

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

**CHANGES IN SOCIAL OUTLOOK OF GHANAIAN EXCHANGE STUDENTS IN
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**BY
AVOTRI NYUIEKO DZIDULA
(10531193)**

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FULFILMENT OF THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
MIGRATION STUDIES**

CENTER FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research is my hard work, unless where reference is duly acknowledged, towards the award of a Master's Degree in Migration Studies. This work to the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published by another person nor materials which have been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University of Ghana.

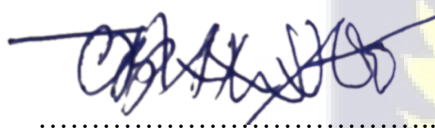


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AVOTRI NYUIEKO DZIDULA
(STUDENT)

.....12/12/2022.....

DATE



.....

DR. JOHNSON WILSON APPIAH KUBI
(SUPERVISOR)

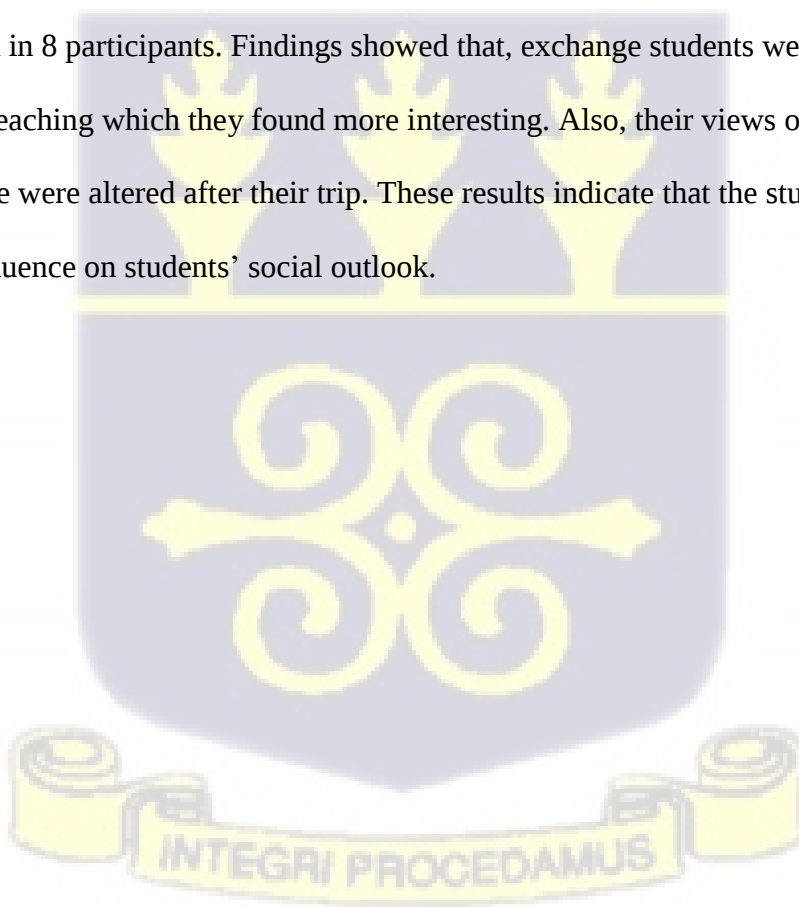
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ABSTRACT

International Migration has become more rapid, globalized and diverse with many young people travelling across international boundaries for reasons such as tourism and education among others. International education has become a valuable export commodity with many countries working hard to recruit students. Ghana is not left out of this arrangement as institutions of higher learning in Ghana accept international students as well as send out their students for the purpose of studying. (Doucerain et al. 2013), asserts that moving to a new environment has its peculiar effects on individuals no matter the duration of the stay. The main objective of this study was thus to ascertain the influence of the year abroad experience on the social outlook of Ghanaian students. The research employed the use of a mixed study approach to achieve its objective. A total of 60 participants were sampled for the quantitative while the interviews on the other hand roped in 8 participants. Findings showed that, exchange students were exposed to newer styles of teaching which they found more interesting. Also, their views on religion and campus residence were altered after their trip. These results indicate that the study abroad period does have an influence on students' social outlook.



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my father and mother, Rev. Dr. Nyuieko Avotri and Mrs Patience Avotri, for the love and the advice they gave me through the period I was working on this Dissertation.

I also dedicate this work to my beautiful sister, Daniella Avotri for her emotional assistance.

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Table of Contents

DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
List of Figures	vii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Background of the Study	1
1.1 Problem Statement	5
1.2 Main Objective	9
1.3 Specific Objectives	9
1.4 Research Questions	9
1.5 Justification	10
1.6 Hypothesis	11
1.7 Conceptual Framework	12
CHAPTER TWO	13
LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.0 Migration and How it Changes People	13
2.1 Exchange Students and Language Acquisition	15
2.2 Educational System	17
2.3 Religion and Migration	19
2.4 Residence	22
CHAPTER THREE	25
METHODOLOGY	25
3.0 Data Sources	25
3.1 Research Design	25
3.2 Study Area	26
3.3 Sampling Method	26
3.4 Instruments of Data Collection	27

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation.....	27
3.6 Ethical Considerations and Informed Consent.....	28
CHAPTER FOUR.....	29
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	29
4.0 Introduction	29
4.1 General Demographics.....	29
4.2 Teaching and Learning Structures.....	30
4.3 Choice of Hall	38
4.4 Religion	46
4.5 Plans for life after completing undergraduate education	55
CHAPTER 5	61
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	61
5.0 Introduction	61
5.1 Summary of Findings	61
5.2 Conclusion.....	64
5.3 Recommendations	65
REFERENCES	68



List of Figures

FIGURE 1.0: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	12
FIGURE 4.1.1 COUNTRY VISITED	30
FIGURE 4.2.1 TEACHING STYLE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA	31
FIGURE 4.2.2 TEACHING STYLE ON EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	32
FIGURE 4.2.3 PREFERRED TEACHING STYLE	33
FIGURE 4.2.4 LEARN BETTER WITH EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	34
FIGURE 4.2.5 BETTER GRADES DURING EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	35
FIGURE 4.2.6 PREFERRED TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLE	36
FIGURE 4.3.1 CHOICE OF HALL BEFORE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	39
FIGURE 4.3.2 CHOICE OF HALL AFTER EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	39
FIGURE 4.3.2.1 WHY DID YOU CHANGE YOUR HALL	40
FIGURE 4.3.3 ROOM SIZE BEFORE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	41
FIGURE 4.3.4 ROOM SIZE DURING EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	42
FIGURE 4.3.5 ROOM SIZE AFTER EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	42
FIGURE 4.3.6 INFLUENCED BY EXCHANGE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE TO CHANGE	44
FIGURE 4.3.7 WASHROOM INSIDE BEFORE?	44
FIGURE 4.3.8 WASHROOMS INSIDE AFTER?	45
FIGURE 4.4.1 COMMITTED BEFORE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	46
FIGURE 4.4.2 REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION	46
FIGURE 4.4.3 HOW OFTEN DO YOU FELLOWSHIP WITH RELIGIOUS GROUP	47
FIGURE 4.4.4 HOW OFTEN DO YOU READ YOUR BIBLE	47
FIGURE 4.4.5 ATTEND CHURCH SERVICES DURING EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	49

FIGURE 4.4.6 WORSHIP WITH DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS GROUP	49
FIGURE 4.4.7 RELIGIOUS LIFE ON EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	50
FIGURE 4.4.8 COMMITTED TO RELIGION AFTER TRIP	52
FIGURE 4.4.9 REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION	53
FIGURE 4.5.10 PLANS AFTER SCHOOL	55
FIGURE 4.5.2 PLANS TO LEAVE GHANA BEFORE THE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME	56
FIGURE 4.5.3 WHY DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE GHANA	56
FIGURE 4.5.4 COUNTRIES YOU WILL LEAVE GHANA FOR	57
FIGURE 4.5.5 HOW WILL YOU MIGRATE	59



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

“Every young person looks up to migration, either internal or international, as an ultimate goal. It is deep-rooted in their minds” (Badasu, 2017). This statement captures to a large extent the reality in Ghana, where the population is youthful and the country does not have the capacity to provide jobs for a vast majority of its educated youth.

According to the Collins dictionary, social means interacting with society or to the way society is planned and outlook is your general attitude towards life. Therefore, social outlook as used in this research describes a person’s general attitude towards society or the structure of the society.

Migration may be defined as a permanent or semi-permanent change of address. It is made up of several types of migrants, such as students, temporary employees, asylum seekers, and permanent residents with the goal of staying for a short or long period of time.

Migration, according to (Oderth, 2002), has impacted and affected the structure of both receiving and origin countries more than any other occurrence in human geography. There are two types of mobility: forced and voluntary mobility. Forced mobility or migration is when people are put in extremely dangerous or stressful situations that force them to move out of their normal settlement. Examples are flood, earthquakes, famine, political unrest, civil wars and many others. Voluntary mobility involves the movement of people for the purpose of exploration, seeking new opportunities and experiencing new culture.

Before western influence, movement in Africa was characterized by hunting and gathering and looking for peaceful places to stay in times of war (Awumbila et al, 2011). Similarly, West Africa has a long history with migration and mobility, there are records of people moving for long distance trade, running away from cruel kings and from famine both regionally and internationally (Awumbila et al, 2013).

International migration flows have however increased and the purpose has diversified (Miller, 2014). This increase and diversity can be attributed to globalization and the spread of information and knowledge. People all over the world are communicating with each other and consequently have a lot of information about many other places. Making migration more sort after because there are opportunities elsewhere that may interest individuals.

Every year, young people from all over the world travel across international boundaries for a variety of reasons, including tourism, education, adventure, family reunions, and work possibilities. This is obvious in the yearly exodus of students, primarily from poor nations to wealthy ones for higher education. International migration has become more rapid, globalized, feminine, diverse, and political (Castles et al, 2009). Currently, about 300 million people, or 3% of the world's population, reside outside their native nations.

In 2017, the Pew Research Centre conducted a study in which it questioned respondents in six Sub-Saharan African countries "whether they would migrate to reside in another country, provided they had the means and chance." Three-quarters (75%) of Ghanaians respondents answered they would.

Studying abroad is one option for young Ghanaians to leave the country. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2016) about 13,000

Ghanaians are already enrolled in foreign higher education institutions. The pool of prospects is expanding, with record numbers of Ghanaians enrolled in secondary schools (4,220,000) and post-secondary courses (2,630,000). According to the data, Ghana's gross enrolment percentage for higher education increased from 8.6 percent in 2008 to 16.1 percent in 2016.

While UNESCO figures show that US higher education institutions enroll over 3,140 Ghanaian students, outnumbering the UK's 1,490, Canada's 924, and Ukraine's 887, competition is heating up, and those numbers might change rapidly. "It has become customary for school representatives from the United States, the United Kingdom, and other areas of the world to come to Ghana to visit potential students in person." It is a stark contrast to the past, when people had to either fly abroad for admittance or have family outside help them with the procedure."

International education has become a valuable export commodity, and many countries are working hard to recruit students. Universities in affluent nations such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, and France produce significant foreign currency through student mobility in international education. Beneficiary students of international education gain greater expertise in a variety of academic and professional areas to enhance their nations' development agendas.

International students are an essential component of international education and a crucial component of the international dimension of higher education. Project Atlas defines an international student as "one who pursues all or part of his/her higher education experience in a country other than the home country" (Project Atlas, 2004).

The "demand" for international students is amongst the most dynamic of all world markets, with such massive growth in the last decade that governments from many countries now prioritize involvement of this market through their own Ministries of Education or dedicated international

education promotional agencies (Kemp, 2007). The possible benefits of hosting overseas students include skill migration, economic growth, public diplomacy, and, most crucially, research and innovation for a "knowledge society."

Migration has been known to impact the lives of the migrant, the country of origin and the destination country in several ways (Oderth, 2002). A lot of migration is done to move to better situation for the migrants involved. People are seeking to move to locations with better prospects for themselves; this movement however does not come isolated of changes in social structure, economy, and development goals (Diop et al, 2019). When people migrate, they experience new culture and lifestyles that they adopt, assimilate, or adapt to integrate in some way to their new environment. This has different effects on the migrant, the host community and the home country.

In the case of migrant students, the schools they attend usually have programmes in place for them to experience that country's culture in one way or another. Schools have always been known to be a place for socialization, making it the prime place for international students to make friends with locals and learn something from them. This is usually a language, an accent, how they live their lives, their beliefs and many others. These experiences have ramifications on the individuals or in this case student, and adds to or changes the way they see their lives, education, religious affiliations and their choice of shelter.

These experiences are not unique to students who spend the whole duration of their study abroad. It also applies to students who go on exchange programmes to school abroad for cultural or language skills acquisition. The University of Ghana sends its language students abroad to study the language and culture of some specific countries. This allows the students to have a full experience and build fluency in the languages they are being taught. Their study is usually one academic year, where students usually go to China, Spain, Russia, Tanzania, France, Togo, or

Benin. This study aims at assessing the extent of change in the social outlook if any of this category of students and how this influences their tastes and preferences.

1.1 Problem Statement

People in today's globalized culture are always on the go. Migration erodes traditional cultural, ethnic, and linguistic boundaries while boosting variety, cultural richness, and economic wealth. People who live, study, and work abroad are not just exposed to, but also immersed in, different cultures for lengthy periods of time.

While adaptation is regarded to be a universal process for all people going through transitions, the socio-cultural environment in which it occurs is undeniably essential. Some authors claim that the role of context is understudied, and that further research is needed to fill this gap. (Doucerein et al, 2013, Ward et al, 2010)

University of Ghana sends students on exchange programmes every year as part of their undergraduate studies. They usually go to learn a language, in its native setting while associating with the people. According to (Doucerein et al, 2013) moving to a new environment has some effect on individuals who move, no matter the duration of their stay. Some work has been done on the effects of migration on different groups in society. There has been work done on how migration affects children left behind by mothers, and fathers (Cortes, 2015); how migration affects migrant workers' productivity (LaLonde, 1997); the effects of language gain on migrant students learning Spanish in Mexico (Yager, 1998), and many others. Studies raise issues related to exchange students, but none tracked the changes in the social outlook that occurs in students who go on exchange programmes from African universities let alone the University of Ghana, Legon which is the focus of this study.

A study of attitudes of German Exchange Students during a year in the United States by (Gruen, 1959) is an example of work done to show how studying abroad for a year can change students' attitudes toward certain themes (Gruen, 1959). However, even Walter Gruen admitted that he could not study the changes of students properly because of how they structure their instruments, given that the study tried to study a lot of different changes at the same time. Admittedly, Walter Gruen's work was not done in Africa, let alone Ghana, hence the need to study how Ghanaian and for that matter the University of Ghana students, are affected by their one year abroad. This study will use a more targeted approach to maximise the focus of the study to arrive at the intended goal of tracing changes in social outlook that relate to University of Ghana students who go on exchange programmes abroad.

This need is buttressed by other studies on student migration which also recommend that the issue be studied more in specificity (Raghuram, 2013). Raghuram buttressed the need for other studies on student migration and further recommends that the issue be studied more in specificity (Raghuram, 2013). Giving that the student migrant has the potential to become another kind of migrant, their exposure to studying in a different country may affect their decisions when and if they return to their home country. A study on 'Year Abroad' students in Europe mentions that there are "remarkably slow" efforts to study the migration behavior of student migrants even though they are a very important part of population mobility (King et al, 2003). This research, makes it an even greater issue, as Europe has a lot of migrant destination countries. Student mobility in a more specific way, creates a big knowledge gap which this research hopes to fill by looking at the changes in social-outlook of students who studied in different countries, including countries in Europe.

According to 2010 census, Ghanaians are very religious. The census data shows that 94% of Ghanaians belong to the major religious groups, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and African Traditional Religion. For religious Ghanaian exchange students who are going to study a new language in a not so religious environment, to be away from their religious groups and the religious Ghanaian society for a while, it is important that we are able to understand what that does to their social outlook. This is more so because in Ghana, religion facilitates and is facilitated by social networks, while the absence of religion in one's life can lead to stigma (Oheneba-Sakyi, 2009). According to Oheneba-Sakyi, the relationship between religion and socioeconomic level is very important. This fact that a person's socioeconomic level affects their view of life and the kind of choices they make is very useful for this study.

