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**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' MOBILITY TO GHANA-EXPECTATIONS AND
EXPERIENCES**

BY

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DECLARATION

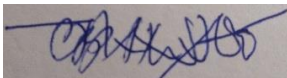
I, Aguzey Ruth Fafali, hereby declare that this dissertation in its entirety is a result of my own research conducted at the Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, under the supervision of Dr. Johnson Wilson Appiah Kubi. All references cited in this work have been duly acknowledged. This dissertation has not been submitted elsewhere for an academic award.



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ABSTRACT

International student mobility is increasingly becoming one of the highlights in modern migration literature. The literature establishes that the number of globally mobile students has witnessed a spiral increase in recent times, with English-speaking countries hosting the largest number of students. Ghana has become a popular study destination for international students in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study investigates international students' mobility to Ghana and explores their expectations and experiences. This study employs qualitative research method in examining the expectations vis-à-vis the experiences of international students in Ghana. With the University of Ghana as the area for the research, the sample size consisted of 20 international students from the university. Primary data was collected using in-depth interviews and data collected was analysed using thematic analysis. Factors informing students' decision to study outside their origin country include but are not limited to the traditional push-pull factors. The study also found that international students have high expectations of language proficiency, access to information, course curriculum to enhance job prospects, social and cultural life and facilities. Overall, international students expressed diverse experiences with academic work, language, accommodation, socio-cultural lifestyle, support services, Covid-19 and the weather. Most students had experiences that were closely matched to their initial expectations of studying in Ghana. The study concludes that both "push" and "pull" factors in Ghana and the origin countries of international students motivate them to study in Ghana. Thus, it is important that government and stakeholders maintain a conducive environment in order to attract international students. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the labour market be open up and employment opportunities be made available to international students. Favourable immigration policies should also be put in place to retain international students in the labour market.

DEDICATION

I wholeheartedly dedicate this dissertation to the Almighty God, for His wisdom, knowledge, strength, guidance and protection. This work is dedicated to my parents Rev. and Mrs. E. D. Aguzey for all their support and guidance and well wishes. This dissertation is also dedicated to my brother Timothy Aguzey for always believing in me and sister Benedicta Aguzey for her earnest support throughout my studies. I am extremely grateful.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------------|--|
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNESCO-UIS | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute of Statistics |
| OECD | Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| NAB | National Accreditation Board |
| UG | University of Ghana |
| IPO | International Programs Office |

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Migration is one of the most important issues in contemporary times. A United Nations (2017) report indicates that about 258 million people are residing out of their country of origin, rising from about 220 million in 2010. People move across borders for various reasons; for education, family reunification, tourism, asylum seeking, and economic activities. International students have always been on the move to countries to obtain higher education and are continuously doing so in large numbers (Kritz, 2006). These movements can either be from the Global North to the Global South and vice versa. Typically, the direction of the movement of international students is from developing countries to developed countries but this trend is changing in recent times. An internationally mobile student is a student having crossed a national border to study in the country they have moved to (Richters & Teichler, 2006). Given the high integration potential of high-skilled students, international student mobility is an important medium by which high-skilled immigrants make their move to host countries and it is particularly advantageous (Suter & Jandl, 2006; Chiswick & Miller, 2011). The literature points out many factors, such as tuition fees, the language of instruction, the standard of higher education, that affect international student mobility (DeVoretz, 2006). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Institute of Statistics (UNESCO-UIS), the number of globally mobile students increased to 5.3 million students in 2017, up from about 2 million students in 2010. English-speaking countries host the largest number of international students with countries like the United States of America and the United Kingdom being the leading destination of choice (Project Atlas, 2017). Per Kahanec and Kralikova (2011), more than half of the student immigrants (53.9%) are

based in six countries: the United States (18%), the United Kingdom (9.9%), Australia (7%), Germany (7%), France (6.8%) and Canada (5.2%).

Globalization has broken down historical barriers to migration and increased disparities in incomes, opportunities for employment and living conditions between countries, and has resulted in individuals' mobility around the world in pursuit of educational opportunities. According to Beine et al. (2014), student mobility has led to an increase in the globalisation of higher education in the last 40 years. This increase in recent times is attributed to the improvement in communications, quicker flow of information, and proactive student recruitment strategies in several destination countries, an increasing internationalisation of education systems which is currently occurring over borders of countries (Tremblay, 2005). The traditional, cross-border flow of students was for students to migrate from one country to another with the aim of furthering their education (Kritz, 2006). Several factors motivate international student mobility. These could be either economic and social factors (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2004; Clark and Sedgwick 2005). Kosmaczewska (2015) and Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) outlined some reasons for international student mobility to include challenges in the home country's education systems, availability of scholarships from the host countries and the possibility of leading a better life, job opportunities and access to job opportunities in the host country, to learn a new language and also to experience other cultures. International student mobility is a significant occurrence for both origin and destination countries.

Africa is a region that is characterised with a history of mobility, due to factors associated with conflicts, trade, and increasing urbanization and development within countries, with the West African region, not an exception (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). According to the UNESCO-UIS (2010), there were about 223,000 students from sub-Saharan Africa in 2008, who were enrolled in

tertiary education institutions outside of their home countries. They represented 7.5% of the total number of mobile students (3.0 million) around the world at the time. Kritz, (2015) further noted that in Africa, 5.8 percent of enrolled tertiary students go outside their homelands for tertiary study which is the highest in the world, surpassing all other world regions.

Mobility of African students is not a new phenomenon and is rooted in the colonial era. Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck (2013) observed that during the colonial era, European higher education systems were introduced in Africa which enabled African students to migrate to European universities for higher education. However, after the independence of most African states, most countries did not have enough higher education institutions and therefore started to send students abroad for tertiary level education in different countries in America and Europe (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). Kritz (2015) observed that whereas nationals of English-speaking countries have several options, including study in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the USA or the UK, nationals of former French colonies have fewer alternatives for studying abroad other than France. In recent years, South Africa has also become a major destination for Anglophone African students. In more recent times, student mobility has also been impacted by the standard of education and is usually based on two indicators from the point of view of the students (Bourke, 1997; OECD, 2011). One is the prestige of the higher education institution and the other is recognition of the degree in the home country or international labour market (Bourke, 1997; Park, 2009). Other factors that also influence student mobility include multiculturalism, safety, weather and the hospitality of the host country (Bourke, 1997; Park, 2009). There is also the intra-regional mobility of students within the African continent and this trend has been on the increase. Countries such as South Africa, Morocco, Kenya and Ghana are some of the major destinations for international students.

Ghana is one of the countries in the West African sub-region which is a popular destination for students. Before the 1960s, migration in the country was internal, involving the search for new settlement and agricultural land. Since independence, urban growth and job prospects attracted many migrants from the rural areas of the country as well as the ECOWAS sub-region (Awumbila et al., 2008). However, the trend in the movement changed, due to political turmoil and economic instability as well as droughts and catastrophic bushfires (Tonah, 2007; Nieswand, 2008). In Sub-Saharan Africa, Ghana has become one of the leading providers of quality higher education. Ghana has adopted policies over the past decade that have indicated to the global community the goal of enhancing the competitiveness of its tertiary education system. Ghana's tertiary education institutions have opened their doors to students and faculty from sub-Saharan African countries, especially Nigeria, Cameroon, Guinea and some East African countries (Ankomah-Asare et al., 2016). In Ghana, the tertiary student population across the 166 tertiary institutions, which comprises both private and public institutions is more than 400,000, of which approximately 15,185 are foreign students which makes 3.85% of the total enrolment (National Accreditation Board (NAB), 2015). These foreign students develop some expectations before they choose Ghana as their destination and experience different challenges when they arrive in Ghana.

1.1 Statement of Research Problem

According to Altbach (2004) and Akensivie et al. (2013), international students' mobility is usually from developing countries to developed countries. As such, majority of the research and literature tends to focus on international students in the Global North (Nicholson, 2001; Holmes, 2005). Statistics exists on the number of international students that have moved from developing countries to developed countries with Ghana not being an exception (UNESCO-UIS, 2019). However,

limited research has been conducted on the international students in Africa as well as Ghana (Frempong, 2015; Aseidu, 2016; Ramtohul, 2016). Ghana like most African countries have historically been immigrant sending countries in terms of international education (Asiedu, 2016). This trend has however changed in recent years. Ghana is increasingly becoming one of the major countries in Africa for international students (Kamran et al., 2019). For instance, Kamran et al. (2019) reports that, the number of inbound students catapulted from 1,899 in 2007 to 17,821 in 2015. However, despite the increase in growth in the volume of international students' mobility to Ghana, much research has not been done in the area of international student mobility to the country, especially in the area of their expectations and experiences. This has made it difficult to obtain information about international students in order for host institutions and policy makers to make informed decisions that will encourage more students to study in the country as well as the implications that increasing inbound students have for the country in terms of development. It is on this basis that it is essential for institutions to understand the motivations of international students, their expectations prior to moving to Ghana and their experiences in order for both international students and host institutions to derive the benefits associated with international students' mobility. This study therefore seeks to fill the gaps in research and add to the limited literature on the expectations and experiences of international students' mobility to Ghana.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The general research objective is to examine the expectations and experiences of international students in Ghana. The specific objectives include

1. To analyse the motivations for choosing Ghana for higher education
2. To interrogate the expectations and experiences of international students in Ghana
3. To investigate future aspirations of international students in Ghana

1.3 Research questions

The research questions that would guide the research include.

1. What are the motivating factors that influence the decision-making of international students to enrol to study in Ghana?
2. What expectations drive international students and do the lived experiences of international students studying in Ghana correspond to their initial expectations?
3. Do international students have the intentions of permanently immigrating to Ghana after their studies?

1.4. Definition of Concepts

International Student Mobility: as used in this dissertation, international student mobility refers to the crossing of one's country borders for the purpose of tertiary education (Richters & Teichler, 2006).

International student: an international student is a student who “crosses a national border to study or to undertake other study related activities, for at least a certain unit of study programme or a certain period of time, in a country to which they move to” (Kelo et al., 2006). They are sometimes referred to as foreign students.

International higher education: according to OECD (2004), international education occurs where the teacher and student as well as programmes and institutions crosses national borders.

Educational mobility: according to King and Findlay (2012), educational mobility could include credit mobility; movement typically is for a year and degree mobility; migration for the entire qualification abroad.

