

FOR FUN OR FUTURE?

VARIOUS PRIORITIES OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS IN GRONINGEN, THE NETHERLANDS



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ABSTRACT

This thesis reports on a quantitative study conducted to determine the priorities of international exchange students residing in the city of Groningen in the fall of 2016. A sample of 141 cases was investigated, all enrolled in different fields of study in either the University of Groningen or Hanze University of Applied Sciences. The majority of respondents originated from Europe and spent a period of one semester in Groningen. Several priorities were distinguished, those of having fun, learning about Dutch culture, performing academically, preparing for future career, getting to know other (international) people, personal development, and connecting to Groningen. Accordingly, these priorities were analysed in light of the personal, academic, and geographic characteristics of the respondents. Multiple linear regression was used to determine which variables are predictors of times a priority was awarded the highest valuation. The main results show that, during the exchange, having fun is regarded as most important. Even though predictors differ profoundly per priority, interesting influences of gender, education level and the frequency of interaction with Dutch people were found.

Keywords: *international student exchange; priorities; Groningen; exchange programme; exchange students.*

PREFACE

In the five years I have lived in Groningen, the diversity of the student population has interested me quite a bit. Every Dutch, international or exchange student experiences the city in their own way. In my surroundings – predominantly Dutch students - , the prejudice exists that these students live mostly in an “international bubble” and are not interested in getting to know Dutch culture or people. Still, very few of these opinions seem to arise from actual knowledge about how international exchange students behave during their stay in Groningen. This sparked my curiosity in wanting to learn more about this specific group of residents of my beloved city.

During the process of writing this thesis, I learned a valuable lesson; taking some time off to clear your mind can be just as, or even more effective as pushing yourself to the limit to achieve the best result. Or, to use the words of the famous Johan Cruijff (1947-2016): “Je gaat het pas zien als je het doorhebt”, most adequately translated to: “You cannot see it before you get it”.

I would like to thank the Faculty of Spatial Sciences and especially my supervisor, prof. dr. P.P.P. Huigen, for his advice and encouragement throughout the writing process. I also want to thank dr. V.A. Venhorst for his assistance regarding the statistics needed for this research. And, of course, I would like to give thanks to all exchange coordinators for forwarding and to the 141 respondents for filling out the questionnaire.

My special thanks goes out to my best friend Lianne, for making sure the language used was up to academic standards, and to Caroline, for critically reviewing the thesis multiple times. Lianne, mama and Daniel, I am indescribably grateful for your support, and for your unconditional belief in me throughout the process of writing this thesis, even when I did not so myself. Without you, I am convinced that this thesis would not be what it is today: a result to be proud of.

I hope you will enjoy reading my thesis!

Liselotte Vreeling

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INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalisation and internationalisation, the demand for internationally educated professionals has increased (Petzold & Peter, 2014; European Commission, 2014). Therefore, it has become desirable for tertiary students to spend a part of their study programme abroad, to experience different cultures and develop both personally and professionally (Teichler, 2004; Petzold & Peter, 2015; Lesjak, Juvan, Ineson, Yap & Axelsson, 2015; Unlu, 2015). Consequently, higher education institutions (HEIs) are to some extent forced to take part in the internationalisation of education, to secure their place in the vastly changing global market of students, scholars and educators (Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Smith, 2016). In order to cater to the needs of international (exchange) students and hence compete on the 'highly competitive international education market' (Smith, 2016), these needs must be mapped for the professionals concerned with providing services and support for this heterogeneous group. This is aptly described by Conrad and Morris (2010, p.13), who state that "the devil really is in the details of each student's experience."

Besides students so-called 'degree-seeking international students', who spend their entire bachelor's or master's degree abroad, a considerable amount of students spends only part of their study programme elsewhere. Most of these participate in an international student exchange programme (ISEP). These exchanges are typically short-term, most of them lasting up to one semester (Unlu, 2015).

Groningen has a relatively large student population, with students making up almost thirty percent of its approximately 200.000 inhabitants. In 2015, 28.500 students were enrolled in the University of Groningen (RuG) and 27.650 in the Hanze University of Applied Sciences (HUAS) (Gemeente Groningen, 2015). In the academic year of 2014-2015, about 6.250 international students resided in the city, of which two-thirds were enrolled in the RuG. (University of Groningen, 2016; Hanze University of Applied Sciences, 2016). Aggregating the numbers of both HEIs, in 2014-2015 a total of 2.167 international exchange students (IESs) sojourned in Groningen, which would total about 1.100 per semester.

Another interesting phenomenon comes to light when examining the annual reports of both facilities; the number of international students per year has increased more than the total number of students enrolled (University of Groningen, 2016; Hanze University of Applied Sciences; 2016). This suggests that the amount of Dutch students coming to Groningen has gradually declined over the last years. This, once again, demonstrates the relevance of this research. Both HEIs in Groningen not only need to attract, but also satisfy international (exchange) students, to both maintain their academic competitiveness, and the municipality's image of a 'typical student city'. To succeed, the ways in which IESs spend their exchange period require further examination.

It would be simplistic to assume that the entire body of IESs have strictly equal priorities during their exchange and therefore, have the same needs. It is important for both the HEIs as well as the municipality of Groningen to identify how international exchange students prioritise between different aspects of (student) life and which personal, academic and geographic characteristics are predictors for prioritisation. A priority, in this sense, means 'something that is given special attention, or has a preferential rating compared to something else' (Merriam-Webster, 2017).

This research paper investigates what international exchange students in Groningen prioritise during their stay in light of their personal, social, academic and geographical characteristics. It does not aim to find causality between the characteristics and differences in

priorities, nor judge which priorities are superior. It merely focuses upon the mind-set of IESs during their time in Groningen. Where do their priorities lie during their stay and how do these relate to their motivations beforehand? And are the priorities of IESs in correspondence with the objectives of ISEPs? The main research question it sets out to answer is:

Which priorities do international exchange students in Groningen have during their exchange and how does this relate to their personal, academic and geographic characteristics?

Secondary research questions deriving from the main research question are:

1. To what extent do priorities during the exchange correspond to motivations to go on exchange beforehand?
2. Are priorities during the exchange congruent with the objectives of ISEPs?

To form a stable basis for analysis through questionnaires, first the existing literature on the topic will be discussed, as well as this paper's contribution to the field. After this, the research method is explained, as well as the data collection process and ethical considerations. The different personal, academic and geographic variables that are analysed will also come forward in this instalment of the thesis. Next, the results of the analysis are presented and, when possible, connected to the existing literature. Lastly, the main conclusions are summarized and the limitations of this research, as well as implications for future research, considered.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, ISEPs such as the Erasmus or Socrates exchange programme, have gained in popularity among students (Lesjak et al., 2015). If we are to believe policy makers and educational institutions, the benefits gained from international student exchange are endless: they act as an opportunity for students to 1) develop academically and improve their résumé (European Commission, 2014); 2) learn about different cultures (Langley & Breese, 2005); 3) socialize with other students; 4) enhance confidence and self-awareness (Brown, 2009; Hutteman, Wagner, Nestler & Egloff, 2015); and 5) change their living environment (all the above: Lesjak et al., 2015; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005; Unlu, 2015; European Commission, 2015). This, supposedly, results in internationally trained, culturally oriented and highly skilled professionals of which society as a whole can profit (European Commission, 2014).

Teichler (2004) concluded that professional development is the main reason why students participate in ISEPs. However, research done by Lesjak et al. (2015) on Erasmus exchange students' international mobility motives and destination choices reveals that, although these students participate for professional and personal growth, they are primarily driven by recreational motives such as having fun. Still, this does not necessarily mean that the profession-oriented goals of international exchange programmes are not met. As Lesjak et al. (2015), mentions, the interaction with people from different cultures may introduce the students to new insights which can result in personal and professional development.

