

**Bachelor Human Geography and Urban Planning
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen**



Motivation for International Student Migration

11-06-2016

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Identifying key push and pull factors experienced by international students from the global South at Manipal University, India.

Word Count: 7.030

Education: Human Geography and Urban Planning

Organisation: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

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Second Supervisor: Dr. Bhumika

Acknowledgements

In front of you lies my bachelor thesis 'Motivation for International Student Migration'. This research was conducted in order for me to graduate from my bachelor program Human Geography and Urban Planning at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. I started working on this paper in February and finished it in June 2016.

Firstly I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. A. Bailey for having patience with me throughout the process and for giving directions to my research. Secondly I would like to thank the staff of the Public Health Evidence South Asia department at Manipal University for their help and support during the data collection phase in India. Lastly I would like to thank all the participants who I have interviewed. They were more than willing to answer each and every of my questions which provided me with most of the acquired data.

I hope you enjoy reading this paper

Bart Vloedveld

June 11th 2016

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1. Abstract

International students are a growing, favorable stream of migrants in the global South. Loosened immigration policies in favor of international students have been implemented by several governments in order to attract more international students, but what actually motivates these students to study abroad? The aims of this research are to identify key push and pull factors that are experienced by international students in the global South. Moreover, a focus was set on the influence of family and friends as part of these key factors. Qualitative data was acquired by conducting ten in depth – interviews with students from the global South who were at the time studying at Manipal University, India, and by interviewing an expert on international affairs from Manipal University.

The study found that the only key push factor proved to be the lack of educational opportunities for the student in its home country. Furthermore, results showed that recommendations from family and friends that have resided in the receiving country are an influential pull factor and an important source of trustworthy information to the participants. Participants who did not have these social ties had private agents to fill up this gap of information and guidance. Another key factor proved to be the high quality reputation of Manipal University which was the main argument for the majority of the students to study in Manipal. Low tuition, living and transportation costs in India were also key pull factors. Lastly, an unexpected pull factor was concluded: all of the participants claimed that increasing independence, improving their English and seeking out adventure had made them want to study abroad in the first place. These conclusions can be used as an aid to gain further understanding as to why students migrate out of their country for study purposes and how they choose their destination.

2. Introduction

“Numbers apart, migration is important because of the way it shapes and reshapes our society, making them more diverse and complex as a whole” (King, 2012, p.6).

In 1993, Stephan Castles and Mark Miller proclaimed that we live in the ‘Age of Migration’ (Castles and Miller 1993, 2009). They describe this as a period during which a rapid increase of international migration is occurring. Moreover, the increase in international migrants has become increasingly subject to globalization, feminization, diversification and politicization. The diversifying types of migration processes and the fact that it is established in the interconnected and globalized world of today makes it well-nigh impossible to visualize a sole, overarching migration theory as to why people in certain situations would decide to move, or why they would not. Through ‘the age of migration’, new processes that underlie globe-spanning migration have risen, for international migration in particular (King, 2012). Nowadays “we also find international migrations connected with family reunion and childcare, marriage migration, student migration, retirement migration, high-skilled migration and brain drain, environmental and climate-change migration, and human trafficking and sexual exploitation” (King, 2012, p.9) – which according to King is by no means a complete list.

In the past couple decades there has been a substantial increase in the amount of international students throughout the world (Madge et al, 2015). When comparing the numbers with overall international migration, the volume of international students has risen about four times faster. In regions where a decrease in international students is experienced, this can usually be related to conflict present in the region (King & Raghuram, 2013).

2.1 Research Problem

Despite the importance of this growing flow of migration, according to Findlay, (2011) international students are still getting the least attention of researchers out of the major categories of migrants. Moreover, the current knowledge is far from conclusive; there are statistical variations and theoretical debates about understanding international student migration (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003). International student migration has mainly been researched in the Northern hemisphere. Studying international student migration in the Southern hemisphere is even more inconclusive and the subject has barely been touched on.

North America and Europe combined still hold account for 62% of the destinations that international students choose to go to. Other destinations such as the Caribbean, Latin-America, Oceania and Asia are just recently increasing in popularity (OECD, 2012, p.361). China and India, while sending huge numbers of students abroad for education, also improved their own educational systems and institutions, thus becoming more attractive to international students (Brooks & Waters, 2011, p.2). According to Bhalla and Powar (2015, p.24), this increase in attractiveness is something favorable for India; something they should pursue. King and Raghuram (2013) proclaim this fondness of students to be because they are considered desirable migrants as they bring skills and later develop in the countries that host them for study purposes. One can already observe the effect of this concept by

looking at the changes to migration policies that have been implemented by governments in attempting to attract more international student migrants (King & Raghuram, 2013).

Data from UNESCO displays that Asian countries are imperative destinations for international students from within the region (UNESCO, 2016; ICEF Monitor, 2015), but what about the rest of the 'global South'? South to South international student migration is increasing and this is considered as something positive, but what exactly makes students from the global South move to a specific country or institution to study abroad? What are the motivations behind this growing stream of international student migration in the global South?

This research aims to understand as to why students from the global South, which in this research is defined as any country in the Southern hemisphere excluding Japan, Australia and New Zealand, would choose to study abroad and how they choose their destination to do so.

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) in their study, which will be covered in the literature overview, showed the significant influence of family and friends and social ties in the decision making process of international students. Thus, in this research we try to assess the importance of these factors in particular.