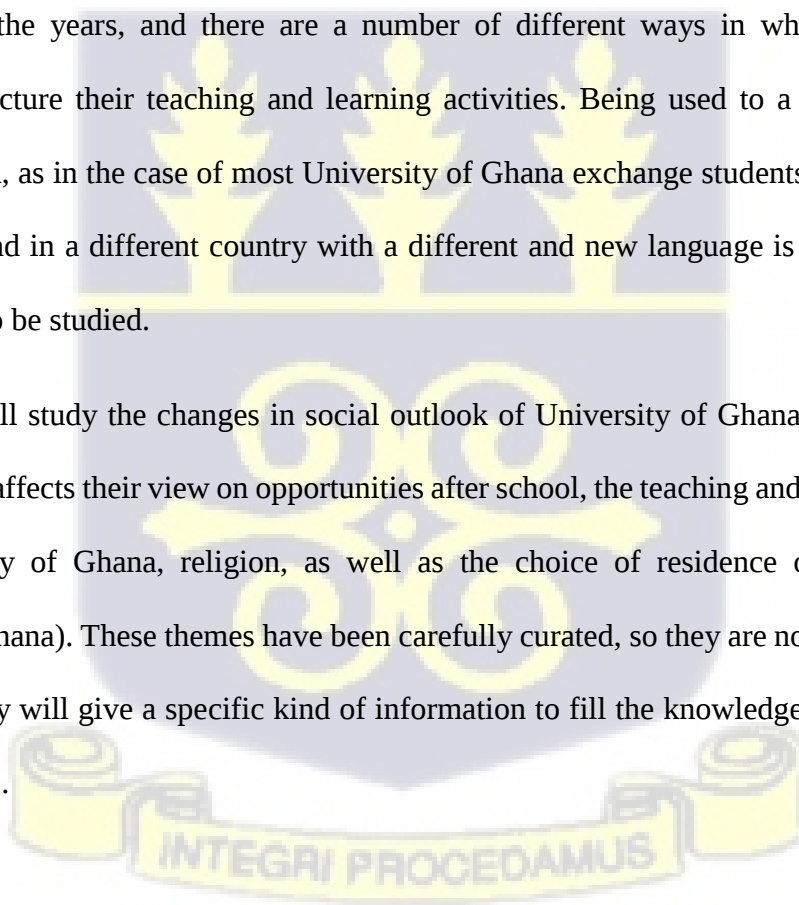
The fact that they are moving from a society that is predominantly Christian and Muslim, who believe that there is only one God, to societies that have very diverse belief systems, some of which believe in many gods, some do not even believe in a god at all. For these students with their religious background and teaches of "repentance" and "sharing the word" to the "lost" it is very important that we study how they react to new religious beliefs and what that influences on their return to Ghana. Secular education's emphasis on humanistic principles can frequently deviate from religious teachings (Sherkat et al, 1999). Students views on how being away from their primary religious group and society coupled with their new experience have affected their social outlook has not been looked at critically. Religion is one of the factors that influences peoples' social outlook.

The position of this study is that the views of University of Ghana exchange students on the effect of being away from their primary religious groups and societies vis-a-vis the extent to which their new experiences have affected their social outlook has not been looked at critically.

Another factor that influences peoples' social outlook is education especially the pedagogy used to deliver that education. According to O'Connor in a 2002 article, the most widely employed teaching techniques in Ghanaian schools was lecturing, question and answer, explanations of processes, and note taking, in that order. As a result, little practical work is completed. This is attributed to a lack of equipment and consumables. It is increasingly evident that examination is another factor that promotes this type of approach to teaching. Many teachers focus on the test material rather than skills and competences (O'Connor, 2002).

When Ghanaian student who have been educated primarily by lecturing with very little interactions and practical work, are sent to schools outside the country where there are resources to allow practical work, it will be a new experience. Education around the world has evolved in different directions over the years, and there are a number of different ways in which countries and Universities structure their teaching and learning activities. Being used to a particular way of formal education, as in the case of most University of Ghana exchange students and the exposure to a different kind in a different country with a different and new language is a very interesting mix that needs to be studied.

This research will study the changes in social outlook of University of Ghana's "Year Abroad" students; how it affects their view on opportunities after school, the teaching and learning structure in the University of Ghana, religion, as well as the choice of residence on return campus (University of Ghana). These themes have been carefully curated, so they are not overreaching, or too generic. They will give a specific kind of information to fill the knowledge gap identified by other researchers.



1.2 Main Objective

To study the changes in social outlook of University of Ghana's Ghanaian exchange students after they return to Ghana from their year abroad.

1.3 Specific Objectives

1. To examine how the exchange programme affected students' view of University of Ghana's teaching and learning structures.
2. To examine how the exchange programme affected students choice of residential status on the University of Ghana campus
3. To examine how the exchange programme affected students religious affiliations and activities
4. To examine how the exchange programme affected students plans for life after completing their undergraduate education.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What did the exchange programme teach students about the teaching and learning structure in University of Ghana?
2. How did the experience living in a foreign country affect students' choice of residence on campus upon return?
3. Did the exchange programme affect students view on religion and religious activities?
4. What has changed about how students viewed life after completing the undergraduate degree?

1.5 Justification

Migration has hit center stage in almost every aspect of international politics because it is very difficult to study in isolation. The process involves numerous aspects, countries, regional bodies, individuals, and international organizations. The vastness of the topic and its increasing importance globally requires that there be a multitude of information.

A lot of the population increase in Europe is because of immigration. In 2016, immigration accounted for majority of Europe's population increase. While births and deaths were both 5.1 million, net migration increased the population by 1.5 million (Mohdin, 2018).

A lot of migration destinations in Europe and America are very difficult to get into. Young Africans, use education to get into these countries by applying for bachelors' or postgraduate studies. The prospects are higher for them when they are educated in foreign countries, either for the entire duration of their study of even as an exchange student for a semester or for a year. When exchange students are exposed to different cultures there are bound to be some changes in their views of how their education is conducted, having been exposed to a different one.

Sociologists believe that collective behavior and social movements are some of the causes driving social change. Societal change is caused by social movements as well as external reasons such as environmental shifts or technology advancements. Essentially, any disruptive movement in the status quo, whether planned or unintentional, human-made or natural, can result in societal change. Therefore, when exchange students move into a society different from their own, into a different environment and exposed to new social and contemporary technologies, there is bound to be some change in their outlook on society.

In the case of exchange students from University of Ghana, they usually go on exchange programmes to study a language. These students learn about their new society. They experience specific parts of the culture while trying to learn the language. This enables them to have a proper experience of the society whose language they have been sent to learn. The way in which their studies and socialization is structured, allows them to experience the good, and bad of these societies. By the time they return to the University of Ghana a lot might have changed about them.

This study will try to tease out how their migratory experiences have affected their views on the educational system in University of Ghana. How they approach their education, their views on the way teaching and learning are done in the University of Ghana. The study will further explore how living elsewhere informs their choice of hostel when they return and if as a result of different hostel accommodation their preferences change. The study will also find out spending time in another country affects their commitment to their religious activities and how what kind of decisions they will make for their lives after their undergraduate studies.

Exchange students usually spend shorter periods in their host country, focusing purely on their academic work. Unlike most migration information or scholarly works that have centred around economic, family reunion and other social aspects of other migrants, this study will bring some valuable information to universities on the value of their exchange students and how these experiences can be used to advance their respective educational systems. This study hopes to create a distinction between exchange students and students who spend their whole period of study abroad or use their studies as a steppingstone in their migratory process.

1.6 Hypothesis

H1.0 Social outlook of students change after their exchange programmes.

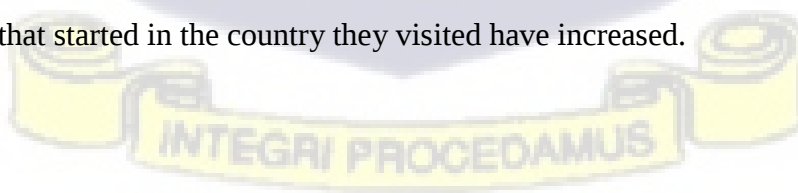
1.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.0: Conceptual Framework



Source: Researchers own construct

The figure above is an illustration of what happens to individuals when they are exposed new cultures and experiences. The first image is a person in the Ghana map, which is used to illustrate students in Ghana with all its social experiences and outlooks. The second is a student in the map of China and another in a group with a leader. This is used to show students in a different country learning a new language and culture. The second image of the student has a different color shirt to illustrate the changes in social outlook happening as a result of the different experiences. The last image is an individual with a different color shift and trouser in the Ghana map. This is used to illustrate the exchange student coming back to Ghana with different social outlooks. It also shows that the changes that started in the country they visited have increased.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Migration and How it Changes People

Archaeologists believe that practically all humans on Earth are migrants, as mankind started in Africa around 200,000 years ago and expanded over the planet, including Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Americas. There are over 200 million migrants in the world today. The issues and possibilities associated with migration are hotly contested by politicians and ordinary people all over the world. In today's globalized society, people are always on the go. The twenty-first century might be dubbed "the age of migrations" (Altner, 2006).

Migration erodes conventional cultural, ethnic, and linguistic borders while increasing variety, cultural, and economic richness. People who live, study, and work overseas are not only exposed to other cultures, but they are also engrossed in them for extended periods of time. Not everyone easily adapts the new realities that surround them. Attempts to understand what causes the success or failure of a foreign experience have resulted in a massive body of literature on cross-cultural adaptation.

Work done by (Bierwiazzonek et al, 2016) on the socio-cultural factors that come before cultural adaptation indicate that there is both socio-cultural (51%) and psychological (82%) adaption to the cultures people find themselves in. These high percentages shows that the changes people go through when they migrate are not only socio-cultural but also psychological, admitting that there is validity in studying the changes in their social outlook. This study sets up to provide data on

what changes about students who spend a year abroad in relation to their preferences on religion and its activities, their choice of teaching style, choice of hall residence and life aspirations after finishing their undergraduate studies. These reflects what the social environments students find themselves in when they go for their years abroad have on the decisions they make in relations to specific topics.

A study done by (Gruen, 1959) on 'Attitudes of German exchange students during a year in the United States', interviewed twenty-five German exchange students at the beginning and end of a year's stay in an American university. The study covered 56 attitudinal dimensions across political, social and economic areas. After a basic cluster analysis, the 56 dimensions were interrelated and provided seven clusters and five extra couplets. The clusters were used to describe the group, which was characterized in large part by a positive attitude toward American policies and government principles, a rejection of sex equality, a strong worker identity, an optimistic conception of man, an emphasis on duty and responsibility, a rejection of strong authority, a belief that the United States has better labour relations than Germany, a perception of a lack of class difference in the United States, a belief that there is no class difference in the United States, a belief that United States family life was not harmonious, and an admiration of informality in dealing with others.

It found that, when the initial and final interview clusters were compared, very few of the attitude clusters changed. This, they explained as a combination of reluctance to change and the fact that the group was so well informed on circumstances and policies in the United States prior to their arrival that little change appeared likely. The four changes identified were a closer acquaintance with various socioeconomic situations in the United States, a picture of the American as less

carefree than previously assumed, perception of larger class divisions in German culture, and an even stronger rejection of family life in the United States.

Students, like all other migrants are exposed to different things when they migrate. These new ideas affect the way they perceive the world around them, either socially or psychologically. From previous studies, people who migrate adapt to their new environment in two ways. Firstly, socio-culturally, that is, changes that affect behavior in the new cultural and social environment. A good example is that when non-Africans move to Africa, they usually have to learn that most African countries believe that it is wrong to use your left hand in certain situations because it is almost regarded as rude (Alhassan, 2018). Psychologically, explained as, people who migrate are exposed to things and ideas that change the way they think and how they perceive life.

2.1 Exchange Students and Language Acquisition

Similar situations pertain in different parts of the world in different social or cultural settings. These are the issues Exchange Students face in new Language Acquisition environments.

For students to be able to become very fluent in a language they are studying, it is very important for them to spend time in a country where that language is spoken natively (Freed, 1998). Research on exchange students and language acquisition shows that for adults; like the University of Ghana Exchange Students, attaining fluency in a new language is facilitated by living in an environment where the new language is spoken natively.

Teachers and students have long felt that studying or living abroad is tremendously useful in acquiring a high degree of fluency in a foreign language, and that it should even be mandatory for most learners (Freed, 1998). Living abroad provides possibilities for casual engagement with the language in addition to academic learning. Some are interactive, such as chatting with native

speakers, while others are passive, such as watching television, reading magazines, listening to music, and other similar activities (Yager, 1998).

(Carroll, 1967) research on college seniors majoring in foreign languages showed that, the duration of stay abroad and the age the student started learning a language are the best indicators of how well the student will be able to learn the language. Living abroad with the aim of learning a language according to (Yager, 1988) is the highest variable for adults being able to speak fluently. According to him, it also creates a near native grammar and pronunciations.

However, the need for a better understanding of the experiences of students who go for the year abroad has sparked an increased interest in mixed methods approaches that go beyond measuring the linguistic development of the language learner to include research on changes in learner identity and agency, as well as student perspectives on language learning, to inform the development of intercultural/transcultural competence. (Jackson, 2010, Kinginger, 2013, Beaven et al, 2016).

Aside the language gain overseas, there is a gap between the curriculum of the year abroad institutions and those at home, revealing the necessity to balance traditional classroom goals with those needed to manage life abroad (Lord et al, 2014).

Exchange students from the University of Ghana, leave the country for a year for the sole purpose of going to study a particular language and gain some advanced level of mastery. For this purpose, they are enrolled in schools where the specific language they are learning is spoken fluently.



2.2 Educational System

Education is an important element of a child's development; it begins at birth and continues until death. It is the process through which a person learns new knowledge, skills, and competencies. Education's primary purpose is to assist a person to learn duties, information, facts, and characteristics which was previously unavailable in the individuals live. Human society relied on education where parents and other members of our society may help learning procedure (Callaway, 1979).

Education in Ghana has progressed from traditional education in the 1600s where parents taught their children through apprenticeship, and children usually followed in the footsteps of their parents, with regards to work. In this traditional educational system, a child will learn to be a hunter if his father is a hunter, a farmer if his father is a farmer etc. It was largely informal with no curriculum or laid out courses, or timed assessments. Every test, or teaching was done on the job, making mistakes, and being corrected while doing the work (Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

The arrival of Europeans came with castle schools along the coast, and the introduction of formal education. The establishment of schools to teach the mulattos, sons of Chiefs and wealthy traders, started from the coast then spread to other parts of the country or then colony. From the times of colonization to date, there have been a few different educational reforms, which have aided in one way or another. According to (Aissat et al, 2011) in their article on the Role of Education in Retrospect: The Gold Coast in the Era of Imperialism, wrote that the Europeans paid Ghanaian workers four times less than they would have paid European staff, so they trained Ghanaians to fill a lot of administrative roles in governmental departments and shops (Aissat et al, 2011). Gearing the formal education at the time to specific roles in the job sector, however after gaining independence, there were steps to change this gradually.

The condition of scientific education and learning in Ghana is poor in the sense that many pupils study science by rote and hence lack knowledge of science topics since no meaningful learning happens (Azure, 2015). This is true not only of science, but of all subjects. He added that instructors prefer teacher-centered, knowledge-based teaching techniques that offer limited possibility for student interaction. This usually means that teachers in Ghana usually give information to students and leave little room for students to add their input. Instilling the idea in Ghanaian students that, schooling is about going to the classroom and being taught by a teacher. Some students in Ghana may go through school without participating in any class unless they are compelled to.

According to (O'Connor, 2002) article, the most widely employed teaching techniques in Ghanaian schools was lecturing, question and answer, explanations of processes, and note taking, in that order. As a result, little practical work is completed. This is attributed to a lack of equipment and consumables. However, it has become increasingly evident that examination is another aspect that promotes this type of approach to teaching. Many teachers focus on the test material rather than skills and competences.

When Ghanaian student who have been educated primarily by lecturing with very little interactions and practical activity, are sent to schools outside the country where there are resources to allow practical work, it will be a new experience.