Although these objectives, especially the ones regarding job-opportunities have been debated amongst the academic world (e.g. Petzold & Peter, 2014), there seems to be no doubt that gaining mobility experience is beneficial for personal, cultural and academic development. Nonetheless, there are studies that mention obstacles that students or scholars going abroad may come across. For example, Howe (2008) discusses the adjustment difficulties for international faculty scholars in the United States during a relatively short exchange period, comparable to most ISEPs. He recognizes '(...) adjusting to and coping within a national and academic culture that may vary greatly from their own (...)' as one of the biggest issues faced by these scholars. This corresponds with literature about the acculturation of (degree-seeking) international students (e.g. Kashima & Loh, 2006). Nevertheless, as Howe (2008) highlights, it cannot be stated that these adjustment issues necessarily are of negative influence on the experience and potential outcomes, since experiencing such difficulties enables personal and professional growth as well. Multiple studies emphasize the importance of interaction with local people on both cultural learning and the development of international skills in international scholars and degree-seeking students (e.g. Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Howe, 2008; Lesjak et al., 2015). It can be expected that this is also the case for international exchange students. Janes (2008) investigated the cultural learning of IESs in London, and maintains that the perception of the host culture does develop during the exchange period, supporting the statement that exchange programmes do, in fact, bring about intercultural learning.

Moreover, it could be argued that the relative short sojourn influences the cultural adjustment profoundly, since IESs may feel less inclined to adjust to their host culture or interact with nationals than those who study abroad for a longer period of time. They may realize their stay is only temporary, or because it is simply easier for them to interact with other IESs.

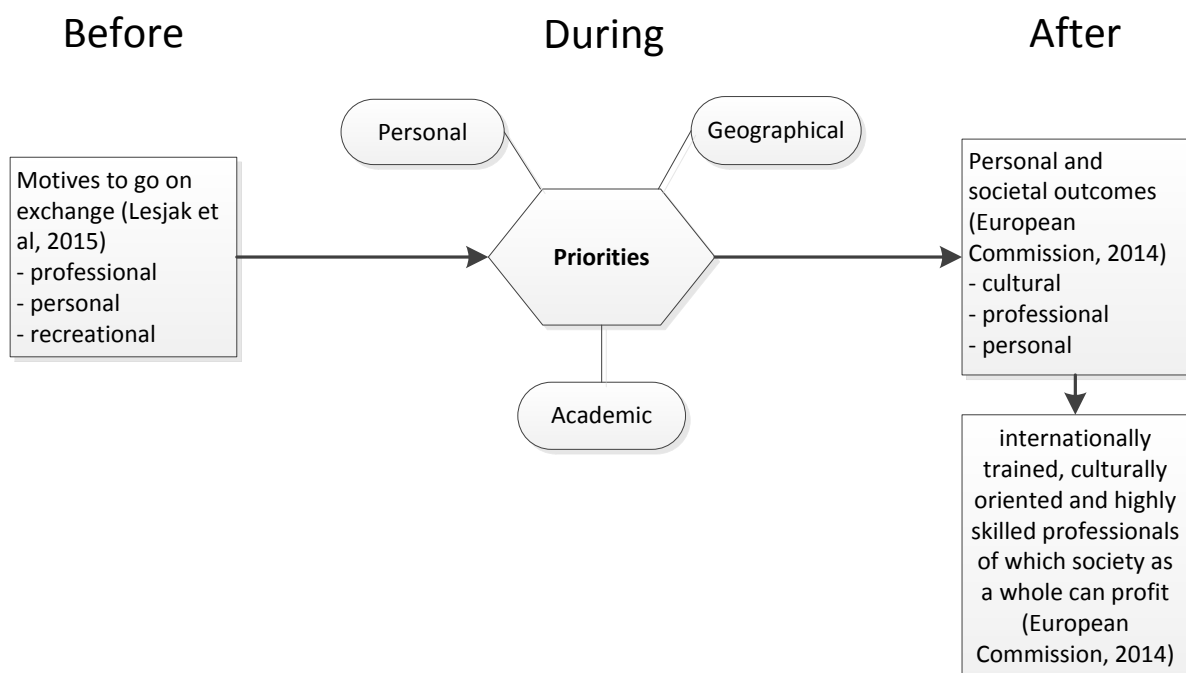
Considering these factors, one question remains unanswered. Studies have done on why students participate in an international exchange programme, why they select certain places, and the objectives of ISEPs. However, this does not automatically mean that this is what

occupies the mind of the exchange student *during* their time abroad. For example, one might decide to go abroad to improve his/her job opportunities for the future, but may not (actively) be concerned with this at all during the actual exchange. There seems to be a gap in the existing literature about what their priorities are during the exchange.

Additionally, there might be profound differences in how various students perceive their stay. ‘The international exchange student’ can have differing personal, academic and geographic characteristics, which may very well all contribute to what a student finds important for his or her own exchange experience. This research aims to fill this void, by investigating differing priorities among international exchange students in Groningen in light of these characteristics. Results of this research provide valuable insights in the distribution priorities of IESs are distributed, and what differences can be found between various groups. These can be used by the HEIs as well as the municipality, since it contains information about how IESs behave during their sojourn in Groningen and provides a suitable framework for them to adapt the services and information for IESs accordingly. As discussed above, providing the right services and circumstances for international students results in a competitive advantage for the institutions on the international education market and secures their future existence.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Figure 1 shows a visualization of the existing literature on the research subject, as well as the information gap this research further examines. The conceptual model can be described as follows: beforehand, students have certain motivations why they choose to go on exchange and afterwards ISEPs have certain outcomes for both the student and society as a whole, but there is little information about the ways in which IESs manage their time abroad and how this relates to the students’ personal, academic and geographic characteristics.



METHODOLOGY

In order to answer the main research question, a quantitative data collection method was used, in the form of an online questionnaire. This particular method was selected for multiple reasons. It was the best method to answer the research question, allows for comparison between different groups, and, as compared to qualitative methods, allows for a more general appliance of the results.

The survey that provided the data for the study was conducted online during the months of October, November and December 2016 among 141 international exchange students enrolled in either the RuG or Hanze UAS in Groningen. The respondents represented various regions of origin, as well as study majors and age levels.

The dataset used was sufficiently valid. Based on the estimate of 1.100 IESs in total per semester, the response rate was about twelve percent. 91,4% of the cases answered all questions and were included in the analysis. Although some groups were overly represented (e.g. women, Hanze-students, study field gamma, and from Europe), each group consisted of enough respondents for the method of analysis (Moore & McCabe, 2005).

Questionnaire design

The aim of the questionnaire was to gain insights in the priorities of IESs in Groningen. The intent was to determine by which personal, academic and geographic variables prioritisation was best predicted, and if this corroborated with the existing literature on the motives of IESs beforehand and the goals of ISEPs.

For the collection of data, an online survey was used. This was the most preferable way, since it is complicated to scout IESs on locations such as the university campus or library – someone’s physical appearance does not give away whether or not they are an IES. To avoid unintentional infliction of negative feelings such as discrimination, the best way to distribute the survey was online. To maximise survey response, five cinema-coupons worth €15,00 were raffled among the participants. Beforehand, a pilot survey was done. A few people (not IESs) filled in the questionnaire and provided helpful feedback on question formulation. Some turned out to be overly ambiguous and were rewritten.

The questionnaire was three pages long and divided into two parts. It would take respondents about ten minutes to fill in. Most of the questions were multiple-choice. The first part investigated how important the respondent found different aspect of student life during the exchange. This was done using sixteen 5-point Likert-scales, rating from 1, ‘not applicable at all’ to 5, ‘extremely applicable’. The second part of the survey measured the participant’s personal, academic and geographic characteristics. Table 1 contains all characteristics that were measured. For the complete online survey, please refer to Appendix A.