Main research question:

- What are the push and pull factors that international students from the global South experience in deciding if and where to study abroad, and what role do friends and family play in the decision making process?

Sub questions:

- How does the 'push and pull' theory apply into context of international student migration?
- What are the key push factors for international students at Manipal University?
- What are the key pull factors for international students at Manipal University?
- What is the role of family and friends in the decision making process of international students at Manipal University?

2.2 Research Structure

This paper will start off with the theoretical framework which explains the main concept that will be used in this research; the push and pull concept, and putting this in context with international student migration. The following section will cover in what way data was acquired and analyzed. In the last section the results from the data will be analyzed and discussed to form a final conclusion to the research and finally, recommendations for further research will be made.

3. Theoretical Framework

The Push and Pull concept

Lee (1966) in his article summarizes four different factors that enter the migration decision making process: factors concerning the area of origin, factors in the area of destination, the intervening obstacles between them and personal factors. Other than the personal factors, Lee (1966) put the concept in the diagram below. Both areas have pro's and con's which pushes or pulls individuals towards a certain area. Push factors are influences that make individuals less likely to stay in or move to a certain area mostly due to unfavorable conditions in the particular area. Pull factors are the favorable components that make individuals stay in or move to an area.

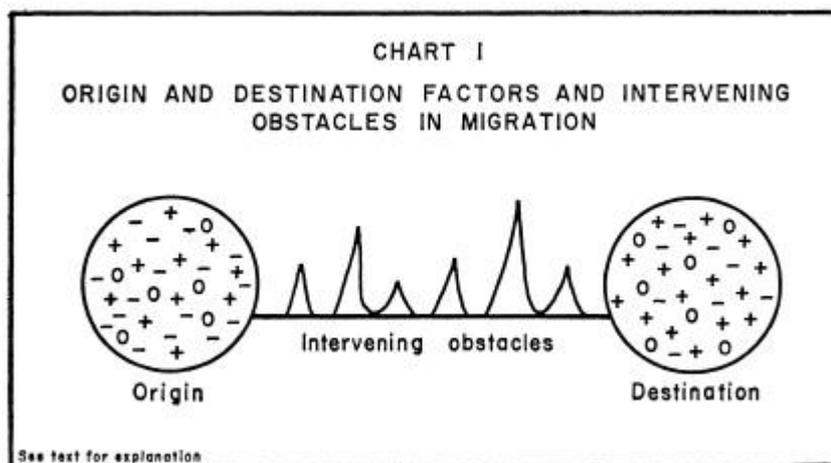


Figure 1. (Lee, 1966, p.50)

The neoclassical migrant theories that in an economical way emphasize the forming of equilibria would indicate that when the calculus of +’s and –’s, positive and negative factors, between two areas becomes positive, migration should occur. That is if a possible migrant would think rationally when weighing the ‘costs and benefits’ of the particular migration. This process would repeat itself until both areas would be evened out in +’s and –’s, resulting in the formation of an equilibrium (Borjas 1990).

Lee (1966) states that in order for migration to occur, one cannot simply take the calculus of the +’s and –’s between countries; there must be enough motivation to overcome the natural inertia which usually tends to be present when choosing to migrate. Also, there are certain obstacles to overcome such as: distance, physical barriers, visa restrictions and many other complications that arise when crossing borders. Furthermore, the pros, cons and intervening obstacles experienced by an individual do not necessarily have the same impact on other individuals. For example, the amount of taxes raised in the destination country has different meaning to different people regarding what country they come from, how much money they earn and what they are used to. Indeed, the amount of different factors that have an impact on the decision of migration in all their complexity cannot all be specified, but in general, a couple of push and pull factors that seem of high importance to considerable groups can be mapped out. A further generalization can be made where Segal, Borgia and Schoenfeld (2005) proclaim that pull factors are the most predominant in the push and pull theory, and push factors are frequently of less importance.

Push and Pull factors in relation to international student migration

The overall pattern of student migration can in this way be understood by a combination of *push and pull factors* that potentially encourage students to study abroad. Push factors, like unfavorable economic or social circumstances, originate from the source country and generate the choice to study elsewhere but home. The decisions as to where they then go are dominantly influenced by the favorable conditions of the host country, or pull factors (McMahon 1992).

McMahon (1992) tested the flow of international students for 18 developing countries through such a push and pull model. The push model consisted of four economic or institutional factors for which in general counts that the less the factor is present, the more it becomes a push factor; the degree of involvement of the developing country in the world economy, the priority placed on education by the government of the developing country, the economic wealth of a country in general and the educational opportunities that students have in the home country. For example: the less wealthy a country is or when there are few educational opportunities in a country, the more this will intensify the process of students migrating out of the country.

The pull side of the model was mostly influenced by relative size and economic, political, institutional and intercultural links between the host and home country. The results showed that between the size of the host nation and the home countries' economy a positive correlation was found and involvement in each other's economy proved to be a very significant factor for intensifying student migration between the countries, all be it one-sided: the smaller and less economically wealthy country being the source country and the larger and more economically prosperous country acting as host country. However, other factors in the pull side of the model were inconsistent and differed between the developing countries. McMahon (1992) used a push and pull model that solely focused on the links and relation between the host and sending country, but Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) suggest that: "some push and pull factors are inherent in the source country, some in the host country *and others in the student themselves*" (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p.1). The latter is something that does not receive attention in McMahon (1992) as he barely touches on social context and solely focuses on the extent to which source and host countries are economically intertwined.