1.5 Significance and justification of the study

The quest to meet the global labour competitiveness has stimulated the need for highly skilled labour. Due to globalisation, growing competition in the global economy has increased the need for highly skilled labour. Higher education in particular is a significant representation and a potential driver of the abilities of nations to compete. Thus, the growth of universities and the reputation of countries are at the core of international higher education and as a developing country, Ghana is embedded on the globalisation processes. This has influenced a significant proportion of people to study outside of their countries of origin. Ghana has become one of the major destinations for international students for their tertiary education although historically, Ghana has been known to be a sending country. The study contributes to the literature on the experiences and expectations of international students in Ghana, especially the University of Ghana. The number of international students that are pursuing their tertiary education in Ghana

has increased in the last five years (UNESCO UIS, 2019). Several studies have focused on the South to North migration for educational purposes, the motivations behind such movements as well as the experiences of student migrants and the implications for the countries in the Global North (Beloucif et al., 2018; Lee & Tan, 1984). However, there is limited literature about the mobility of students to the Global South. The findings of this study are an addition to the limited literature that exists in this area, and serve as a resource for international students seeking to pursue their tertiary education in Ghana as well as providing an avenue for further research. Lastly, this research would provide data on the experiences of international students in Ghana, in order to address the negative experiences of these international students. Also, knowing whether the expectations of international students were met will help the university of Ghana offer better services in order to attract other potential students.

1.6 Organisation of the study

The dissertation is organised into five chapters. The first chapter consists of the introduction and background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, research questions and scope of the study. The second chapter reviews relevant literature on the international student mobility discourse. Chapter Three examines the methodology as well as data collection methods, sampling and the design of data analysis. Chapter Four covers the analysis and interpretation. Chapter Five covers the discussion of results. The last chapter is focused on the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the relevant literature in relation to the expectations and experiences of international students is explored. Scholarly works from journals, articles as well as books and online data sets were the main sources of literature. In this study, the relevant literature is presented in six sub streams: (1) international students' mobility; (2) global trends and mobility rates; (3) internationalisation and globalisation; (4) motivations of international students; (5) expectations of international students; and (6) experiences of international students. This chapter also focuses on two theoretical frameworks; the Human Capital theory and the Push-Pull Theory of migration.

2.1 International Student Mobility

International student mobility broadly encompasses students' physical movement from their home country to a destination country for educational purposes. According to Larsen (2016), various international student mobility structures such as credit mobility which refers to short-term study abroad, and/or diploma and degree mobility, are used to differentiate various concepts that lead to the attainment of a certificate and/or educational immigration. Students that partake in international student mobility are usually referred to as "international students" or "foreign students" (Chen, 2016). However, host countries often define these terms differently (Chiou, 2014). For instance, in the United States, an international student is an individual who is neither a US citizen, immigrant nor a refugee at the time of enrolment at an educational institution (Hazen & Alberts, 2006). Canada defines foreign students as students who have the permission of an immigration officer to study for a course that exceeds six months (Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007). These various definitions indicate that there are complexities in international education and

inconsistencies in the definition of an international or foreign student. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defines students in international mobility as “students that have crossed a national or territorial border for the purpose of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin” and has urged host countries to adopt this definition (American Council on Education, 2006). This research refers to international students as students who have obtained permits or visas to travel and study in a host country. Zheng (2010) uses the terms home and host countries to refer to students’ countries of origin or where students come from and the countries students choose as their destinations respectively.

2.2 Global flow and mobility rates

International student migration and mobility has become a much more frequent occurrence in recent decades, as the OECD and UNESCO statistics indicate, even though its rate of growth only marginally surpasses the aggregate increase in terms of student numbers (King, 2010). At 2 to 3 percent of the overall global student population, the number of globally mobile students has been traditionally constant. Nevertheless, the real headcount of student numbers has increased over the past 40 years, from around 0.8 million in 1975 to 3.7 million in 2009 and this growth is projected to continue (OECD, 2011). While South to South flow of students significantly exists, historically, the global student flow follows the trend of South to North and North to North (Agarwal et al., 2007). There is also the concurrent increase in mobility within regions, referred to as “regional globalism” (Wildavsky, 2012) such as for instance the European Union support for some programmes which pushes European regional mobility. According to Altbach et al. (2009a), 2008 OECD data shows that, a majority of international students are enrolled within the OECD area with countries such as the United States accounting for about 22 percent of students. Furthermore, European countries including the United Kingdom (12%), Germany (10%), France, (9%), Spain,

Belgium, and Italy at (2%), Austria, Sweden and the Netherlands at 1% account 40% of all students globally. According to Guruz (2008), in 2004, the total enrolment of international students in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand accounted for almost half of the enrolment of international students in the world. In terms of the top countries of origin, China is the leading country with about 343,126 students abroad, which is followed by the USA with 191,321, India with 123,559, and then with Korea, and Germany with 95,885 and 62,200 respectively (Prazeres, 2013). The results from Chen and Barnett (2000) indicates that the developed countries in the western world have remained at the core of foreign student flows and countries in Africa have remained in the periphery. Asia, which is experiencing rapid economic growth, is becoming an increasingly significant player in international student flows. UNESCO (2009) estimates that about 5.8% of all Sub-Sahara African students in higher education are studying abroad. This figure is nearly three times higher than the global average. The region also has the highest percentage (6%) of outbound students in comparison to its total higher education population (UNESCO, 2009). According to Marshall (2013), in 2010, statistics indicated that about 380,000 African students, which represents approximately 10% of all foreign students globally and 6% of all African students were on the move.

2.2.1 Inflow of students into Ghana's higher education

Ghana has become a popular study destination for international students in sub-Saharan Africa. Historically, the countries in West Africa and other countries in Africa have been the main sources of international students for Ghana (National Accreditation Board, 2015). However, in recent times, other non-African countries are also contributing to the number of international students in Ghana. The number of international students in Ghana according to UNESCO -UIS data has

increased from 1,899 in 2007 to 17,821 in 2015 (UNESCO UIS, 2019). Nigeria remains the largest sending country of international students to Ghana (Kamran et al., 2019) and with an estimated 9,172 students in 2017. Other major sending countries in Africa include Gabon, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin and the Republic of Congo. The United States of America remains the top non-African sending country (Kamran et al., 2019).

2.3 Internationalisation and Globalisation

In recent years, more and more governments are beginning to appreciate the positive impacts of international students' mobility. With respect to issues of international students' mobility, globalisation and internationalisation are the concepts that are mostly used in the field of tertiary education because these concepts have impacts on the mobility of students and higher education institutions. Internationalisation and Globalisation as concepts are complex and multi-faceted (de Wit, 2011) and increasingly, the literature focuses on the relation between these phenomena. According to Brooks and Waters (2011), globalisation deals generally with the increase inflows of people between economies and the internationalisation of tertiary education that is shaped by student flows. Globalisation has impacted how knowledge is increasingly becoming somewhat of a tradable resource commodity that moves between countries (Kritz, 2006). The demand for knowledge has led to competition among educational institutions around the world. Over the years, many students have migrated to several countries intending to pursue higher education and they continue to do so in increasing numbers in recent times, due to the demand for higher education exceeding the supply in home countries (UNESCO-UIS, 2012, as cited in Adu, 2019).

Arshad-Ayaz (2008) explains globalisation to be process that underlies the contemporary world's political, economic, social and cultural dynamics into itself. Globalisation as defined by Ennew

and Greenaway (2012) refers to a series of wider economic, political and socio-cultural processes that increase interconnection and interdependence between nation states and beyond them. Altbach (2006) defines globalisation as “broad economic, technological and scientific trends that directly affect higher education, and are highly inevitable in the contemporary world”. Whereas globalization has had many dimensions, including cultural, social and economic, it is difficult to research similar trends without awareness and knowledge of how dynamic, interdependent and interrelated the dimensions are (Beck, 2013; Rizvi & Lingard, 2000). Globalisation thus involves the interaction between people and regions that is seen in the exchange of goods, services, technology, human expertise among others. For instance, international students’ mobility is a trend that has been influenced by globalisation.

Internationalisation, on the other hand, is an abstract belief which is non-economical in the early stages but political and cultural in its purpose (Dzvimbo & Moloji, 2013). Altbach et al. (2009) describe internationalisation as a wide range of interventions and initiatives adopted by that universities and governments as a reaction to globalisation. To Ennew and Greenaway (2012) internationalisation is “a process within higher education that constitutes the sector’s response to globalisation”. Knight (2004) posits that Internationalisation as a concept in reinforcing the international component of higher education is a prime example in which globalisation is seen as defining the criteria for internationalisation of higher education. Van der Wende (1996) also defines internationalization as a sustainable initiative which is intended to make higher education adaptive to social development, economic and labour market requirements and challenges.

Recent progression in the literature of internationalisation of higher education are increasingly based on the changing fields of international student mobility. Several discussions have progressed from international higher education as an industry (Brooks & Waters, 2011), to recognizing the

various specific geographies of mobility (Waters, 2009). Whereas Findlay et al. (2012) posit that international higher education is a way for student-migrants to raise resources, Sin (2013) believes that for non-migrant students, it is a means of participating in a transnational higher education as well as a process for destination countries to acquire some new talent (Hawthorne, 2014). Koh (2015) suggests that the ‘education-migration nexus’ offers policy in relation to the experiences of international students in destination countries.

According to de Wit (2008), three components of internationalisation of higher education has been identified, ranging from curriculum modification through the introduction of international courses; curriculum modification through the introduction of global studies to learning of different; programmes that involve mobility, such as study abroad, student exchanges, mobility of educational staff, among others. Globalization and its related technologies and market forces have a more direct effect on the last component, leading to concepts of “borderless education”, “offshore education”, “e-learning” and “international trade in higher education services”.

The change in the dynamics in the internationalisation of higher education are deeply rooted in the definitions and meanings and rationales of globalisation and internationalisation (de Wit, 2013). Historically, different terms have been attributed to internationalisation of tertiary education; from curriculum related aspects through the introduction of courses such as global studies, international studies, and mobility related through the study abroad and education abroad programs among others (de Wit, 2013).

Teichler (2004) suggests that universities have always been one of the social institutions that has been internationalised. According to Ramtohul (2016), education in Africa has long been internationalised through colonialism, making it deeply rooted in its history. This can especially be seen in higher education or universities where the aftermath of colonialism remains in the

administration of universities as well as the language of instruction. Universities across Africa are becoming internationalised, in order to compete with other institutions across the globe. A variety of programmes directly aimed at facilitating the internationalisation of higher education in Africa has been established by African regional bodies. Regional bodies, for example, the African Union Commission is seeking to harmonize the tertiary education systems in Africa, which is organised along the various geographic, colonial, linguistic and structural lines. The Pan African University which was a move towards the Arusha Convention implementation, has also been introduced. The goal according to Teferra (2012) is to harmonize cross-border academic programmes to promote cooperation, quality assurance, institutional integration as well as transferability of academic degrees in order to facilitate mobility. Jowi (2009) suggests that the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa and the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa are funding local universities through joint research programmes, capacity building and exchange of academic staff. In West Africa, there is also the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Academic Mobility Programme (AMP) which is designed to enhance educational opportunities in areas of strategic interest such as through the provision of Master's and PhD scholarships. It also aims to enhance the regions knowledge base by facilitating research, exchange of academic materials and information between higher education institutions and universities (Economic Community of West African States, n.d.). In addition, regional university organisations have been formed, promoting internationalisation and intra-regional collaborations both within regions and among African universities. For instance, there is the Southern Africa University Association and the Association of West African Universities.