Personal	Geographic	Academic
Age	Region of origin	Education level
Gender	Current residential area	Study field
Duration of stay		Phase of studies (bachelor’s or master’s degree)
Friends (number of and demographics)		Location of classes
Main motivation for choosing Groningen		
Hours of spare time per week (average)		
Economic position family		

Table 1 - Variables per category.

Data collection process

First, the survey was spread through different groups on Facebook, such as 'ESN (Erasmus Student Network) Groningen' and 'exchange students Groningen'.¹ Unfortunately, this led to little response. Next, exchange coordinators from all study fields from the RuG and Hanze UAS were contacted, causing the survey to be spread digitally through e-mail.² This has led to 141 respondents, of which 129 useable, enough to run a parametric analysis method such as multiple linear regression (Moore & McCabe, 2010; Campbell & Swinscow, 2009).

Ethical considerations

Since the researcher is also a student, power relations do not play a role of significance in this research. However, the researcher, a domestic student not participating in any exchange programme, may be considered an outsider by international exchange students. Consequences of this may include cultural and/or linguistic barriers. However, since the survey was conducted online, the participants had little information about the demographics of the researcher except field of study and the use of the survey. In no way was the goal to make the participants feel insecure or judged on their behaviour, therefore the potential impact of every question was carefully considered in advance, and questions were altered if necessary or preferable, using the book *Key Methods in Geography* by Clifford, French & Valentine (2010). To guarantee the privacy of the participants, all data collected from the survey was processed anonymously, and before the survey could be started, the respondent had to explicitly authorize the use of his/her answers for this research.

Data preparation

Coding of priorities (dependent variables)

To avoid unnecessary cluttering of the regression and therefore the results of this research, the sixteen Likert-scales used in the survey were aggregated into seven so-called 'priorities'. First, the Spearman rank-correlation test was used to identify which scales showed the highest, most significant correlations.³ Next, the scales to combine were selected. This was done not only on a statistical, but also on a theoretical basis, to avoid that the combination of two (or more) scales shows statistic correlation, but turns out to be theoretically irrelevant. Moreover, correlation between scales will become clear when the distinguished priorities are cross-referenced in the analysis. Table 2 contains the priorities that were selected.⁴

Per priority, the number of times a case rated the consisting scales as 'extremely applicable' (5) was counted, resulting in seven different (ratio) variables to use for analysis. The consideration was also made whether it would be better to count the number of times a respondent rated a scale as 'quite important' (4) as well, because one could argue that respondents who gave this rating may be 'the same as respondents who rated 5, only less extreme in their rating'. This did not turn out to be the case. The explanatory value as well as the significance of each model decreased as compared to the "harsh" counterpart. For future research, it might be interesting to also take a look at the other ratings, but in light of the research question and limited resources for this thesis, only the 5-ratings were included.

¹ For the message that was posted in these groups, please refer to Appendix C of this thesis.

² A copy of the e-mail that was sent, can be found in Appendix D.

³ For an overview of these correlations, please refer to Appendix E.

⁴ Please note that these are not all the potential priorities an international exchange student may have, but the motives that can be distinguished the best following the existing literature and the setup of this research.

Priority	Scales
1. Having fun;	Having fun; Enjoying the nightlife of Groningen;
2. Learning about Dutch culture, language and people;	Learning about Dutch culture; Interacting with Dutch students; Learning the Dutch language; Interacting with Dutch non-students;
3. Performing academically;	Getting good grades;
4. Preparing for a future career;	Building a professional network for later; Improving my résumé; Improving my job opportunities for the future;
5. Getting to know other international people;	Getting to know as many people as possible; ⁵ Getting to know other international exchange students;
6. Personal development;	Learning about myself;
7. Connecting to Groningen.	Exploring the city of Groningen; Making Groningen my home; Visiting tourist sites in Groningen.

Table 2 - Classification of scales into priorities.

Coding of independent variables

A number of variables had to be recoded to make all the data compliant to the method of analysis, Most of these were categorical. Most of the characteristics, based on the division of the respondents, could be recoded into a binary variable (region of origin, location of classes) and some had to be recoded into three-category variables, using the lowest and highest categories as polars (e.g. financial position family, spare time, study field, number of friends). Other variables were split into multiple binary variables, such as motivation for choosing Groningen, nationality of friends, location of classes, neighbourhood Groningen. The last open question of the survey, main motivation for choosing Groningen, was binary coded for seven categories: personal, social, geographic, academic, cultural, practical and 'other'.⁶

Cross-references

To analyse whether patterns could be found in the ways respondents rated different priorities, not only the '5-count'-priorities were included in analysis, but also the number of times respondents gave a priority the minimal rating. As such, the inter-priority relationships lend themselves to closer inspection. For example, the number of times a respondent rated a scale about having fun as extremely important shows significant correlation with the number of times a respondent rated a professional scale as not important at all, which means that based on the sample it can be stated that in the population IESs whose priority is having fun, the priority of preparing for the future is more likely to be (very) low.

Data analysis

Multiple linear regression was used to analyse the correlation between these variables and the outcome variable, since this test allows for an unlimited number of independent variables. This is preferable for this research, because the rating of a priority may be contingent upon different factors at once. For every regression, the null hypothesis was that no linear correlation could be found between the outcome variable (the priority) and all independent variables included in the regression. The alpha level was set at .10. All data analyses were done using IBM SPSS Statistics 23.

⁵ This scale was included in this priority, because most respondents stated to have mainly international (exchange) students as friends. Also, the scales showed high correlation using Spearman's Rank Correlation. These correlations can be found in appendix E.

⁶ For the code families of these categories, please refer to Appendix B

RESULTS

Descriptives

Looking at the descriptive results (table 3 and table 4), several things stand out. First of all, there are more than twice as many female as male respondents, and 60% of the respondents is enrolled in the HUAS. The latter is incongruent with the population division, which points out that there are more IESs studying at the RuG. Most of the respondents (100) are in Groningen for one semester, which is in line with how most international student exchange programmes are set up.

106 of 129 respondents said that less than 30% of their friends in Groningen are Dutch students, out of which 74 indicated that number to be less than 10%. None of the respondents expressed that more than 30% of their friends in Groningen are Dutch non-students. These numbers correspond to the results of previous studies, such as Smith (2016), who said that the vast majority of the international students in Ontario, Canada has little or no domestic friends. Kashima & Loh (2006) reported that international students in Australia have more international and conational rather than local social ties. Moreover, most of these students reported conationals and internationals as their primary contacts. As mentioned, Howe (2008) emphasizes the importance of interaction with nationals for adjustment to the host culture. These results may indicate that there may indeed be a weaker desire for IESs to adjust to the Dutch culture. However, a multitude of reasons may emerge for this, such as the duration of the exchange period, language/cultural barriers, or because of the conveniences of contact with other international (exchange) students through associations such as ESN.

Figure 2 shows the residential areas of IESs in Groningen. Evidently, most of them live in the old neighbourhoods or the west of the city. This may be due to the fact that the Student Hotel, an accommodation tailored to the housing needs of international (exchange) students, is located in the old neighbourhoods. Also, rooms seem to be the most readily available and/or cheap in these boroughs.⁷

Almost 30% of the cases stated academic reasons as their main motivation for choosing Groningen as their exchange destination. This includes the reputation of the university and the quality of the study programme. Personal and social motivations were also often stated. Personal reasons include 'self-development' and 'new experience', whereas social motivations had to do specifically with contact with other people or the reputation of Groningen as a student city.⁸

Reason for choosing Groningen	N	Valid % ⁹
Personal	37	26,2
Social	35	24,8
Geographic	28	19,9
Academic/professional	41	29,1
Cultural	20	14,2
Practical	17	12,1
'Other'	5	3,5

Table 3 - Reason for choosing Groningen (N = 129).

