



university of
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STUDENT MIGRATION:
THE **PUSH AND PULL**
FACTORS OF SOUTH AND
SOUTHEAST ASIAN
STUDENTS **MIGRATING TO**
MANIPAL UNIVERSITY,
INDIA

Bachelor thesis

Human geography and regional and urban planning
Supervisors: dr. Ajay Bailey and dr. Bhumika (Manipal University)
Second reader: dr. Viktor Venhorst

George Sevenhuijsen

S2211254

SUMMARY

Student migration is a growing type of migration. In 2013 4,5 million students were enrolled outside their home country and this number is steadily growing by 6% annually (OECD, 2013). As student migration to developing countries is a rather new field of research, this research paper explores and describes the push and pull factors of South and Southeast Asian students who have migrated to Manipal University, India, for study purposes.

Eight students from South and Southeast Asia were interviewed using semi-structured interview as this makes it possible to investigate their personal experiences, motivations and beliefs and allows for follow-up questions to be asked to obtain a deeper understanding. In combination with the literature research many push and pull factors have been found. Some of much importance and some which appeared not to be so important.

However, it has been found that the main push factor for students to leave their home country are the educational opportunities. As why the students chose Manipal University, three pull factors appeared to be of great importance. First, the quality of the education at Manipal University. The other pull factors appeared to be the low tuition fees and living expenses and the personal recommendations the students received by their friends, family and doctors they know. The pull factors appeared to be of more influence than the push factors.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

Student migration is a growing type of migration. In 2013 the number of tertiary students enrolled outside their country of citizenship was around 4.5 million. This number is steadily growing by 6% annually (OECD, 2013). There are a few key factors which have led to this great annual increase in students enrolled at universities outside of their country of citizenship. Recently there has been an under-supply of university places in developed countries. The main reason for this is because the developing countries were not able to satisfy the demands for higher education, leaving many students without any other options but to study abroad (Gribble, 2008). Another factor is the expectations of international students to increase their chances at professional and business success when studying abroad (Gribble, 2008). Another economic reason is the recent drop of transportation and communication costs and the improved technology of transportation and communication. These two reasons make studying abroad way more accessible than it ever was before (Gribble, 2008).

This shift in high education demands created a whole new market for countries. Developed countries have adjusted to this shift and managed to quickly capitalize on the domestic shortages inviting many students over from other nationalities (Gribble, 2008). Since attracting foreign students to universities in one's own country is generally positive for the economy of the receiving country, developing countries are as well trying to keep their students in their own country and attracting foreign students to their university. For example, China invested a lot in high education. These investments appeared to be successfully since more and more Chinese students stay in China to study since high quality and high education is accessible in China now (Ryan & Dodd, 2005).

Since international student migration to developing countries is a rather new field of research, much research has yet to be done in order to fully understand the motivations of students moving to developing countries for study purposes. However, Lee (1966) mentions that migration is never fully rational, so a fully understanding of why students from developing countries migrate to India is not possible. This research will consider the push and pull factors of international students at the Manipal University in India.

1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The aim of this research is to study the motivations of student migration of international students at the University of Manipal. The motivations of these students can probably be divided into two sides. This means that there will be reasons of students that attracts them to this particular university; the pull side of student migration, as well as reasons which makes them leave their country of origin; the push side of student migration.

These combined reasons and motivations will contribute to a clear overview of student migration of international students to Manipal, which may be used to increase student migration to India or comparable developing economies.

The main research question of the research paper is:

‘What are the push and pull factors for South and Southeast Asian students and their willingness to study abroad at Manipal University?’

To be able to answer the main question properly, four sub-questions have been presented. The main goal of these sub-questions is to support the outcome of the main research problem. The four sub-questions have been written down below:

1. *‘How can the push-pull concept be described in the context of international student migration?’*
2. *‘What are the key push factors of the participants regarding their choice to leave their home country?’*
3. *‘What are the key pull factors of the participants regarding their choice to study at the University of Manipal?’*
4. *‘To what extent do push and pull factors interact with each other?’*

1.3. STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH PAPER

The structure of this research paper is as follows: a theoretical framework is presented to introduce the reader the details of the research as well to set clear boundaries as what will be researched and what not. What is written in the theoretical framework is visualized and summarized in the conceptual model. The conceptual model in this research paper is the basis of this research.

The next chapter is the methodology chapter which includes which research method was chosen and as well why it was chosen. A part of the methodology chapter also includes information on how the data was collected and a clarification on the interview guide which is included in Appendix 7.1. The method which was used to analyze the field data is included as well.

The results and discussion chapter is the following chapter which includes the results of the field research data collection. This will be integrated with the information in the theoretical framework which allows new interpretation on specific issues to answer the sub-questions.

The last chapter is the conclusions chapter. This chapter will answer the main research question. The conclusions also include recommendations for future research and limitations in this research paper.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. STUDENT MIGRATION

Students are a group of desirable migrants, since they contribute to the development in the receiving country as well as the skills they bring with them. Because of these advantages, student migration has been fine-tuned in policies to attract them (King & Raghuram, 2013). These advantages combined plus the exponentially growing amount of student migration might suggest that this field of research has been studied a lot. For student migration this is not the case. Student migration is somewhat neglected in migration research (King & Raghuram, 2013).

A reason for student migration not to be studied as much as other fields of migration research is because student migration is often categorized in skill migration or general international migration (King & Raghuram, 2013). For this research paper it is important to define international student migration as it is the main subject.

An international student is a student who is not a permanent resident of their country of study, or those who received their prior education in another country (regardless of citizenship) according to the definition of the OECD (2013). An international student is not the same as international student migration, which means some sort of time limit has to be added to the definition of international students by the EOCED (2013). J. Springs (2009) states that international student migration is the movement of students who study outside their country of birth or citizenship for a period of 12 months or more. In this research paper, these definitions of international students is used as a criterion for the participants. Therefore, a student has to study for at least a year at Manipal University *and* must have done his prior education in another country, preferably their country of birth.