The Push and Pull factors in the decision making process

Mazzarol (1998) found that the decision making process that an international student goes through when choosing a final study destination consists of three phases. First, a student has to choose whether or not to go abroad. As mentioned before, this decision can be influenced by the push factors in the home country of the student. Second, the student makes the decision about in which country it wants to study abroad. In this phase, the pull factors of the host countries, which will be discussed later, play an important role as they can make one host country relatively more attractive than other potential host countries. In the final stage a student has to choose an institution to which a lot of different pull factors have an influence on, such as; reputation for quality, range of courses, alliances and coalitions, size of the alumni base, and promotion and marketing efforts (Mazzarol, 1998).

The selection of a host country by international students, or the second stage, has found to be influenced by six factors (Mazzarol, Kemp and Savery, 1997). The overall level of knowledge about the host country, which is to be obtained by the amount and accessibility of the information, which entails the quality reputation of the host country/institution, is the first factor. The second factor is

the amount of personal recommendations by friends, family and other people that influenced the final decision. A third factor consists of costs of living expenses, transportation costs, tuition fees but also social costs such as safety, racial discrimination and crime. The fourth factor concerns climate, which refers to the study climate and moreover the physical climate and the perceived lifestyle someone expects to have during their stay abroad. Geographical proximity from the host country to the source country also proves to be a significant factor. The sixth factor regards the social links as to whether the friends and family of a student have studied in the host country before or if the student has family living there. These six pull factors of the host country are always in conjunction with the push factors from the source country in driving international student migration, together providing the structural framework for this research.

4. Literature Review

Emphasis of pull factors on influence of family and friends

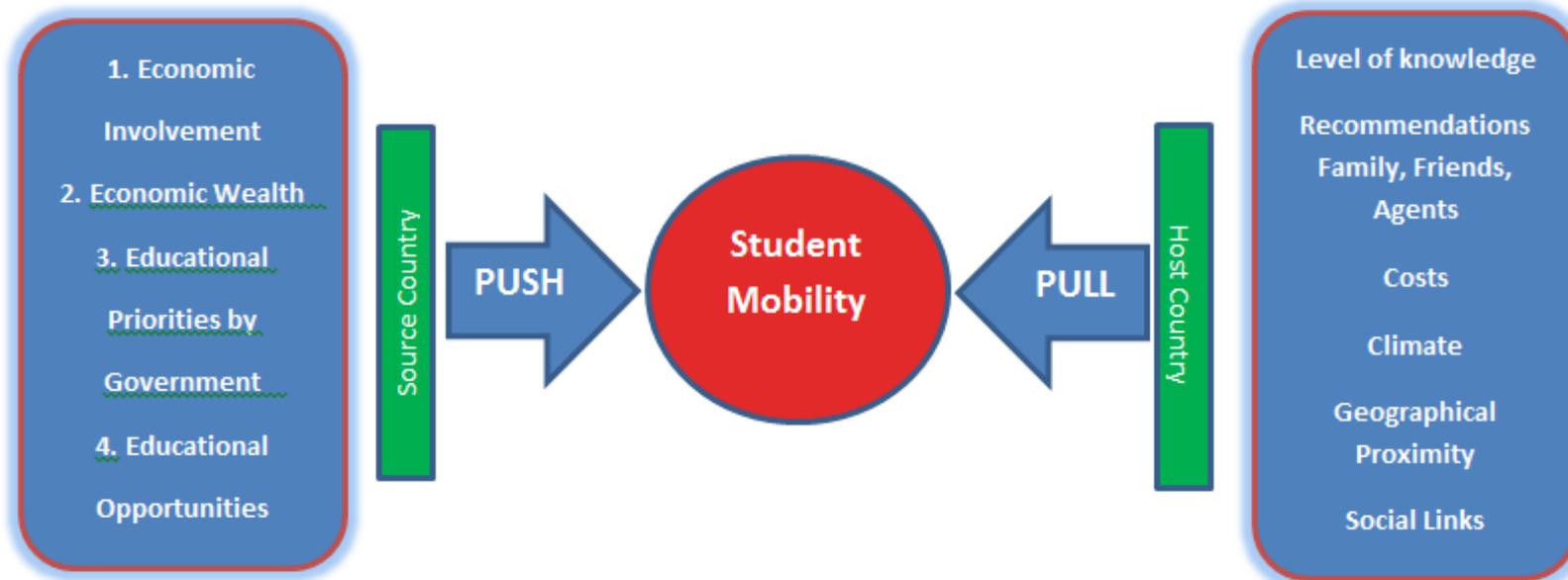
Several studies on the six pull factors were conducted by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) over four years of time (1997-2002) who surveyed a variety of international students for a total of 2248 international students. The second and sixth pull factors, both concerning the influence from family, friends, relatives and other agents, among other factors, proved to be significant. Private recruiters turned out to be good campaigners for their countries, but they are less effective than the recommendations from the friends and relatives of the students.

The outcome of the same set of studies also points out that regarding the sixth factor of social links, the majority of surveyed students indicated it was important that they had some family or friends living or studying in the same host country. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) moreover concluded that the studying abroad decision making process is involved by multiple decision-makers and is and often a family decision.

Because of the large and diverse sample sizes used in their research and in using respondents from four countries that are within the target audience of this paper, a strong influence of family and friends will be closely looked at to observe if there is corresponding data on this topic.