2.4. Characteristics and Motivations of international students

Globally, trends in international student mobility refer to students from developing countries as degree-seeking students who travel to advanced countries in order to pursue an academic programme. Studies that focus on motivations and the characteristics of international student mobility usually focus on outgoing students from other English-speaking countries to other developed countries (Prazeres, 2013). King and Ruiz-Gelices (2003) examined the characteristics of students who study outside their countries of origin by focusing on 3 groups of university students. The first group of people consisted of students who had spent a year studying outside the country, the second group were students who did not study abroad and the third comprised students about to undertake a year of study outside their country. The research findings suggested that students who studied abroad for a year and the students who migrated were most likely to migrate or had migrated since completing their studies in comparison to those who did not embark on the study abroad. Stroud (2010) also noted that females are more likely than males to study internationally and also understanding diverse cultures was the intention of most students to study abroad.

Most studies concerning international student's motivation to study abroad have assumed the "push-pull" paradigm (McMahon, 1992; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). The "push" factors, usually involving the strength of a country's economy or educational level operate within an origin country to influence the students' decisions to study abroad, whereas the "pull" factors usually involving economic, social, and institutional considerations operate in host countries that draw students from other countries into that specific country (McMahon, 1992). Recent studies have extensively examined and pointed out several motivating factors influencing the decisions of students although

there is a little nuance regarding what each student especially from a different continent considers important (Davey, 2005 cited in Maringe & Carter, 2007).

King and Sondhi (2018) engaged in a comparative analysis of the motivation factors of two streams of international students, the first stream from India to developed Anglophone countries and the second from the UK to Australia, North American, and European countries. The study which employed the mixed-method research strategy found that the decision to study abroad for both British and Indian nationals were largely influenced by the prospect of competing well in the international labour market after acquiring a foreign degree, the desire to study in a world-class university and the opportunity to engage in experiential learning of a new culture and society (King & Sondhi, 2018). Whereas the majority of Indians saw as very important the opportunity to study in a developed country as a means of starting a life in a different country, the desire to seek an adventure through a study abroad programme was more important for British respondents than their Indian counterparts. This buttresses the assertion that the study abroad motivations of students vary depending on where they come from (Davey, 2005 cited in Maringe & Carter, 2007).

In an exploratory study that relied on the accounts of 28 African students studying in the United Kingdom, Maringe and Carter (2007) found that economic, political and institutional challenges were some of the push factors which influenced the decisions of students. The prevailing levels of economic decline, the preference of foreign qualifications over locally acquired ones, and the limited spaces and innovations in higher educational institutions in countries like Zimbabwe and Malawi continue to inform the decisions of students (Maringe & Carter, 2007). Regarding the pull factors, considerations centred around the quality of degrees from the British universities, safe teaching, and learning environments as well as the opportunities for post-qualification progression (Maringe & Carter, 2007).

Brooks and Waters (2011) conducted research on the motivations of students in the United Kingdom to study abroad and they observed that the students' motivations were influenced by social networks, friendship networks, kinship networks, and partners as well as romantic relationships. The desire to maintain close contact and be closer to family, loved ones and friends are some reasons for students to embark on international studies.

2.4.1 Youth mobility culture

King and Findlay (2012) explain the motivations of international students by placing emphasis on the youth culture as well as the importance of travelling outside of one's country as a rite of passage for the middle-class youth. Much more than in previous generations, the global horizons of students already reach beyond their national boundaries; long before they step into higher education. For middle-class youth, the ability to explore and discover different locations and cultures is seen as an attractive lifestyle trait. International student mobility is partially seen as an interesting experience or 'adventure' for the student. Studying abroad represents a 'consumption good' or its equivalent 'rite of passage' at a particular stage in life (King & Sondhi, 2018). According to King and Sondhi (2018), the essence of academic qualification remains constant; not losing its relevance. The main aim however remains the experience of living in another region that has diverse culture, environment and scenery as well as an opportunity for new social interactions.

2.5 Decision-making and Choice

Several factors influence student decision to study abroad as well as which institutions to study. These factors include the general image of the host country (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Bourke,

2000), personal motivation (Maringe & Carter, 2007), financial factors which include the basic costs of tuition, accommodation and travel expenses (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Cain and McClintock, 1984, as cited in Shanka et al., 2006) and image of higher education institutions and academic reputation (Shanka et al., 2006; Cubillo et al., 2006). Bowers and Pugh (1973, as cited in Shanka et al., 2006) carried out one of the earliest studies on students' motivation to choose their host institutions and reported that the prestige of schools was a crucial factor in the choice of the host institutions. Other studies have found that the views of family and friends also influences the choice of institutions and host countries. Shanka et al. (2002) and Bourke (2000) found that opinions of social networks accounted for the reasons why students decided to choose a particular institution over the other. In a study by Padlee et al. (2010) concerning the criteria of selection of private institutions in Malaysia among 565 international students, the results from the study indicated that variables such as quality of learning environment, customer focus, cost, influencers, facilities, location, and socialisation affects the processes of decision-making of international students.

2.6 Expectations of International students

The majority of students believe that education that is offered overseas is superior and admission to universities abroad equates to access to job opportunities, support services through the studies as well as life experiences that would be valuable to the students prior to their arrival in the destination countries (Peterson et al., 1999; Pimpa, 2004). East (2001) found that international students expected to be able to socialise with local students, improve their English language proficiency as well as quality teaching and response to their educational needs. In an exploration of students view of international study, Hellsten (2002) conducted a study on how international

students viewed Australia as a potential country for studies and their expectations before they arrived in the country. The researcher found cultural and social integration into the local communities was integral in the achievement of learning outcomes through the receipt of support from the local communities as well as the expectations of cooperation between the home and host cultures. Dalgish and Chan (2005) conducted a study to examine international students' expectations and reflections on studying in Australia and indicated that whereas Thai students had great expectations of the availability of social facilities, African students had expectations of a total Australian experience although the presence of other international students was a bonus. They also reported that Indian students were amazed by the differences in the teaching styles between India and Australia. Ransom et al. (2005) in a study at the University of Melbourne found that, international students who were not from English speaking countries had high expectations of improving their language proficiency and expected the institution to support them to enhance their English proficiency. Beloucif et al. (2018) conducted a study to explore international students' expectations of United Kingdom higher education and found that some international students highly expected improved career prospects after completion of their tertiary education. Although the experiences and opinions of students' social networks, as well as proximity to destination, environment and cost, influence the decisions of students to study abroad, the lived experiences often times vary from the preconceived expectations (Sherry et al., 2004). At the destination, when students are faced with discrimination and shock cultures that are not in conformity with preconceived ideas that were developed prior to the movement, oftentimes leads to disillusionment (Liu & Winder, 2014). Some of the elements of cultural shocks include food, language, pattern of dressing, behaviour, and values (Nicholson, 2001; Shi, 2001). The expectations of international students have a significant impact on their experiences in the destination countries and therefore

face adjustment problems in a new environment. As such, Sherry et al. (2004) suggest that institutions should take into consideration the expectations of students and take measures to adequately support these students for effective integration.

2.7 International Students' Experiences

Several studies exist that focus on the experiences of students, prioritizing on the difficulties involved in studying out of one's country of origin (Chen, 2016). According to Sherry et al. (2010), language barrier, acculturation, establishing relationship with nationals of the country of study and financial barriers are some of the major challenges facing international students. Hsu (2003) also highlights adapting to new culture, academic differences, information and feedback from country of origin, dealing with financial, emotional and cross-cultural complexities as well as the anxiety of returning home as some challenges that international students are likely to experience in the destination country. There are other illustrations of international students' susceptibility to exploitation which may take the form of unequal opportunities in educational institutions where international students are exploited and institutions treat internationalisation as an opportunity to market and sell products to "foreigners" (Altbach & Teichler, 2001). In their new environment, international students are often quite lonely and isolated. This isolation entails the absence of social networks and acquaintances and the absence of common linguistic and cultural contexts or environment (Sawir et al., 2008; McClure, 2007). Thus, the availability of social support ensures the success of foreign students in their new environment. Therefore, according to Tidwell and Hanassab (2007), universities that focus solely on the learning demands of foreign students neglect major variables in the future achievements of international students in their new academic setting.

There are also experiences of access to accommodation and how this affects international students. According to Akensivie et al. (2013), the type of accommodation has different impacts on foreign students' experiences. Residential accommodation has its advantages and disadvantages for the international student. Zhang and Brunton (2007) outline increased socialisation and intercultural relations as some advantages of residential accommodation. In contrast, international students have difficulties adjusting to customs, language, and food (Ward, 2001). Where there are limited facilities for both international and local students on campus, it creates some problems for international students. Cost and standard of living, access to information and transportation, adjustment to local weather conditions are some factors that influence students' experiences in a destination country (Akensivie et al., 2013). O'Reilly et al. (2015) examined the experiences concerning social support, socio-cultural challenges discrimination and academic adjustment of some American international students in Ireland. It was found out that the issue of language was a major challenge faced by most international students in their social life, academic performance and overall issues pertaining to language. This is consistent with studies conducted by Sherry et al. (2010) which explores the social, cultural and international students' learning experiences at the University of Toledo. The researchers illustrated international students' experiences, including the transition to a different cultural lifestyle, language barrier and economic difficulties. Akensivie et al. (2013) conducted a study on foreign students' experiences in Ghanaian tertiary institutions by collecting data from 351 students using a questionnaire. They found that most international students experiences related to institutional and country experiences. The institutional experience includes the relationship with students, lecturers as well as access to accommodation and educational facilities, quality of teaching and how complaints were addressed. The country experiences include weather conditions, the country's security and how local communities accept

foreigners. The researchers also noted that institutional experiences are likely to affect the overall country experience through generalisation. It is worth noting that these studies provide further explanation about the experiences of international students from English-speaking countries as they face relatively fewer challenges as compared to non-English speakers.

2.7.1 Language of Instruction

The OECD (2011) considers the medium of communication to be a significant factor for international student mobility. Kuo (2011) suggests that language is a significant element of communication, especially in an academic setting. English, French and Spanish are among some of the top global languages and countries that speak these languages are mostly preferred by students looking to further their schooling abroad. International students who decide to embark on their education in other countries need to have some degree of understanding of the official language used in communication in these institutions. English, however, is increasingly used in most higher education institutions and research as a lingua franca and this influences students to study abroad in order to improve their proficiency and skills (Altbach, 2007; Zheng, 2010). According to the OECD (2011), about 42% of mobile students go to English-speaking countries and this significant proportion reinforces the significance of English as a language of instruction. In Ghana, the language of instruction in tertiary institutions is English, and therefore, a good grade in English is a requirement for admission into all tertiary institutions (Mahmoud et al., 2019). According to Kuo (2011), English proficiency becomes problematic for some international students. This is particularly seen in areas such as understanding lectures, taking an active part in discussions and writing papers (Huntley, 1993). Jenkins et al. (1993) discussed language as an obstacle to students' academic activities. Language also influences student mobility in the area of

new language acquisition or improving one's knowledge on already known language (Mahmoud et al., 2019).