Education around the world has evolved in different directions over the years, and there are several different ways in which countries and Universities structure their teaching and learning activities. Being used to one way of formal education, especially for most University of Ghana students, exposure to a different kind in a different country and in a different language is a very interesting mix that needs to be studied.

2.3 Religion and Migration

Religion is an embodiment of beliefs, practices, and one's attachment to something considered worthwhile in one's life. These beliefs and practices may include belief in preternatural forces such as, Supreme Being, divinities, lesser gods, angels pouring libation, prayers, burning incense, bowing etc. (Anderson, 2013).

Karl Marx defined religion as the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions (Marx, 1844). According to him religion thrives because there are situations that necessitate it. It is merely a means to an end, therefore, in a perfect world, without oppression and hardship there will be no need for religion.

Europe and other parts of the world also used to be very religious around the 1800s. However, in contemporary times, the role of religion is diminished. The periods of the great religious reforms and awakenings in Europe and the Americas respectively are far gone. According to a 2019 Eurostat, 27% of European Union residents do not believe there is any spirit, God, or life force. In this survey, Romania came out as the most religious country in the EU with 55% while Estonia is the least with 7%.

There are several reasons. The (World Atlas, 2022) opines that, most of the introduction of the religion in Europe has been mainly through the movement of people who switch countries or go to work in Europe. It further argues that looking at the future projections of religion, between 2010 and 2050 Christianity will shrink in numbers while Islam and the unaffiliated will become more popular. It stressed what experts foresee, that the number of Christians will drop from more than half a billion to just over 400 million followers by 2050. Muslims will increase from around 40 million to about 90 million followers. The unaffiliated are also expected to grow from around 150 million people to almost 200 million people.

Another reason to think of is the rise of science, technology and secularism, a phenomenon which was observable even before migration started in large numbers in Europe. Andrew M. Greeley in his 2004 book “Priests; A Calling in Crisis”, argues that the assumption that Europeans have been religious is wrong. He thinks the European had never been religious but rather superstitious, which they still are today. However, some other scholars argue that the Great Schism of the 11th century and Reformation of the 16th century tore apart Christendom; the most influential religion in Europe, into hostile factions as seen in Northern Ireland. This fueled atheism and agnosticism to spread across Europe during the Age of *Enlightenment* of the 18th century, and further gave way for Orientalism (Hinduism and Buddhism) in the nineteenth-century into Europe. It said that 20th century (*New Age*), brought with it increasing syncretism and various new religious movements which divorced spirituality from inherited traditions for many Europeans.

In Africa and for that matter Ghana, it is widely argued that religion plays a role in determining the morality of the people. Some scholars believe that religion permeates virtually all the spheres of the African life to the extent that it cannot be distinguished from non-religious aspects of life. (Leonard, 1966) argues that “Africans are in the natural sense of the word truly and deeply religious of whom it can be said that they eat religiously, drink religiously, bathe religiously, dress religiously and sin religiously”.

Similarly, in the Ghanaian traditional life, it is difficult if not impossible to see an atheist. The Ghanaian cultural heritage is said to be intensely and pervasively religious (Opoku, 1974). In the Akan society for instance religion is so widespread and intricately linked to their culture such that it is difficult to separate what is essentially religious from other areas of existence. Adding that, life in the Akan world is religion, and religion is life. (Opoku, 1974)

According to the 2010 census data, 94% of Ghanaians belong to the major religious groups: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and African Traditional Religion. The remaining 6% belong to some other religion or do not believe in any higher power.

Religion, globalization, and development all work together to shape social and cultural change in Ghana (Oheneba-Sakyi, 2009). Religious affiliation, belief system, and religiosity are becoming both public and private problems in Ghana. In religious contexts, prominent rituals such as funerals and weddings are performed. Religion facilitates and is facilitated by social networks, while the absence of religion in one's life can lead to stigma (Oheneba-Sakyi, 2009). According to Oheneba-Sakyi, Religion is so intricately woven into the DNA of Ghanaians that it affects the person's political views, socioeconomic outcomes, and social status. The extent to which a Ghanaians are affected by religious teachings, interactions and the general religious society is massive.

It is argued that recent times have seen increased secularization hence the decline in religion. Secular education's emphasis on humanistic principles can frequently deviate from religious teachings (Sherkat et al, 1999). This statement emphasizes that education can affect a person's religious beliefs, because education seeks evidence in what is seen, touched, and felt physically. Religion is on the other hand, seeks faith, making religion and intellectuality inversely related (Shenhav et al, 2012). Explaining that as a person gains higher intellectual capacity, he or she also gains the high tendency to disbelief.

As young university students, the exchange students are already in the mix if higher education which according to (Sherkat et al, 1999) deviates from religious teachings. Add that to leaving their intricately religious setting to parts of the world that do not believe in any superior being or spirit. This is more likely to affect the way they look at religion because for most of them, they have only been exposed to the Ghanaian religious society, so, meeting another society where

religiosity is not as revered will be a social shock. This can either reinforce their religious beliefs and dedication or weaken them.

2.4 Residence

Life events shape a person's personality. When a child is born, his or her family offers a protective environment for the new-born; at the beginning, interactions are limited, later in life, social interactions increase, and the socializing process begins. Several studies have been undertaken to emphasize the significance of the home environment and the function of family members in the development of children. Variances in child development begin with the family's financial situation, biological endowment, and educational differences. The residential area of the child when he or she is growing up also has a very large effect on the socialization of the child. It has the potential to determine the type and quality of education a child will have and the kind of friends he or she will make (Fergusson et al, 2008, Tucker et al, 2011).

The hostel or hall of residence is a location where students reside when they are away from home to pursue formal education. However, the notion of a hostel is more than just a place to stay; it is also a human practical laboratory (Iftikhar et al, 2015). As a result, a hostel is more than just a place to stay; it is also a place of learning and interaction with different people. During their hostel stay, students learn as much from their lecturers as they do from their other students. It contributes to character development by enriching students' knowledge of the curriculum via critical conversation in the rooms. Students in hostels not only acquire theoretical content, but they also learn how to improve their personal skills and live independently (Mishra, 1994).

Not living close to family for an extended length of time leaves students with some life-changing experiences. In this new way of life, students learn to live independently and to negotiate with their course mates and roommates (Khozaei et al, 2010). Financial problems, adjustment concerns,

personal powerlessness, anguish, changes in eating and sleeping habits, and a variety of other issues confront students living in hostels (Iftikhar et al, 2015). According to research, hostel students will have higher levels of empathy, altruism, and emotional stability. The hostel setting allows students to socialize with one another in ways that cannot be done in the classroom (Mimrot, 2012).

Living in a different country to pursue education in a new language may bring about new experiences that can inform some life changing choices of young adults. Exchange programmes students who live in hostels share their ideologies and experiences from their home countries with other students and learn a lot from their hostel mates. During their stay in these countries, they are hosted in international students' halls or hostels. As a result, they will interact with other people from countries other than that of their host and home country (Shah, 2010). These experiences impact students' religious beliefs and attitudes (Ahmad, 2006). It encourages them to be more ambitious, confident in who they are and allows them to develop, which can help them tackle life (Ahmad, 2006).

Migration is yet another factor that may influence the exchange student. Migration is well known to change peoples' perceptions on things and gives them a broader view of what life is. When a person has lived in different locations, it can even be seen as a form of education on its own, because being well travelled also means that a person has been exposed to different cultures and has some appreciation of them. It is the same with exchange students when they are on their exchange programmes. They interact with people from different parts of the world and even though they may not have travelled to all those destinations and experienced those cultures, having a roommate or a floor mate from those areas in the next best thing (Thakkar, 2012).

When exchange students return from their trips, these different experiences may have some effects on their taste of hostel they want to stay in. For University of Ghana exchange students, changing one's residence on campus is not very difficult. They are free to choose which hall they want to stay in if they feel a need to change. However, students on exchange programmes who already have residency on campus do not lose it, except in very special cases. A students' experience in a different kind of hostel than he or she was in before the exchange programme, can affect the person's taste and decision to change. If the person was exposed to different facilities or enjoyed a certain kind of socialization, the person can decide to change his or her hall to one that can give a similar feeling. These and their related behavioral changes validate this study.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Data Sources

The research made use of primary and secondary data. Primary data sources included questionnaire administration and interviews with students who took part in the exchange programmes organized by the university. The secondary data was obtained from subsidiary sources such as published and non-published books, journals, articles, and the internet.

3.1 Research Design

The research employed an explanatory mixed method approach in the gathering and analysis of data. This technique combined qualitative and quantitative data. This was used because mixed method benefits from the strengths of quantitative and qualitative approaches and the weaknesses of the qualitative are usually mitigated by the strengths of the quantitative. Allowing the research to have a balanced outcome. The quantitative data for this study was obtained from questionnaires filled by the respondents. Information from this section are expressed using charts and tables to show that the responses are quantifiable. The information is presented this way to help track the changes that exchange students experienced before and after their trips. It also gives the research some measurable information which is useful for replicability of the research as well as providing a basis for further research. Qualitative data on the other hand was obtained from interviews with exchange students on some of their experiences abroad and how it has affected their view on the specific topic stated in the research questions. This information is used to reflect aspects of the study that are not captured in previous literature and prior studies, allowing the research to have

new views from respondents. Additionally, it gives some explanation that the charts and tables are not able to, allowing respondents to explain why and how come, the charts are the way they are.

These two methods are used hand in hand because students who study abroad have different and complex experiences, which cannot be captured in tables, charts, and statistics. There is a human side to the changes that students went through, which is explored by qualitative data. The research used the qualitative data to support and occasionally explain the quantitative data, giving a much-needed two sided view on the changes that the exchange students experienced.

3.2 Study Area

The University of Ghana is the oldest and largest university in Ghana. Founded in 1948 by the British Colonial Government, the University of Ghana was initially affiliated to the University of London. Now as a fully-fledged University, it has nearly 40,000 students with 628 international students as of 2020. The University also sends about 200 students abroad every year for exchange programmes.

This study was carried out in the whole university, because exchange students are across the faculties and halls of the University.

3.3 Sampling Method

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, the questionnaire was sent out to exchange students as a google forms link. Respondents were sampled using a snowball sampling method. The respondents in this study are a specific group and are not easily identified. However, identifying one exchange student led us to others; the link was shared among exchange students and placed on their various social media groups, allowing them to fill the forms in their own time and voluntarily. Majority of the target group are young adults who are constantly on their phones using these social media platforms for entertainment, work and school (Cleave, 2012). Some of these social media

platforms have exchange students in groups based on the country they visited, this was particularly useful as getting in touch with them would have been difficult. Interviews were conducted with willing respondents from the already identified students, based on availability and willingness.

3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

Sixty responses were collected from the google forms questionnaire and eight interviews were conducted with some exchange students. The interviews were conducted after the questionnaire data was collected so that the questions asked will be relevant to give explanations to the responses given. The google form was used because the target group members are in different areas and because of the Covid-19 pandemic people are not willing to accept printed documents. Students could forward the form to other colleges who went with them via WhatsApp or other social media platforms. There were concerns of the security of the information and students filling multiple times. These were addressed by linking the form to a secure account and making responses linked to users Email, not giving the option for multiple entries.

There was a part of the questionnaire where respondents were asked if they will be available for an interview and when to giving them the flexibility and choice to give information for the research.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

The quantitative data was analysed using the statistical programme SPSS and qualitative data was analysed using word cloud generator. Majority of the information received from interviewees were presented as quotes. So the weight of their experiences are felt. Frequencies and percentages were used in charts and graphs to analyse the responses. This is to provide a graphical representation for easy grasping of the topics under examination. It was also helpful to track the changes that

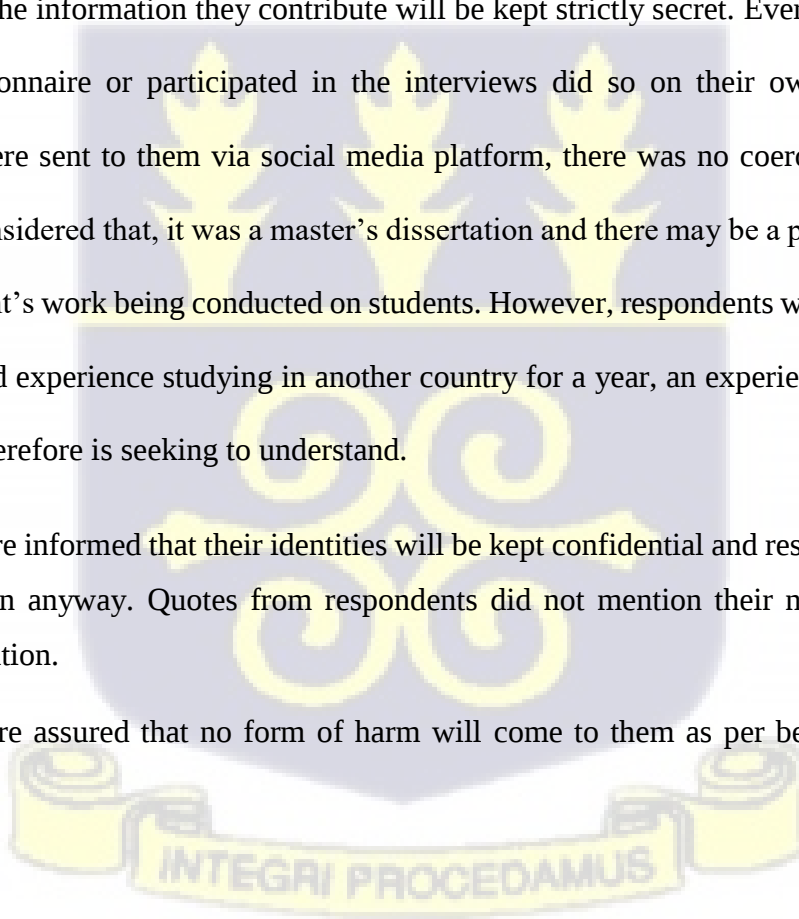
exchange students experienced. WordClouds were used to show some common response received from respondents. This pictorial presentation of results is backed with some quotes from interviews conducted, presenting a complete view of the respondent's views. The presentation of data is done such that, the explanations and additions on each of the topics is given by excerpts from the interviews after the statistical data has been presented.

3.6 Ethical Considerations and Informed Consent

During the research, ethical protocols were strictly followed. The goal of the study was properly explained to the responders. The message that was snowballed to respondents contained some explanation as to what the research was about. They had the choice of participation and were guaranteed that the information they contribute will be kept strictly secret. Every respondent who filled the questionnaire or participated in the interviews did so on their own volition as the questionnaire were sent to them via social media platform, there was no coercion or force. The research also considered that, it was a master's dissertation and there may be a positionality issues as it was a student's work being conducted on students. However, respondents were undergraduate students who had experience studying in another country for a year, an experience the researcher does not have therefore is seeking to understand.

Respondents were informed that their identities will be kept confidential and responses will not be linked to them in anyway. Quotes from respondents did not mention their names or give any personal information.

Finally, they were assured that no form of harm will come to them as per being linked to this information.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

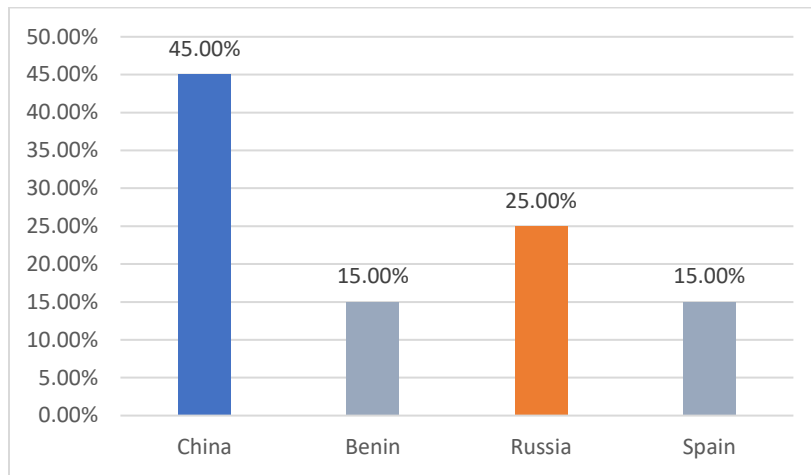
This chapter presents the results of analyzed data collected from exchange students. Statistical techniques such as frequency tables and charts are used in the illustration of the results with quotes from the interviews conducted adding some much-needed human aspect. The various sub-themes under this chapter include General demographics of respondents, the views of teaching and learning structures, choice of hall, Religion and religious activities, life choices after undergraduate studies. These sub-themes will at the end of the day come together to answer these research questions.

