes were more satisfied with level of integration with native students than those in the humanities, business studies and social sciences. Same can be articulated in the case of UG since its alpha value (0.009) was within the significant level of 0.05. However, it should be stressed that international students offering humanities or arts programmes expressed higher satisfaction with their integration with native students more than their colleagues offering sciences, business studies, educational and social sciences.

In sum, international students in both KNUST and UG were satisfied with their social experiences since they had access to health care, good transportation systems and could communicate to the local people. Also, international students were satisfied with the availability of mall and markets that served their needs. The section was further explained with the help of migration system theory where students opt to choose public university based on the positive feedback they receive from the old students.

Research Question 3: What Challenges do International Students face in pursuing university education in a public university in Ghana?

One of the important aspects of this study is the challenges international students face while pursuing the academic work in the host country. This is captured in the last research question of the study. International students encounter a number of challenges that hinder their stay in the host country. These can also be accounted for in terms of academic and social challenges. It ranges from location of lecture theatres, medium of instruction, quality lectures, access to local food, and accommodation among others. International students were asked to indicate whether they agree (A) or disagree (D) to a number of challenges already identified from the literature; the results are displayed in the Table 12.

The problems international students face has been categorized into social and economic challenges. They were asked to indicate whether they had challenges with a number of issues upon which their responses are displayed in Table 12. A critical look at the data depicts that international students in both UG and KNUST in some instances agreed and in other instances disagreed with some of the listed challenges.

To start with locating lecture theatres, international students in both institutions (61.4% in UG; 73.2% in KNUST) did not find it difficult to locate lecture theatres where most of the learning takes place. Similarly, responses on interaction with lectures and staff showed a similar trend in both study areas. While 62 and approximately 71 percent of international students had good interaction with lectures in UG and KNUST, about 71

and 64 percent of them had no challenges interacting with non-teaching staffs.

With respect to access to learning materials, the data showed contrasting views from international students in both institutions. In the case of UG, it was evident that international students (60.8%) had access to learning materials although 51.2 percent faced challenges accessing the internet. This could probably mean that the international students' access to books in the library was their major source of learning materials. This contradicts Sahin, Balta and Ercan's (2010) study that international students have access to internet resources for homework and course projects studies. In addition, Sahin et al. (2010) claimed the internet is reliable, available and usable in universities.

Table 12: Challenges International Students' Encounter

Challenges	A/D	UG N	%	Mean	KNUST N	%	Mean
Academic							
Locating Lecture	A	64	38.5	2.25	72	26.8	2.03
Theatre	D	102	61.4		197	73.2	
Interacting with	A	63	38	2.20	102	37.9	2.28
Lectures	D	103	62		167	62.1	
Interacting with Staff	A	49	29.5	2.22	97	36.1	2.26
	D	107	70.5		172	63.9	
Learning Materials	A	65	39.2	2.31	201	74.7	2.04
	D	101	60.8		68	25.3	
Access to Internet	A	85	51.2	2.6	184	68.4	2.9
	D	81	48.8		85	31.6	
Medium of Instruction	A	56	33.7	2.37	119	44.2	2.51
	D	110	66.3		150	55.8	
Quality Lectures	A	79	47.6	2.47	110	40.9	2.25
	D	87	52.4		159	59.1	
Average Mean				**2.34**			**2.22**
Social							
Losing Sight of Own	A	8	4.8	1.52	53	19.7	1.77
Culture	D	158	95.2		216	80.3	
No Access to Local	A	113	68.1	2.89	176	65.4	2.96
Food	D	53	31.9		93	34.6	
No Integration with	A	46	27.7	2.06	130	48.3	2.47
native Students	D	120	72.3		139	51.7	
Expected	A	75	45.2	2.43	142	52.8	2.65
Accommodation	D	91	54.8		127	47.2	
Available Transport	A	37	22.3	1.95	93	34.6	2.17
	D	129	77.7		176	65.4	
Banking Services	A	115	69.3	2.13	174	64.7	2.17
	D	51	30.7		95	35.3	
Campus Living	A	85	51.2	2.52	183	68	2.98
Expenses	D	81	48.8		86	32	
Communication	A	62	37.3	2.24	134	49.8	2.59
Problems	D	104	62.7		135	50.2	
Discrimination on	A	76	54.2	2.4	161	59.9	2.66
Campus Environment	D	90	45.8		108	40.1	
Low English	A	23	13.9	1.64	95	35.3	2.01
Proficiency	D	143	86.1		174	64.7	
Average Mean				**2.17**			**2.44**

Source: Fieldwork, Paddy (2019)

On the other hand, it was quiet clear that international students (74.7% and 68.4 %) in KNUST respectively stated that they faced challenges in both accessing learning materials and the internet. It can

therefore be deduced that international students in UG were only better off with regards to access to learning materials but the same cannot be said for their colleagues in KNUST. In terms of medium of instruction and the quality of lecturers available to execute these instructions, the study found that international students disagreed that they had problems with methods of teaching (UG=66.3%; KNUST=55.8%) and the qualities of lecturers (UG=52.4%; KNUST=59.1%).