2.8 Theoretical perspective

The study is founded on two theories, the push-pull theory and the human capital theory. These theories help the researcher explain the motivations of international students and how decisions to study in a foreign country are made. The expectations and experiences of international students are better understood with these theories.

2.8.1 Push-Pull theoretical framework

Lee (1966) developed a framework to describe the reasons for immigration and emigration by basing these reasons on “push” and “pull” factors. Thus, in this context, the motivations and the expectations of international students in relation to pursuing their education outside of their countries of origin are largely influenced by an interplay of both “push” and “pull” factors of mobility (Weibl, 2014; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). These “push-pull” factors are from different sources, and originate across global, national and local levels (Weibl, 2014). According to Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), the “push” factors are those factors that exist in the country of origin and initiate the choice of students to pursue international study, whereas the “pull” factors are the factors that make the host country comparatively attractive to international students. A majority of factors can increase a student’s attraction to a destination. Among other things, students’ expectations depend on how long these students spend studying outside their countries of origin (Nilsson, 2015). These factors can be classified under academic, socio-cultural, economic and political factors that act simultaneously across international, national and local levels. The Push-

Pull model is used to explain the rationale as well as the drivers of international students' mobility. At the origin, some of these factors, for example economic, social and other factors serve as drivers for movement, and students may also expect career prospects, the desire to experience other cultures and personal growth. As a result, choosing a destination for international studies is dependent on some pull factors such as social networks, proximity and host country knowledge. There are also the barriers to mobility, which also take the form of economic; which may include cost of study for international students, political; in terms of visa issuance and immigration barriers among others.

2.8.1.1 Push Factors

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) acknowledge that “push” factors are essential in the motivation of students to study in another country. Historically, the “push” to study outside one’s country of origin was due to the fact that demand for higher education could not meet the supply (Chiou, 2014), and the inadequate educational capacity and opportunities, especially in developing countries (Naidoo, 2007). According to the OECD (2013), one of the most important explanation why students choose to study abroad is to increase the possibility of getting employed. However, some students resort to education abroad because they are unable to gain admission into their preferred university at the origin (Chiou, 2014). Furthermore, travelling to another country to study has become a trend in several cultures and some families consider international education to have benefits for their children as direct exposure to different languages and culture as well as skills and education enhancement increases the students’ potential for the job market (Yang, 2002). It is worth noting that the “push” factors that compel people to migrate are not always negative. Some students may decide to move to another country to gain international experience or develop their

linguistic capabilities and learn a new language (Naidoo, 2006). Chiou (2014) suggests that academic achievement, social and cultural advantages, economic reward and political benefits should also be considered as “push” factors that advance the decisions to study abroad. For Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) and Yang (2007), “push” factors at the origin are usually economic, political, socio-cultural and educational related and these build-up interests that encourage students to seek for international education. Nilsson (2015) suggests that the versatility of educational mobility is less static, and the decision to enrol can change rapidly.

2.8.1.2 Pull factors

Once a student together with their family decide to study abroad, numerous “pull” factors affect their decision of the country of study (Yang, 2007; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Yang (2007) describe “pull” factors as the variables that function inside the host nation and render that country attractive to students. They include cultural and historic links, common language, economic ties and/or political affinity (Chiou, 2014). Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) outlined some six ‘pull’ factors that potentially influence the decision-making process of students seeking to study abroad. Firstly, Knowledge and perception of the destination; availability and accessibility of information is one major ‘pull’ factor. Chiou (2014) suggests that the organisation of educational fairs in origin countries as well as the attendance of representatives of foreign institutions is a vital process in influencing the decisions of students. The availability of information on the educational institutions website also provides the relevant information for students. Secondly, recommendation received from social networks; family and friends through the word of mouth is an important factor in the process of selection of educational institutions and destination countries.

The third pull factor outlined is cost and benefits. According to the researchers, the prospective student takes into consideration the economic costs of pursuing international education. These economic costs include tuition and living expenses, cost of visas, travel cost and the length of study period as well as social cost. The fourth factor is the environment. This factor is primarily associated with lifestyle, climate, crime and safety as well as issues of discrimination; how communities in the destination behave towards foreigners. Additionally, Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) also outlined geographic proximity and the importance of being close to home. For instance, Nigerian students prefer Ghana as one of their major destinations on the African continent. The last factor is social links and Yang (2007) suggests that this applies to the prospective student having family and friends living in the destination or having family and friends who have undertaken studies in the destination.

However, the “push-pull” framework does not take into consideration the personal differences, family and specific circumstances which may influence students’ decisions to study in a different country. Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, as well as the economic and social status are different with each student leading to diverse response from international students (Li & Bray, 2007). Li and Bray (2007) expand this unifocal and one direction ‘push-pull’ theory to a two-way direction by reversing the directions of the “pull and push” factors at the origin and destination countries. Aside the ‘push’ factors that influence decisions to migrate, there are forces at home that influences student’s decision to remain at home. These include family ties, employment ties and social and professional networks. Other factors may discourage students from moving abroad and may include cost of tuition and accommodation, governmental and immigration policies or the fear of the unknown.

2.8.2 Human Capital and Student Migration

Theorists of the Human Capital perspective of student mobility view migration as a source of investment, and therefore the decision to study outside of one's country of origin is to invest in future employability through the attainment of better job opportunities and expected income. The Human Capital perspective acknowledges movement of students as a subset of highly skilled migration (King & Findlay, 2012). According to Rosenzweig (2006), migration is the consequence of the unavailability of educational facilities in the country of origin and students return in order to reap the benefits at the origin as well as migration being used as a means to escape the low returns to education at the origin. He refers to the former as the school-constrained model and the later as the migration model. From the macroeconomic point of view, the incentive of the receiving country to attract foreign students is heightened by its strategy to enhance the availability of highly qualified human resource in its domestic labor market —case in point is Canada and Australia. The downside to this phenomenon is the brain drain from the home country. This is however rectified by a meandering cycle of “brain circulation” which often times leads to a “brain return” to the sending country. It is instructive to note that a discussion on brain mobility is tied to binary economic regions in Global North, mostly recipients and South, mostly senders (King & Sondhi, 2018). From the angle of Human Capital of the individual, international students’ mobility might be perceived as an opportunity for career enhancement. This is a logical plan of action to stand a better chance in the country of origin upon return home. Additionally, it may be viewed as a steppingstone to a well-paying international career, most likely in a global organization or even as a future course of action towards emigration (Findlay et al., 2017). A broader outlook of the international students’ mobility thus points to its contribution to the creation of elite international labor of skilled professionals who span from scholars, administrators, business owners to

international civil servants. The question is however asked, if students can be properly considered as highly skilled since in most cases, they do not form part of the labor market. Szelenyi (2006) asserts that only graduate and post graduate students are the important part of highly skilled labor. While the impact of the Human Capital Theory on international student mobility is supported by ample findings, some of its limitations are also posed in the field. According to Wells (2014), many of the students are assumed to want to stay and work in the country of their studies. In this situation, international students are viewed as highly skilled migrants to their destination countries and as the carriers of human capital. With this notion, however, there are many issues. First of all, it is uncertain if international students are already highly skilled migrants upon arrival in the host country or whether, as a consequence of their education in the country, they become highly skilled. Secondly, this principle is based on the premise that Human Capital Theory pertains to education outside of the country as well as at home, which Hadler (2006) considers misleading. This issue of length of stay after completion of higher education in order to be referred to as a migrant is unknown. Even so, some students could decide to either engage in employment in destination country for some period of time, return home or migrate to other countries.

Linking student mobility with the Human Capital theory allows for the study of the concept known as “human capital flight” or “brain drain”. Notwithstanding the common perception that a substantial percentage of outgoing international students cause countries to lose human capital, there is no scientific evidence supporting the perception. However, it is possible that such views stems from the notion that international students are likely to function in the same manner as skilled migrants who choose to remain in the destination countries. According to Wells (2014), the distinction between highly skilled regular migrants and international students is that regular migrants may have probably been educated prior to their movement although this may not always

be the case as well as the main purpose of migration being economic and not education. Students on the contrary, during the course of their education may build their human capital in the destination country. In addition, there are no laid down guidelines as to the period of time a person can be engaged in employment abroad until their country of origin classifies them as contributing to “brain drain” even if they do not instantly return home. These discrepancies show that although links between highly skilled migrants and brain drain might be feasible, there is no compelling proof that international students contribute to brain drain.

Taking student migration into account as a component of a professional, academic and scientific versatility, in essence, leads to two distinct global environments. One is the brain exchange between nations, especially in Europe, where there is the geographical distribution of developed countries and also amongst Europe and several educationally influential countries including the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Student circulation can be seen as a preparation for potential executives and professionals in multinational corporations and transnational organisations for careers. The other scenario is the movement of students from developing to developed nations. There are indications of systemic disparity in student migration, including from academically poor university systems to those deemed higher quality and merit based especially those often within advanced countries. Very few students migrate for their university education from developed countries to less developed countries.

2.9 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter relied on the knowledge from the previous literature and presented the trends in international student’s mobility and its significance in the globalised world, and also linked the study to international students’ mobility to Ghana. The literature review revealed an established

understanding of the motivations of international students to study abroad, the factors that influences their decision making and choice of destination country and institution as well as their expectations and experiences. Most of the study on international student's mobility reviewed focused on international students moving to the Global North. Two theories, the push-pull framework and the human capital theory were also chosen for the study to understand the motivations, expectations and experiences of international students as well as their future aspirations after completing their education.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology used in this study. It discusses the research design, sampling techniques used, sources of data, a description of the study area, data collection and analysis. The ethical considerations and limitations to the study are also further discussed in this section.

3.1 Profile of the Study Area

This study was conducted at the University of Ghana (UG), the nation's premier university. Established in 1948 as Gold Coast University College, the university was originally an affiliate of the University of London, which supervised its academic programs and conferred degrees. Currently home to over 40,000 students, the university which gained its full university status in 1961 continue to attract many local and foreign students from over 70 countries around the world into its undergraduate and post-graduate programmes. The vision of the university is to become a world class research-intensive university over the next decade and its mission is to create an enabling environment that makes the university increasingly relevant to national and global development through cutting-edge research as well as high quality teaching and learning. With its main campus at Legon, about twelve kilometres northeast of the centre of Accra, the university boasts of many satellite campuses and learning centres across the nation, an ultra-modern teaching hospital, a basic school as well as a state-of-the- art main library (The Balme Library) amongst others. The university has International Programmes Office in charge of international students' affairs. The university has several research institutions such as the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, the Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research among others. The

university is currently affiliated to several international and Ghanaian institutions and has established partnerships with higher education institutions across Africa, America and Europe for workers, students and academic staff exchange and collaborative research.