2.2. PUSH AND PULL THEORY

International students have reasons and motivations to study abroad. These reasons and motivations international students have are consciously or unconsciously triggered by push and pull factors concerning the students personal space.

The push and pull theory was first introduced by Lee (1966). Figure 1 shows an illustration on Lee's (1966) push and pull theory. It shows the migration flows between a region of origin and a region of destination. The positive and negative signs in the 'region of origin' resembles a migrant's consideration concerning staying or leaving. The 'constraints of migration' are the intervening obstacles. These can be physical, like distance but also specific migration rules in the regions of concerning as these can influence a decision as well. The positive and negative signs in the region of destination cloud in figure 1 shows the consideration of a migrant choosing his destination. It has to be noted that both the origin and destination have pull and push factors. If the positives outweigh the negatives, migration is likely to happen (Lee, 1966).

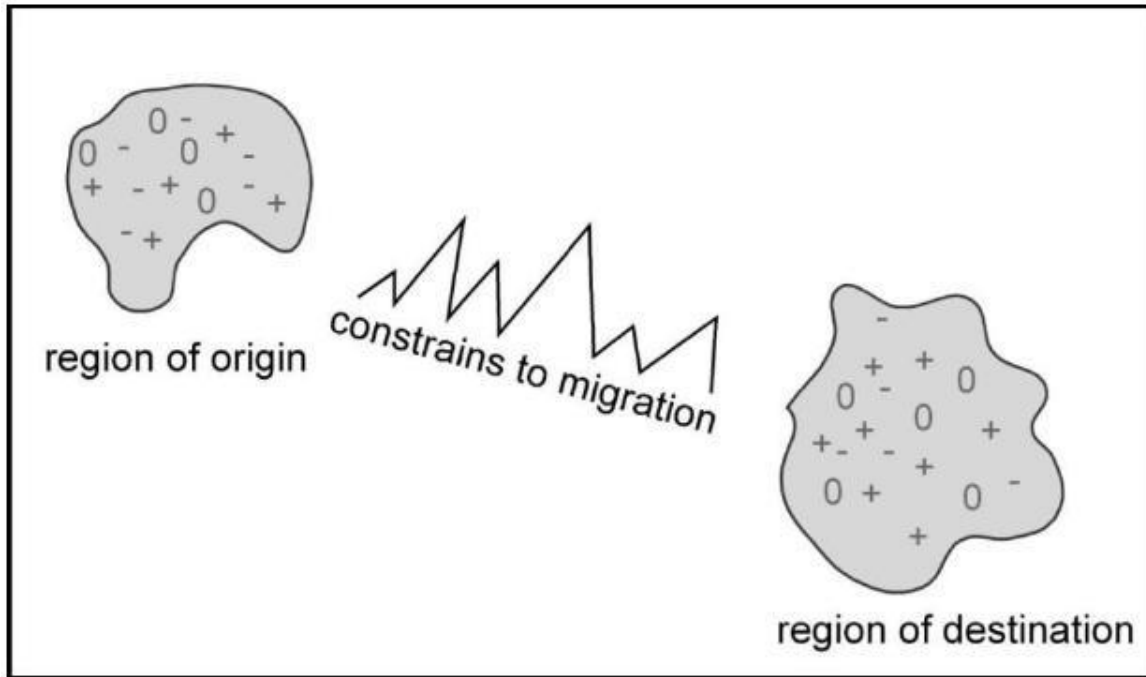


Figure 1: an illustration based on Lee's (1966) push and pull theory. (Fassmann, 2011)

When discussing international student migration, the push side generally concerns the motivations of international students to leave their country of citizenship (Mazzarol & Soutar, "Push-Pull" Factors Influencing International Student Destination Choice, 2002).

The other side of the push and pull theory, pull factors, are generally linked to the receiving country. Pull factors are factors which attracts international students to a certain university, when discussing international student migration (Mazzarol & Soutar, "Push-Pull" Factors Influencing International Student Destination Choice, 2002).

Stating this, it is really important to keep in mind that receiving countries do not only have pull factors and that sending countries do not only have push factors, as is shown in figure 1. The decision making process is a process which weighs the push factors and the pull factors of the sending country versus the push and pull factors of the receiving country. If the push factors of the sending country outweighed the pull factors of the sending country, then it would be rational to leave the country of citizenship to study abroad. If the pull factors of the receiving country outweighed the push factors then this is a country where one might want to study abroad. A combination of the push and pull factors of the sending country versus the push and pull factors of the receiving country is a way to theorize and academically discuss why students study abroad and why their path of movement is how they chose it to be.

Hakim (1989) spoke about the push and pull theory as well. He noticed that push factors are characterized by personal or external factors. An example of this regarding student migration is that a student is forced to migrate due to the lack of a certain study at the place of residence but could also extend to conflicts at home which increased the will to leave their home. Push

factors therefore have often negative connotations. Pull factors draw people to a certain place often to grab opportunities and therefore have often contain positive connotations (Hakim, 1989). This could be a student migration to a city with a university which has a high rank or is known for certain advantages. In general, it is found that pull factors are often of greater importance concerning migration than push factors (Segal *et al.*, 2005)

According to Mazzarol & Soutar (2002), there appears to be at least three distinct stages when selecting the study destinations for international students. Stage one includes making the decision to study internationally, when the push factors outweighs the pull factors of the country of citizenship. This can be influenced by push factors of the country of citizenship. Once this decision has been made, the student chooses a host country; the receiving country. In this stage the pull factors are important. The student will choose the country where the difference between the pull and push factors are the greatest, where the pull factor has to be the greatest and the push factor of the receiving country the smallest. Stage three includes choosing the institution. This decision making process is the same as the decision making process when choosing the most attractive country (Mazzarol & Soutar, "Push-Pull" Factors Influencing International Student Destination Choice, 2002). Stage two and three is sometimes combined, when the student does not have any country preference when going through the process of decision making.