This supports Atarah's and Peprah's (2014) study on the influence of advertising on student enrolment in private tertiary institutions in Ghana. They concluded that international students were satisfied with institutional courses or programmes; because of the quality and medium of teaching the course. With the highest mean of 2.6 and 2.9, access to internet appeared to be a major challenge in UG and KNUST respectively. With regard to the social challenges of international students, access to local food, banking services, higher campus living expenses, feeling of discrimination came out as the problems they face in both study areas. About 68 and 65 percent of international students in both UG and KNUST argued that they encountered challenges in buying their local food in the host country.

This affirms Alakaam's (2016) argument that international students' mobility affects their dietary habits, food choices, and physical behaviour. As international students move from one country to another, they may adapt to the culture of their host country but may face challenges in getting their local food. This might affect food their practices and choices, and can lead to changes in the students eating behaviours (Edwards, Hartwell, & Brown, 2010).

Again, the majority of the respondents (UG=69.3%; KNUST=64.7%) had challenges with performing transaction in the banks in Ghana since most of the banks they have opened accounts with did not operate in Ghana. This corroborates with Hsiao-ping, Garza and Guzman's (2014) claim that coming to a new country, international students are faced with the reality of needing to find places to live and finding banks to deposit and withdraw money and applying for credits cards. Surviving in a new community is the first lesson they have to deal with. It is observed from the data that international students complained about higher cost of living. The reason is that they (UG=51.2%; KNUST=68%) argued about how living expense on campus was extremely high.

Unlike UG where approximately 63 percent of international students did not have any problem at all communicating native student, it appeared that their colleagues in KNUST had a challenge with this since almost half (49.8%) articulated to this. Although the majority of international students (UG=72.3%; KNUST=51.7%) had no problems with integrating with native students, the majority of them (UG=54.3%; KNUST=59.9%) expressed feelings of discrimination. The finding confirms Hsiao-ping, Garza and Guzman's (2015) study on the students challenge and adjustment to college in the USA in the sense that assertion that international students still experience prejudice and discrimination by host students in many aspects where they find themselves isolated and lonely when they are studying in host countries.

In UG, data showed that available accommodation met the expectations of international students as 54.8 percent attested to this but this

was a challenge in KNUST as accommodation did not meet the expectations of about 53 percent of their colleagues. Proficiency in English was not a challenge because international student (UG=86.1%; KNUST=64.7%) attested to this. This contradicts the observation that international students are known to be quiet members in classrooms who rarely participate in discussions simply because of lack of proficiency in spoken English that prevents students from speaking up (Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000). It further opposes the experiences of Liu (2011) who expressed that her lack of English proficiency became a barrier for successful participation in host community in Canada.

In sum, the major sources of information about university for international students in UG and KNUST were through parents and family recommendations. With the push-pull theory and migration system theory as a lens, the study indicated that cost of tuition, meeting people with diverse culture and the search for new experience and institution's reputation were factors that influenced their choice. Among the challenges that emerged in both study areas were issues of discrimination, available accommodation that met their expectation and high cost of living.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings that emerged from the study. The study examined the determinants of international students' choice of a public university in Ghana by focusing on University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The study was a descriptive research and data were collected from 435 international students (UG=166; KNUST=269) using a Likert-response schedule. It draws conclusions and makes recommendations to stakeholders and policymakers to understand the factors that determine international students' choice of a public university in Ghana and how best they can be assisted to adapt into Ghanaian universities. This study will add to available literature on relevant factors underlying international students' choice of university in developing countries, in order to contribute to the literature in higher education management in developing countries.

Summary

The study addressed three specific questions which aimed at determining the factors that informs international students choice of a particular public university in Ghana; determining whether international students experiences in a public university meet their expectations; and identifying what challenges international students face in pursuing university education in a public university.

With regard to the factors that inform international student's choice of a particular public university in Ghana, key findings showed that:

1. In UG and KNUST, International student's major source of information about the university was through parent and family recommendations. This could have been a major influence on the choices of international students in both UG and KNUST since they ought to respect the choices made by family or parents, who on many occasions are their sponsors in the university.

2. The major economic factor that influenced international student's choice in both UG and KNUST was the cost of tuition.

3. Among the social factors that influenced the choice of university by international students, the study found that, in UG, they considered meeting people with diverse culture and the search for new experience above other things. However, in KNUST the reputation of the institution stood tall among all the social factors that influenced their choice.