3.2 Research design

For the purpose of this study, the qualitative research method was employed. According to Silverman (2011), the qualitative research method offers an in-depth insight into people's experiences and facilitates the ability to access useful and relevant data. It also measures the individual perspectives of participants. By employing the in-depth interview approach, the researcher was able to solicit and examine the lived experiences of foreign students in Ghana regarding their motivations, expectations, and experiences in relation to their selection of Ghana as the host country for their tertiary education. Also, the approach helped the researcher to probe the responses of respondents to get a clearer understanding of the study under discussion. The qualitative technique encourages participants to be actively involved in the research. Notwithstanding the strengths of the qualitative method outlined above, it is criticized as being too subjective and lacks the ability to generalize its findings as compared to quantitative methods (Teye, 2012). Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic which led to the disruption in the academic calendar of many universities and the subsequent return of many foreign students, the researcher resorted to using telephone conversations and other online platforms such as Skype and Zoom audio and video platforms in soliciting for responses, replacing the conventional face-to-face interactions.

3.3 Target Population

According to Rubin and Rubin (2011), the population of a study refers to a group of people the researcher seeks to study. The population of this study included all students excluding Ghanaians in the University of Ghana studying various programmes for at least one semester.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used in selecting respondents for the study. Babbie (2003) posits that purposive sampling enables researchers to choose a sample based on the knowledge of the population, its elements, and the purpose of the study. The purposive sampling was used to select foreign students at University of Ghana since the study was directly related to them and the researcher believes that they can best provide information that can help achieve the research objectives. However, due to the closure of the University and the subsequent return of many international students owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, identifying my respondents as a group became difficult but by locating three of them (international students), the researcher was led to the others through chain referrals. This is where the snowball sampling technique became useful. According to Mack et al. (2005), the snowball sampling technique is effective in recruiting “hidden populations, that is groups not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies”. This technique offered an opportunity to already contacted respondents to recommend to the researcher other individuals who satisfied the inclusion criteria of the study (Mack et. al., 2005).

A total of 20 participants were recruited for the study. Participants comprising both male and female undergraduate and post-graduate students who have studied for at least one semester at the University of Ghana in the last twelve months. These students were from both developing and

developed countries. The final number of participants was arrived at when saturation point was reached, meaning no further interview carried new information. According to Guest et al. (2006), for some qualitative research, the saturation point is normally reached after a researcher has interviewed 12 participants.

3.5 Sources of Data

The study relied on both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with international students at University of Ghana. On the other hand, secondary data were sourced from journal reports, articles, books and other relevant sources. Data was also sourced from the International Programmes Office (IPO), the office responsible for all affairs of international students ranging from admissions to orientations overall coordination of international students' welfare. The data collected from IPO was statistics on international students' enrolment over the last five years.

Table 3. 1 International students' distribution by level of education

| YEAR | UNDERGRADUATE | GRADUATE | TOTAL |
|-----------|---------------|----------|-------|
| 2015/2016 | 126 | 119 | 245 |
| 2016/2017 | 70 | 144 | 214 |
| 2017/2018 | 91 | 65 | 156 |
| 2018/2019 | 102 | 91 | 193 |
| 2019/2020 | 97 | 52 | 149 |

Source: International Programmes Office (2019/2020)

3.6 Methods of Data Collection

An in-depth interview guide developed in line with the objectives of the research was developed for data collection. The interview guide was semi-structured to enable freedom of expression of thoughts and perspectives of participants concerning the subject matter and also allowed the researcher to probe for further responses when needed for clarification. The interviews were developed and conducted in English and included data about demographic characteristics, motivations of international students as well as their expectations and experiences. Data collection for this study was between the 15th September to 15th October 2020. The researcher initially contacted three respondents at the International Students Hostel (ISH), informing them about the purpose of the research with a convenient date and time agreed upon for the interviews. Two other respondents from the Valco Hostel were also contacted and informed about the research and an agreed time for the interviews were reached. The other respondents were informed of the purpose of the study via telephone, Skype and Zoom online platforms because it was not convenient for them to meet in-person. Both in-person and online interviews were recorded, after the consent of participants were sought and subsequently transcribed for analysis with each interview lasting for about 50 minutes. All respondents were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the data that they provided. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some protocols were followed to ensure the safety of both researcher and respondents. During the face-to-face interviews, all respondents were encouraged to wear their face masks and they all adhered to this instruction. Hand sanitizers were also provided and a safe distance of two metres was also maintained. Due to the use of face masks and the social distance, both the researcher and respondents had to speak louder than usual to enable the audio recorder to capture the sounds. Other respondents opted for the telephone call as an option to avoid contact due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondary data on statistics of

international students between 2015/2016 and 2019/2020 were also collected from the IPO of the University of Ghana.

3.7 Data Analysis

Following all interviews, the recorded data were kept on a computer, ensuring the protection of the information gathered. After this, all recordings were transcribed verbatim into a word document and while the process was a lengthy one, transcription allowed the researcher to be familiar with the data collected. The researcher read the transcripts several times and became familiar with the data and then grouped them into appropriate themes. The themes were developed bearing in mind the research problems and objectives and the key themes that emerged from the literature review. The data were then manually coded into themes with the research questions serving as a guide. Coding refers to translating the responses of respondents as well as their information into specific categories for further analysis. Finally, quotes attributed to respondents and other scholars were cited, aiding in the analysis and discussions of findings in the study.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The consent of respondents was sought before data collection. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the data collected. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and given assurance that their names would not be attached to the final findings for this study. The names of each research respondent were removed and replaced with pseudonyms.

The consent of the respondents was also sought for the recording of all interviews. Respondents had the right to cancel participation at any point in the data collection process.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The findings of this study will mostly be relevant to University of Ghana, where the sample was taken from. University of Ghana is one of the several universities in Ghana and this research finding may not be generalised to other universities.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF KEY FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the analysis of the data collected in the context of the research objectives that were set. The chapter has been divided into three main sections. The first section discusses the demographic information such as the ages of respondents, their gender, and their level of education. The second section focuses on the motivation, preparation to study, expectations, and experiences of international students and rounds off with the aspirations of international students. The last section focuses on two case studies.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of international students

This section focuses on the age, sex, country of origin and marital status of the international students. Some other variables included the level of education of international students, duration of stay and their employment status.

4.1.1 Age of Respondents

A total of 20 international students were interviewed as respondents for this study. The youngest respondent was 19 and the oldest 30, with an average age of 24.3. This indicates that a high proportion of participants were in their youthful years; a clear suggestion that the large majority of international students are quite young, which is consistent with studies that assert that the majority of international student migrants are young people. The literature also suggests that most young people migrate for educational purposes to better their lives.

4.1.2 Gender and Marital Status of Respondents

Out of the 20 respondents, 13 were females while the remaining 7 were males, showing that there were more female respondents than there were male respondents. This corroborates with data from the IPO suggests that there are more enrolled female international students (60%) than there are males (40%). The literature also suggests that females are more likely to study abroad than males. In terms of marital status, all respondents in this study were unmarried. This is consistent with the literature that suggests that single people are more geographically mobile than married individuals because they have no social ties to their countries of origin.

4.1.3 Nationality of Respondents

In terms of nationality, fourteen out of the twenty respondents were from African countries and six were non-Africans. This is due to the fact that most Africans tend to move within the continent than outside the continent. Out of the African respondents, 6 were from Nigeria, 2 from Togo, 3 from Ivory Coast, 1 from Benin and 2 from Congo. The majority of African students are from the ECOWAS subregion which is attributed to the free movement associated with the ECOWAS Protocol. Four of the respondents were from the United States of America, 1 from Denmark and 1 from Sweden. Data received from the International Programmes Office suggests that Nigerians are in a majority in terms of international students from Africa and this could be attributed to the high population of the country. American students constitute the majority of non-African international students at the University of Ghana.

4.1.4 Level of Education

The participants who took part in the study were mostly undergraduate students. Out of the 20 participants interviewed, 17 were undergraduates with 3 being postgraduates. Data received from the International Programmes Office between 2015/2016 and 2019/2020 revealed that there were relatively more undergraduate students than graduate students at the University of Ghana. With regards to the collegial affiliations, the undergraduates were mostly students in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences and College of Humanities. The postgraduates were affiliated with the College of Humanities and the College of Health Sciences.

4.2 Motivations for Studying in Ghana

International students' motivations, as well as their decision to study abroad, were influenced by different factors and actors as captured in this study. Some of the responses from the interviews include the ability to compete in the labour market, learning new cultures, programme of study, financial consideration, language of instruction, and influence of family and friends.

4.2.1 Ability to Compete in the Labour market

With regards to the ability to compete in the global market and stand the chance of receiving a high salary and promotion, some participants indicated that this was a major factor in their motivations to study abroad. In some countries, foreign degrees are highly valuable and increases an individual's prospects of getting hired or even promoted at an existing job as indicated by this respondent from Togo:

I wanted to have that foreign experience that will increase my chances of getting a good-paying job. In my country, they give so much preference to people who were

educated outside the country. I think it is believed that they have some form of foreign exposure. **(Marcel, 24, September 2020)**

Another student from Ivory Coast narrated: “my parents thought it will be better if they put me into a different system so that I can get a better education to get more job opportunities when I complete school” **(Claire, 19, October, 2020)**.

Other respondents also wanted to start their lives outside their countries of origin and that motivated them to study in Ghana. This informed Leo’s decision to enrol in a Master’s degree in Ghana. He indicated that he wanted to stay in Ghana to find suitable employment which he feared he may not be able to find in his home country Nigeria;

I wanted to work in Ghana and I believed that getting my masters education here would give me the opportunity to work here or any other country if I do not get a job here. **(Leo, 30, October 2020)**

4.2.2 Learning a new culture

One motivating factor for international students’ decision to study in Ghana for their higher education is to be exposed to a new culture. Seven respondents out of the total number interviewed expressed that they were eager to learn about the rich Ghanaian culture and heritage. Out of the 7 who were motivated to study in Ghana due to the country’s culture, 6 were non-Africans. Non-African international students are usually eager to learn about traditional cultures that they are unfamiliar with and their nuances as well as art forms. These include the food, traditional festivals, music and dance and as such, they enrol into courses such as Music, Dance and Literature and Linguistics at the School of Performing Arts and African Studies. One of the respondents, an American student narrated;

I chose to come to Ghana just to study the diverse dance types here. I was very fascinated by the dance culture that exists here that is why I chose the country and the university has an excellent dance programme. **(Adam, 20, October 2020)**

The Africans on the other hand were not highly motivated to study in Ghana for the new cultural experience. This could be attributed to the similarities between cultures across the continent.