2.3. PUSH FACTORS OF THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

McMahon (1992) examined 18 developing countries in 1992 and discovered certain push factors of the sending countries concerning specifically student migration. The first two factors he found was that economic wealth and the economic involvement of the developing country are important. The other factors he found was that the priority the government of the developing country positioned on education and the educational opportunities the developing country offered are important when making decisions to study abroad.

2.4. PULL FACTORS OF THE DESTINATION

Six factors have been found by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) which concerns the pull factors of the receiving countries.

The first factor is the overall level of knowledge and awareness of the receiving country or institute of destination in the student's country of citizenship. This includes the accessibility of obtaining such information and for example the reputation of the potential country or institute of destination. The second factor are the personal recommendations. The more and better the recommendations of parents, friends and other people about the destination, the greater the pull factor becomes. The third factor concerns the costs of the receiving country. This costs are not limited to economic costs, like living costs or tuition fees at universities but also social costs like discrimination probability and general safety.

The fourth factor is the environment in the receiving country. As well as the study climate as the physical climate are factors which are considered. The physical climate is a factor which a student can be aware of before he leaves to the country of destination whereas the study climate is a factor which is based on opinions of other people. This is because study climate includes an emotional level on which different people have different opinions. The fifth factor is the geographical proximity, which is also correlated with the travel expenses but also time of the travel. The sixth factor are the social links. This related to the possible family members living in a possible country of destination as well as friends who studied in the country of destination (Mazzarol *et al.*, 1997).

2.5. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Figure 2 shows the conceptual model based on the theoretical framework.

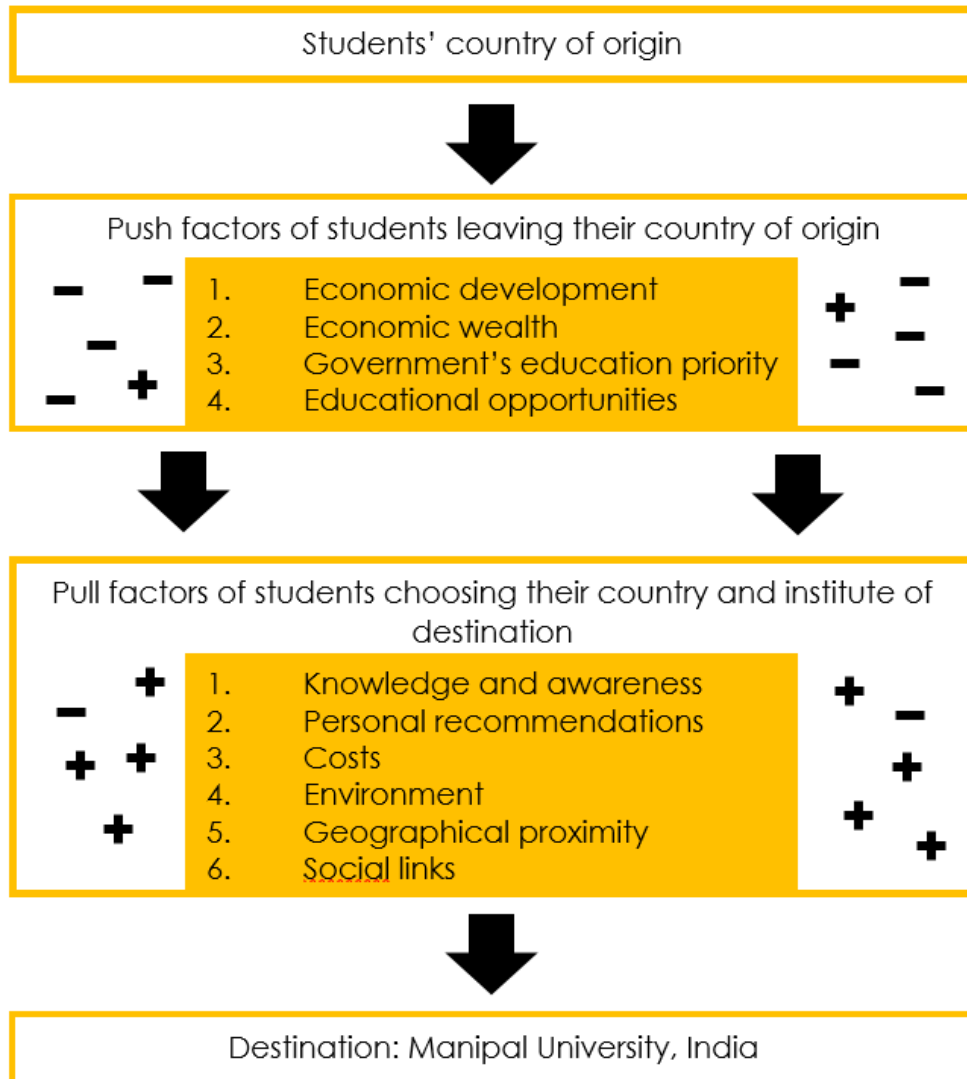


Figure 2: Conceptual model

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. QUALITATIVE VERSUS QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research is, as Saldana (2011, p. 3) mentions, an ‘*umbrella term*’ for a wide variety of approaches to and methods for the study of natural social life. The information and data collected is mostly nonquantitative and may consist of interview transcripts, fieldnotes, documents and visual methods like photographs, videos and even internet sites. These kinds of data all document human experiences (Saldana, 2011). The goals of qualitative research can also vary and is depending on the study. The findings of qualitative research are mostly essential representations and can include but is not limited by the following: new understandings and insights on social and/or individual complexities, documentaries on cultural observations and/or critique of existing social order and the initiation of social justice (Saldana, 2011).