4.1 General Demographics

Under this section, the background characteristics of respondents are displayed since these are critical to understanding the answers provided to the research questions. The age, gender, country visited, and language of the country visited will be presented. The age of the respondents was between 24 and 29, of which 45% were male and 55% female.

There were 4 countries visited by the respondents: China (45%), Benin (15%), Russia (25%), and Spain (15%). This is expressing all countries visited by students from the University of Ghana as at the time of the study with the exception of France and Tanzania. This however is because the low number of students who study Swahili and that French students get scholarships to go to Benin but have to pay some amounts to go to France. As a result, there are fewer students who opt to have their exchange programme in France and fewer students who go to Tanzania.

Figure 4.1.1 Country Visited



Source: Field Data, 2022

The languages these exchange students were sent to study are Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish.

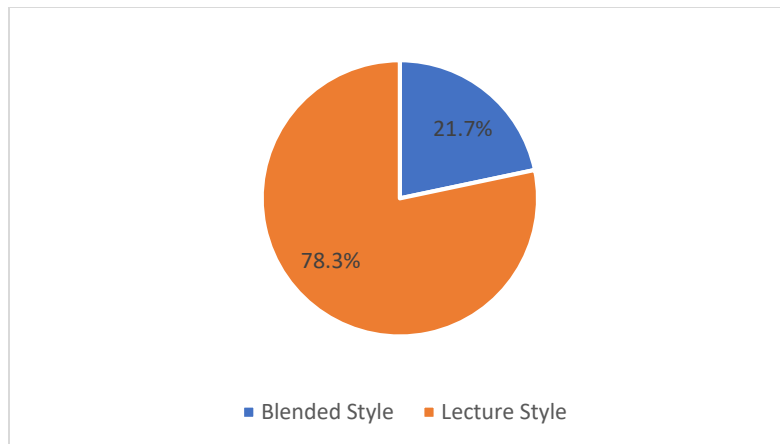
4.2 Teaching and Learning Structures

This is the first research question posed by the researcher, as proposed earlier in the study; there are a number of teaching and learning styles that are used in universities. Each University chooses how they will teach their courses, it was mentioned that there are 5 styles of teaching. The respondents were asked which of the teaching styles they think university of Ghana is practicing, lecture style, coach style, activity style, group style, and blended style. According to the students who filled the questionnaire, University of Ghana is more lecture style oriented as 47 students representing 78.3% of the total respondents choose that option, the rest, 13 students or 21.7% of them chose blended style.

Interviewee 1 mentioned that *“In University of Ghana, most of the lecturers just come project the slides and start teaching, they occasionally pause to ask questions, but majority of the talking is done by the lecturers. Aside the language classes, those ones you will have to read, and speak so*

that you can become comfortable speaking the language. Apart from those classes, the rest are lectures.”

Figure 1.2.1 Teaching Style University of Ghana



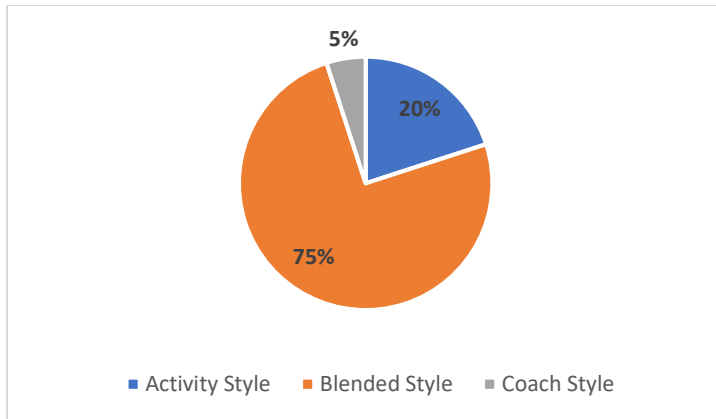
Source: Field Data, 2022

While on their exchange trip, students were exposed to not only another University, but another country. They were exposed to new teaching styles which were completely different from what they had been exposed to in the University of Ghana. When asked what teaching style they experienced in their exchange institution, the data chart does not show any mention on the lecture style which was the predominant teaching style in University of Ghana. It shows that during their exchange programme, 45 of the exchange students, representing 75% of respondents were taught with a blended approach, which is a mix of all the other teaching styles. Interesting to note is that the next most predominant teaching style was the activity style, which allows students to learn by doing.

Interviewee 1, mentioned that *“There was a class that we go and watch a movie, then everyone picks a role and acts it out in Chinese. We had outdoor games, we played traditional Chinese games with Chinese characters and in Chinese. There was also a class we learnt road signs, items*

in shops, names of items, then we go out after the class and take pictures for discussion during the next class. It was really helpful for finding your way around town without having to ask people.”

Figure 4.2.2 Teaching Style on Exchange Programme



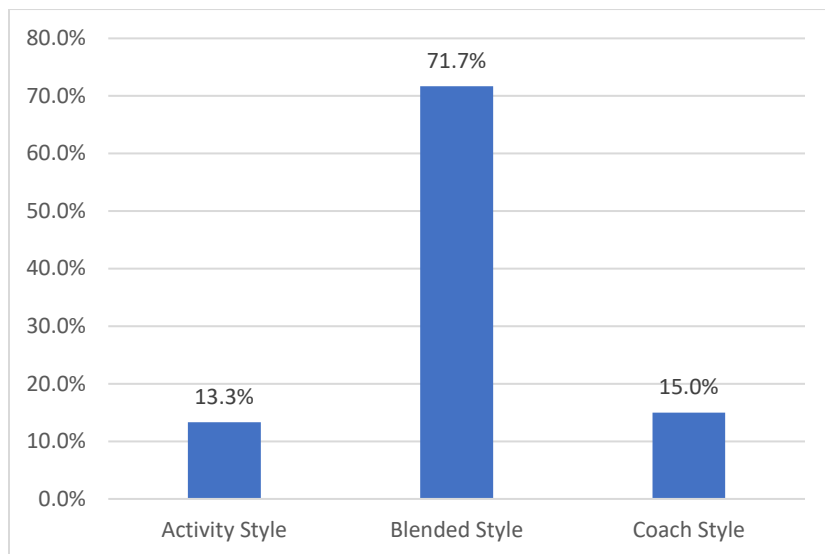
Source: Field Data, 2022

This is corroborated by interviewee 6 who mentioned that *“Because our classes were mostly language classes and we were not many, the lecturers made sure that we were very involved in the classes. They will always ask you to speak in class or read in class so that they correct your mistakes. There was a culture class that we had to interact with people, and we discussed in class.”*

The research also showed that exchange students do not prefer the lecture teaching style used in University of Ghana, as a result it was not mentioned at all when they were asked which of the teaching styles they preferred. A total of the 43 out of the 60 exchange students who filled the questionnaire, representing 71.7% of respondents preferred blended teaching style, 9 students representing 15% preferred coaching style and 8 students representing 13.3% preferred activity style.



Figure 4.2.3 Preferred teaching style



Source: Field Data, 2022.

During the interviews, there was a generally good sentiment about having to learn with different approaches than just lecturing. The students were excited that their schoolwork could take them on trips to the mall, or to a park or would allow them to take a stroll around their new country.

Interviewee 1 mentioned *“During these class assignments we could take pictures and post on social media and people will think that you have gone out to chill, but you are actually doing schoolwork. It was exciting”*

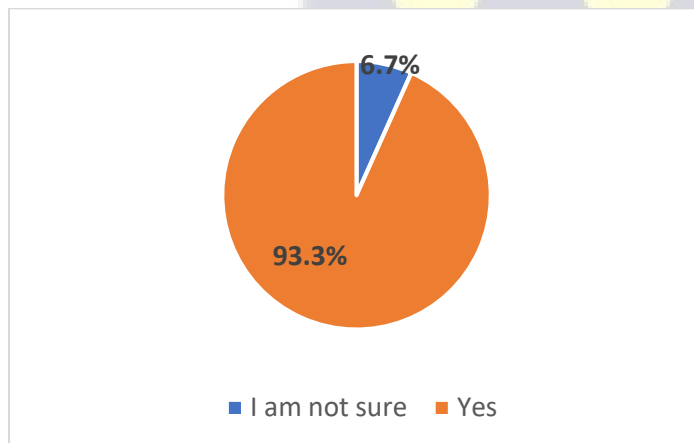
Interviewee 3, another exchange student mentioned that *“Before the year abroad, we spoke to some people who went the years prior, they had a lot of pictures to show of all the fun places they went, it looked like so much fun. So, when we finally went and saw that having fun was part of the*

schoolwork it made the trip more enjoyable. Plus, we did all these things in groups, it helped create some new friendship among our classmates.”

Additionally, the students were asked if they were able to learn better during their exchange trip, 56 of them, representing 93.3% said they were, while only 4 out of the 60, that is 6.7% said there were not sure. None of the exchange students mentioned that they were unable to learn better during their exchange trip.

Interviewee 1 mentioned that *“In University of Ghana, all of us were combining the languages with other course, so there was divided attention. But, during the year abroad, we do purely Chinese so you will definitely learn better.”*

Figure 4.2.4 Learn better with exchange programme



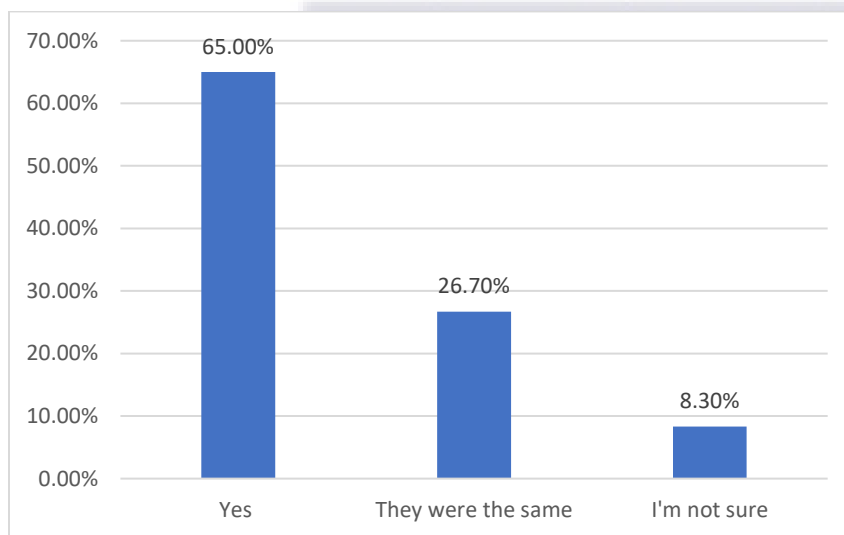
Source: Field Data, 2022.

This is corroborated by an interview with Interviewee 4, who said, *“They were teaching us Chinese in Ghana, and we could understand and write what we could for exams, but when we went to China, the Chinese they were teaching us was different. How they were teaching it was also different, so learning the Chinese became very easy.”* Adding that, *“Maybe, because we were*

learning Chinese in China, it was easier because there are obviously more people to speak the language with, you need the language to do everything, because they do not really understand English. So, you try harder to learn so that if you want to go out on your own, you can always communicate.”

As a result of the students reported ability to learn better, the research asked if their grades were better. Data gathered reports that 39 students, that is 65% of exchange students reported that they had better grades on the exchange programme than in University of Ghana, 16 students (26.7%) said their grades were the same, 5 students (8.3%) said they were not sure.

Figure 4.2.5 Better grades during exchange programme



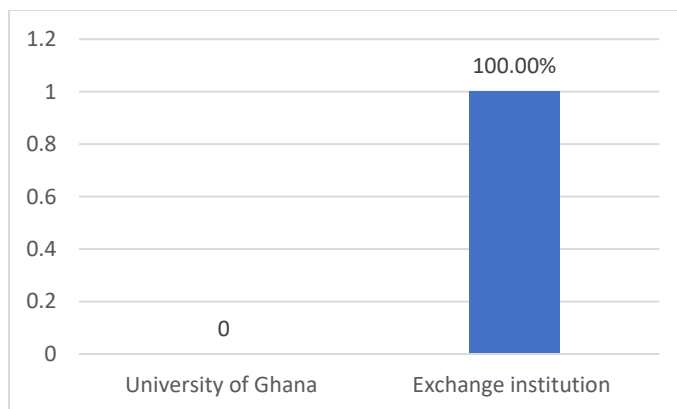
Source: Field Data, 2022.

Interviewee 2, an exchange student explained that *“Usually we do not get graded during the exchange programme, but we get scores. If after the exam you had 70/100 you will know, however, after the exchange programme we submit all our scores to University of Ghana, and they give us one grade for the whole exchange programme. Its 6 credits so it is on your academic record as*

Studies Abroad with on grade, A or B+. Because of that it may be difficult to track if you did better, but if you remember your scores, you will know if you did better.”

Up to this point, the exchange students have shown that their experience in their exchange institution was a good one. So, it is no surprise that when students were asked which of the institutions teaching and learning styles they preferred, 100% of them preferred that of the exchange institution. Not a single person out of the students interviewed and those who filled the questionnaires expressed preference of University of Ghana’s’ teaching style over that of their exchange institution.

Figure 4.2.6 Preferred teaching and learning style



Source: Field Data, 2022.

Respondent 32 explained; *“I was more guided and felt included in every activity in my exchange programme as compared to that of UG. The reason being my UG class had over 700 students as compared to only 30 students in my exchange programme class.”*

Respondent 9 mentioned that *“Lecturers have time for every student and this makes learning fun and interesting.”*

Respondent 57, mentioned that *“The main focus of class is not to feed you information that you’re required to regurgitate to the lecturer during exams, they encourage the need to study to understand and to love what you study and make it a part of you.”*

Respondent 5, explained that *“The teaching style was such that it included individual students and so all students always participated in class activities, and the lecturers took time to help out individual students. Class sizes were also very small, so it helped teachers’ pay attention to all students.”*

Interviewee 3, also mentioned that *“The classes were smaller with less students and we studied just one subject, French”*

Interviewee 4 also explained that *“To be honest, the teaching style of my exchange school was more interactive. The teachers engaged all students and the whole class participated in every aspect. No student was left out. The teachers were also friendly and approachable.”*

Therefore, from the information gathered, exchange students from University of Ghana believe that University of Ghana teaches mainly through lecturing. This relates to what (O’Conner, 2002) mentioned about the main teaching style in Ghana is lecturing. Where lectures come to class lecture, occasionally pausing to ask questions they explained that this style of teaching does not allow students to have any input in the class and it makes learning less interesting and difficult.

As a result of their exchange programme, they were exposed to other teaching styles which they prefer to that of University of Ghana. They want teaching to be more interactive and fun, and University of Ghana does not give them that. Again reflecting (O'Connor, 2002) sentiments about very little practical work being done in the Ghanaian teaching style.

The research data shows that students believe they studied better and had better grades during their exchange programme. They attributed this to large classes in University of Ghana and the teaching style used. They mentioned that using the blended style of teaching, which is a mix of all five teaching styles makes teaching more interactive and interesting while making learning easier.

4.3 Choice of Hall

The next question posed was to examine how the exchange programme affected their choice of hall when they return to University of Ghana. Exchange students were asked different questions pertaining to their choice of hall before and after their exchange programme. This section explores how living elsewhere informs their choice of hostel when they return since they usually lose their residence and how their stay with people of other cultures has shifted their taste of the kind of people, they would want to share their space with.

Figure 4.3.1 below shows the halls exchange students were in before they left for their trips abroad. It is worth noting that 19 of the 60 students were in Elizabeth Sey Hall and 14 were in Akuafio Hall. Also, the exchange students were resident in 7 halls on the University of Ghana campus. Only 4 of the halls mentioned have their washrooms inside the rooms, the rest have a shared washroom. Out of the respondents, 50% preferred living in halls such as Elizabeth Sey Hall, Alexander Adum Kwapong Hall, Jean Nelson Aka Hall and TF Hostels because they have washrooms inside the rooms.