5. Conceptual Model

Figure 2. Conceptual Model



The conceptual model has a 'pull' side which consists of the six pull factors mentioned in [Mazzarol and Soutar \(2002\)](#). The push factors from [McMahon \(1992\)](#) are used to measure the conditions in the source country.

6. Methodology

In-depth Interviews

The second and third sub questions are about understanding the motivations and experiences from international students as to how and why they chose to study at Manipal University, India. In trying to assess the context behind certain pull factors such as family and friends have on the international students, this research is trying to gain new insights, making it a qualitative research (Baarda, 2014). This paper aims at finding the individual context of international students to discover the underlying motives as to why they came to study at Manipal University. Because of the nature of the required data and the interactive way of doing research, the main method that has been used for acquiring data to answer the sub questions has been in-depth interviewing (Clifford et al, 2010).

The four push factors and six pull factors that are based on the theory and put in the conceptual model were put in the created interview guide (see appendix). The acquired information from the interviews has been transcribed and useful data were given inductive or deductive codes which were then organized in code families for final data analyzation.

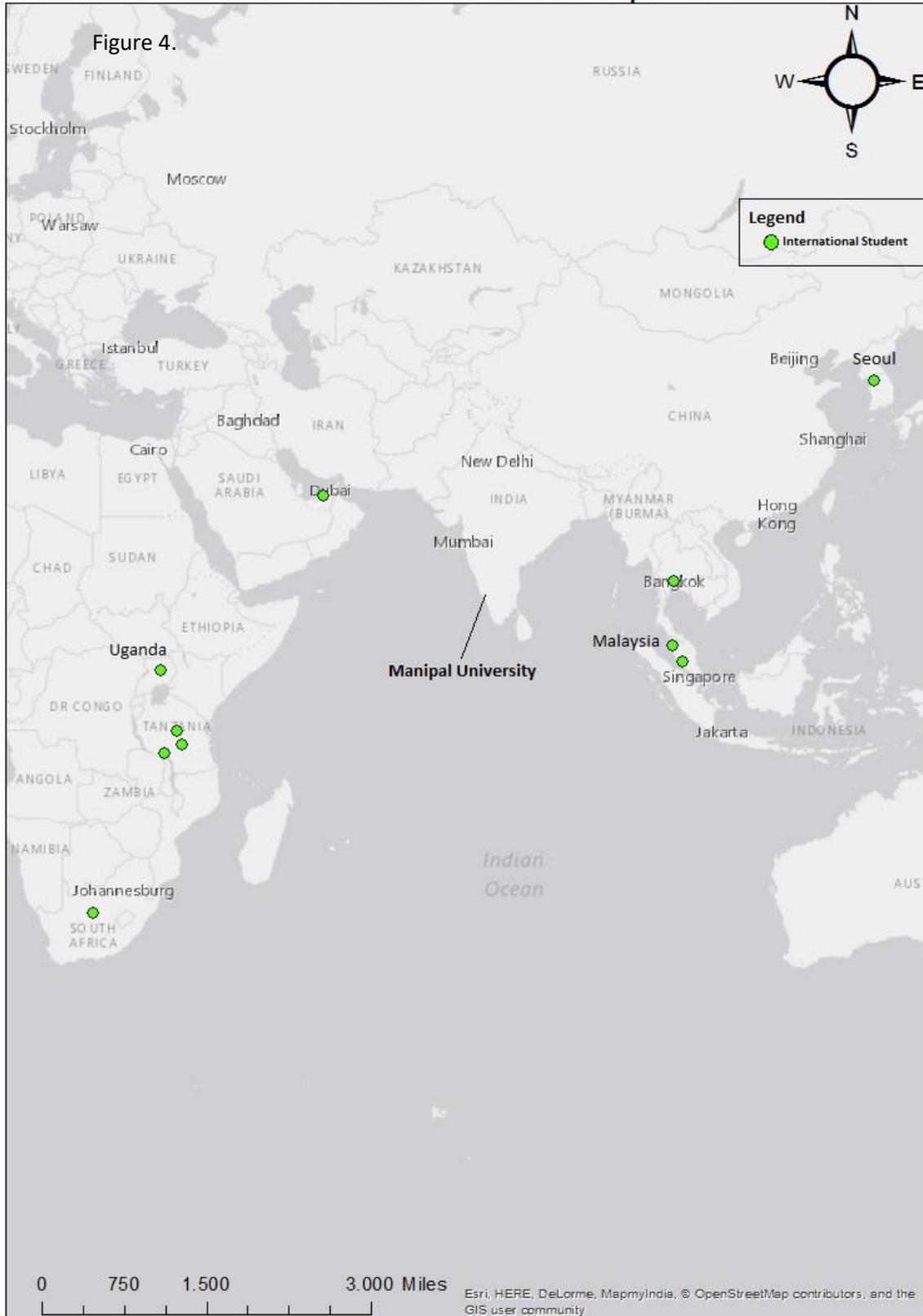
Interviewees

their nationalities, followed study program, and sex. As this paper studies South-South international student migration, all the students were from countries from the developing ‘global South’, which means any country in the Southern hemisphere that is not Australia, New Zealand or Japan, considering they are economically wealthy countries. The students all studied at Manipal University, India, and were residents in Manipal. Their sex did not matter but to make sure there was a somewhat even spread between males and females; six males and four females have been interviewed.