However, one African respondent from Congo said this;

I was motivated to choose Ghana because I was interested in learning new cultures and even though I am African and there are some similarities in our culture, it was a chance for me to learn about the different cultures and way of doing things, other than the ones from my country. **(Marie, 19, October 2020)**

4.2.3 Financial factors

Most respondents stated that these economic factors- the cost of tuition, accommodation, and living expenses also influenced their decision to study in the country. For some of the respondents, the cost of tuition for studying in Ghana was cheaper in comparison to other international destinations such as Europe and the United States of America.

A 25-year-old Nigerian studying Geography shared that: “I did consider the tuition costs and accommodation and living expenses and compared them to other countries but I felt they were affordable in Ghana per my standards” **(Daniel, 25, September 2020)**.

Another student from Congo also had this to say: “It was too expensive to study biological sciences in most universities in the Western World so we decided to do biology in Ghana instead” **(Laurel, 20, September 2020)**.

Whereas for some it was the affordability that motivated them, others saw the similarity in the amount paid for tuition especially for postgraduates with that of other countries. One Swedish student shared what motivated her:

The education in Sweden is free so I definitely considered having my postgraduate education in Sweden. The education especially the masters in Ghana is costly for international students so I definitely considered the financial aspects before I chose Ghana but I feel like the cost for the master is the same in Ghana like most countries and the quality of education here is quite high so why not go where I get my money's worth. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

4.2.4 Language of instruction

English as a language of instruction is one major factor that most international students considered when they decided to choose a destination for their higher education. For some international students, they considered Ghana as their choice of destination mainly due to English being the official language of the country as well as the language of instruction whereas others also indicated that the use of English as the language of instruction did not influence their decision to study in Ghana. The international students who were motivated to study in Ghana because of the language of instruction were mostly students from French-speaking African countries and others from Sweden and Denmark. The rest of the students who were not motivated by the language of instruction were mostly Nigerians and this could be attributed to the fact that Nigeria is an English-speaking country.

One second year Congolese studying Biological Sciences for instance had this to say: “I wanted to do my degree in English so I studied English just to apply and Ghana is an English-speaking country so I decided to do study here” **(Laurel, 20, September 2020)**.

Another Swedish student had this to share:

For my undergraduate degree, the language of instruction was English so when I was deciding on where to go for my Master's degree, I definitely wanted to go where the language of instruction is mainly English. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

For some international students who did not consider the language of instruction, a Nigerian student narrated;

I did not take into consideration the language of instruction at all. I knew Ghana was an English-speaking country. Nigeria is also an English-speaking country so I could have just stayed back in Nigeria to study there. Although I was definitely looking to study in English, I did not consider that at all. **(Lolu, 27, September 2020)**

4.2.5 Proximity to country of origin

Data analysed from this study suggests that one motivating factor for student's decision to study in Ghana is the geographical proximity of Ghana to their home countries. For about 8 West African students that were interviewed, they shared that one factor that motivated them to select Ghana as a destination of choice was how close Ghana was to their respective countries. For some of these students, being able to easily travel back to their origin countries was one major factor.

An example is Tobi, a 26-year-old Nigerian student. He is offering a Bachelor's degree in Adult Education and Philosophy. According to Tobi, he decided to study in Ghana because Ghana is close to Nigeria and it is relatively easier and cheaper to travel back home after every academic year. He shared this;

I was motivated to study in Ghana because it is relatively closer to Nigeria which makes traveling back home easy and transportation is also quite affordable than traveling from America or Europe. I can travel by bus which is great and by air which is so fast. **(Tobi, 26, September 2020)**

Another Togolese international student had this to say:

The reason why I chose Ghana was because it was close to home. Anytime probably I feel homesick or need to go home urgently, I know it is close by and I can get there in a few hours. **(Frances, 24, October 2020)**

4.2.6 Adventure

Some international students that were interviewed suggested that they were motivated to study in Ghana as a way of changing the environment that they were used to in order to experience new things. They were not necessarily motivated by the education that they were expecting to receive in Ghana but by the new experiences that they were going to make. Some of the students from Nigeria narrated their stories;

I think I just wanted a change of environment. Most of my friends in Nigeria were travelling outside of Nigeria and had that travel experience so I decided to also travel and get the change of environment. **(Amadi, 25, September 2020)**

I just wanted to leave Nigeria. The system there is so rigged and if I had continued my tertiary education there, I don't know what could have happened to my mental health. I needed that new environment that could build the youth and not tear them down. Ghana is that place for me. **(Tobi, 26, September 2020)**

Tobi's statement was made after he shared that he gained admission into other universities in Nigeria.

4.3 Motivations for Choosing University of Ghana

Some motivating factors influenced the selection of educational institutions for international students. From the interviews that were conducted, the respondents revealed that the programmes of study, the location of the university, knowledge of the university from people who had

previously studied in the university were some of the factors that influenced their selection of the University of Ghana.

4.3.1 Programme of Study

The study found out that some international students' decision to study outside of their countries of origin were also motivated by the programmes offered as well as the duration of these programmes. Data analysed indicated that whereas mostly Africa students were interested in studying programmes that offered degrees and diplomas, which influences their choice of country and university, non-African students were interested in the short courses they could partake in to acquire knowledge. They are usually motivated by programmes that offer knowledge and insight into the rich cultures on the African continent. They usually take up short courses in African studies and its related courses. Regardless of this, it was evident that most international students were motivated by the programmes and duration of study that the university has to offer.

For instance, Amadi, a Nigerian studying Bachelor of Arts in Geography said:

I was motivated to study at the University of Ghana because of the bachelor programmes available in the social sciences. The different course combinations motivated me to study here. **(Amadi, 25, September 2020)**

Another international student from the United States of America narrated that she chose to study in Ghana after researching for universities that had the course she was interested in:

Before I decided on the University of Ghana, I focused on looking for universities that offered student exchange programmes in mostly African-related studies. I was excited to come here to learn more about the country and Africa. **(Ana, 20, September 2020)**

Although most non-Africans choose to study short courses, others also take up long degree awarding courses, especially in the postgraduate area. This was affirmed by Nia, a 29-year-old

Swedish MA student who was motivated by the Migration Studies curriculum and the duration of study. She shared this reason:

I always knew I wanted to study migration and migration-related courses in West Africa. When I was ready to pursue my MA, I looked for universities in the sub-region which offered a specific course in migration. I was delighted when I realised the University of Ghana offers the course and it is also a one-year programme. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

4.3.2 University Ranking

For some of the respondents, one of the most important factors that influenced them to choose the University was its ranking and a good reputation for quality teaching and education. Some of the respondents were aware after research that the University of Ghana is one of the major Universities in Ghana and had a credible reputation in the courses that were offered in the university.

A Togolese student had this to say:

One thing I did consider before applying to schools in Ghana was the prestige of the university. University of Ghana is very well known and has a reputation for good academic work. I am sure most people have heard of the university before. **(Marcel, 24, September 2020)**

Laurel from Congo also narrated that the University's ranking influenced her decision to study in Ghana:

I also read about the university rankings in west Africa and I realized that the university of Ghana ranks the first or second in the subregion so I knew it was a good university. **(Laurel, 20, September 2020)**

Another student from Nigeria shared her motivation to study at the University:

I initially wanted to study in Nigeria but considering the numbers that were applying, I decided to go abroad and needed to enrol in the best universities abroad. That is why I decided on the university. It is one of the best in Africa. **(Mide, 23, September 2020)**

4.3.3 Location of the University

Another factor that the study identified as a motivating factor for students' choice of the University of Ghana is the location of the university. Some students were motivated to choose the University of Ghana because it is located in the capital city, Accra. Some respondents liked the fact that the university is located in the capital and close to the airport with major facilities and infrastructure. They shared their stories and for instance this student from Ivory Coast narrated: "I applied to study at the University of Ghana because it was in the capital city and I wanted to be in the capital as well" (**Nabilla, 23, October 2020**).

Another Swedish student said this:

My first choice was the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi but when I realized the university was not in the capital and I had to travel to another city, I changed my mind and chose UG. I quite like where it is situated. Not too far from the central district where all the action takes place. (**Nia, 29, September 2020**)

4.3.4 Influence of Social Networks

People tend to migrate to places where they have an already established social network. Social networks provide information and resources for potential migrants which encourages migration. Seven international students also stated that they were motivated to study at the University of Ghana because they had other friends and relatives who had previously studied at the University or still knew students currently in the university. These students became conversant with the University of Ghana through these acquaintances' introduction as well as recommendations of students that had previously studied in the university. Others also shared that they were motivated

to study at the university because they had family and friends from who they hoped to gain some form of support.

Claire, a student from Ivory Coast shared this:

I did not even think of Ghana so it is definitely from the family. I know my uncle did his masters here at the University of Ghana and he told my dad and that UG is quite good and so I applied and came to study here. **(Claire, 19, October 2020)**

Another Togolese respondent also narrated:

Some of my family and friends from Togo went through the same university. From how they talked about the high standard of education over here convinced me a lot to also take the same path even though it was much expensive over here compared to back home. **(Marcel, 24, September 2020)**

Mide from Nigeria shared her motivation for studying at the University

I was motivated to study at the University of Ghana because my cousin was already enrolled here. My family was convinced that knowing someone here would be beneficial to me. **(Mide, 23, September 2020)**

4.4 Preparation to study at the University

For all international students who wish to study in Ghana, the university and visa applications are the two most essential processes that they must go through. The cost of education (tuition, accommodation, and living expenses) for tertiary education, especially for international students, can be expensive. The researcher considered the source of funding for tertiary education of international students.

4.4.1 University Application

On the University of Ghana application process, most of the respondents expressed that it was fairly easy to apply to the university. To be admitted into the university, the student must meet the

admission requirement and submit all necessary documents like transcripts, degree or diploma certificates and proof of language proficiency for students who are not native English speakers. For instance, for students coming from the English-speaking countries in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) seeking undergraduate degrees, they had to upload their West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results that meet the admission requirement. A Nigerian student shared his experience;

My university application was quite straightforward. I applied with my WASSCE results and since I was from an English-speaking country, I was not obliged to provide a proficiency test which was quite good. However, my admission letter came quite late which was the only problem I had. **(Daniel, 25, September 2020)**

Leo, a 30-year-old Nigerian enrolled at the School for Public Health also said this;

It was fairly easy to apply to school at the university because in Nigeria, we have to write exams, like 2 exams before you get admitted to study in a Public or Federal School but here, it is more of merit; they look at your qualifications and see whether you are a good fit for a programme or not. But in Nigeria you have to write two different exams first. **(Leo, 30, October 2020)**

However, others also had difficulties with the application process. Some students expressed their frustrations and for instance, Nia from Sweden and Laurel from Congo narrated their experiences:

I have to say that it was a bit complicated, the application and process. I feel like the website could have been better and the information there could have been easier to understand. I remember because I was a master's student it was like if you wanted to apply as an international student, there were mostly undergraduate programs that were stated on the website and master's students had their separate website and that became confusing because I was both masters' student and international. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

The application process was really bad for me and I do not know about others. But for me when I checked on the portal, it was written that they receive international applications all year round so I applied and I was expecting to get a response like two weeks later but then I got the response six months later which was a long time to wait. **(Laurel, 20, September 2020)**

4.4.2 Visa Application

All respondents who needed visas before entry to the country stated that it was relatively easier to apply for their student visas as regulations and immigration requirements for students were particularly flexible. Once students had received their admission letters, they could apply for their student visas as the process of visa application was not complicated or time-consuming. Some students shared their experiences and for instance Laurel, a Congolese shared that: “The visa application process was not long at all. I waited for three days. I applied with my admission letter so it was a quick process. I did not need to rely on any travel agency” **(Laurel, 20, September 2020)**.