The outcome of quantitative research is numeric and is found by investigating independent variables on an outcome of dependent variables. Statistical analyses are usually used to analyze and interpret the data (Lakshman *et al.*, 2000). The research is usually conducted using the same format of questions for every participant or subject, which means that questions can be misinterpreted and that the information is most likely to be superficial when it comes to conducting quantitative research on people.

Therefore, this research will include qualitative research because, as was mentioned by Saldana (2011) in the first paragraph, it is the best method to research human experiences and it is the best method to find new insights due to the personal aspect of this research method.

3.2. RESEARCH METHOD: SEMI-STRUCTURED IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Within qualitative research are a few methods which can be used to conduct data. Because of the nature of the research, which is trying to find out the push and pull factors of South and Southeast Asian students who study at Manipal University, the participants have to be approached individually to prevent the participants repeating each other which might make the research less in-depth. A semi-structured in-depth interview has a few advantages, because of the fact that personal experiences, motivations, beliefs and views on specific matters can be observed and that there will be freedom to ask follow up questions for a deeper understanding (Gill *et al.*, 2008).

3.3. INTERVIEW GUIDE

The interview guide starts with a few general questions with the aim to make the participants feel comfortable. The participants who have been interviewed already had contact with the researcher before, which also eased the process of interviewing.

The middle and main part contain the key questions. These questions contain the theoretical material mentioned in the theoretical framework and the conceptual model.

At the end of the interview, a few closing questions were asked to make sure the received information is understood and to end the interview fluently.

3.4. PROCESS OF THE INTERVIEWS

The participants whom were interviewed, were found through social contacts. A few selection criteria were applied to the participants namely; the participants have to study for at least one year at Manipal University. The participant also had to come from a developing country in South and Southeast Asia except from India. Therefore, it was not allowed to interview a person who originates from Singapore as this is considered a developed country. It did not matter what study the participant participated in nor did it matter whether the participant was male or female as this is not a gender study.

Before a participant was interviewed, a consent form was shown and signed to secure the feeling of the participant that the information he or she might give would be used for study purposes only and that the participant will stay anonymous. This to increase the comfortability of the student which helps to receive more relevant personal in-depth information. The interview took place in a silent place to ensure that both the researcher and participant were not distracted during the interview.

Once the interview was finished the participant was thanked and was asked if he or she knew somebody who might want to participate in the field research.

3.5. ANALYSES

The interview recordings were first transcribed and coded using the program ATLAS.ti. This program is made for coding transcriptions and it helps receiving a clear overview on what was said and by who to simplify writing the results chapter. The codes which were used are shown in Appendix 7.2.

The data from the interviews will be linked to the theory in the theoretical framework and the conceptual model.

3.6. QUALITY OF FIELD RESEARCH

The diversity of participants from South and Southeast Asia could have been better. One participant came from Thailand, one from Sri Lanka and six from Malaysia. The high proportion of Malaysian participants in this research is a result of unforeseen circumstances as the sample size was meant to be higher and no more Malaysian students were planned to be

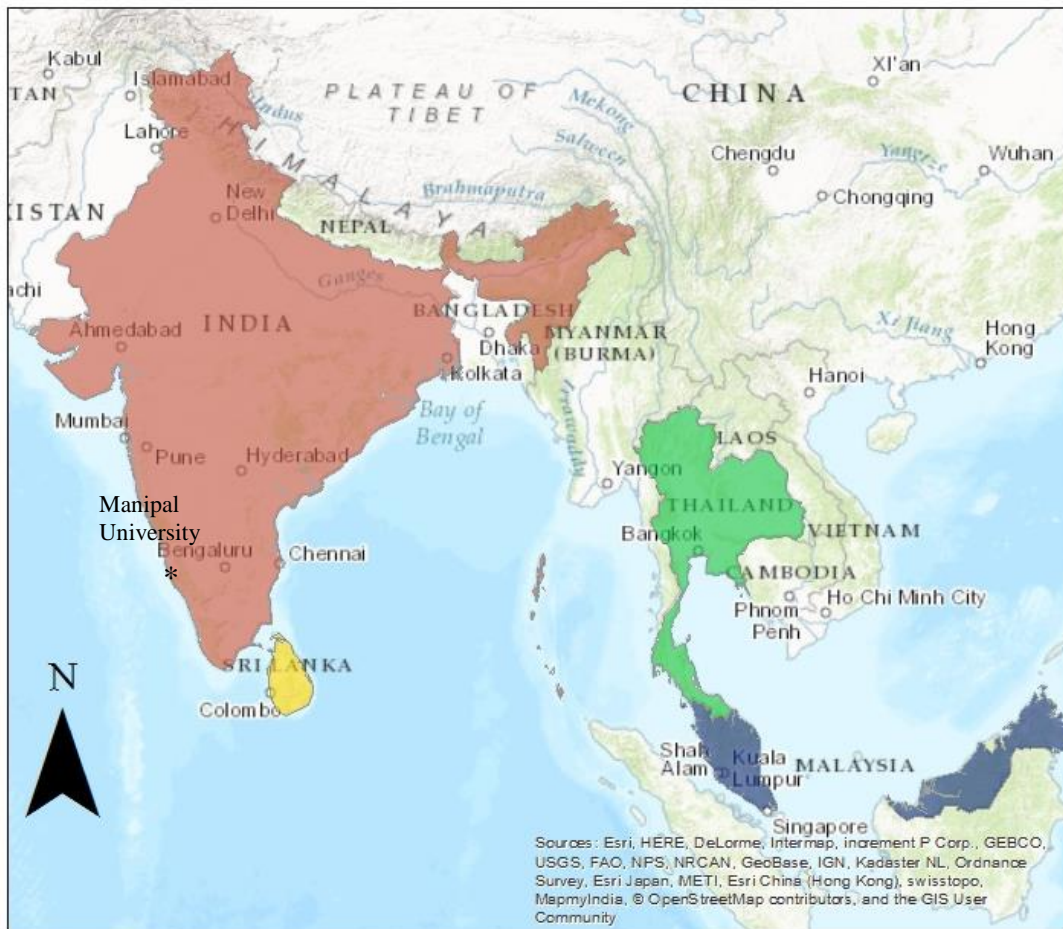
interviewed. However, at Manipal University, the majority of international students are from Malaysia which reduces the idea of misrepresentation.