Figure 3. Participant Overview

	Home Country	Study	Sex	Duration of Study
Participant 1	Thailand	Business	M	4 Years
Participant 2	South-Korea	Business	M	4 Years
Participant 3	Uganda	Business	M	4 Years
Participant 4	Malaysia	Dentistry	M	3 Years
Participant 5	Malaysia	Dentistry	V	3 Years
Participant 6	Tanzania	Medicine	V	4 Years
Participant 7	Tanzania	Medicine (PhD)	V	2 Years
Participant 8	Tanzania	Medicine (PhD)	M	2 Years
Participant 9	South Africa	Business	V	4 Years
Participant 10	Abu Dhabi	Engineering	M	4 Years

Home Countries of Participants



Ethical Considerations

Interviewing is a research method which involves ethical questions. Prior to conducting the in-depth interviews, the interviewees were informed about the purpose of the research, the role they would play in the research, what the acquired data would be used for and who would be able to access this data (Clifford et al, 2010). They were also told that the data would be confidential and they signed forms and have been recorded stating their consent in recording the interview and using the data. They were familiar with the fact that they could stop the interview at any given time and that parts of the recordings could be erased after the interview if they wished as such.

Secondary research method: Semi structured interview

A semi structured - interview was held with an expert of Manipal University concerning international affairs. Having interviewed ten international students from the global South, it was found fit for the research to interview an expert on the supply side of international student migration and asking what he thinks what motivates students to come to Manipal University. The results from this interview were compared with the results from the ten in depth – interviews to check for deviations and similarities.

7. Results

7.1 Push Factor Analysis.

Economic involvement of the home country with the global economy

The answers provided by the interviewees in asking them about the economic involvement of their country with the rest of the world were not present, incomplete or too vague. The extent to which the economy of their home country is involved with the global economy does not seem to play a role in the minds of the students.

Economic wealth

In asking the participants about their living situation back home, this differed a lot based on the home country itself, but never was a 'poor' background a key factor in coming to India. Although an African student mentions: "back home, there is wealth, it is just not equally divided".

Another student mentions:

Student: "Development wise, Abu Dhabi is a very different country, it's more developed. We have the luxurious life over there, and a lot of equality".

Educational opportunities

African students explained that there is wealth in their country but it is not equally divided. There is also the opportunity for people to study but the state universities are of low quality and private universities are expensive which makes them want to study abroad. A participant said:

"In my country the academics are okay but it is not that valuable, going abroad is better and will get me a better job and make me more popular on the job market".

A student about studying in her home country: "There are some colleges that everyone could get in to but good colleges are expensive and you must have good grades. Getting in to colleges in my country is difficult but I guess money talks".

Moreover a dentistry student stated that costs for universities were high in comparison with India which was a clear reason for them to study in India rather than at home.

Also, a student says: "in the past, the government tried to focus on education but now they have a political problem so they can't really focus on promoting or improving education. (...) There are enough universities but not enough places at the good ones".

Priorities on education

Malaysian students stated their dissatisfaction about the way their government handles education in general. The participants say that education is seen as important in their country but they did not have the opportunity to study what they wanted as during high school; they were selected and divided into study groups with topics depending on their grades which put a lot of pressure on high school students at an early age.

A participant also mentions that students in his country are treated as 'numbers' and that in India the education is better and more personal, but this barely played a role in his decision to study abroad.

7.2 Pull Factor Analysis

Knowledge and awareness

Acquiring a good educational title at a renowned university: Manipal University, was often the main purpose of the participant. All the students knew about the outstanding reputation that Manipal has prior to making their decision to come and study in India.

Student: "The first reason that comes to mind is education, because in India and specifically in Manipal I think they have really good education, second is English language development and the third would be cheap living costs".

Furthermore, Malaysian students clarified that only international degrees from particular international institutions were credible back in their home country; Manipal University is one of those institutions.

The students knew little about India before deciding to study there but much more so about the campus. For some there were other optional universities in India with the same tuition expenses but because after research it seemed as if Manipal University was outperforming those institutions by their leisure time facilities, the choice was made rather simple. A participant expresses this in the following way:

"I looked on their website to check what the environment was like because that is important to me. (...)I need to have certain facilities so that if I feel bored I can do 'this' or if I feel stressed I can do 'this'".

Information obtained through websites or folders were only incidental and the students barely mention it.

Personal recommendation and social links

In total, 6 out of ten had either friends or families recommend Manipal University to them and in this way acted like ambassadors to Manipal.

Student: "I got to know about this place through my high school friends that knew this place and I heard that this place was famous for the education I mentioned earlier and I heard that there were a lot of students. Then when my friend recommended this place, I was sold."

When asking the participants what role the recommendations and provided information played at the time of making the decision in coming to India, they all deemed it extremely important.

"Information about campus life and facilities I got from friends, about courses and tuition funds I got from website, so it's different".

Researcher: "Which one would you say was more influential to your decision in coming here?"

Student: "Friends, because it's face to face and I can ask him about stories and experience, and if I want to ask anything I just ask and he can answer straight away".

Another participant mentions as followed:

“One of my friends who I went to school with told me that he had a friend who studies at Manipal and that he was having a wonderful time. Because the education is good as well, my friend went here for that reason; I went here for the experience and to have a wonderful time like my friend’s friend”.

Another student: “(...) she helped a lot because he is a really close friend of mine and told me a lot about this place, that was really helpful”.

The other four students, who were all from African background, came either through a scholarship or through an agent. Sometimes these agents came by their high schools and sometimes the students visited an ‘agent center’. A participant formulates his experience with an agent as such:

Student: “You give them (the agent) your grades transcripts and other map sheets and they arrange it”. (...) “They then explain the different courses in cities, how you will be managing and where you will be staying or if they have what you want in the course”.