⁷ This was glossed over by looking at the number and average rental prices of rooms available in each borough of Groningen on <https://www.kamers.nl/huren/groningen/>. Last consulted on 21-01-2017.

⁸ For an overview of the code families, please refer to Appendix B.

⁹ More than one reason could be stated, therefore this does not add up to 100%

Variable	N	Valid %
Gender		
Male	41	31,8
Female	88	68,2
Age ($\mu = 21,86$)		
19	7	5,5
20	21	16,4
21	39	30,5
22	24	18,8
23	13	10,2
24	8	6,3
25	9	7,0
26	7	5,5
Institution		
Hanze University of Applied Sciences	78	60,5
University of Groningen	51	39,5
Duration of stay		
Less than one semester	8	6,2
One semester	100	77,5
Two semesters	21	16,3
Region of origin		
Europe	94	74,0
Outside of Europe	33	26,0
Phase of studies		
Bachelor's	106	82,2
Master's	23	17,8
Study field		
Alpha	39	30,2
Gamma	76	58,9
Beta	14	10,9
Financial position family		
Below average	20	15,5
Average	58	45,0
Above average	49	38,0
Unknown	2	1,5
Spare time (average hours per week) ($\mu = 31,73$)		
Below average	34	24,1
Average (20-40 hrs/week)	56	39,7
Above average	26	18,4
Unknown	25	17,7
Number of friends in Groningen		
14 or less	87	67,4
15-24	26	20,2
25 or more	16	12,4
Division of friends (average percentages)		
% International exchange students ($\mu = 61,67$)		
0-30%	28	21,7
31-70%	43	33,3
71-100%	58	45,0
% International students ($\mu = 12,61$)		
0-30%	114	88,4
31-70%	11	8,5
71-100%	4	3,1
% Dutch students ($\mu = 16,77$)		
0-30%	106	82,2
31-70%	21	16,3
71-100%	2	1,6
% International, non-students ($\mu = 1,94$)		
0-9%	115	89,1
10-19%	10	7,8
20% or more	4	3,1
% Dutch, non-students ($\mu = 2,60$)		
0-9%	111	86,0
10-19%	14	10,9
20% or more	4	3,1

Table 4 - Respondent demographics (N=129).

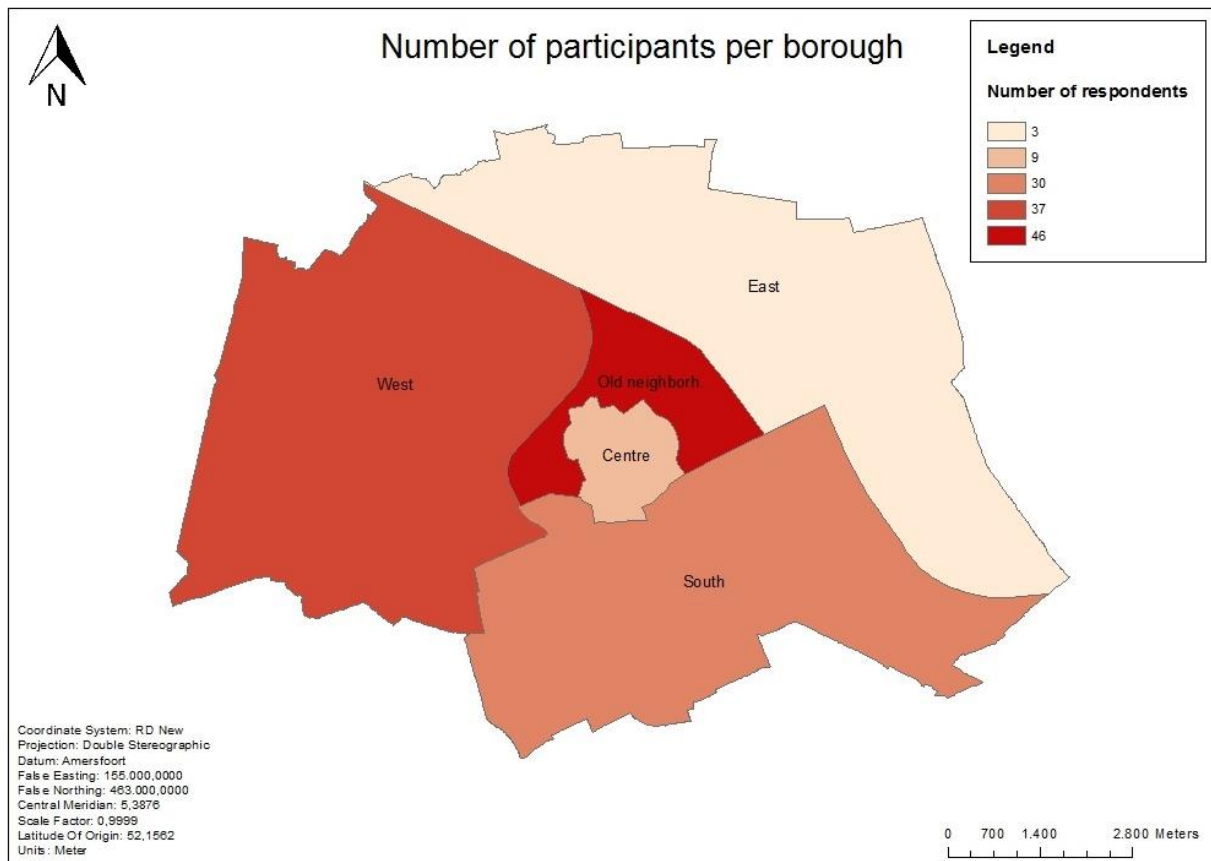


Figure 2 - map of areas in Groningen where IESs live.

Table 4 displays how many times a scale for each priority was awarded maximal valuation by a respondent. Due to a variable amount of Likert-scales per priority, the interpretation of the results may not be obvious. It is most useful to look at the number of respondents who never rated a priority as extremely important. Since only 44% not once gave a scale about having fun the maximum score, it can be concluded that this is the most important priority for IESs during their stay, followed by personal development and getting to know other international people. Extending this train of thought, one can conclude that learning about the Dutch culture, preparing for a future career and the academic priority seem to be least important. However, some caution must be exercised when drawing these conclusions, since the academic priority only entailed one Likert-scale.

Comparing table 3 and 5, an interesting phenomenon presents itself. Most respondents gave academic reasons for choosing Groningen beforehand, but performing academically and preparing for the future appear to be of lesser importance during the exchange – rather, having fun and socializing seem to have the priority. This corresponds with the research done by Lesjak et al. (2015), who conclude that most student engage in exchange programmes mainly for recreational reasons.

Priority/number of times rated as extremely important	0		1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fun	62	44,0	48	34,0	31	22,0				
Dutch culture	94	66,7	26	18,4	11	7,8	7	5,0	3	2,1
Academic	119	84,4	22	15,6						
Career	93	66,0	23	16,3	19	13,5	6	4,3		
Internationals	79	56,0	40	28,4	22	15,6				
Personal	78	55,3	63	44,7						
Groningen	85	60,3	34	24,1	16	11,3	6	4,3		

Table 5 - Number of times a scale for each priority was rated as extremely important (N=141).

Regressions

Table 6 consists of the regression models for the number of times a gave a scale in a priority the maximum rating. All models were significant, with the explanatory value ranging between 47 and 58%. Moreover, the other models will be foregrounded in their relation to the frequency of the respondent's expression to maximally value a certain priority. For instance, scales concerning 'fun' are often awarded a 5, while career-related scales are rated with a 1. This indicates mutual exclusiveness of both priorities.

For the remainder of this chapter, only the most outstanding or curious results will be discussed. Because the results differ profoundly between both priorities, each of the seven priorities will be discussed separately.