To ensure anonymity, the participants have been given fictive names. These names, country of origin, age and study are shown in figure 3. Figure 4 includes a map of the country of origin of the students as well as where in India Manipal University is situated. Many participants are following medical programs and programs related to medicine. The reason for this relatively high number of students who follow medical studies, namely seven out of eight students, is because Manipal University is mainly a medical college and is known for that. Three of the eight participants are female and therefore five of the participants are male. As this is not a gender study, this disproportion should be ignored. All students will or are studying for at least two years at Manipal University in India.

| Participant's fictive name | Country of origin | Age | Study |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| Akmal | Thailand | 24 | Business management |
| Adam | Malaysia | 27 | Medicine |
| Charissa | Malaysia | 21 | Medicine |
| Kirk | Malaysia | 19 | Medicine |
| Keisha | Malaysia | 21 | Dentistry |
| Danish | Malaysia | 20 | Medicine |
| Jane | Malaysia | 20 | Dentistry |
| Akila | Sri Lanka | 21 | Medicine |

Figure 3: Participants

Participants' country of origin



Legend

- India
- Sri Lanka, 1 participant
- Thailand, 1 participant
- Malaysia, 6 participants

0 500 1,000 2,000 Kilometers

Figure 4: ArcGIS map of India and participants' country of origin

3.7. SECOND RESEARCH METHOD

As a second research method, the Head of the International Affairs at Manipal University was interviewed. He was interviewed to support the statements of the participants and give more insight in the general background of the international students at Manipal University. In particular, the Malaysian students' background as to clarify why a majority of the international students' origin from Malaysia.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, a consent form was used to ensure the participants anonymity and increase the feeling of comfort and decrease the feeling that the participant felt insecure around a researcher.

Another thing which was taken care of was the fact that the participants have other cultural background than the researcher which made it really important to not judge during interviews and be neutral throughout the interview. During the first interview, which was with the Thai participant, a mistake was made as the researcher judged forced marriage while the participant felt like it was part of his culture and felt somewhat insulted. This incident was learnt from and used in other interviews to try and avoid these situations.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After conducting the field research, in which eight students, who are studying at Manipal University and origin from developing countries were interviewed, enough data has been collected to analyze their ideas on why they came to Manipal University and why they left their home country.

Manipal university has an off-shore campus in other countries as well. It has campuses in Dubai, Nepal, Antigua, Malaysia. The Head of International Admissions of Manipal University (second research method) explained how the Melaka-Manipal Medical College in Malaysia was founded, as five of the six Malaysian participants follow courses which required the students to study at both Manipal University in India and in Malaysia. First off all, the contract of the Melaka-Manipal Medical College was signed in 1993 and in 1997 the new university campus was in use. Before many Malaysian students came to Manipal University in India to study medicine due to the lack of high quality medicine education in Malaysia. At some point, the majority of the students at Manipal University came from Malaysia. Therefore, the government of Malaysia asked Manipal University to build a whole new Manipal University in Malaysia to where the Malaysian students could go. This would be a very expensive for Manipal University, as they would have to duplicate everything, including the staff expenses, so they decided to build a campus in Malaysia to which Malaysian student go once they have finished their first two to three years at the Manipal University in India to be as cost efficient as possible without losing quality. In these first years the students can practice on corpses of humans since these are widely available in India. Once they have done this, they go back to Malaysia to finish their studies. According to the Head of International Admissions, more countries were looking for a joint venture program with Manipal University but Manipal University only set up off-shore campuses in countries which are stable enough to do so. The reasons for other countries to prefer this over building a whole new hospital with a university is because they lack good qualified staff in their country whereas Manipal University has very high quality staff and therefore they would like to use this strength.

According to the Head of International Admissions, Manipal does not advertise to attract students as the university does not need to do that as they have way more applicants than seats available. His view on medical events was; *“We don’t want to be conspicuous by our absence, we will try to participate but we don’t really do promotion a lot”*.

4.1. WHAT ARE THE KEY PUSH FACTORS OF THE PARTICIPANTS REGARDING THEIR CHOICE TO LEAVE THEIR HOME COUNTRY?

4.1.1. *Economic development*

As has been written in chapter 2, ‘Theoretical Framework’ and visualized in figure 2, ‘conceptual model’ on student migration, four theoretical push factors exist according to McMahon (1992). The first theoretical push factor is the economic development in the sending country. Due to the fact that India is not more developed economically, this was not a direct reason for any of the students to leave their home country. But because India is not as developed as the home countries of the students, according to Adam, it was a pull factor for the medicine students as the medical conditions of the inhabitants around Manipal University is worse and diseases still appear around this area which do not occur in more developed countries anymore due to the better healthcare in those countries. Danish said the following on this matter: *“You have a whole spectrum of diseases you can see here but in Malaysia it is very limited. You can learn it [in Malaysia] but your practical knowledge is very limited. So in that case Manipal offers a lot more”*.