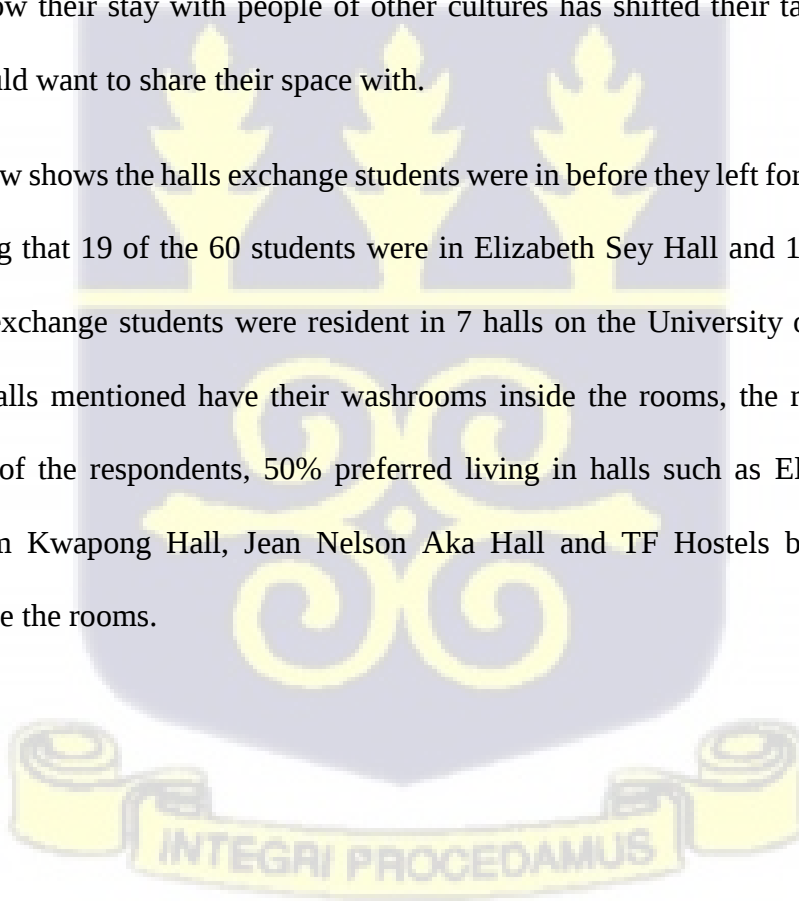
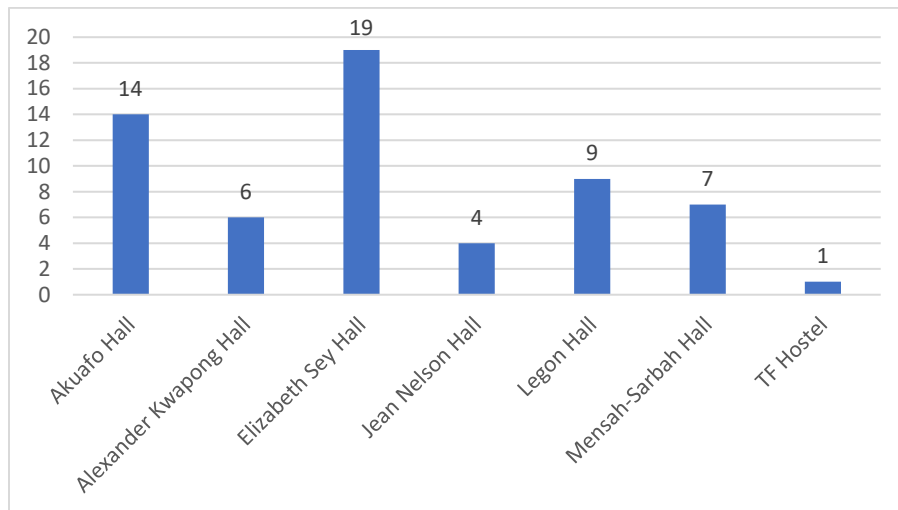


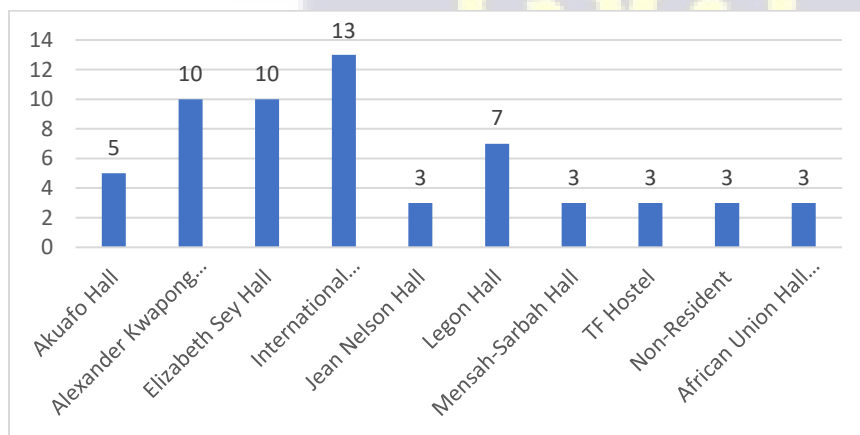
Figure 4.3.1 Choice of hall before exchange programme



Source: Field Data, 2022.

When students returned from their exchange programme, 31% of them changed their halls of residence. As a result, when they were asked what halls, they came back to, there was a more diverse collection of halls. Important of them is the international students' hostel.

Figure 4.3.2 Choice of hall after exchange programme



Source: Field Data, 2022.

After the exchange programme, international students' hostel which was not on the list before is the highest occupied hall by exchange students with 13 respondents residing there.

Interviewee 2 mentioned that “*When we were in Russia we were communicating with some of the people who went for the year abroad the year before. A number of them had moved from their halls to international students’ hostel (ISH), it was just cool. They were in Russia together and created a friendship. So, when they came back, they moved to ISH so they still felt like they were together. I do not think I moved because of a smaller room or a washroom, I was in Akuafo, I do not care about shared washrooms. It was just for the union, to try and keep that kind of bond we had in Russia.*”

The Interviews and questionnaire filled by exchange students revealed a number of different reasons why some exchange students changed their rooms and halls when they returned to University of Ghana. Some of the reasons are:

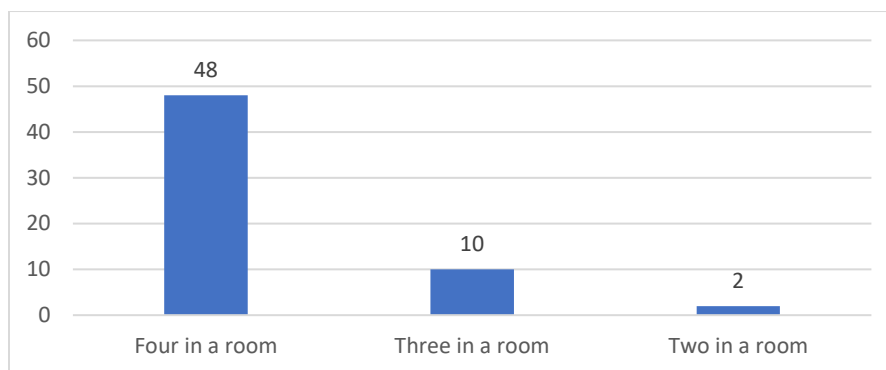
Figure 4.3.2.1 Why did you change your hall



Source: Field Data, 2022.

Data from room size before and after the exchange programme also showed some changes, like the diversity in the choice of hall after the exchange programme, there is diversity in the room size also.

Figure 4.3.3 Room size before exchange programme

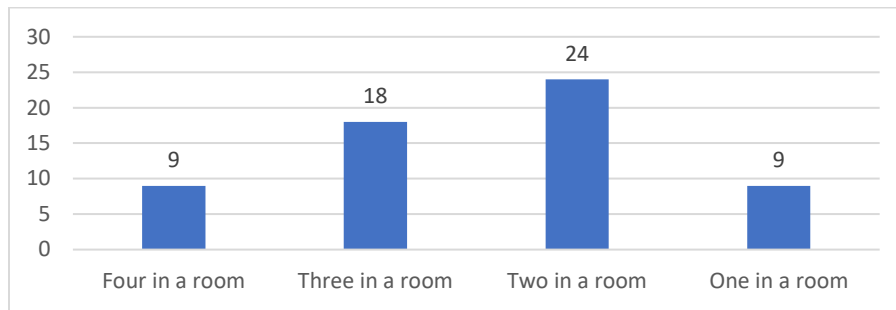


Source: Field Data, 2022.

Figure 4.3.4 shows four in a room as the highest occupied room size by exchange students, this is so because the halls with the highest occupancy for exchange students Elizabeth Sey, Legon Hall, Mensah Sarbah Hall all have four in a room as the predominant room sizes.

During their exchange trip, 24 of the students were in two in a room, shown in Figure 4.3iv below. As per the above data, 48 of the exchange students were in four in a room before they went for the exchange programme but only 9 of them were in four in a room during their exchange programme. Additionally, none of the students were in one in room before the exchange programme but 9 of them were moved.

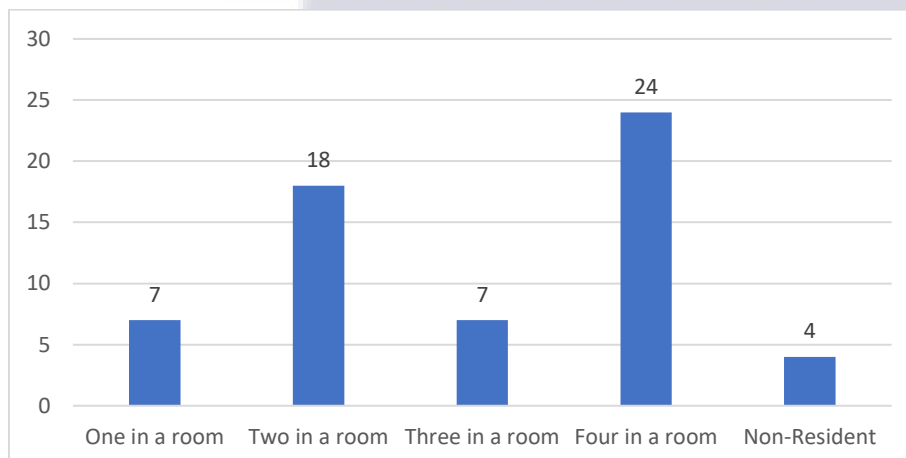
Figure 4.3.4 Room size during exchange programme



Source: Field Data, 2022.

Interviewee 6 explained “when I was in Ghana, before my year abroad, I was in a four in a room. During the year abroad I was in a two in a room, being in the two in a room for that period was less stressful, there were fewer people to worry about. If it was sweeping or cleaning it is just one other person so it is not difficult. Also, we had the choice of who to be in the room with, so it was just peaceful. When we came back to UG, I wanted that so I changed my room and international students’ hostel is the cheapest place on campus that I could have that.”

Figure 4.3.2 Room size after exchange programme



Source: Field Data, 2022.

After the exchange programme, even though four in a room is still the highest occupied room with 24 students, two in a room which was the least occupied room size before the exchange programme has become the second most occupied room with 18 students. This are closely followed by one in room, which was not on the chart before the exchange programme and three in a room, then 4 students moved out of campus completely.

Interviewee 1, explained that *“I have always wanted a 2 in a room since I got into the university, this was just an opportunity to get that. I wanted to be in a room with someone I am comfortable with so that it is cool. Having less roommates is just peace of mind; you do not worry about 3 other people. I have had bad experiences in 4 in a room, so I just wanted a peaceful small room where I will be with my friend.”* Adding that *“I choose international students’ hostel, because it is close to campus, it is cheaper, and prior to moving in, I heard that the rooms are nice. The only thing that put me off was the washrooms were not in the rooms. It was a shared washroom, but I compromised because it costs less than Elizabeth Sey.”*

Additionally exchange students, when asked if their experiences during their exchange programme affected their decision to change their room, 87.5% of them responded “Yes” 12.5% of them responded “I am not sure”. None of the students who changed their rooms responded “No”. Expressing how the exchange programme had affected them.

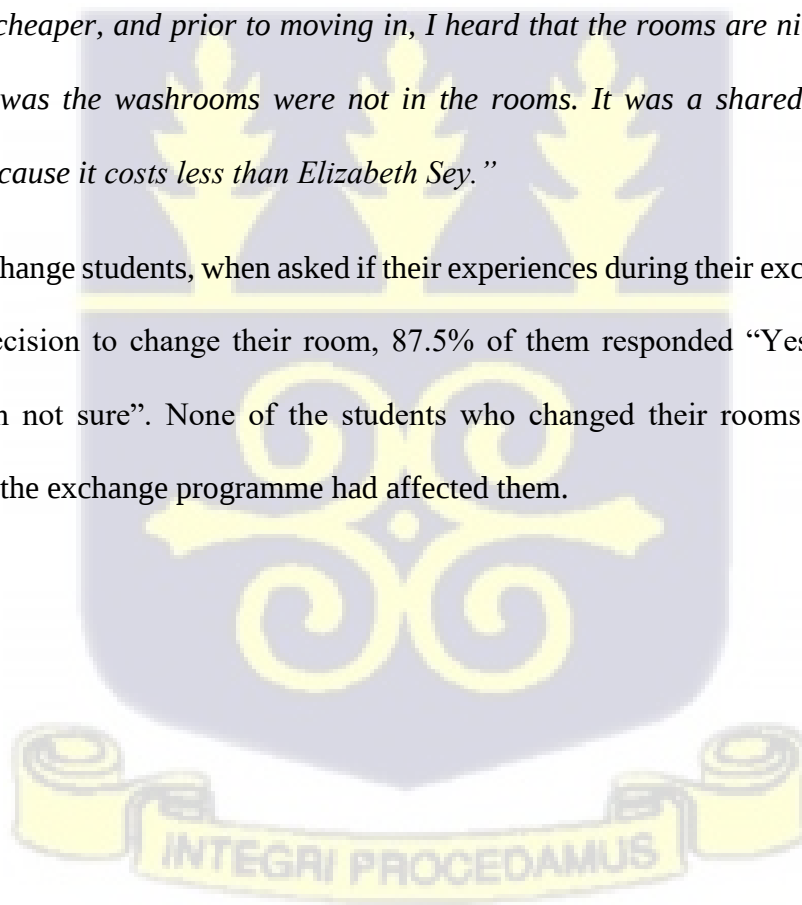
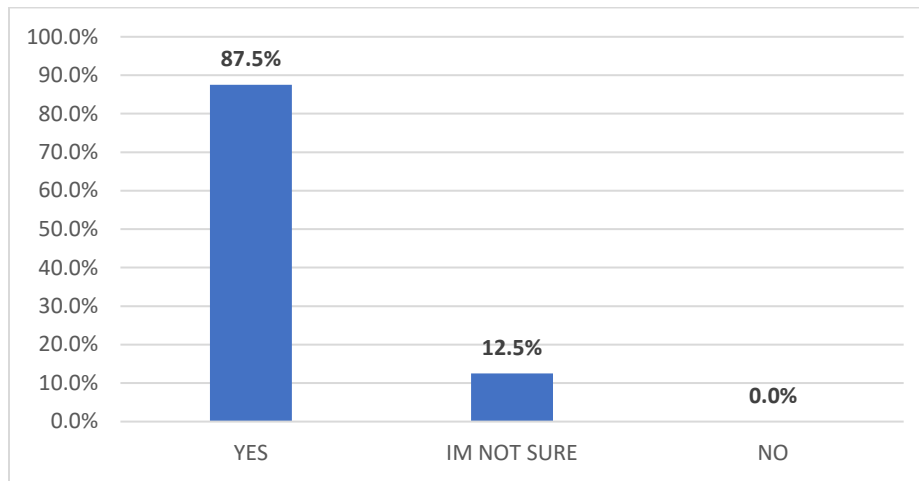


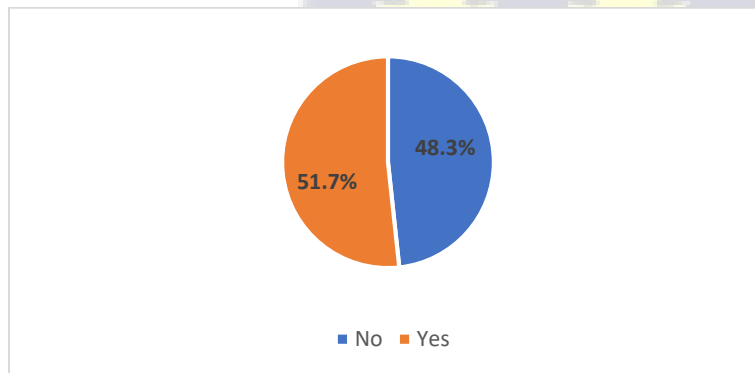
Figure 4.3.3 Influenced by exchange school experience to change residence



Source: Field Data, 2022.