Parents seemed to be letting their children decide most of the time. “I feel like my parents were okay with anywhere I went as long as the place that I was studying was good; Manipal is a good place to study so I could come here”. (...) “my dad told me (...) I could go anywhere I want. If I would not pass, I could not leave; simple and clear”.

A different participant mentions: “my parents gave me so many choices but I had to make the decision by myself. They just gave me freedom to choose whatever I want but they said “if you choose, you must be a success”.”

The background of parents or other family also influenced the decision of students:

Student: “My dad was involved for a good 80% (...) he suggested this degree, I looked it up and it looked fine and I had a dentist in my family too, he was also positive about it”. (...)

Researcher: “You said your cousin told you about it, when you first heard about Manipal though?”

Student: “From him (her cousin), because he is five years older than me so he was there while I was in high school so that’s how I knew first”.

Costs and geographical proximity

India was cheaper than the home countries of the interviewees which pulled them towards it. Also, when asked if the students had any other options at the time that they were choosing a study abroad location, repeatedly they spoke about the UK, US or Australia as an alternative or preferable location. In every of these cases it was increased costs that held them back. The tuition funds, living costs and plane tickets are significantly lower in Manipal, India.

A participant comments: “I have a lot of friends in the UK, I even have a cousin there, but it’s really expensive there. (...) My friends say they spend a lot more and have part time jobs because even getting the ticket back home is more expensive, so you have to get a job and only come home once every two years”.

Regarding geographical proximity between home and source country the students that had financial struggles with going to a location further away all mentioned ticket prices to be higher at these locations.

Student: "I'm not here because of the low costs, mainly I wanted to know English, but I could only have gone one time per year to visit my parents if I would have gone to the UK".

Regarding the social costs; three out of the four women were affected by feeling unsafe on occasion. "When I was living at my first hostel and didn't have friends so that was scary so I couldn't even go out of my house, I would stay in my house for days".

While obviously a very serious factor, the students did not know about any safety issues beforehand. No other social costs such as discrimination issues were raised by the participants.

Climate

The climate pull factor is a twofold argument. The so called 'study climate' was perceived as very stimulating, mostly by dentistry and medicine students.

"It's a good place to study; the way the classes are held, the system, the lectures, again; it's one of the best parts here".

The students received proper aid when needed.

"When we have any problem we can go and talk to them, any problem, like even bad things or anything that happens and they'll give a proper suggestion".

The second argument of the climate pull factor is about the actual climate, such as weather conditions, but also the physical climate. Most of the students said they were unhappy with the extreme heat. Others mentioned in a positive way that they found Manipal spacious and green. However, most of them again did not know this prior to coming to Manipal.

Self-development and adventure

All the students felt that studying abroad would in some way help them develop in becoming a stronger individual and that the period of their abroad stay would enrich them in positive experiences, make them become more independent and help them in improving their English.

"The first benefit of Manipal is that English is the main language at Manipal, second benefit is I want to survive somewhere I am not comfortable so I can challenge myself in that way".

Another participant claims 'learning life' was the most important reason for him to have come to India because he has more freedom there. In his words:

"I came here to learn life first, and study second. (...) I love Manipal, it has given me a lot of wonderful experiences, good quality of education which is known around the world. But I strongly feel that what I have learned here is not from books but more from experience".

7.3 Expert Interview

Expert: "The Manipal experience; a university town with a lot of students, common language is English, and it's unique in its facilities".

This matches the information provided by the other ten participants.

Expert: "Manipal University does not have agents".

This came as a surprise as all of the African students had been in contact with agents.

Expert: "The US and more countries acknowledge our degrees because of the certificates Manipal has earned on medical terrain. (...) After graduation our students can get a work permit up to 39 months in the US. (...) We have 6000 alumni in the US as a result of brain drain".

This confirms what the student participants, especially the Malaysian and African students, clarified about their degrees being legitimate back home and in other countries. The expert also proclaims to have a brain drain of over 6000 alumni in the US as a result of the granted work permits.

8. Discussion

8.1 General Discussion

The push factor-questions are very different than the pull factor-questions as these are more focused on individual context. This did not come unexpected because this is mentioned in the theoretical framework: the model from McMahon (1992), which in this research is used for the push side of the conceptual model, does not incorporate individual context; the theory of Mazzarol and Soutar (1998; 2002), which is used for the pull side of the model, does. This difference accounts for the huge discrepancy in quantity and quality of acquired data between a lacking push side and a detailed pull side. Although an imbalance in favor of the pull side of the model was predicted by Segal, Borgia and Schoenfeld (2005), the information gap between the two sides that will be discussed below was unexpected and can be explained by multiple reasons. The first reason immediately explaining the direct boundaries of this survey: only ten participants were questioned for which the target audience 'global South' entails half the globe minus three countries. It is nigh impossible to draw any hard conclusions from a sample size of ten students.

8.2 Discussing Push Factors

Economic involvement:

The participants did not seem to know much about their country and how it is economically connected with the global market. The answers did not provide any useful data and were mostly guessing games. Either the participants did not understand the questions correctly or they were simply ignorant, resulting in a non-satisfying data pool which could not be worked with.

Economic wealth

Economic wealth of the home country also proved to be insignificant and some questions were left unanswered. A poor background supposedly did not play a role, even though sometimes the same participants would mention high tuition costs in the home country or in a different study destination to be part of the reason why they went to India for college. Because it was considered as impolite, no further questions to elaborate on this topic were asked, but one could view some of the information provided as bias; the participants might have been embarrassed about their home situation.