Priority 1 - Having fun

Gender ($B = ,430^{**}$) and education level ($B = ,550^{**}$) were significant predictors for the priority of having fun. This means that males as well as exchange students enrolled in the RuG more frequently have the priority of having fun than females or those studying at the HUAS. Earlier research has been done on the differences in behaviour between men and women in an academic setting. These concluded that males are more prone to reaching short-term goals such as enjoying themselves, whereas women have a primary focus on the long term (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006). The influence of education level cannot be easily explained. A substantial difference between the two groups could exist, but this result could also be caused by a hidden variable. Also, respondents living in the western neighbourhoods of Groningen awarded scales about having fun the maximum valuation significantly more than those who live in other regions of Groningen. This result is challenging to interpret, since it could be explained in multiple ways. For example, the result could be caused by a variable that is not included in the research. Future research could look into this.

Although it would be logical to assume that having fun and performing academically are mutually exclusive, the results show that the latter has a positive correlation with having fun ($B = ,379$). This indicates that a combination of the two priorities might be most important to international exchange students, in line with the motives beforehand determined by Lesjak et al. (2015). However, the number of times the priority career was given the minimal valuation also shows positive correlation, meaning that respondents who highly value the priority of having fun, more often rated the priority career as very low.

Priority 2 - Learning about Dutch culture, language & people

Respondents who have relatively more friends who are Dutch students ($,460^*$) as well as students from the HUAS ($-,653^{**}$), have a higher chance to more often rate the priority of learning about Dutch culture, language and people as extremely important. This indicates that the degree to which cultural adaptation to the host culture is influenced by the number of local social ties one has. This corresponds to earlier research that stated the importance of interaction with local people for cultural development (e.g. Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Howe, 2008; Lesjak et al., 2015).

Looking at the cross-references, it stands out that when a respondent either values the priority of connecting to Groningen very high ($,050^*$) or very low ($,682^*$), he or she is likely to value learning about Dutch culture, language and people as highly important. A possible explanation for this can be found in the scales included in both priorities; 'visiting tourist sites in Groningen' is closely connected to learning about Dutch culture, whereas 'making Groningen my home' is not.

Priority 3 - Performing academically

Students with less than twenty hours of spare time per week (.203**) find it more important to perform academically, indicating that these students spend more time per week studying. Therefore, it is not surprising that they find it more important to perform academically. IESs from Europe (.171**) also prioritised getting good grades, as opposed to their non-European counterparts. This may be due to the fact that European countries often promote individualistic values such as achievement, whereas in Asian cultures, for example, collectivistic ideals like in-group harmony are valued (Green, Deschamps & Paez, 2005).

The group who values performing academically as extremely important, also finds it important to prepare for future career (.132**), but thinks connecting to Groningen is of less importance (.373**).

Priority 4 - Preparing for the future

Looking at the results of the regression, IESs studying at the RuG more often prioritise preparing for the future (B = .438**). As mentioned, an adequate explanation for this difference in education level could not be found. Future research is needed for this.

Respondents who find it important to prepare for the future, want to learn about Dutch culture (.250**) and perform academically (.773**) as well. When someone more frequently gave a scale about preparing for the future the highest valuation, they more frequently thought that having fun was not important at all (.609**).

Priority 5 - Getting to know other international people

According to the outcomes of the regression, a good determinant for how frequently a scale about getting to know other international people is valued as extremely important, is the number of friends a respondent has (.325**). The more friends someone has, the more often this priority is rated as very important. When the priority of getting to know other international people is of major importance, so is the priority of having fun (.331**), but performing academically is more often found not important at all (1,379**).

Priority 6 - Personal development

This priority correlates negatively with the duration of the stay (-.231**), which means that the shorter an IES is in Groningen, the higher the chance is they think personal development is extremely important. Also, when practical reasons for choosing Groningen as the exchange destination are given, the priority of personal development was valued as highly (.248*). Regarding the cross-references, respondents who have the priority of personal development, have a higher chance of preferring getting to know other internationals (.137*) and connect to Groningen (.168**).

Priority 7 - Connecting to Groningen

Women more frequently stated that connecting to Groningen during the exchange is important for them than men (-.335*), as well as those who had mainly geographic reasons for choosing Groningen for their exchange (.338*). The latter stands to reason, since this motivation is highly connected to the physical characteristics of Groningen.

Connecting to Groningen was valued as extremely important and the priority personal development correlated significantly (.461**). When a respondent thinks connecting to Groningen is of high importance, the higher the chance is that they do not find performing academically important at all (1,095*). There is a positive correlation between connecting to Groningen and a high (.206**) as well as a low (.336**) valuation of the priority learning about Dutch culture. This can be explained in the same way that is mentioned with above, in the section 'Priority 3'.