4.1.2. *Economic wealth*

The second push factor according to McMahon (1992) is economic wealth. All of the participants, when asking about their living situations and how it is compared to the rest of the country, said that it was at least average to above average. Akmal for example defined it as *“some kind of rich”*. As all of the participants mentioned, economic wealth was not a push factor to leave their home country as India is not more economically developed than their country of origin. Stating this, economic wealth is not a push factor in student migration to developing countries. However, you need the necessary economical and educational resources to study at Manipal University. This can be concluded due to the fact that no participant described him or herself as rather poor.

4.1.3. *Governments’ education priority*

The third push factor, which is how high the education’s priority in the government, is somewhat more complex. Six interviews were conducted on Malaysian students, but their answers on this matter really differs. *“The education system in Malaysia is bad, really bad”* as Adam mentioned. Adam spoke about the Malaysian education system in which racism by the government is ‘normal’. This makes him feel the Malaysian education system is that bad, and

was for him a reason to study abroad. He said that in Malaysia, three main races live together. Malays, which are the biggest group, Chinese, Indians and the others. The Malay people rule the country and set up this law, “Special Rights of the Malay”, which basically discriminates other races, and therefore Malay people have a better chance of receiving a scholarship for example. Kirk said that the Malaysian education system “... *leaves much to be desired*”. The discrimination was mentioned by all of the Malaysian participants, as they all did not have the Malay background. Jane, from Malaysia, said: ‘*The universities got bad over the years. They implemented stuff that was unnecessary*’. However, Akila from Sri Lanka was very positive about the priority the government gives the education system. He said that all education, even at university level, is free for Sri Lankan citizen.

4.1.4. Educational opportunity

However, when it comes to the educational opportunities, Akila had mixed feeling because there is only a limited amount of medicine seats at university level in Sri Lanka, which made him migrate to India to be able to study medicine.

For the Malaysian participants, five of the six came to Manipal in India because of a joint venture program. Manipal University also has a campus in Malaysia, as was explained before by the Head of International Admissions at Manipal University. Because Manipal University has such a good reputation in Malaysia, especially the medicine and dentistry studies, many students choose this university over other universities in Malaysia. One of the reasons is that in India, way more specimens are available to practice on. Adam said: “... *Malaysia is a country dominated by Muslims. So therefore, when someone passed away and died, according to the Muslim law, they have to be cremated on the same day. And therefore we don't have much specimen to play around compared to Manipal. That's what brought me here. It's what most of the Malaysians over here*”. This was proven to be true as all the participants from Malaysia spoke about the specimens available in India whereas they lack specimens in Malaysia.

4.1.5. Discussion

The push factors ‘economic development’ and ‘economic wealth’ are not necessary a push factor in student migration from developing to developing countries. This is because India is not more developed as the countries of origin of the participants and because they students were able to study in India, it means that they have some kind of wealth, as Akmal mentioned.

However, the government’s educational priority is a factor which is of influence, especially in the case of the Malaysian participants. The quality of education got worse over the years, as Jane mentioned. For some, the way the Malaysian education system works was a reason to study abroad. However, Akila was forced to study abroad as there were not enough seats left in Sri Lanka. But he explicitly mentioned that the education system is good as it is free.

Education opportunity is a factor which was for the Malaysian students a main reason to study abroad as in Malaysia, specimens are hard to come by to practice on. They all mentioned this as an important factor to leave Malaysia in combination with the good quality Manipal University offers in general.

4.2. WHAT ARE THE KEY PULL FACTORS OF THE PARTICIPANTS REGARDING THEIR CHOICE TO STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MANIPAL?

4.2.1. *Knowledge and awareness and personal recommendation*

In the theoretical framework, Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) mentioned that the first pull factor is knowledge and awareness, referring to the fact that a person must have heard or read about Manipal University in order for it to be a potential destination. The Malaysian students mainly know Manipal University because of the campus of Manipal University in Malaysia itself. However, most of the knowledge and awareness appear to be received from personal recommendations, which Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) mentioned as their second pull factor. This happened to all nationalities which were interviewed. As Danish mentioned: *“I started talking to a lot of people who graduated from Manipal, even doctors. Everyone was recommending Manipal. As compared to studying locally in Malaysia itself, the recommendation... would still be Manipal”*, and Akila said: *“There was a doctor. He came here [in Manipal]. He highly recommended it”*. All of the participants received personal recommendations in some way. Most of the personal recommendations received came from friends, parents and doctors who studied, and even doctor who did not study at Manipal University.

4.2.2. *Costs*

Cost as a pull factor is another important factor. *“And then the fees are not that high. so my parents can afford it so I chose India”* is what Charissa said. The costs Charissa meant are financial costs. This is what seven out of eight participants said to be an important factor as Manipal University and India are considered rather cheap. A question was asked about the preferred country of destination to study in if there were no boundaries like financial limitations. The majority of the participants would answer that they would like to study in the United Kingdom or Australia. But as these countries are much more expensive to study in, they did not go there. Keisha said: *“Well, at first I didn’t want to [study at Manipal University], I didn’t want to because I wanted to study in probably like Australia or the United Kingdom. But it’s pretty pricy [to study over there]”*. However, Keisha went to Manipal University due to the price/quality relationship. *“It’s very cost effective for those who want to learn medicine”*, is what Danish said. As medicine is one of the main studies at this university, this influenced many student coming to Manipal University.