Educational opportunities

A push factor that did have influence was the lack of educational opportunities. Be it too high tuition costs or a deficit for the amount of seats available in proper universities, there was a considerable amount of students that complained about their home situation regarding academics which ultimately resulted, among other reasons, in the participants desiring to study abroad.

Priorities of government on education

Complaints raised by the participants, some of which are mentioned above, were sometimes directed towards the government. Yet, most of the participants were ignorant on how their government prioritized education, making this an insignificant push factor.

8.3 Discussing Pull Factors

Knowledge and awareness

All the students knew about Manipal's excellent reputation and this was one of the main reasons why they came in the first place, thus making it a key pull factor. The students did not know too much about India hence it seems that knowledge about the institution and its facilities is more important than the knowledge about the country itself, which was quite unexpected. This can be explained by the importance of a good degree and the life of the students mostly being around the campus walls, hence lowering the interest in the rest of the country. Moreover, it seems that information from websites is inferior to information through other sources.

Personal recommendations and social ties

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) deal with the second and sixth pull factor separately. This research showed that if a participant had a social tie in India, this was also the one that had given them a personal recommendation. This means that personal recommendations and social links are heavily reliant on each other, making them intertwined pull factors. All the participants had some kind of recommendation, either through friends, family or an agent. Also, they all deemed the recommendation extremely important as they trusted them and could get quick access to trustworthy information. The African participants did not have social links that gave them personal recommendations but got theirs from agents which can be explained by a lack of social links in the country hence the African participants used a different source for recommendations.

Parents did not seem to involve too much in the decision making process other than giving approval for the student to go abroad in the first place. This means that choosing to go abroad, stage one of the decision making process is a family decision, which was expected, but choosing the exact location, stage two and three (Mazzarol and Soutar, 1998), was not. This is because judging on the acquired data; the parents let their children choose themselves as long as they are successful.

The second and sixth pull factors are very key in the decision making process, which was predicted by the research from Mazzarol and Soutar (2002). Although both factors were heavily influenced by each other, for the African students this was not the case, hence they are separate pull factors.

Costs

India was generally cheap for studying which contributed in the students deciding to study in Manipal. Asking the students if they would rather have gone somewhere else, some participants mentioned the UK or US as a preferable destination. However, the increased costs that came with it made it no longer viable. Low costs - be it tuition, living or plane ticket costs - are thus, as was expected, considered a key pull factor. Social costs played a significant role, but only for woman. Three out of four women felt unsafe on occasion. For the rest of the participants the influences of social costs are insignificant.

Geographical proximity

Geographical proximity does not play a role other than being linked with increasing costs of plane tickets when distance between home and source country increase; which is also debatable as ticket prices fluctuate.

Climate

The study climate was perceived as very positive. However, only three participants knew about this beforehand. The same can be said about the unpleasant heat and the good looking campus and surrounding nature; most of the students did not know about these factors before making their decision in coming to Manipal. This pull factor is therefore considered insignificant, which was unexpected but can be explained by the ignorance of the participants. Even though some students think of the good study climate as one of the best perks of studying at Manipal, they only knew so when they were already studying at Manipal University, thus not influencing their decision making.

Self-development and adventure

Learning new cultures and surviving in a new country was an unexpected motivation to study abroad. Every participant mentioned either improving their English, becoming more independent or seeking out adventure to be an important reason in choosing to study abroad in the first place. Although partially covered by theory through the 'climate' pull factor as part of the 'lifestyle', this does not fully recognize the weight of this pull factor and is therefore treated separately. This pull factor seems of high influence in the first stage (Mazzarol and Soutar, 1998) of the decision making process, making the students choose to study abroad, and is therefore a key pull factor.

8.4 Discussion Expert Interview

The expert explains that Manipal offers a unique experience as a university town with a big number of international students where English is the common language and where the facilities are above par. This matches the data provided by the interviewed international students who mention all three of these factors to be of a positive influence to their stay. Furthermore, the expert explained that Manipal has no agents. From this can be concluded that all of the agents that came in contact with the African students are external agents working for private agencies in the source countries of the participants, not for Manipal University itself.

The considerable high amount of Manipal alumni that reside in the United States show a brain drain which is a result of work permits given by the US government for Manipal graduates. This confirms that students come to Manipal for the quality and recognition of its degrees and certificates in other countries such as the US. This is another similarity with the information provided by the student participants about the quality of the institution pulling them towards Manipal.

The secondary research method verifies and supports the data given by the international student participants, but only to a small extent. One should always keep in mind that information given by an employee from Manipal University itself could be bias. In general, the conducted interview with the expert is not perceived as a great data source.

9. Conclusion

This research examined the push and pull factors that international students from the global South at Manipal University experienced in deciding if and where to study abroad. A focus was set on the influence of family and friends in particular as part of these factors.

It can be concluded that family and friends have a very strong impact on the decision making process of international students as to if and where they go for studying abroad. Friends and family that have either lived in the destination itself or knew someone close to them who did, gave trustworthy information and recommendations that were deemed as highly important by the international students. Students who experienced a lack of recommendations from friends and family had private agents to fill up this gap in order to be provided with important information and guidance.