4. The academic value of the degree was the most significant academic factor that influenced international students' choice into UG and KNUST. Indeed, international students in both universities made it quite clear that these factors informed their choice and not because they failed to get admissions in alternative universities.

5. The study showed that international students within UG and KNUST were much concerned about how economic factors influenced their choices compared to the social and academic factors.

6. It was also revealed that, comparatively, international students across the two universities (UG and KNUST) viewed economic factors as a major influence on their choices.

7. Female international students from both universities were excited over meeting and learning from people with diverse cultural background as compared to their male counterparts.

8. Male international students from both universities considered their economic and academic values of their degree programmes as a major influence on their choices as compared to their female counterparts.

9. In KNUST, international students between the ages of 15-25 viewed teaching and learning as practical as compared to those above this age range but in UG the study showed that there were no variations in opinions of international students on this subject matter.

The findings on whether international students' experiences in a public university meet their expectations include:

1. The study revealed that international students were generally satisfied with their experiences as far as academic expectations was concerned.

2. In UG and KNUST, international students argued that teaching and learning was practical.

3. Again, international students who found it easy to adjust into the learning environment were more than four times those who found it difficult to adjust in UC but in the case of KNUST respondents who were satisfied were more than three times those who were dissatisfied.

4. In relation to interaction with lecturers concerning their academics, the study showed that international students were happy; hence met their expectations.

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5. The proportions between the two study areas clearly show that international students in UG had high social expectations than their colleagues in KNUST.

6. Although the majority of international students were not conversant with the local language, they were able to communicate with local people who stayed outside the school

With respect to challenges international students encounter in host country, some main findings were made:

1. With respect to access to learning materials, the data showed international students (60.8%) in UG had access to learning materials although 51.2 percent faced challenges accessing the internet.

2. It was quiet clear that international students (74.7% and 68.4 %) in KNUST respectively stated that they faced challenges in both accessing learning materials and the internet. It can therefore be deduced that international students in UG were only better off with regards to access to learning materials but same cannot be said for their colleagues in KNUST.

3. While 62 and approximately 71 percent of international students had good interaction with lectures in UG and KNUST respectively, about 71 and 64 percent of them had no challenges interacting with non-teaching staffs.

4. About 68 and 65 percent of international students in both UG and KNUST argued that they encountered challenges in buying their local food in the host country.

5. Again the majority of the respondents had challenges with performing transaction in the banks in Ghana since most of the banks they have opened accounts with did not operate in Ghana.

6. It is observed from the data that international students complained about high cost of living, especially living expenses on campus.

7. Unlike UG where approximately 63 percent of international students did not have any problem at all communicating native student, it appeared that their colleagues in KNUST had a challenge with this since almost half (49.8%) articulated to this.

8. A little above half of international students expressed feelings of discrimination.

9. In UG, data showed that available accommodation met the expectations of international students as 54.8 percent attested to this but this was a challenge in KNUST as accommodation did not meet the expectations of about 53 percent of their colleagues

Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn in respect of the study objectives:

First, as part of socialisation, parents and families continue to play important roles in the choices their children make especially with respect to their educational development. Second, cost of tuition appears to be one of the major economic issues that burdens international students prior to enrolment into a university. International students value the search for new experience and reputation of the host university. Also, international students are overburdened by economic factors more than the social and academic factors. The institutions are successful to a

large extent in catering for international students' academic and social needs.

The high cost of living, acts of discrimination and unavailable flexible banking are push factors that would prevent international students from choosing particular tertiary institutions in Ghana.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn on international students' choice of university, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Office of International students of UG and KNUST should organise more peer programmes in order to allow Ghanaians and international students to meet up and learn each other's culture.

2. The university authorities should conduct students need assessment to identify their basic needs as international students.

3. Since international students complained about high tuition cost, the office of international students should engage the universities to come up with flexible ways of paying tuition for the academic year.

4. The university authorities should inform international students through their website on available banks in their institutions before they are enrolled.

5. Since internet services was a challenge in both institutions, the study recommend that university authorities should improve on internet accessibility to aid effective communication and studies.

6. To cure the problem of discrimination, the universities should organise games and programmes that will involve both the local and international students. This could create an avenue for socialisation and build social

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networks as well as improve language skills, and become familiar with the new environment.

Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher suggests that since the current study focused on two public tertiary universities, future research could look at a comparative study between a public and a private university. Also, future studies may also consider looking at factors that influence international students to enrol into private institutions.

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APPENDIX A
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
ADMINISTRATION
QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondents,

I am an M.Phil student from the University of Cape Coast, Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) undertaking a *study on the determinants of international students' choice of universities in Ghana: A multi site case study*. This study is solely for educational purpose and your assistance in filling this questionnaire will also be beneficial to students in their career choice. I want to assure you that information provided will be used solely for research work and you are guaranteed of secrecy and privacy of information provided. However, we hope you will participate in it since your views are important.