Variables / Priority	1. Having fun	2. Dutch culture	3. Academic	4. Career	5. Internationals	6. Personal	7. Groningen
<i>Personal</i>							
Age	-,018 (.674)	-,020 (.714)	-,026 (.214)	-,041 (.417)	-,005 (.899)	-,027 (.360)	,029 (.555)
Gender	,430 (.009)**	-,015 (.941)	-,054 (.504)	,174 (.380)	-,048 (.762)	-,118 (.313)	-,335 (.078)*
Duration of stay	-,086 (.561)	,186 (.318)	,044 (.549)	,232 (.188)	,092 (.513)	-,231 (.024)**	-,031 (.853)
# Friends	,028 (.797)	,156 (.253)	-,022 (.676)	-,012 (.928)	,325 (.001)*	-,120 (.106)	-,193 (.116)
% social ties IES	,154 (.174)	-,042 (.778)	,039 (.493)	-,122 (.380)	,022 (.846)	-,054 (.500)	,009 (.945)
% International Student	,070 (.697)	,355 (.106)	,117 (.176)	,123 (.564)	-,173 (.306)	-,143 (.251)	,010 (.961)
% Dutch Student	-,028 (.883)	,460 (.064)*	,011 (.902)	-,283 (.230)	-,245 (.195)	-,186 (.171)	,227 (.298)
% Intern. Non-student	-,026 (.875)	,124 (.555)	,002 (.982)	,057 (.773)	-,130 (.409)	-,143 (.251)	-,060 (.748)
% Dutch Non-student	,010 (.949)	,143 (.486)	-,026 (.746)	-,005 (.979)	,002 (.988)	,089 (.432)	-,064 (.732)
Finance < average	-,089 (.638)	,194 (.415)	-,076 (.414)	-,084 (.709)	-,166 (.356)	-,055 (.677)	,146 (.492)
Finance > average	-,014 (.925)	,037 (.838)	,071 (.319)	-,061 (.763)	-,132 (.335)	,025 (.801)	,039 (.811)
Finance unknown	-,476 (.415)	,380 (.608)	,410 (.157)	-,635 (.344)	,142 (.800)	,373 (.363)	-,454 (.495)
Spare time < average	-,279 (.107)	,149 (.500)	,203 (.017)**	-,186 (.376)	,070 (.676)	-,018 (.884)	-,048 (.806)
Spare time > average	,068 (.721)	-,101 (.675)	-,036 (.704)	,176 (.440)	,216 (.230)	-,140 (.294)	-,209 (.337)
Spare time unknown	-,131 (.576)	-,055 (.861)	,085 (.486)	-,416 (.158)	,148 (.530)	,099 (.564)	,358 (.202)
Reason for choosing Groningen							
- Personal	-,354 (.030)**	,118 (.568)	,126 (.120)	-,168 (.391)	,134 (.393)	,179 (.117)	,125 (.507)
- Social	,010 (.950)	,199 (.313)	,006 (.942)	-,252 (.169)	,022 (.884)	,119 (.277)	-,113 (.522)
- Geographical	,011 (.947)	,125 (.542)	-,126 (.120)	,216 (.269)	-,075 (.632)	-,077 (.501)	,338 (.069)*
- Academic	-,214 (.160)	-,264 (.169)	,039 (.604)	,197 (.278)	,132 (.365)	,041 (.700)	,239 (.169)
- Cultural	-,006 (.974)	,107 (.665)	-,008 (.937)	-,152 (.509)	-,040 (.831)	,077 (.573)	,064 (.771)
- Practical	-,183 (.386)	-,290 (.273)	-,008 (.940)	-,169 (.499)	,529 (.007)**	,248 (.089)*	-,136 (.570)
- Other	-,493 (.196)	-,223 (.649)	,038 (.842)	,044 (.925)	,010 (.978)	,649 (.015)**	-,136 (.760)
<i>Geographic</i>							
From Europe	-,051 (.763)	-,005 (.981)	,171 (.037)**	-,004 (.984)	,089 (.575)	-,104 (.374)	-,223 (.237)
Neighbourhood							
West	,304 (.089)*	-,225 (.319)	,081 (.357)	-,045 (.834)	-,263 (.122)	,216 (.079)*	-,191 (.349)
South	,123 (.477)	-,001 (.996)	,057 (.501)	-,188 (.359)	-,112 (.495)	,056 (.640)	-,138 (.484)
Old neighbourhoods	-,163 (.555)	-,016 (.964)	,205 (.132)	-,150 (.644)	-,182 (.489)	,016 (.935)	,786 (.011)**
<i>Academic</i>							
Bachelor/master	-,087 (.687)	-,208 (.443)	,001 (.993)	-,125 (.626)	,301 (.139)	-,051 (.734)	-,284 (.243)
Education level	,550 (.004)**	-,653 (.007)**	-,085 (.385)	,438 (.060)*	-,145 (.437)	,050 (.715)	,012 (.956)
Study field	-,150 (.376)	,197 (.356)	,123 (.141)	-,061 (.763)	-,120 (.456)	,132 (.263)	-,077 (.686)
Classes at Zernike	-,260 (.212)	,393 (.133)	-,131 (.204)	,133 (.596)	,186 (.352)	-,282 (.051)*	,272 (.255)
<i>Cross-references</i>							
Priority Fun 5	-	,261 (.058)*	,089 (.102)	,000 (.999)	,331 (.001)**	-,050 (.514)	,193 (.127)
Priority Culture 5	,148 (.090)*	-	-,027 (.536)	,250 (.015)**	,110 (.189)	,029 (.639)	,206 (.034)*
Priority Academic 5	,379 (.086)*	-,208 (.455)	-	,773 (.003)**	-,257 (.222)	-,113 (.467)	,258 (.290)
Priority Career 5	-,022 (.804)	,282 (.013)**	,132 (.003)**	-	,070 (.425)	,101 (.109)	-,031 (.768)
Priority Internationals 5	,389 (.001)**	,165 (.265)	-,086 (.118)	,148 (.292)	-	,137 (.096)*	,128 (.345)
Priority Personal 5	-,118 (.452)	,126 (.526)	-,044 (.479)	,288 (.123)	,202 (.170)	-	,461 (.008)*
Priority Groningen 5	,171 (.071)*	,229 (.050)*	,052 (.268)	-,032 (.778)	,095 (.297)	,168 (.011)**	-
Priority Fun 1	-	,033 (.921)	-,073 (.581)	,609 (.055)*	-	,120 (.519)	-,514 (.070)*
Priority Culture 1	-,192 (.175)	-	,057 (.401)	-,094 (.535)	,086 (.507)	-,119 (.231)	,336 (.036)**
Priority Academic 1	-,656 (.266)	-,520 (.472)	-	-,467 (.485)	1,379 (.009)**	-,344 (.399)	1,095 (.099)*
Priority Career 1	,362 (.013)**	-,202 (.221)	-,098 (.155)	-	-,179 (.200)	,042 (.682)	-,125 (.455)
Priority Internationals 1	,300 (.576)	-,301 (.642)	-,255 (.316)	,626 (.327)	-	,513 (.143)	-,226 (.692)
Priority Personal 1	,849 (.223)	,531 (.550)	-,014 (.968)	-,1343 (.107)	-,974 (.120)	-	-,443 (.581)
Priority Groningen 1	-,377 (.199)	,682 (.084)*	,373 (.014)**	-,092 (.805)	-,083 (.767)	-,328 (.134)	-
<i>Summary statistics</i>							
R2	,557	,515	,479	,488	,576	,488	,525
Adj. R2	,333	,269	,215	,229	,361	,229	,284
F (sig.)	2,483 (.000)	2,097 (.002)	1,814 (.011)	1,882 (.007)	2,680 (.000)	1,882 (.007)	2,182 (.001)

Table 6 - Results of multiple linear regression analyses for the distinguished priorities. Unstandardized B and significance. N = 129.

** = sign. at 5% level

* = sign. at 10% level

CONCLUSIONS

The present study examined the relationship between international exchange students' priorities during the time they reside in Groningen and their personal, geographical and academic characteristics. The focus was to gain insights in to what extent the objectives of international student exchange programmes are pursued by the IESs during the exchange. The main goals of these programmes foreground personal, professional and cultural development and learning. The motivation for researching this particular topic was to fill in the existing hiatus in the current knowledge about how international exchange students perceive their stay.

The main results of this research are partially correspondent to the literature on motivations before the exchange and outcomes afterwards. During the exchange, most international students prioritise having fun above all else, which corresponds to research done by Lesjak et al. (2015). Both social interaction, which one could say is closely linked to having fun, and personal development seem to be equally important. On the other hand, performing academically and preparing for a future career are not as heavily prioritised as would be expected from existing literature (e.g. Teichler, 2004; Lesjak et al., 2015). The priorities regarding Dutch culture and connecting to Groningen are neither the highest nor the lowest valued priorities. This is incongruent with one of the proposed goals of ISEPs; learning about the host culture (European Commission, 2014). In order to achieve this, one would assume that cultural learning plays a more prominent role during the exchange.

Looking at the results of the regressions, interesting differences can be found between several groups. First of all, men prioritise having fun, whereas women value to familiarize with Groningen. This is congruent with results from earlier research, which shows that men are more prone to focus on the short-term, whereas women are more future-oriented (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006). IESs originating from Europe found performing academically of higher importance than their non-European counterparts, which may be caused by differences in individualistic and collectivistic values (Green et al., 2006). Finally, students enrolled in the University of Groningen prefer having fun and preparing for a future career more so than Hanze UAS-students, whereas the latter group more often prioritises learning about Dutch culture. Unfortunately, a possible explanation for this is currently still absent in existing literature. This difference in priorities could be caused by the types of studies each HEI offers, or another hidden variable.

Regarding the cultural development goals of ISEPs, there seems to be useful input for improvement. Most of the respondents stated to have very little or no Dutch friends, and the priority 'Learning about Dutch culture' was hardly rated as extremely important. Moreover, when respondents had more local friends, they found it more important to learn about the culture. The HEIs and the municipality ought to consider encouraging the contact between domestic and international exchange students more. However, as Kashima & Loh (2006) emphasize, it is important to bear in mind that interaction with people from other cultures also brings about cultural development. It is merely the aspect of getting to know the Dutch culture through contact with local people that could be changed for the better.

Since there are no previous studies on this subject, it is difficult to state whether the results of this study are generalizable on a larger scope. No statements can be made regarding any differences that might exist between the priorities of international exchange students and other students in higher education, such as local or international degree-seeking students. Future research could apply this study to another city or another population in order to determine the reliability of these results.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Strengths of this research is its unique investigation into unknown research territory: it sheds light on the overlooked phenomenon of the priorities of international exchange students in light of a number of characteristics, paving the way for future research on this topic. Limitations include the measurement of the students' perceptions rather than actual behaviour. Also, the moment of measurement, right after the first exam period, may have influenced the results. By the time, respondents had only been in Groningen for a couple of months, affecting the degree to which they felt connected to Groningen and the Dutch culture. Moreover, they may have prioritised enjoying themselves after exams, leading to a bias towards the priority of having fun. Future research could look into this influence, by using multiple moments of measurement, for example. This enables further investigation of (a shift in) the priorities of international exchange students during the exchange period as a whole.