Another student from Sweden also narrated: “To get the visa took like a week because I applied in the embassy in Sweden and since I had my admission letter the process was easy” **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**.

4.4.3 Funding

The source of funding for international students who took part in this study varied. Through the interviews, it was revealed that 11 undergraduate students were sponsored by their family members and others such as parents, uncles and aunts, and communities among others. Other undergraduate students were partially sponsored by their parents and partially self-funded. One postgraduate student was funded by his employers back at the origin. The other postgraduate students were self-

funded. An undergraduate student from Ivory Coast shared this: “The fees are a little high and since my parents decided for me to study here, they opted to pay the fees” (**Claire, 19, October 2020**).

Another postgraduate from Nigeria narrated: “I was working before I decided to further my education. My employers are paying for the cost of studying here” (**Leo, 30, October 2020**).

Another Swedish student also shared: “When I decided I was going to study abroad, I started saving towards that. I am a self-funded student” (**Nia, 29, September 2020**).

4.5 International student Expectations

When international students are motivated to study outside their home countries, they begin their journeys with high expectations that they wish would be met in the host country. Concerning international students’ expectations, some of the most common expectations of some of the respondents were that they expected to gain different experiences as well as learn about the diverse cultures that exist in the country. Others also expected to improve their language abilities, high quality teaching and enjoy student and campus life. Through the interviews, the researcher also sought to establish whether the initial expectations of the respondents have been met.

4.5.1 Course Curriculum

Most of the international students had high expectations of the course content as well as organised lecturers. Whereas some students expected that the course load will be manageable, others also wanted classes that were practical that increased their future career aspirations.

Other international students also had expectations of their lecturers and their ability to impart knowledge. A student from Benin had this to say:

I was expecting a high-level quality of education, I was expecting that I would receive the best quality of education so I will say my expectations were quite high. I think my expectations were met and I was not surprised about the quality that I have received. **(Angele, 27, October 2020)**

Nia from Sweden also shared her expectations with the course curriculum:

Since it is a postgraduate programme, I was expecting a small class with practical classes and academic resources for all students. My class was made up of 11 students and resources were usually enough for all students. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

A Nigerian student also narrated:

It was my first time in a different academic system and I thought my class would be a relatively smaller one than it is. I thought it would be more interactive with both students and lecturers. Although the class is quite huge, it is interactive. **(Tobi, 26, September 2020)**

This student from the United States of America also shared that “I expected my course in African Studies to be practical. That is why I chose the university. It was practical and I enjoyed dancing a lot”. **(Bella, 21, October 2020)**

4.5.2 Language Proficiency

Other respondents also revealed through the interviews that they had high expectations of improving their language proficiency. Most of the international students who expected to improve their language proficiency were from non-English speaking countries.

A Congolese student shared her language expectations:

... I lost a bit of my English so before coming I had high expectations of improving my English because French is my first language and I speak that often. I hoped that the university would provide support to help in my proficiency in the language. I think that expectation has been met because I speak and write English almost every day here. **(Laurel, 20, September 2020)**

This Togolese student also shared that:

I am coming from a francophone country and Ghana being an anglophone country it was the best opportunity for me to improve on my English speaking and writing skills and yes it has been easier and faster for me to learn English since most of my friends on campus and all those I have met communicate in English. **(Marcel, 24, September 2020)**

4.5.3 Social and cultural life

Some of the international students revealed that they had expectations with respect to fulfilling their social life as well as making friends to help them integrate into their new societies. For instance, this student from Denmark shared this expectation: "... I was also expecting to be able to have some interactions with the local folks and making more friends with people from other backgrounds and I have been able to do that" **(Natasha, 27, October 2020)**.

Daniel from Nigeria shared: "I just expected living in Ghana to be basically like living in Nigeria so in fact, when I was coming here, I did not have high expectations about social life here" **(Daniel, 25, September 2020)**.

Another Togolese student had this to share:

For some reason, I thought I would be out more, like with school friends and all that but most of them are not really outing people and also COVID so I did not really get to meet most of my classmates. I did think I would be out more to party and that we will just be chilling because that is what someone told me before I came here. They were like it was just so easy and cool and fun in Ghana, so I was like ok, party time. **(Frances, 24, October 2020)**

Another student from Ivory Coast shared: "Before I came here, I actually did my checks on the currency so I was expecting the cost of living to be quite affordable but then I got here and it was so expensive to live in the city" **(Claire, 19, October 2020)**.

4.5.4 Access to Information

From the interviews conducted, some of the respondents revealed that they had high expectations of their access to information considering they were international students and were new into the country's educational system and university system. Some respondents shared that their expectations were met while others were not met.

These students from Nigeria shared:

...and I expected that being an international student it will be easier for me to get information concerning academics. I will say no, that expectation has not been met because I had information through other international students not usually from the office of international students during my first year. **(Daniel, 25, September 2020)**

Before I arrived, I expected to receive all the help and information from the International Programs Office. I knew they were in charge of foreign students so I expected them to help in every way possible. However, I did not get enough information from the IPO. I did not even know they existed until my second year or third year. With the IPO I think if you are a Nigerian student they do not really bother and I think they are only focused on people from Europe and America. It was when I got to know of the office that I realized they were for all international students. **(Tobi, 26, September 2020)**

This student lamented on the lack of information for students especially those from Nigeria because he perceived that the IPO only catered to non-African students.

Another student from Denmark had a different expectation and experience with the IPO and shared:

...and I expected to be able to get any information I wanted concerning academics, the library, transport services on campus, medical services, and social life. The IPO

really helped in that aspect I must add. I am able to walk to the office and get any information. So yes, they exceeded my expectations. **(Natasha, 27, October 2020)**

4.5.5 Facilities at the university

The international students interviewed for the study expressed that they expected the facilities on campus to be of high quality that would be conducive for learning. Through the interviews, they expressed that they expected the social facilities, hostels and internet to be advanced with cutting edge technology. For instance, a Nigerian student said:

Well, I was expecting like a huge campus, I was expecting that the shared areas in my hostel to be clean and yes, the campus is very huge. There is even the Accra city campus. **(Mide, 23, September 2020)**

Another Nigerian shared his expectations:

I chose the school because of the infrastructure so I expected the campus to be huge with modern facilities and fast internet. I was very much surprised about the size of the campus and the library. I am usually able to study at the library. The facilities here are great so that expectation has been exceeded. **(Leo, 30, October 2020)**

This Congolese student also shared this expectation:

I expected a big campus because of the prestige of the university, I was not surprised about it. The lecture halls and residential halls are huge and oh, there is internet almost everywhere on campus. **(Laurel, 20, September 2020)**

4.5.6 No expectations

Whereas most of the international students interviewed had very high expectations, others also had no expectations at all before arrival. They did not expect the quality of facilities and the course curriculum that they would receive at the university and were pleasantly surprised by what they received upon arrival. This student from the United States shared: “I did not have any kind of

expectation. I just went in with an open mind and wanted to be surprised” (Adam, 20, October 2020).

A Nigerian student also shared this: “I was not expecting a university here in Ghana to be that huge with big lecture halls so I would say that I was impressed with that” (Lolu, 27, September 2020).

Another student from Ivory Coast recounted:

To be honest, I did not want to study here. I wanted to go to Europe or America. I did not know what to expect because I had no expectations. I have been surprised about how great the university has been so far. (Lum, 26, September 2020)

4.6 Experiences of international students

International students are involved in various situations that affect their academic, economic, and social life as well as their general wellbeing either positively or negatively. During the study, international students expressed some of their experiences with overall academics, language, food, accommodation, cost of living, student permit, international students’ week among others. Although some of these experiences were positive, others also faced challenges. It is therefore important to examine whether the expectations of the international students have been met by analysing their experiences of studying at the University of Ghana as well as living here.

4.6.1 Experiences with academic work

The international students interviewed for the study were asked about their experiences with academic work and most of the respondents revealed that they were satisfied with the studies as well as the student and lecturer relationship. However, some students also complained about the workload.

4.6.1.1 Study

With respect to international students' experiences with academic work, most of the respondents indicated that they were impressed with the quality of academic work they were receiving at the university. Some of the respondents shared their experiences:

This Togolese student narrated his experience: “Personally, what I have experienced is that the teaching and learning has a higher standard. The mode of teaching is a bit intense compared to back home” **(Marcel, 24, September 2020)**.

Another American student also recounted her experience:

The course I took in African studies was quite informative. As an African-American, my experience was awesome. I was extremely impressed with the quality of information I received and I needed it. **(Bella, 21, October 2020)**

This Swedish student also shared her experience:

The quality of teaching is really good but of course there were some that were better than others but overall, I will say the quality of teaching was quite good and I was quite happy about it. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

Another Togolese student narrated:

Interesting, I will describe the academic work as interesting. Because usually, the French classes are very serious. Nobody is really talking but here there is joking going on in classes and it helps with the learning because you are at ease, you are listening and you are paying attention as well. I am also learning a little bit about different cultures because it is not just Ghana anymore, it is not just Ghanaian students, there are Nigerians, Americans, Liberians like different continents and different countries. So, I am getting a bit of everybody's culture while I am also studying the main thing. **(Frances, 24, October 2020)**

Some international students on the other hand had challenges and lamented on the course load as well as course demands and felt some pressure especially during examination periods. This student from Sweden shared her challenges:

I must say it has been confusing to me because I am not used to this system. The pressure is a bit higher in Ghana than in Sweden. For instance, in Ghana where we sit and do all the exams by the end of the semester which puts pressure on students. So, I will say it is quite formal and it is more stressful as English is not my first language which was also a stress for me. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

4.6.1.2 Lecturer-student relationship

Some of the respondents also expressed their diverse experiences with lecturers as well as lecturer-student relationships. Claire, an Ivorian and Nia from Sweden narrated their positive experiences:

Because I do not know if it is because I am a foreign because anytime I talk to a lecturer and they realize I am a foreigner they are even nicer to me and try to make me understand better but I think it depends because for some lecturers they just do not care [laughs] and they just do what they have to do and just leave and there are others that interact with you. **(Claire, 19, October 2020)**

All the teachers and professors are quite nice and always helped with academic issues. I would say it was also very good that my class was small in a small centre and that helped. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

Other students also faced some Challenges with developing relationships with their lecturers.