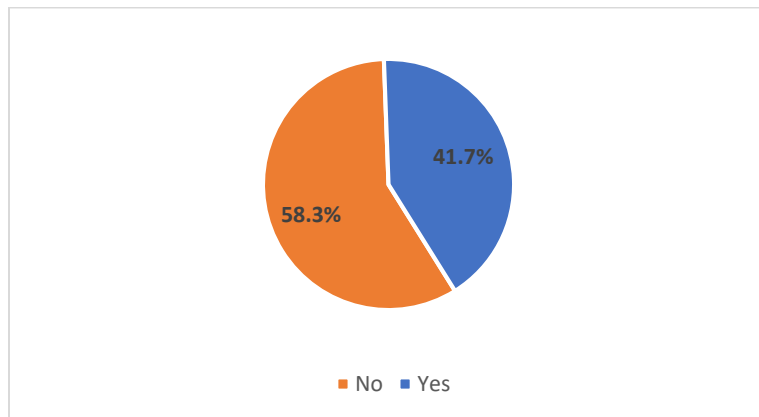
Finally, before the exchange students went on their trip, 51.7% of them had their washrooms inside their rooms and 48.3% did not.

Figure 4.3.4 Washroom inside before?



Source: Field Data, 2022.

However, when they returned from their trip 58.3% of them did not have washrooms inside their rooms, only 41.7% did. As explained earlier in this section, some of the exchange students compromised on having their washrooms inside their rooms for having less roommates and more peace of mind.

Figure 4.3.5 Washrooms inside after?

Source: Field Data, 2022.

In conclusion, 80% of the exchange students in were in four in a room before they left for their exchange programme, during their exchange programmes, 85% of them were moved to smaller rooms. As a result of having less roommates for the duration of their stay and the new friendships some of them created, they opted for smaller rooms and new halls, to be with friends in a new space, and have less problems with roommates. To be able to do this, the students who changed their halls, and rooms had to compromise on having washrooms inside their room.

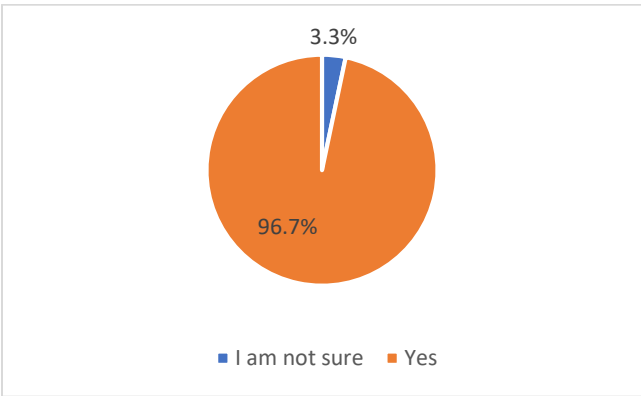
Rather than their stay with other countries nationals changing their taste of association, students grew closer to their Ghanaian course mates who went on the trips with them. So much that, some changed their halls to be closer to each other and continue to have the same kind of connection they had during their exchange programme. This relates directly to (Mimrot, 2012) mentioning that the hostel is a place for socialization unlike any other. These exchange students went to another country and created stronger bonds with course mates because they lived together in another country completely independent (Mishra, 1994).

4.4 Religion

This section will examine how the religious affiliations and activities of exchange students from the University of Ghana were affected by their year abroad.

All 68 of the exchange students in this study were Christian (100%). Of that number, 58 (96.7%) of them said they were committed to their religious activities before the exchange programme.

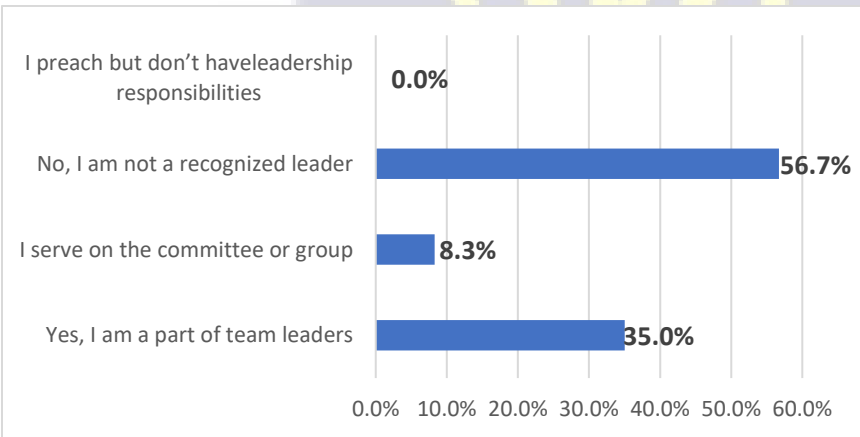
Figure 4.4.1 Committed before exchange programme



Source: Field Data, 2022.

About 56.7 percent of the (a total of 34) were not recognized leaders and 21 (35%) of them were leaders or part of team leaders and 5 (8.3%) served in a group or committee in their Churches.

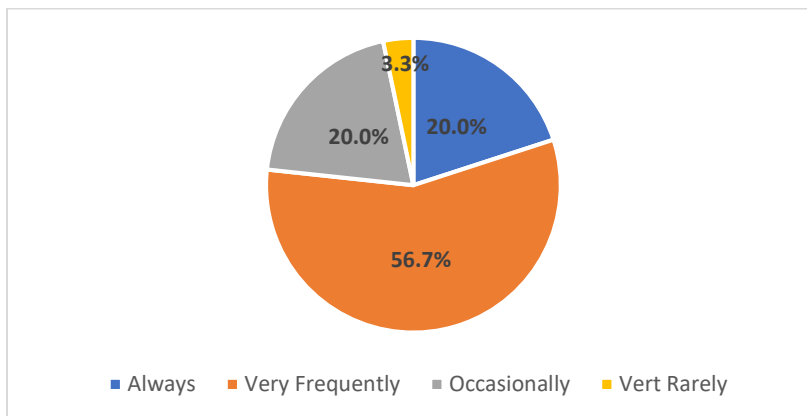
Figure 4.4.2 Representative of your religious institution



Source: Field Data, 2022.

Below is a chart showing how often they attended Church activities before their exchange trip, 34 (56.7%) of the respondents attend very frequently and 12 (20%) attend always and occasionally. Just 2(3.3%) students attended Church activities very rarely.

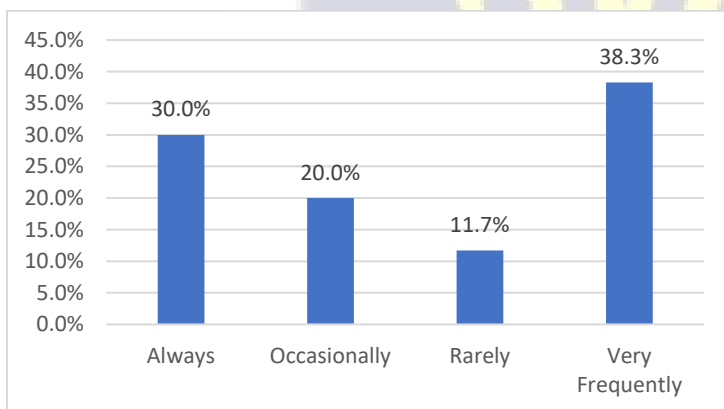
Figure 4.4.3 How often do you fellowship with religious group



Source: Field Data, 2022.

Additionally, 23 (38.3%) of them read their Bibles very frequently, 18 (30.0%) read it always and 12 (20.0%) and 7 (11.7%) reading it occasionally and rarely.

Figure 4.4.4 How often do you read your Bible



Source: Field Data, 2022.

Before exchange student went on their trip, 96.7% of them reported being very committed to their religious activities. Out of the people interviewed, 76.7% of them go to Church very frequently and always, 68.3% of them reading their Bibles very frequently and always, and 43.3% of them being part of leadership or serving on a committee.

Some interviewed students explained that before their exchange programme, because they were in Ghana and were around the Churches they have been in since childhood, it made going to Church activities easier. Interviewee 6 mentioned that *“On campus there is a lot of motivation to go to Church even on weekdays, because what are you doing that you cannot serve God?”* Adding that *“My friends from my home Church or High School come and call me for Church programmes and some of these Christian Music concerts”* According to her, having friends and being in a space you are comfortable with makes it easier to be more committed.

Interviewee 3 mentioned that *“Before the year abroad, my mates were around, it made it easier, to be serious with the work of God because there are days that you do not feel like going for prayer meetings or even reading your Bible, but knowing that some of those people will check up on you and ask, makes you do it”*

Giving the understanding that, before the exchange programme, a lot of the exchange students were able to attend services and read their Bibles because their peers checked on them and encouraged them.

During the exchange programme, 46 (76.7%) of the students were able to attend Church services, 8 (13.3%) of them were not and 6 (10%) were not able to fellowship often.

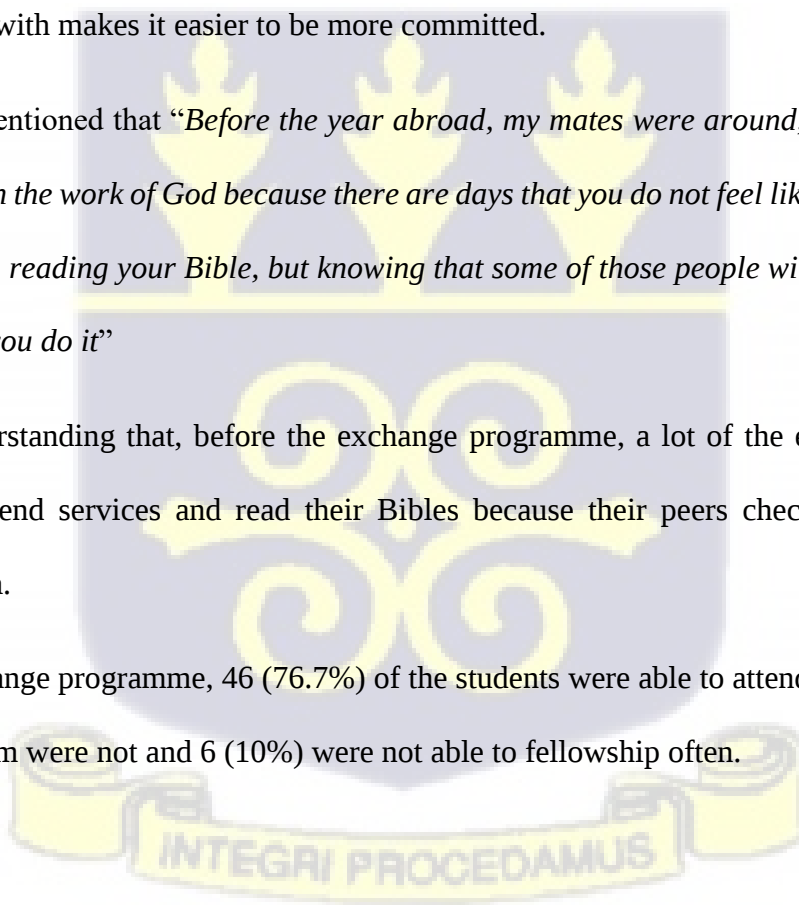
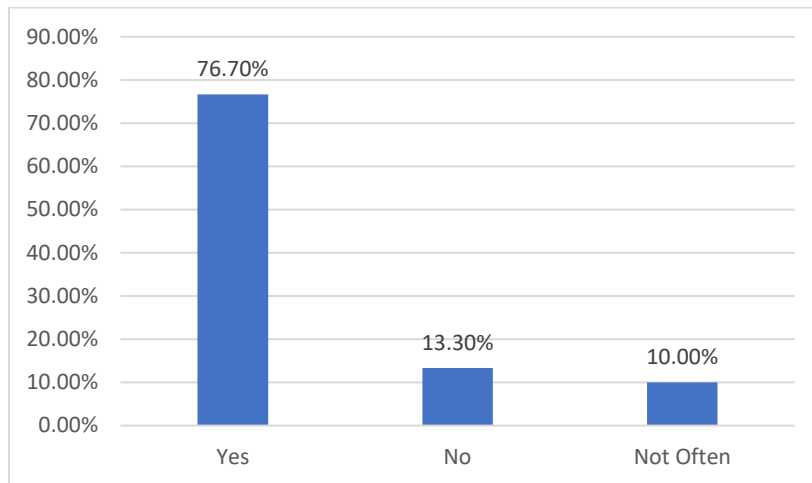


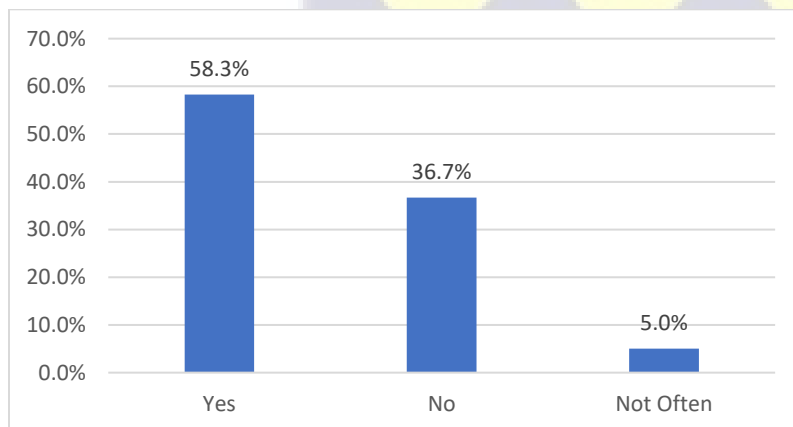
Figure 4.4.5 Attend Church services during your exchange programme



Source: Field Data, 2022.

While a lot of the students were able to attend Church programmes during the exchange programme, 35 (58.3%) of the exchange students worshiped with other denominations of their religion.

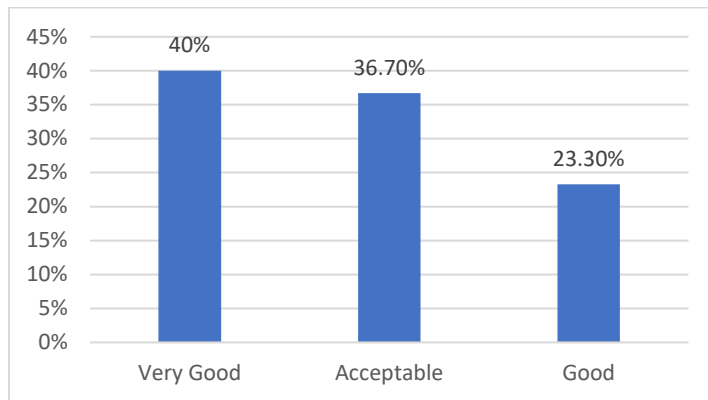
Figure 4.4.6 Worship with different religious group



Source: Field Data, 2022.

The religious life of 24 (40%) of the respondents was very good, 22 (36.7%) said it was acceptable and 14 (23.3%) said it was good.

Figure 4.4.7 Religious life on exchange programme



Source: Field Data, 2022.

However, the respondents for the interview had a mixed reaction to religious activities.