FOR OFFICAL PURPOSES ONLY

QUESTIONNIARE NUMBER	……………………………………	
NAME OF UNIVERSITY	……………………………………	
Section A: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents		
Q1	Age	15-20	1
		21-25	2
		26-30	3
		31-35	4
		36-40	5
		41-45	6
		46-50	7
Q2	Sex of the respondent	Male [ ]	1
		Female [ ]	2
Q3	What is your current marital status?	Married [ ]	1
		Cohabiting [ ]	2
		Single [ ]	3
		Widowed [ ]	4

Q4		Divorced [ ]	5
		Separated [ ]	6
Q4	Level of programme	Level 100 [ ]	1
		Level 200 [ ]	2
		Level 300 [ ]	3
		Level 400 [ ]	4
		Level 500 [ ]	5
		Level 600 [ ]	6
		Level 800 [ ]	7
		Above Level 800 [ ]	8
Q5	What is your programme/department of study	Humanities/Arts [ ]	1
		Social sciences [ ]	2
		Business Studies [ ]	3
		Medical sciences [ ]	4
		Physical sciences [ ]	5
		Educational studies [ ]	6

Section B: Determinants of International Students Choice

Q8	Factors Influencing Choice of Tertiary Education	*No*	*Not sure*	*Yes*
	The reputation, prestige, national and international recognition of university affected my choice of tertiary education			
	Quality of infrastructure determined my choice of tertiary education			
	Quality of services determined my choice of tertiary education			
	Location and distance or and family home proximity to the institution influence my choice of tertiary education			
	Duration and time required for the completion of the program			
	My society of origin and higher social status to students/alumnus of university with foreign education.			
	The commonality of the language and opportunity to improve second language			
	Occupational and educational aspirations of parent			

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	Good sporting facilities and activities			
	Availability of health care services			
	Availability of residential accommodation			
	Safe and friendly campus environment			
	Tuition Cost, re-location costs and accommodation costs determines choice of tertiary education			
	Scholarships have a desired impact on student choice			
	Socio-economic status of students family			
	Availability and quality of students support services or systems			
	Occupational aspirations of students			
	To gain new experience			
	Research performance of the institution			
	Type of programmes or courses available			

Section C: Educational Experiences of International Students

International students had certain expectation prior to their choice of tertiary education. This section seeks to find out from respondents whether their expectations have been met based on their experiences.

1= very satisfied (vs); 3=somewhat satisfied (ss); 4= somewhat dissatisfied (sd); 5= very dissatisfied (vd)

Q9	Experiences	VS	SS	SD	VD
	Met expectations based:				
	Fair and equal treatment by the native students				
	Fair and equal treatment by the people in communities outside the school				
	Easy to integrate with my course/programme mates				
	Good relations with native students				

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Provided the needed support services by the university				
Easy access to a residential accommodation				
Classroom teaching/lectures is more practical				
Learning experience is more practical				
Easy adjusting to the new learning environment				
Access to internet and library				
Easy to renew visas as international students				
Safe and friendly campus environment				
Easy to communicate with people outside the school community				

Section E: Challenges International Students Encounter in host Universities
1= Strongly Disagree (SD); 2= Disagree (D); 3=Neutral (N); 4= Agree (A);

5=Strongly Agree (SA)

Q10	*Challenges of international students*	SD	D	N	A	SA
	Getting access to my local **food** they sell around					
	I am not able to deal with the **body language** of native students					
	The **accommodation available** does not meet my expectation					
	The **transport system** in the university is not convenient					
	I have a challenge performing **transactions with banks** in Ghana					
	The **living expenses** on campus are high					
	I am losing sight of my own **culture**					
	I have problem with communicating in my native **language** with students					
	I sometimes feel **discriminated**					
	Locating lecture theatres has been a challenge					
	Low **English proficiency level** is a challenge					

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APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

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8th March, 2019

Our Ref: IEPA/144/Vol./158

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Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The bearer of this letter **Ms. Paddy Loretta Padikwor** is an M.Phil. student of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) of the University of Cape Coast. She requires some data/information from you/your outfit for the purpose of writing her thesis titled, **"Determinants of International Students Choice of Public Universities in Ghana: A Multi Case Study"** as a requirement for M.Phil. degree programme.

Kindly give the necessary assistance that **Ms. Padikwor** requires to enable her gather the information she needs.

While anticipating your co-operation, we thank you for any help that you may be able to give her.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Alberta A. K. Owusu (Mrs.)
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR
FOR: DIRECTOR

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL
PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION
University

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