As Mazzarol and Souter (2002) mentioned, also social costs are considered costs. As Charissa mentioned, many guards are guarding the university campus, but *“in here we cannot go out at night because it’s very dangerous”* is how Charissa described the safety in Manipal compared to Malaysia. This social cost can be considered a pull factor, because the campus is a very safe

to be. But the social cost could also be a factor which makes Manipal University less attractive due to the unsafety during nights and possibly outside the university campus.

4.2.3. *Environment*

The fourth pull factor, according to Mazzarol and Souter (2002) is the environment. This environment can be seen from two different perspectives. The first is the study climate and the second the physical climate.

Akmal from Thailand choose Manipal University due to it being a small city. A small city gives him less opportunities to hang out with people. He mentioned Bangalore as an example. Because there are more tourists in Bangalore he fears that he will spend more time “*chilling and drinking*”. The city of Manipal, as he said, prevents him from doing so and therefore he can spend more time studying.

As for the physical climate, this was not necessarily a pull factor according all of the participants. Since this study focusses on students from South and Southeast Asia, the climate in the home countries of the students is more or less similar to that of Manipal. Therefore, most participants were indifferent to the climate in Manipal while choosing for their university as they were kind of used to it already. They all have two seasons a year, just like Manipal has, but Manipal is just somewhat more extreme. Jane spoke about the monsoons: “*Like in Malaysia, they don't even call it monsoon, there is some rain season but not bad. But here it's really bad. The monsoon who was here last year, it was really bad. In a week you probably need to get like 6 or 7 umbrellas because of the wind and rain*”.

4.2.4. *Geographical proximity*

Geographical proximity, the fifth pull factor Mazzarol and Souter (2002) mentioned as well, was approximately only for half of the students a factor which they considered when selecting their destination for studying. Some of the participants are disinterested in traveling, which makes geographical proximity an important factor for them. Akmal from Thailand was asked whether he would want to study in the UK, for example. His reaction was: “*No, not too much. It's too much travel. I don't like sitting in the plane*”. For others is was family. Keisha responded on the question about geographical proximity. “*Actually in the beginning it didn't matter, but every holiday I go back to my family in Malaysia. I don't travel. I never went to the north [of India]. So every holiday I go back*”.

For most of the participants, however, the geographical proximity did not matter. They had other factors which they considered more vital.

4.2.5. *Social links*

Social links is the last factor Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) mentioned. Social links can me split up in two perspectives as well. There can be social links to India in general and/or social links to Manipal University.

As for a few of the Malaysian participants, they have Indian backgrounds. Kirk for example, has an Indian mother. Due to her being Indian, Kirk was told and taught a lot about India and Indian culture way before he made the decision to study in India. *“Well one more thing when I was small and my mum used to give me magazines, comics of ancient Hinduism and this and that. Then, in these comics they used to make like the art of medicine itself, they made it look like the art of medicine originated from here. From that it grew and grew and grew. And I wanted to be at the heart place”*. Without him having direct social links to India, he probably would not have received this information.

Most of the participants had friends, family member or acquaintances who studied in Manipal before and therefore had a trustworthy source of information on living there. Jane’s sister was still studying in Manipal when she arrived and she showed her around, which was the most direct social link she had there. When she was asked for the most important reasons why she decided to go to Manipal she answered: *“I think because of my sister because she was here, and also because Manipal is like one of the best for medicine and dentistry. And also because India is cheaper than other places”*.

4.2.6. Quality of education

Quality of the education was not mentioned in the theories of Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), but concluding from the interview data, this is an essential pull factor. Seven out of the eight participants explicitly mentioned the quality of the education at Manipal to be very good. Asking the participants about why they came to Manipal University to study, answers like: *“... because the medical college is one of the best places”* (Akila, Sri Lanka), and *“I think education wise, that be first [reason to study at Manipal University]”* (Jane, Malaysia).

4.2.7. Cultural differences

As for cultural differences, especially in the case of the Malaysian participants, one participant mentioned something very important about cultural differences. *“But because we have an Indian population in Malaysia which are originated from South India, we are not very ‘foreigned’ to the culture”* (Adam, Malaysia). Even the food in India for him was *“normal”*. But even within the Malaysian community, different opinions on the Indian food existed, ranging from *“It’s quite similar in Malaysia”* (Charissa, Malaysia) to *“food wise, it’s not so good”* (Keisha, Malaysia). Participants from the other countries used terms like *“too spicy”* (Akmal, Thailand) and *“different”* (Jane, Malaysia) when it comes to Indian food. What the cultural differences and similarities concerns, these were not factors which the participants consciously considered when migrating to Manipal University. For Adam, however, the cultural difference was a push factor to leave his country of origin, Malaysia. He spoke about the racism in Malaysia, as he belonged to one of the minority groups in Malaysia. *“They give a lot of opportunities to the Malays”*, he said. And therefore had less change of receiving a scholarship because he belongs to the Chinese minority.

4.2.8. Discussion

Mazarol & Soutar (2002) described knowledge and awareness and personal recommendations as two different pull factors. Concluding from what the participants said about this idea, personal recommendations can be seen as a part of knowledge and awareness. According to the participants, the personal recommendations were an important factor when it comes to selecting the university and thus the country as the participants all chose Manipal University because of the quality which they were told about by other people. Also the relative low tuition fees and low costs of living is a very important factor for students to choose India. This, in combination with the high quality of education Manipal University offers, as was often mentioned by the participants, were the main reasons to choose education. This can be summarized by, as Kirk mentioned, *“It’s very cost effective for those who want to learn medicine”*.

The main pull factor therefore, is a combination of the costs and quality of education. The supporting factor to get people to know about this is the personal recommendations the participants have received to study at Manipal University.

However, it has to be acknowledged that all of the pull factors above have some influence, but this is very person specific.

4.3. THE INTERACTION OF PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Push and pull factors cannot be seen as separate factors due to their dependent nature, as is shown in the figure 1: An illustration based on Lee’s (1966) push and pull theory. (Fassmann, 2011) and figure 2: Conceptual model.