Interviewee 2 mentioned that *“I did not really go for weekday services on campus because they were long and they talked too much, I only went on Sundays, I was not interested in joining any group or being any kind of leader. But, when I got to Russia, the Church was small, so everyone had a role to play, they did not waste time, the services were only preaching and songs. No unnecessary announcements. I enjoyed going during my time there”*

Interviewee 6 mentioned that *“I personally did not attend a lot of weekday activities because I felt lazy. I went only once, even that was a music programme. But I always went on Sundays, the Church spoke a lot of French, so I liked going, plus it was a correct Bible believing Church.”*

Interviewee 1 mentioned that *“The school I went for my exchange programme, I was the only person from my class who went there. I met a few Ghanaians there, even they had stopped going to Church because there was no African like Church that was not far. The closest one was in another school, but I was not prepared to go.”* Adding that *“I would rather sit in my room and listen to an old message and pray.”*

Interviewee 3 mentioned that *“Where we were, there were so many superstitious people, they even had a festival for Juju, so I had to be very prayerful. But I went to Church only on Sundays very consistently. Most of my mates in the hostel also went to Church, a lot of them went to lighthouse because there was a bus and the Church services were in English, but my Church was in French and I had to pay for my own transportation.”*

Interviewee 4 also mentioned that *“I went to Church a lot, but mostly on Sundays, those are the days we got to take a lot of pictures and interact with some other people. I felt comfortable going because my roommate was in First Love and they have a Church there, so we just went. It was like any Church on UG campus”*

From speaking to the respondents, it was clear that, students who went to schools that had a lot of Africans or Ghanaians, were more willing to attend Church services because there were people to go with. However, some still mentioned that they listened to Christian messages, but did not attend Church services.

After the exchange programme, when asked if they consider themselves to be committed to their religious teachings, 49 (81.7%) said Yes, 11 (18.3%) said they were not sure, but none said No. This may look like a significant number of still committed students. However, there was a drop from the 58 (96.7%) students before the trip to 49 (81.7%).

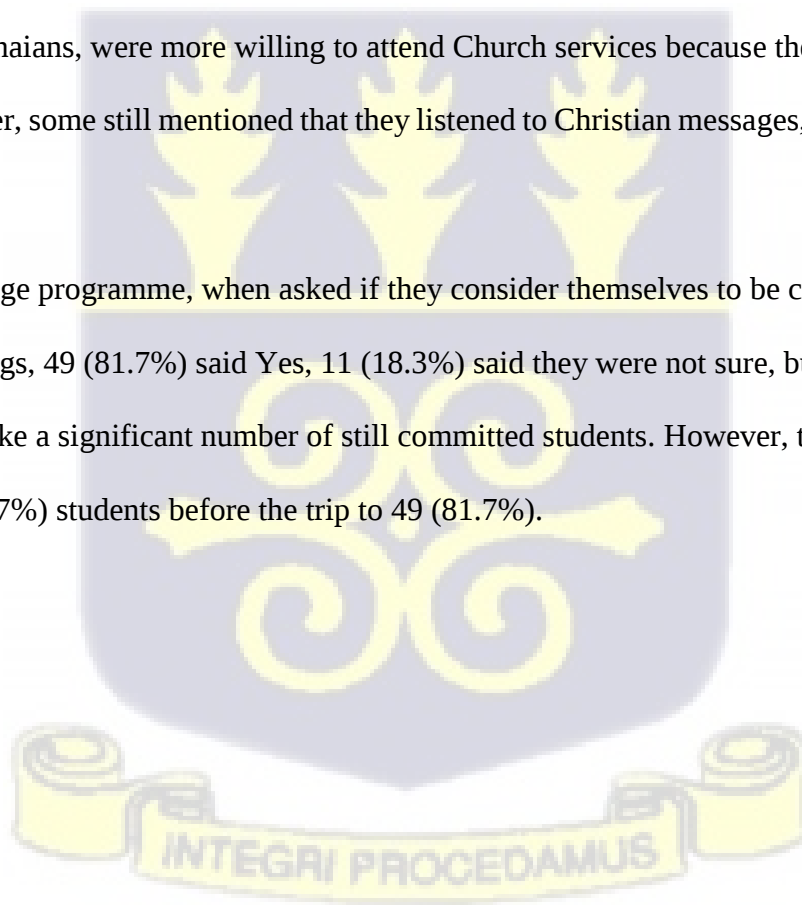
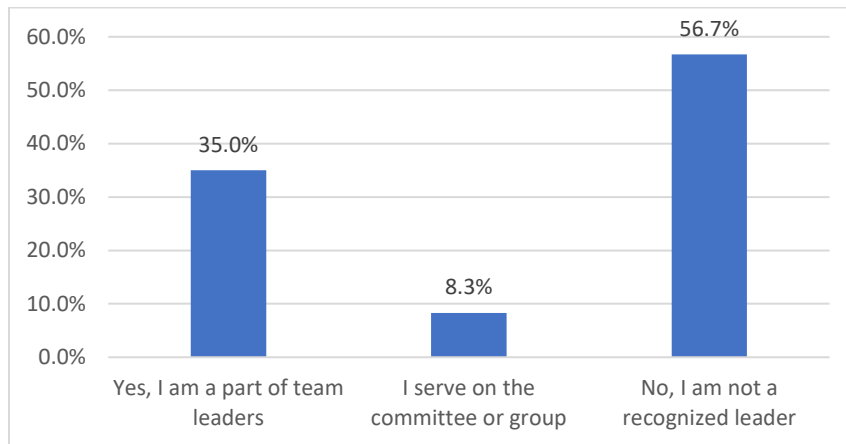


Figure 4.4.8 Committed to Religion after trip



Source: Field Data, 2022.

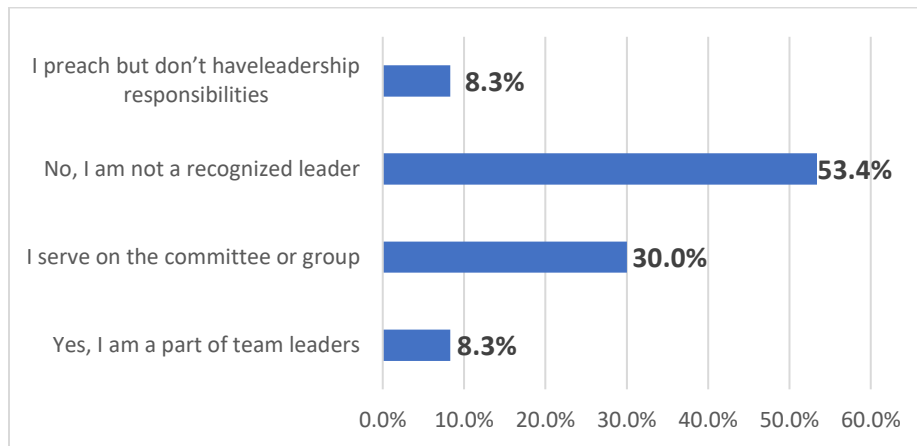
Interviewee 6 explained that, “when I came back to Ghana my mates were no longer on campus so I did not really feel like going for all the activities. I would go occasionally on Sundays but not as much as I used to.”

Interviewee 5 also mentioned that “I used to go to church a lot because there was a lot of motivation to go, but after the year abroad, I did not have that motivation to go. I only went on special occasions. First Sunday, last Sunday, Christian music concerts, those kinds of things.”

Interviewee 7 also mentioned “when I came back from the year abroad, I did not want to go back to my church because all my friends had completed. I had lost a lot of the people I talked to, so I looked for another Church. Lucky for me I found one that had services in my hall, even that one, I rarely went for weekday services, but I was consistent on Sundays” Adding that “There were times that I went outside campus for Church services”

After their exchange programme, 5 (8.3%) of the respondents now were preaching, 32 (53.4%) of exchange students were still not recognized leaders in their Churches, 18 (30%) were now part of groups and committees and 5 (8.3%) of them were part of team leaders.

Figure 4.4.6 Representative of your religious institution



Source: Field Data, 2022.

The number that was part of the leaders had reduced to 5 (8.3%) and 18 (30%) of them were now serving in a committee or group. This is because of their year of absence, elections for Church leaders are held while they are away therefore not allowing them to be re-nominated. However, depending on how valuable they are to their Churches, they may be allowed to hold some minor leadership roles.

Interviewee 1 mentioned that *“I was a cell leader in my Church before the exchange programme and I was assigned a hall, so when I came back, I just continued the work. Two of us handle the hall, so when I was away, the other person handled everything.”*

Interviewee 2 mentioned that *“I was not interested in joining any group or being any kind of leader.”*

In conclusion, exchange students considered themselves to be very committed to their religious teachings before their trips abroad. They are all Christian and attended religious services and read their scriptures very frequently if not always. Some interviewees mentioned that before their exchange programme they used to go to almost all Church activities, weekdays and Sundays.

However, during their exchange programme, a number of students reported feeling lazy to attend church services especially during the week. Those who did not attend Church, occasionally listened to sermons online and said they prayed occasionally. Some mentioned that their Church activities became restricted to Sundays because they felt lazy to attend the services in the evenings during the week. When they returned from their exchange programme, their mates were done with school some felt reluctant to go back to the same Churches, others had leadership positions waiting for them and some others went back to the normal flow of things. Most of them still tried to attend Church services on Sundays, but not so much during the weekdays. As a result, a lot of them were just Church members, very few were in leadership positions.

The exchange programme seems to have impacted the attendance of Church services of the students and slightly their denominational affiliations. Not because of their experiences outside having to fellowship with different Christian denominations, but because they lost the community of friends they had, which motivated them on days they did not feel like it. This reflects the sentiments of Oheneba-Sekyi who mentioned that religion is facilitated by social networks (Oheneba-Sakyi, 2009). It also reflects the ideas of (Mensah, 2009) that Ghanaians when abroad are more inclined to attend Churches that have other Ghanaians. They do this to create a welcoming society for themselves and to assist other Ghanaians to integrate properly into their new locations. This excludes students who were in some form of leadership position before they left for their exchange programme. The study does not find any influence of other religious activities on the students, there was only one student mentioned praying more because of fear of bad people.



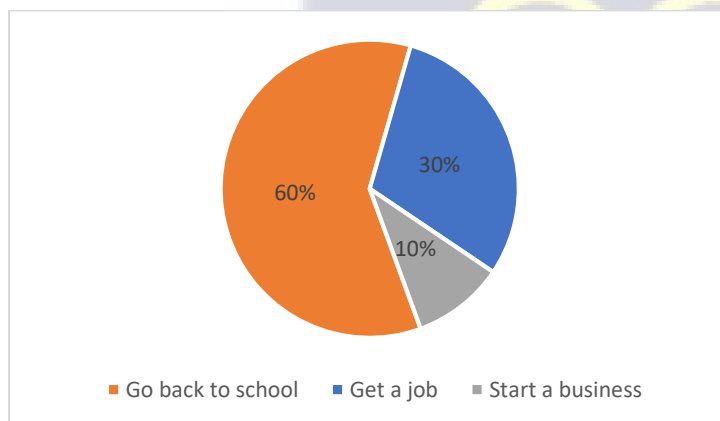
4.5 Plans for life after completing undergraduate education

This section will examine what has changed about how exchange students view their life after completing their undergraduate education.

In Ghana, when a student completes his tertiary education, he or she does National Service after which they get employed, start their own business, continue their education, take a break, or join a family business. Migrating to other parts of the world and being exposed to different ways of life can change what a student decides to do after school. Considering that aside having experiencing life in another country, all these exchange students have mates who will be doing their national service and friends working in Ghana by the time they return from their exchange programme. They will have some information of life after school, this will inform their own decisions for life after school.

The exchange students were asked what plans they had for themselves when they finish their undergraduate studies, 36 (60%) of them said they will go back to school 18 (30%) said they will get a job, and 6 (10%) said they will start a business.

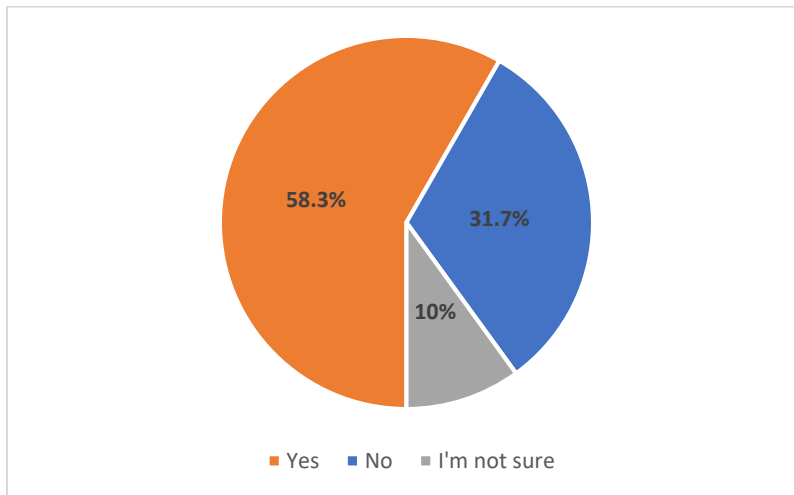
Figure 4.5.7 Plans after school



Source: Field Data, 2022.

From the students interviewed, 35, representing 58.3% of them said they had plans of leaving Ghana after school. Also, 36 students making up 60% of the sample, had plans of furthering their education after their undergraduate degree.

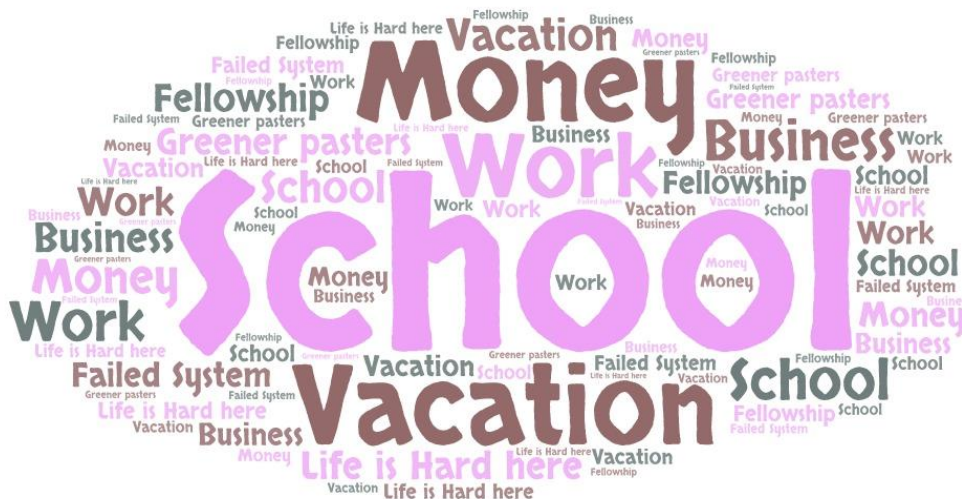
Figure 4.5.2 Plans to leave Ghana before the exchange programme



Source: Field Data, 2022.

After the exchange programme, the students' sentiments are the same, 35 (58.3%) of them still plan on leaving Ghana in search for more favorable opportunities.