Furthermore, there are limits to the representativeness of the dataset used, resulting from the method of data collection. Recruiting participants proved to be challenging, and, to obtain enough respondents for the method of analysis in mind, my focus on the validity of the sample was lessened. However eventually response was sufficient, the sample included twice as many women as men, there were more students from Hanze UAS than RuG included. In the population, however, this was not the case. The way in which participants were approached also led to an overrepresentation of certain studies in the sample, while other studies were barely or not at all represented. This is mainly caused by the willingness of exchange coordinators to forward my survey to the international exchange students enrolled in their faculty. This problem could have been avoided by a more active attitude of the researcher towards the coordinators to remind them to forward the survey.

In order to draw conclusions about the applicability of the present results, more research is required. As mentioned, this research could be performed in other locations, or using another target population. The interpretation of relative importance of priorities can be improved by using the same amount of Likert-scales per priority. However, it is difficult to predict which scales correlate statistically, since this is not implied, despite theoretical correlation.

Finally, because of the way in which the priorities were measured, conclusions could not be drawn from the reasons why certain priorities were found more important than others. In the future, research could further explore why international exchange students have certain priorities, in order to gain more insight in not only what these students find important during their exchange, but also the underlying causes for such attitudes.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A – QUESTIONNAIRE

Being an exchange student in Groningen

This questionnaire is concerned with how you, as an international exchange student, perceive your stay in the city of Groningen. It will take a maximum of 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Naturally, all the answers given will be processed anonymously to guarantee your privacy.

In the first part of this survey, you will find some statements about different aspects of staying in Groningen that might be important to you as an exchange student. When answering the questions, please consider how you have spent your time in Groningen so far. For each of the statements, please fill in to what degree it applies to you.

1 = does not apply to me at all

4 = applies to me a lot

2 = a little applicable to me

5 = extremely applicable to me

3 = moderately applicable to me

During my stay in Groningen, I find it important to spend my time...

1. Getting to know as many people as possible	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
2. Exploring the city of Groningen	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
3. Learning about the Dutch culture	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
4. Interacting with Dutch students	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
5. Getting good grades	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
6. Visiting tourist sites in Groningen	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
7. Making Groningen my home	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
8. Building a professional network for later	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
9. Learning about myself	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
10. Getting to know other ERASMUS exchange students	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
11. Improving my résumé	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
12. Having fun	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
13. Interacting with Dutch non-students	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
14. Enjoying the night life of Groningen	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
15. Learning the Dutch language	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
16. Improving my job opportunities for the future	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Personal questions

1. What is your age?

- Drop-down list with ages 'younger than 17', than ages 17-25 and one 'older than 25'

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

3. Which region in the world are you from?

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Western Europe | 5. Russia |
| 2. Eastern Europe | 6. Middle East |
| 3. Northern Europe | 7. Africa |
| 4. Southern Europe | 8. South East Asia |

- 9. Australia/New Zealand
- 10. North America
- 11. Middle America
- 12. South America

- 13. Other
- 14. Middle Asia
- 15. East Asia

4. At this moment, how many people in Groningen do you consider to be your friends (estimation)?
- Less than 5
 - 5-14
 - 15-24
 - 25-34
 - 35 or more
5. What percentage of your friends in Groningen fits in each of the following categories (estimation)? (Can be no more than 100%)
- International exchange students: ___ %
 - International, not exchange students: ___ %
 - Dutch students: ___ %
 - International, non-student: ___ %
 - Dutch, non-student: ___ %
6. Which of the following best describes the financial position of your family?
- Poor
 - Modest
 - Middle
 - Comfortable
 - Wealthy
 - I don't know
7. What is your postal code in Groningen (number only)?
- _____
8. Do you attend the University of Groningen (RuG) or Hanze University of Applied Sciences?
- University of Groningen
 - Hanze University of Applied Sciences
9. What is your study field (faculty)?
- _____
10. Which year of your studies are you in?
- Bachelor, First
 - Bachelor, Second
 - Bachelor, Third
 - Bachelor, Fourth
 - Bachelor, Fifth or later
 - Master, First
 - Master, Second
 - Master, Third
 - Master, Fourth or later

11. On average, how many hours per week do you have to spend anyway you want? This is time that you don't have academic (e.g. lectures, self-study) or professional (e.g. job) obligations.

12. Please describe your main motivation for choosing Groningen as your ERASMUS destination in one sentence.

Thank you for filling in this survey! Fill in your (student) e-mail address below if you want to have a chance to win a cinema coupon worth €15. This e-mail address will only be used to notify the winners and will not be used for commercial or any other purposes!

Thank you so much for participating in my research! If you are one of the winners of the cinema coupon, you will get an e-mail around the middle of December.

APPENDIX B – CODE FAMILIES

Main motivation for choosing Groningen

<p>1. Personal Familiar Safety (Familial) ancestry Improve English Learn about self Develop Experience Fun (context = self) Away from home Change of scenery opportunity</p>	<p>2. Social Fun (with people) People Friends Student (student city) Atmosphere recommended</p>	<p>3. Geographic Beautiful (city/surrounding) Near (other places) Environment Historic city City (Convenient) location</p>
<p>4. Academic Good reputation Top university Résumé (Study) programme Job market</p>	<p>5. Cultural (Dutch) language Heritage (Different) culture</p>	<p>6. Practical No other option Price Near hometown (work) Convenient</p>
<p>7. Other Chose me Nothing better Not my first choice</p>		

APPENDIX C – MESSAGE FOR INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS ON FACEBOOK

“Hi everyone, I need your help!

For my bachelor thesis in Human Geography and Planning I am researching how International exchange students in Groningen experience their stay. So, if you are an International exchange student in Groningen: please help me graduate by filling in a short survey! If you're not, you can still help me by sharing this message.

Thank you in advance :)

<http://www.thesistools.com/web/?id=520288> “

APPENDIX D – E-MAIL FOR EXCHANGE COORDINATORS

“Goedemiddag,

Mijn naam is Liselotte Vreeling en voor mijn bachelor scriptie aan de faculteit Ruimtelijke Wetenschappen aan de RuG onderzoek ik hoe internationale uitwisselingsstudenten in Groningen hun verblijf ervaren. Hiervoor neem ik een (digitale) enquête af onder deze groep. Tot nu toe valt te respons echter nogal tegen, wat betekent dat ik niet de analyse kan doen die nodig is voor dit onderzoek.

Om deze reden heb ik via mijn begeleider, Paulus Huigen (p.p.p.huigen@rug.nl) contact opgenomen met de Exchange coördinator van mijn faculteit, Paul van Steen (p.j.m.van.steen@rug.nl) over de mogelijkheden omtrent het via de e-mail verspreiden van mijn enquête. Hij zei me dat het niet mogelijk is dat ik zelf de internationale uitwisselingsstudenten een e-mail stuur, maar dat het wel mogelijk is dat coördinatoren van verschillende faculteiten namens mij een e-mail sturen met daarin een korte Engelstalige uitleg van mijn onderzoek en een link naar de enquête. Mijn vraag aan u is of u hieraan mee zou willen werken. Voor de compleetheid en representativiteit van mijn onderzoek is het wenselijk om studenten van zoveel mogelijk verschillende faculteiten te bereiken.

Hieronder een Engelstalige tekst gericht aan de internationale uitwisselingsstudenten en de link naar mijn enquête.