The quality of education, of which many participants spoke about, was considered as a push factor, due to the lack of educational opportunities in the sending country but it was also a pull factor, as the quality of education at Manipal University is considered as *‘very nice, very good’* (Charissa, Malaysia). According to Hakim (1989), push factors contain personal and external elements and usually have negative connotations and pull factors often contain opportunities, and usually have positive connotations.

As for quality of education regarding the push side, where it is called ‘education opportunity’, the fact that the proper education is not available in the home country of the participants is an external factor with a negative connotation.

Quality of education on the push side is seen as an opportunity and thus positive connotations. The participants chose this destination. This theory can be applied to all push and pull factors.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The number of tertiary students who are studying abroad is steadily growing by 6% per year (OECD, 2013). One reason for this growth is the under-supply of university seats in developing countries (Gribble, 2008). This research paper focused on the push and pull factors of student migration, specifically student migration from developing countries in South and Southeast Asia to Manipal University in India. Eight students from South and Southeast Asian countries were interviewed to attain the desired personal experiences.

The push and pull theory by Lee (1966) has been used as the basis of this research paper. In international student migration, push factors generally concern reasons to leave the home country, whereas pull factors are the reasons which attract international students to a certain university (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

The push and pull factors cannot be seen as of equal importance as pull factors are found to be of greater importance than push factors, which Segal, Borgia, & Schoenfeld (2005) concluded in their research as well.

An important push factor which has been found is the government's education priority. In Malaysia it was due to the discrimination happening in their educational system and in Sri Lanka it was because there were not enough seats available for all the students. However, the most influential push factor is found to be the educational opportunities in the country of origin. The vast majority of the participants found this to be the greatest reason to leave their country of origin as the quality of education in their home countries is not as they desired it to be.

Among the participants, the quality of education is found to be the most important reason to study at Manipal University. The Malaysian participants explicitly mentioned the availability of specimens to practice on at Manipal University a reason to choose this university as they are not widely available in Malaysia due to the Malaysian culture. Another main pull factor of Manipal University has found to be financial costs. The relatively low tuition fees at Manipal University and low living costs in India in combination with the high quality of education is what ensures Manipal University to stand out. The third main pull factor is found to be knowledge and awareness. Manipal University is known for its quality in medical education. All of the participants have therefore been recommended to study at Manipal University by people around them, like friends, family and doctors.

However, the institutional linkages with Manipal University campus in Malaysia is the main reason why many Malaysian students can be found in Manipal University in India due to the fact that students who study at Manipal University campus in Malaysia are send to India for their first half of their studies and will complete their studies in Malaysia. Nevertheless, the push and pull factors of students who study at Manipal University campus in Malaysia are applicable because they knew in advance that they would partly study in India, and therefore, seen as their choice.

5.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future recommendations would be to gain a larger sample size as eight participants is hardly enough to base a research on in qualitative data research. Another limitation in this research were the nationalities of the participants as six came from Malaysia, one from Thailand and one from Sri Lanka. A recommendation would be to focus on a single nationality or focus on all nationalities but with same amount of participants from each nationality.

This study focusses on the push and pull factors of student migration. An issue with this is the relationship between the push and pull factors as there is a very unclear boundary between the two. A suggestion would be to focus more on the relationship between push and pull factors instead of trying to see them separated from each other.

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7. APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

7.1. INTERVIEW GUIDE:

The interview will start with an informal introduction of the researcher to the participant and vice versa, including stating that this interview will be anonymous and will be recorded for research purposes only, which will be strengthened by a consent form.

Opening Questions:

How are you?
What is your name?
How old are you?
Where are you from?
What are you studying?

Key Questions:

Can you tell me more about the country you come from?
[Did you live in a rural or urban area? Which city/area?]

How did you decide to come to India?

Why did you leave your home country to study in India?
[friends going to India, costs, wish to go to India]

Can you tell me more about your living situation back home?
[living situation compared to the rest of the country, siblings, parents]

How are the universities in your country?
[Many choices in courses, safety, accessibility, have you studied here]

Can you tell me how you made your choice to study at the University of Manipal?
[why, why not other university]

How did you receive information about Manipal University before you applied here?
[what information, which medium, what were your first thoughts]

Before you came here, were you told about Manipal University by people?
[did you know people who studied here, attitude towards Manipal University]

What does Manipal University offer you, concerning your studies?
[Costs, good education, accessibility, friends + importance of each probe]

Did you take the distance from your home to Manipal in consideration when deciding to come here?
[Conscious, unconscious, why not go somewhere else then]

How important were the costs of studying and living while making your choice?
[and why]

What was the most important reason for you to study at the University of Manipal and why?

Do you have any other reasons to study in Manipal?
[parents' satisfaction, experience of going abroad, reputation of university]

If you would not have chosen Manipal to study, would you still study outside your own country?
[without looking at the costs]

Closing Questions:

What are your plans for the future?

Will you stay in India and why?

What did you think about this interview?

Do you have any other questions for me?

7.2. CODES USED WHILE CODING THE TRANSCRIPTIONS WITH ATLAS.TI

All the codes which were used in Atlas.ti are shown below. However, not all codes have been used in the research paper.

| Code group | Codes |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Information about the participant | -Age -Time in Manipal -Study of the participant |
| Push factor | -Educational opportunity -Economic wealth -Economic development -Governments' education priority |
| Pull factor | -Accessibility -Costs -Geographical proximity -Country of citizenship -Personal recommendation -Quality of education -Social links |
| Other | -Culture/food -Language -Living situation in country of origin -Most important reason -Opinion on Manipal -Parents' influence -Recommendation by the participant |