Other key pull factors in order of importance were; the high quality reputation of the institution, and low living, tuition and transporting costs. An unexpected, yet important pull factor was concluded out of the data: all of the participants claimed that the search for independency, self-development and adventure had lured them away from their home countries into a world where they could thrive with other international students, exchange culture, improve their English and to ultimately become a more complex individual. Future research should investigate more specifically where this urge to study abroad originates from, and what its exact implications are. Moreover, some of these pull factors were confirmed by an expert working for Manipal University.

The lacking educational opportunities in the home countries of the participants proved to be the only key push factor. Universities in the home countries of participants were often too expensive or did not have enough places to satisfy the home student population. This pushed the participants away and, among other reasons, made them decide to leave their home country to study internationally.

Other than successfully confirming and contradicting favorable and unfavorable conditions in host countries that were predicted by literature, this research is proud to have shown the presence of a pull factor that was barely mentioned in the studied literature and that deserves the attention of being closely looked at as a separate pull factor. However, this research also had clear boundaries with a sample size of only ten participants, which is simply too small when trying to draw conclusions for a target audience that consists of half the globe. It is therefore recommended that in future studies, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods are used in order to bolster its claims and generate more robust conclusions.

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Appendix A: Data Collection Instrument, Interview Guide.

Opening interview:

Shortly explaining the purpose of this interview and the thesis overall. Ask for consent to record the interview and explain that the data published will be anonymous. Thanking interviewee in advance.

Gaining general information about the interviewee:

- How are you today?
- What is your age?
- What is your home country?
- How long have you been in Manipal, India?
- For how long will you be in Manipal, India?
- What do you study? How is your study going?

Key questions:

Manipal:

Do you enjoy living in India/Manipal?

(In what ways? What do you enjoy the most? Can you give an example?)

What were your expectations of India/Manipal before you came here?

(What gave you this feeling? Can you describe this feeling?)

What made you come to India/Manipal?

(What were the main reasons? How did you come by these reasons?)

Would you recommend India/Manipal to a friend from home?

(Would there be friends you would not recommend it to? Why?)

Push Factors:

Why did you choose to leave your home country?

*(Was this mainly for study purposes? What were other reasons to leave your home country?
Can you tell me more about these reasons?)*

Could you tell me something about your country?

*(What do you think defines your country? How does it do economically? Would you say your
country is wealthy?)*

How do you feel about the education system in your country?

*(Do you reckon your government should show more initiative to improve education? In what
ways do you believe India is better/worse than your home country in creating educational
opportunities?)*

Pull Factors:

Did you have any other countries as an option to go abroad to?

(Why did you only have one choice / Why did you choose India over other options? In what ways is India better than the other options you had?)

In what situation did India/Manipal first come to mind as an option for studying abroad?
(When and why did this turn into a viable option? With whom did you speak about India/Manipal? Did you know someone at the time that studied in India/Manipal before?)

Who gave you the most detailed information about India/Manipal?
(Were there friends and/or family involved? How did this information influence you? Do you think either of them was trying to persuade you? Were they perhaps trying to dissuade you from a different location to study abroad?)

Other than friends or family, were there any other people that directly gave you information about your study abroad possibilities?
(How about Alumni?)

Are the costs to study in India/Manipal less or more expensive?
(How did this influence your decision on coming to India/Manipal? Was India a relative cheap option for you to go to? How important are the costs to you in comparison with the level of education or experience you get from studying in India/Manipal?)

What do you think is good about the study climate in India/Manipal? And bad?
(Do you feel unsafe or discriminated in any way? Were you afraid this was going to happen when you made the decision on coming here? Did other potential options for destination have this problem?)

How does the weather and the general climate and physical surroundings in India/Manipal make you feel?
(Is it something you felt excited for or were specifically not excited about? Would you have gone somewhere else if India/Manipal did not have this climate or physical surroundings?)

What role would you say your parents played in the decision of choosing a destination?
(Were they more involved than you had hoped? Were you able to choose your destination yourself? Do your parents have any affinity with India/Manipal?)

In what ways did the fact that your country lies far away/close by influence your decision?
(Did you choose a country because of a match in culture with your home country?)

Closing Questions

- What would be the main reason for you to come back to India or to stay here?
- If you are not staying, what else do you have planned for the future?
- Do you wish to add anything or to jump back to one of the topics discussed earlier?
- Do you have any tips for or constructive criticism on this interview?

Appendix B: Data Analysis Codes; ordered by code families.

Push Factors	Costs	Recommendations & Information
Low Opportunities	Low Costs India	Agents
High Tuition	High Costs Home Country	Friends
Economic Wealth	Costs UK/US versus India	Family
World Economy	Plane Tickets	Influence Parents
Government Priorities	Part Time Job	Reputation
High School System	Living Costs	Website & Folders
High Costs Home Country	Scholarship	Scholarship
Wealth of Student	Safety	Degree
Friends in Home Country	Geographical Proximity	Other Acquaintances
Home University	Social Costs	
Quality of Home Education	Safety	
Social Ties	Physical Surroundings	Study Climate
Friends in India	Weather	English Common Language
Family in India	Campus	Indian School System
Other Acquaintances	Nature	Lectures
Lacking Social Ties	Urban versus Rural	Library
	Food	Amount of Students
		Family Feeling
		Support
International Community	Self-Development & Adventure	Self-Development & Adventure
Social Activities	Traveling	Development
Campus Facilities	Lifestyle	Independent
Gym	English	
Meeting Place	Indian Culture	
English	Amount of Students	
Hostel	Friends	
	Exchanging Culture	