Dear international exchange student,

My name is Liselotte Vreeling and for my bachelor thesis in the field of Spatial Sciences I am currently researching how international exchange students experience their stay in Groningen. Because it is all about your perceptions of Groningen and the people in it, I would really appreciate it if you could fill in a short survey. It should take no more than 10 minutes and if you participate, you have a chance to win one of the five cinema-coupons worth €15! Besides this, you will get my eternal gratitude and, last but not least, help me graduate!

So please, fill in the survey which is linked to below:)

<http://www.thesistools.com/web/?id=520288>

Thank you in advance and kind regards,

Liselotte Vreeling

Het zou mij ontzettend helpen als u bovenstaand bericht zou kunnen doorsturen naar de internationale uitwisselingsstudenten die verbonden zijn aan uw faculteit. Voor vragen en opmerkingen kunt u mij mailen.

Bij voorbaat dank!

Met Vriendelijke Groet,

Liselotte Vreeling”

APPENDIX E – (SPEARMAN) RANK-CORRELATIONS BETWEEN LIKERT-SCALES

Correlations

			Exploring the city of Groningen	Learning about Dutch culture	Getting to know as many people as possible	Interacting with Dutch students	Getting good grades	Visiting tourist sites in Groningen	Making Groningen my home	Building a professional network for later	Learning about myself	Getting to know other international exchange students	Improving my résumé	Having fun	Interacting with Dutch non-students	Enjoying the night life of Groningen	Learning the Dutch language	Improving my job opportunities for the future	
Spearman's rho	Exploring the city of Groningen	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,350**	,420**	,273**	,071	,461**	,262**	,087	,246**	,318**	,235**	,350**	,283**	,248**	,018	,153	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000	,000	,001	,400	,000	,002	,308	,003	,000	,005	,000	,001	,003	,834	,070	
		N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141
	Learning about Dutch culture	Correlation Coefficient	,350**	1,000	,156	,508**	,169*	,243**	,074	,286**	,080	,039	,148	,121	,321**	,013	,377**	,161	,057
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.	,064	,000	,045	,004	,382	,001	,344	,647	,080	,154	,000	,879	,000	,057	,057
		N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141
	Getting to know as many people as possible	Correlation Coefficient	,420**	,156	1,000	,240**	-.062	,203*	,218**	,074	,177*	,216*	,508**	,164	,461**	,275**	,452**	,023	-.042
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,064	.	,004	,465	,016	,010	,035	,010	,000	,052	,000	,001	,000	,788	,618	,618
		N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141
	Interacting with Dutch students	Correlation Coefficient	,273**	,508**	,240**	1,000	,145	,082	,025	,351**	,045	,059	,149	,168*	,344**	,156	,227**	,143	,143
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,000	,004	.	,086	,331	,768	,000	,593	,485	,077	,046	,000	,064	,007	,090	,090
		N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141
	Getting good grades	Correlation Coefficient	,071	,169*	-.062	,145	1,000	,256**	-.038	,124	-.020	-.077	,378**	-.037	,113	-.061	-.027	,265**	,265**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,400	,045	,465	,086	.	,002	,657	,142	,811	,362	,000	,664	,183	,473	,747	,002	,002
		N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141
	Visiting tourist sites in Groningen	Correlation Coefficient	,461**	,243**	,203*	,082	,256**	1,000	,164	,144	,209*	,179*	,192*	,191*	,148	,099	,000	,204*	,204*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,004	,016	,331	,002	.	,052	,088	,013	,034	,022	,023	,079	,245	,997	,015	,015
		N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141
	Making Groningen my home	Correlation Coefficient	,262**	,074	,218**	,025	-.038	,164	1,000	,022	,396**	,289**	,026	,353**	,122	,398**	,125	-.064	-.064
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,382	,010	,768	,657	,052	.	,799	,000	,001	,761	,000	,150	,000	,139	,454	,454
N		141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	
Building a professional network for later	Correlation Coefficient	,087	,286**	,177*	,351**	,124	,144	,022	1,000	,253**	,106	,276**	-.050	,335**	-.057	,204*	,409**	,409**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,308	,001	,035	,000	,142	,088	,799	.	,002	,212	,001	,555	,000	,500	,015	,000	,000	
	N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	
Learning about myself	Correlation Coefficient	,246**	,080	,216*	,045	-.020	,209*	,396**	,253**	1,000	-.020	,284**	,274**	,061	,070	,023	-.123	-.116	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,003	,344	,010	,593	,811	,013	,000	,002	.	,001	,001	,476	,408	,784	,145	,172	,172	
	N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	
Getting to know other international exchange students	Correlation Coefficient	,318**	,039	,508**	,059	-.077	,179*	,289**	,106	,284**	1,000	,135	,438**	,221**	,440**	,029	-.024	-.024	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,647	,000	,485	,362	,034	,001	,212	,001	.	,110	,000	,008	,000	,736	,778	,778	
	N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	
Improving my résumé	Correlation Coefficient	,235**	,148	,164	,149	,378**	,192*	,026	,276**	,274**	,135	1,000	,093	,130	-.065	-.066	,493**	,493**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,005	,080	,052	,077	,000	,022	,761	,001	,001	,110	.	,274	,124	,443	,440	,000	,000	
	N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	
Having fun	Correlation Coefficient	,350**	,121	,461**	,168*	-.037	,191*	,353**	-.050	,061	,438**	,093	1,000	,195*	,627**	,115	-.042	-.042	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,154	,000	,046	,664	,023	,000	,555	,476	,000	,274	.	,020	,000	,173	,621	,621	
	N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	
Interacting with Dutch non-students	Correlation Coefficient	,283**	,321**	,275**	,344**	,113	,148	,122	,335**	,070	,221**	,130	,195*	1,000	,200*	,148	,141	,141	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,000	,001	,000	,183	,079	,150	,000	,408	,008	,124	,020	.	,017	,080	,096	,096	
	N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	
Enjoying the night life of Groningen	Correlation Coefficient	,248**	,013	,452**	,156	-.061	,099	,398**	-.057	,023	,440**	-.065	,627**	,200*	1,000	,032	-.141	-.141	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,003	,879	,000	,064	,473	,245	,000	,500	,784	,000	,443	,000	,017	.	,710	,096	,096	
	N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	
Learning the Dutch language	Correlation Coefficient	,018	,377**	,023	,227**	-.027	,000	,125	,204*	-.123	,029	-.066	,115	,148	,032	1,000	,213*	,213*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,834	,000	,788	,007	,747	,997	,139	,015	,145	,736	,440	,173	,080	,710	.	,011	,011	
	N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	
Improving my job opportunities for the future	Correlation Coefficient	,153	,161	-.042	,143	,265**	,204*	-.064	,409**	,116	-.024	,493**	-.042	,141	-.141	-.141	,213*	1,000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,070	,057	,618	,090	,002	,015	,454	,000	,172	,778	,000	,621	,096	,096	,011	.	.	
	N	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	141	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

APPENDIX F – CLASSIFICATION OF STUDY FIELDS INTO ALPHA, GAMMA OR BETA¹⁰

	Alpha (1)	Gamma (2)	Beta (3)
<i>University of Groningen</i>	Arts	Spatial Sciences	Medical Sciences
	Theology & Religions	Economics & Business	Mathematics & Natural Sciences
	Philosophy	Law	
		Behavioral & Social Sciences	
	University College		
<i>Hanze University of Applied Sciences</i>	Dance Academy Lucia Marthas	Education	Health Care Studies
	Minerva Art Academy	Social Studies	Nursing
	Prince Claus Conservatoire	International Business School	Sport Studies
		Communication, Media & IT	Life Science & Technology
		Facility Management	Engineering
		Financial & Economic Management	Architecture, Built Environment & Civil Engineering
		Law	
		Marketing Management	

¹⁰ N.B.: not all study fields were represented in the sample that was used in this thesis.