Figure 4.5.3 Why do you want to leave Ghana

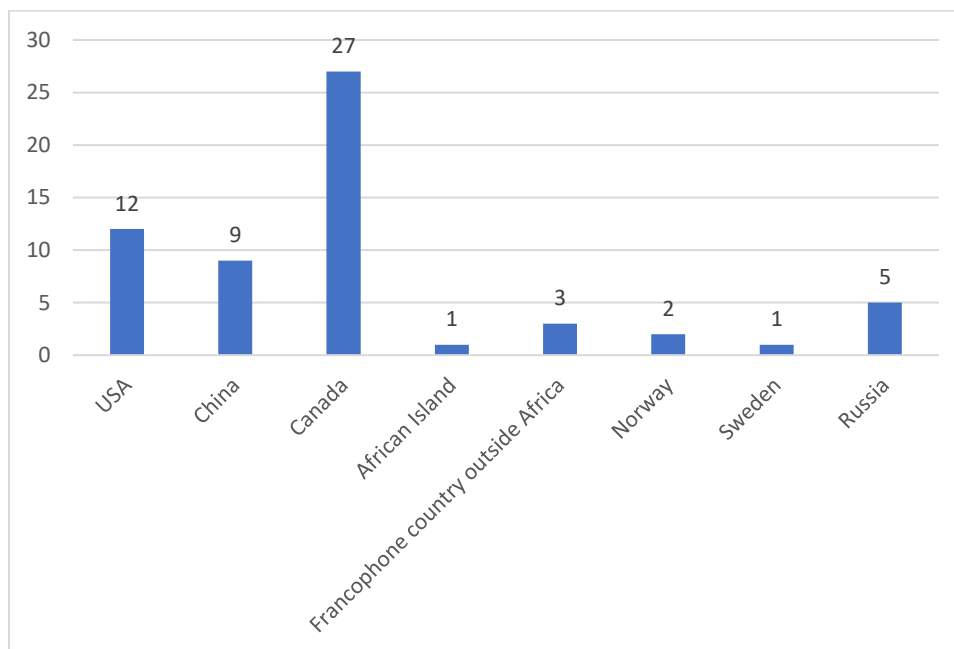


Source: Field Data, 2022.

A lot of the students want to further their education outside Ghana, while others want to leave in search of “greener pastures”.

As 35 (58.3%) of the exchange students want to leave the country after their undergraduate studies, majority of them to further their education, they were asked what country they will want to visit. These are some of the responses they gave:

Figure 4.5.4 Countries you will leave Ghana for



Source: Field Data, 2022.

Very few students were inclined to go back to the country they spent their exchange programme even though they report having experienced a better teaching and learning environment. Many wanted to migrate to Canada, United States of America, and China. Interestingly, 27 respondents for this study went to China for their exchange programmes however, only 9 of them want to go back.

Interviewee 1 explained, *“China is not friendly to black people, their system makes it difficult for you to enjoy your stay there. You can make money there, but you will have to be looking out for the authorities. I feel it is very restricted in China, if I could go anywhere, I will choose China last, but I would not mind going”* Adding that *“I want to move to Canada, I have a friend there who is a student, but she is making a lot of money. According to her, the system there is not difficult to penetrate and there are a lot of opportunities, even without a certificate.”*

Other students who went to other Countries had other sentiments. Interviewee 3 who went to Benin for her exchange programme said *“Benin is just like Ghana, or probably Ghana is better. It does not really have anything that will push me to go back aside wanting to learn the language. I will rather go to another French speaking country like France, I feel somewhere like there are more opportunities for school, work, and leisure”*

Interviewee 7 who went to China mentioned that *“I do not mind going back to China, I sell clothes and those things are cheap in China, I can make a lot of money as a supplier. Ghanaians buy a lot of things from China so I know I will make a lot of money. But I would like to experience another country”*

These exchange students have because of their exchange programmes had a feel of immigration laws and how difficult it is to enter some countries. They were asked how they were planning on entering these countries they desired, 86.7% of them said they will enter as students.

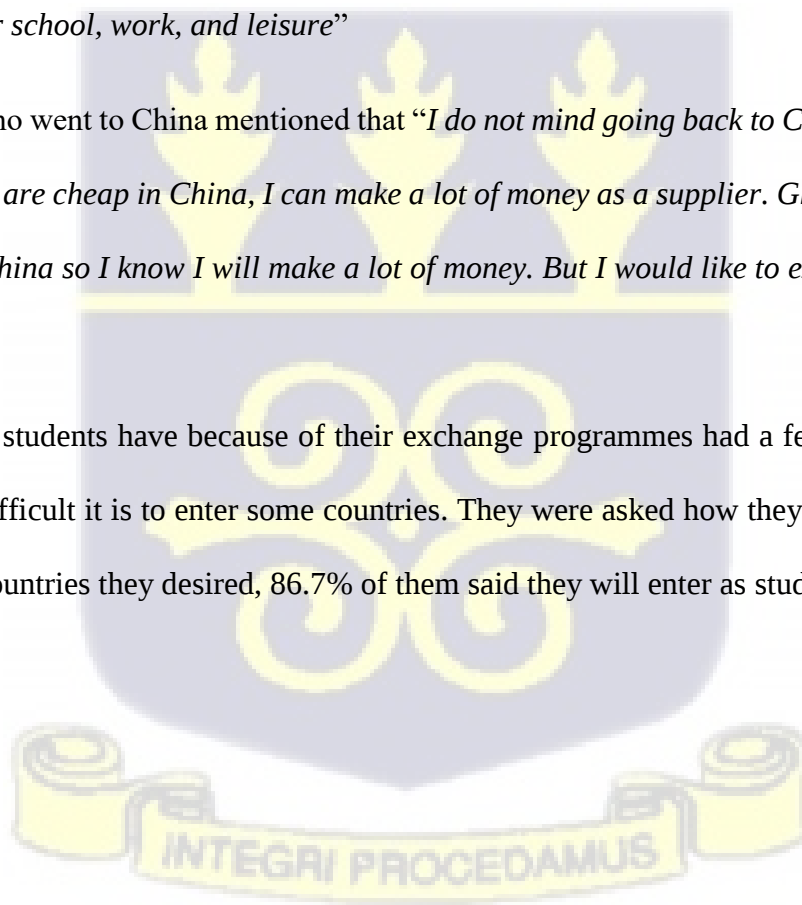
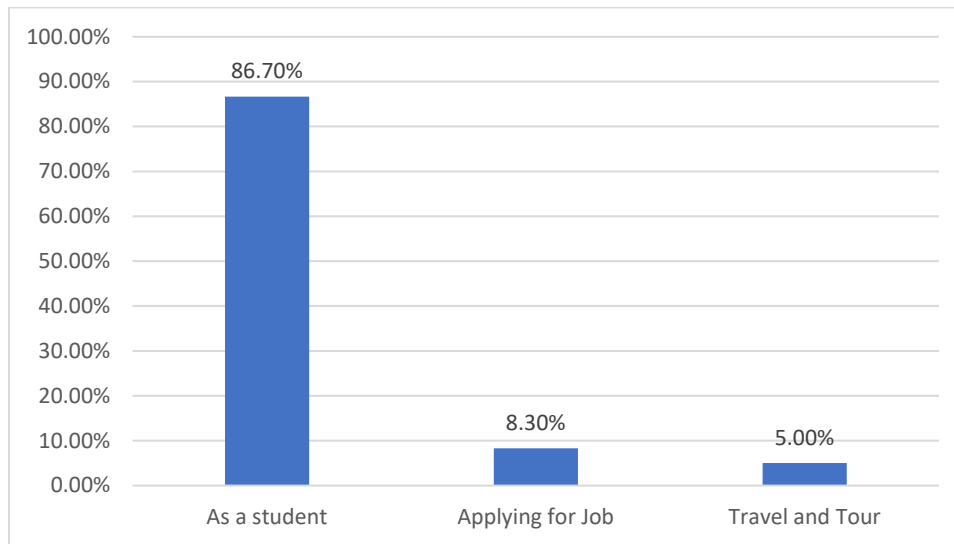


Figure 4.5.5 How will you migrate

Source: Field Data, 2022.

The exchange students have some experience immigrating into another country as a student, and as 35 (58.3%) of them want to leave Ghana for school, it is understandable that they will want to leave as students. Additionally, Interviewee 2, explained that she knew someone in Canada who is a student but is working. Their ties with people in the countries they aspire to visit and study in, may be the reason 52 (86.7%) of them want to migrate as students.

Interviewee 8 said that *“I have some experience looking for schools online and applying for scholarships. I do not know any other easy way to enter another country apart from going as a student. I feel like the laws are relaxed small for students and once you are in the country you can make other plans.”*

To answer the research question, nothing significant has changed about the exchange students plans for life after school. The exchange programme has heightened the interest of students to migrate internationally because, they have had some experience living abroad and it has boosted their appetite for a better and further education. This ties in with data from (UNESCO, 2013) which

highlights some reasons why students will want to study abroad. It mentions that, some see it as an opportunity to widen their intellectual and cultural horizons. Others travel overseas to escape the difficulties of domestic colleges with little funding. Many people are forced to study abroad in order to pursue a specific topic of study or type of academic program.



CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the summary of findings, recommendations, and ends with conclusions on the changes in social outlook of exchange students from the University of Ghana. It will discuss social outlook on teaching and learning, choice of hall, religion, and life choices after undergraduate studies.

5.1 Summary of Findings

University of Ghana sends some language students to learn the languages in their native setting. Students go to China, Benin, Russia, Tanzania, France and Spain for what they call “year abroad” with the aim of gaining fluency in the languages they have been taught from first year in university. This study had respondents who went to China, Russia, Benin, and Spain. A total of 60 of them filled the questionnaire and 8 were interviewed. They usually embark on this trip during their fourth year in school, making the duration of their undergraduate studies five years.

This research aimed to study the changes in social-outlook of University of Ghana’s “Year Abroad” students; how it affects their view on opportunities and choices after school, the teaching and learning structure in University of Ghana, religion, as well as the choice of residence on return to campus (University of Ghana). These themes were carefully curated, so they are not overreaching, or too generic. To provide a specific kind of information to fill the knowledge gap identified by other researchers.

The research found that as a result of the students exchange programme, they were exposed to a new style of teaching which was more interesting to them than that of university of Ghana’s. It found that as a result of their exposure to a completely different teaching style, the majority of the

students wanted to further their education outside Ghana. Respondents mentioned that they studied better and had higher grades when they were taught using the mixed, activity and coaching teaching style. It allowed students to learn in a more open environment without restricting them to the classroom and slides. The exchange students learned from their exchange trip that, there were more ways to be taught than what they experienced in university of Ghana. They enjoyed this new way of learning and teaching so much that majority of them wanted to further their education outside the University of Ghana.

Further, before the exchange student left Ghana for their year abroad, the majority of them were in rooms with 3 other people, when they left Ghana for their exchange programme, the majority were put in rooms with one other person. So, when they came back the students changed their room sizes, now the majority of them were in rooms with one other person because they had a feel of how peaceful it is to be with only one other person instead of three. They mentioned that, being in a room with only one other person was less stressful for them. Additionally, before the exchange programme, the respondents were in 7 halls on the university of Ghana campus with 4 of those halls having washrooms inside their rooms. However, when they came back from their trips, the majority of them traded the comfort of having a washroom inside their rooms to having only one roommate. Therefore, the experiences of being in smaller rooms during their exchange programme affected their choice of hall when they returned. So much that they chose the peace of having one roommate to having comfort of a private washroom.

All the students in this study are Christian so all the religious references were to Church services and reading their Bibles. The research found that before the trip because students were in their peer groups they were a lot more committed to their Church activities, attending their denominations very frequently if not always. They would read their Bibles and go for weekend activities not only

because they wanted to serve God but also because they had people to go with and talk to after services. During the trips however, there were different responses to Church attendance and general Christian life. Some students mentioned that the schools they were in during their exchange programme had few Churches they were willing to attend. Some also mentioned that they had some of the best Church experiences because of the smaller number of members in the Church and the fact that there were a considerable number of Africans in the area. Overall, the majority of the exchange students were Sunday church attendees or did not attend at all. When they returned, their mates were out of school. Some exchange students responded to this by attending other denominations. Others continued but as regular Sunday Church members, others because of their previous leadership positions went back to their normal activities like nothing happened, still some elevated their religious commitment because they now had the role of preacher. However, you look at it, there was a change in the exchange students' general behaviour towards religious activities because of their exchange programme.

The different experiences these students had in their education, choice of residence and in religion plays into what choices they will make after they are done with their undergraduate studies. The research found that, many of these exchange students had plans of leaving the country for various reasons before their exchange programme. However, the thought has been reinforced by their one year abroad. By virtue of their successful emigration from Ghana on the basis of school, all these exchange students have witnessed first-hand the procedure of leaving the country for education. Therefore, to them, leaving Ghana to further their education in countries that they believe are easy to make a life is only a logical option. It was also found that the exchange students preferred the teaching structures of their exchange institutions so it may have put in their minds that being outside the country for educational purposes are better than that in Ghana.

5.2 Conclusion

This study examined, the changes in social outlook of exchange students from university of Ghana. Social outlook was looked at under four themes, teaching and learning, religion, choice of hall and life choices after school. The study explained that migration changes how people perceive their environment. That students who went to other countries as part of their education will be affected by their new environment and this will reflect in their educational preferences, choice of residence, religious commitment and the choices they will make after school.

Using a questionnaire and interviews, the research collected data on how students looked at the educational system used in university of Ghana as against what they were exposed to during their exchange programme. Finding that students were exposed to new ways of teaching and learning during their time outside Ghana, and they enjoyed it so much they want to leave Ghana to further their education after their undergraduate studies.

Also, the study found that as a result of not being among their peers on the exchange programme and when they returned, a lot of students were less inclined to go for religious activities on other day's aside Sunday.

Generally, the students were exposed to during their trips, and this affected the views and choices when they returned from their year abroad.

This study shows that when exchange students return from their trips, their views on certain things change, but not entirely because of their experiences abroad, because the school they return to is different from when they left it. Their social circle would have completed school and would mostly be doing their national service. The classes they return to will be made up of some different people. The social dynamic of the school would have changed for them, causing exchange students to want

different things. A good example is when students talk about not going to Church as often because their peers are not in school anymore. There is also more motivation to want smaller rooms because some roommates would have changed making their old rooms not as appealing. Some students who created new and strong relationships while on their year abroad naturally want to continue to have that.

5.3 Recommendations

From the study a few recommendations are made. It is recommended that the University of Ghana re-examine the mode of teaching. The study found that students rather enjoyed activity-based teaching and a mix of teaching styles rather than mainly lecturing. It will make students of all courses learn better and enjoy their time in school rather than dread it. Lecturers should think of more interesting ways to teach all courses, not only language courses. This will encourage students to think of further education in the country. Additionally, there should be more scholarships for Ghanaian students, and more publicity of these scholarships. There are already a number of scholarships for Ghanaian students to study in Ghana, however, these scholarships are not easily accessible to Ghanaian students. They would rather look for scholarships outside the country than stay in Ghana to study in the same education style that makes it difficult for them.

Students who study languages in the University of Ghana are held back one year because of their year abroad. However, the longer a person stays in a country the better their language acquisition (Llanes et al, 2011). There could be arrangements for students to attend these exchange programmes every long vacation, so they do not finish their undergraduate studies a year late. This will have an effect on so much; the students will not have to change their religious denominations or be reduced to Sunday Church attenders because their mates are done with school. They will always be in step with their peer groups in addition to making new friends on their trips.

Additionally, this would let students have time to study the languages well and spend more of their time while in the University of Ghana, studying other courses rather than having to combine attention for both.

Another recommendation is that the Ghanaian government should put measures in place to make the country more attractive to young people. Using the exchange students in this study for example, many learnt to speak and write Chinese, Russian and French, but the majority want to leave to Canada and the United States. Which implies that, all their language studies may not bear any fruit as those countries speak English. This is a resource the country is losing, especially in a time where a lot of African countries have Chinese contractors and are in a lot of agreements with Russia. These students who have learned in Chinese, Russian and French schools could give so much back to the country in many areas. Their ability to speak these languages can be used to educate them in specialized fields from these countries so that we will not need Chinese contractors in the long run, or even Chinese translators in the short term.

These students' knowledge of culture of other countries can be used by the tourism ministry in Ghana to market Ghanaian heritage to specialized markets outside the country. From speaking to some of the exchange students, they have gathered a vast knowledge of how people in the countries they visited think, their work ethic and the stereotypes they have about Africans. This information is invaluable for tourism and investor hunting.

Exchange programmes should not only be limited to language students, but it should also be opened up to other courses. There is a vast amount of information that students can learn from when they visit some other countries, and exposure alone is a great experience as many migration studies and theories have shown. Allowing students to travel to other countries for a year or a semester to be taught their courses in a different university is an experience that will revolutionize

student behaviour after their studies and will create a large expert base for the country to utilize for development.

Finally, this study looked at specific topics, more aspects of social outlook of Ghanaian exchange students should be examined to reveal other information that this study could not. There should be further examination of Ghanaian exchange students because there is a scarcity of information about them. This data could be used to inform a lot regarding educational reform in the country.



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