Tobi, a Nigerian shared his challenges:

...but with the student-teacher relationship, personally it was not anything good. For the course I am taking, the class has a large number of students so it is

impossible to maintain that student-teacher relationship. **(Tobi, 26, September 2020)**

4.6.2 Language Experiences

Issues of language are one of the major challenges that most international students are faced with, which can influence their social life as well as their academics. When asked about their language experiences, most of the respondents expressed that the use of English as a language of instruction did not have any impact on their studies as they could use the English during classes, to complete assignments and communicate with other classmates.

This Nigerian student narrated her positive experiences with the use of English as a language of instruction:

I completed my secondary education in English and decided to go to an English-speaking country. I particularly like how English is spoken here and it has not affected my studies at all. I would rather say it has improved how I speak English. **(Mide, 23, September 2020)**

However, some students had issues with the different accents as narrated by this student from Congo;

I learnt English from South Africa and they speak differently there so when I came to class, I would record lectures and play them and listen over and over again to understand because in class I was not getting the accents at first. **(Laurel, 20, September 2020)**

Furthermore, when it came to the use of the local languages in academic settings and their daily social life, some students had issues with communication and comprehension. Most students stated that it was difficult to for instance, shopping at the local markets or even asking for directions.

Others also expressed that it was difficult to become close to the locals who did not speak English because they could not express themselves in the medium of communication. Some students shared these challenges;

Claire from Ivory Coast shared this:

I have realized that everywhere you go they first start speaking to you in twi and when you say you do not understand or speak twi then they change so I had to start learning the basic words to understand. For instance, when you go to the market and they ask you a question I have noticed that they are always asking you what you want or what you want to buy. And because I made a lot of Ghanaian friends, I actually started asking them to teach me so now I know how to say I do not speak twi in the twi language. **(Claire, 19, October 2020)**

Frances, a Togolese also faced some challenges with the local languages spoken in Accra. She narrated:

English is not the most spoken language, it is Twi. People will be speaking Twi to me and I am like, “ahh sorry I do not know”, and then they will ask me how long I have been in Ghana, and I will say 2 years. And they always go like “and you do not speak twi?” and I am like, No. I am surrounded by people who speak French or English. **(Frances, 24, October 2020)**

This Congolese student also shared her challenges:

One thing I must say disappoints me is that sometimes some lecturers speak twi in class. One day in math class, there was something that almost all of us were not getting so the teaching assistant started explaining the whole thing in twi not knowing that there were some foreigners there that would not get it. So, for that part I had to go to a friend for translation and explanation just because he decided to explain that part in twi. **(Laurel, 20, September 2020)**

4.6.3 Experiences with Accommodation

The University of Ghana has several hostels and halls of residence that cater to international students on campus. For instance, the International Students Hostel, popularly known as ISH, houses the majority of international students who are undergraduates and the VALCO hostel also houses graduate students. Therefore, almost all respondents commented positively on their experiences with accommodation.

Nia from Sweden shared this experience:

It was stated in my admission letter who to contact in terms of accommodation on campus. I sent them an email but then when I arrived on campus, I went to the VALCO hostel with my bags and everything I needed and said hello I do not know who I emailed but I am coming to stay here and they looked a bit surprised because it looked like they had no idea what I was talking about so they did not get a room for me. I had to wait for an hour and then they managed to get a room for me so I guess there was a misunderstanding and they did not communicate well but they were super nice to me. I just got the feeling like they did not know and were not expecting me. But staying in the hostel was quite good. We were just two in a room and I was paired with a Ghanaian student and that helped me greatly. My roommate was my source of information and that friendship helped me in different ways. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

These two Nigerians also shared these positive experiences

Accommodation is good, staying at the international hostel. It was good and I stayed there for two and then I moved to Bani hostel before moving off campus. I will say for international students it is good that they get to see not only other international students and Ghanaian students but people from your own country as well. **(Daniel, 25, September 2020)**

I have been at ISH and have not really bothered to try to move out. I am comfortable but I had friends moving to Pent and Bani hostels. I quite liked how the accommodation arrangement was at ISH and how clean the shared areas are. **(Tobi, 26, September 2020)**

4.6.4 Experiences with Socio-cultural life

Living in a different country is usually an avenue for international students to experience the culture and way of life of the local people. International students interviewed for the study suggested that they had diverse experiences with the social life in Ghana with regards to making friends as well as the nightlife in the country.

4.6.4.1 Ghanaian Friends

One major experience that emerged from interviewing the respondents was the experiences of making Ghanaian friends and how they impacted the daily lives of students. Different international students shared their different experiences. For some students, they found it difficult to make Ghanaian friends and tended to be friends with mostly students from their home countries or other international students.

Other students expressed their positive experiences with making Ghanaian friends and how these friends impacted their social and academic life. Laurel from Congo shared:

I would say that making Ghanaian friends really helped me. And as most of the friends I had were Ghanaians, they were warm to me and helped me out with academics and also like culturally how to do things and things to expect from people in terms of behaviors and attitudes. So, I would say having Ghanaian friends helped ease into the society properly. **(Laurel, 20, September 2020)**

Frances from Togo also narrated her positive experiences:

I am definitely happy that I have made some Ghanaian friends because when I first got here, I used to be around Togolese and francophone people and the way that we hang out and speak is completely different from how the Ghanaians hangout and speak. Ghanaians are very funny and I would say that they are not serious; you know sometimes the slang that they have been saying has now affected me and I have started using some of these slangs and I have been acting some type of way, it is very interesting. I have noticed very recently that I am acting more like my Ghanaian friends than the Togolese that I am and my francophone friends are telling me, you are now a Ghanaian, we do not recognise you. **(Frances, 24, October 2020)**

Others also faced challenges. One student from Nigeria narrated his challenges with making Ghanaian friends:

I did not really make many Ghanaian friends and I mostly tended to move with some Nigerian students on campus. It was quite difficult to actually learn the language because of this. I would say I did not really make Ghanaian friends because I have been at the international students' hostel for the entirety of my stay and there are mostly only international students there with a few Ghanaians and they mostly spoke in the local languages after classes and that made it difficult to connect with them on that level. **(Tobi, 26, September 2020)**

4.6.4.2 Experiences with Local Food

One of the social and cultural experiences that international students are faced with is local dishes and drinks. For some international students, food options in a new environment may be limited. Some students were eager to try new dishes and had positive reviews and experiences. This Togolese student shared her experience:

Oh, I love Ghanaian food. Honestly, I miss the traditional dishes which we used to eat, but I like the waakye, the Jollof...oh my gosh! and the way Ghanaians prepare fufu is actually different from the way Togo prepares fufu so I found that

interesting. We cook a lot of similar stuff but it is just in different ways and adding different stuff...so it is pleasant. Ghanaian food is nice. **(Frances, 24, October 2020)**

Leo from Nigeria also narrated:

Ghana has more investment in natural or organic fruits, there is more fruits, variety and it is easily accessible but in Nigeria, it is more of processed fruits. For me it is kind of better. **(Leo, 30, October 2020)**

Others also found it difficult to adjust to the local cuisines when they first arrived. Nabilla from Ivory Coast shared her challenges:

When I first arrived in Ghana, the only place I knew to get food was the night market and the food they sell there is so spicy and in Congo, we do not eat spicy food, so I was either eating with lots of water or eating very little. **(Nabilla, 23, October 2020)**

4.6.4.3 Night Life in Accra

Some international students expressed their experiences with the nightlife in Accra. These experiences have been positive and they also expressed their satisfaction with the nightlife in Ghana. They shared their positive experiences:

Adam from the United States of America shared his positive experiences:

I actually enjoy nights out with my friends back home and with the nightlife here, since I made friends with more local students, I was shown my way around all the good spots and where to go for some dancing, how to get there, about the transportation, the currency and a few other hacks so it has been quite good. **(Adam, 20, October 2020)**

This Togolese student also narrated her positive experiences with the night life in Accra:

Nightlife in Ghana is very fun. I have gone out a few times with my friends and it is interesting. We go from one place to another place, to another place. It is like you

get to see Ghana in a different light. Ghana is fun in general but at night time everyone goes crazy. **(Frances, 24, October 2020)**

4.6.5 Support and Service from the University

For most international students, they require the utmost help and support when they first arrive in a new country. Help and support in terms of their access to information, counselling among others. Respondents said they mostly receive help from their friends as well as students and the International Programmes Office (IPO). Whereas some of the respondents were aware of the assistance the IPO offers to international students, other respondents felt that the IPO only offered support to international students from the Global North.

A Congolese student shared her experience:

The IPO created a group for international students on WhatsApp so they put all information there and there are people available to help you. If you just ask them a question or need any sort of information, they are happy to help. I would say it was quite easy to get access to information. **(Marie, 19, October 2020)**

Nia from Sweden faced some challenges with information and support from the University. She shared this:

[laughs] well the information was not that good but it was okay and it was a bit hard because you had to go about to find the right person to get the information from. Information was not clear especially on the university website and on the information boards or anything like that and you had to ask around and I guess that is different from Sweden because they make it clear and systematic on how to do things. I feel like access to information could be better and the information itself could be clearer. Also, if you call someone or send an email it is very rare to get an answer, so I had to ask many students and my professors concerning how to do things cause when you come into a new system there is a lot you don't know and you feel stupid for not knowing some things. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

4.6.6 Experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic

At the time when interviews were conducted, there was an outbreak of COVID-19 which became a global pandemic. As a result, some barriers to mobility such as difficulty crossing international borders and movement within countries impacted several migrants including international students. The government of Ghana instituted a lockdown in several cities in the country. Accra was one of these cities impacted and the restrictions associated with the lockdown affected many international students. Some of the international students interviewed expressed some negative experiences with how the university handled the issues related to the pandemic for those that remained on campus. Some respondents faced challenges during their stay on campus and narrated:

Laurel from Congo narrated her challenges during the pandemic:

...also, with the COVID issue, we did not have any support from the university and we were left on our own. I was stuck on campus with the borders closed. My other international student friends were on campus with no family. I actually lost my laptop. Someone broke into my room and stole most of my belongings and nothing was done about it. **(Laurel, 20, September 2020)**

Another student from Ivory Coast shared this experience:

Unfortunately, I happened to be on campus during the lockdown and I must confess it was not easy at all. Imagine being away from your family during a pandemic and then receiving no support from the university. I had to rely on other friends who were also in the hostel. It was a rough time for me. **(Lum, 26, September 2020)**

Nia from Sweden also narrated:

I had no idea what was going on. When the university was closed down, all my friends had to leave for home. I was on campus with no idea what to do until nationals from my country were evacuated. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

The challenges these international students faced during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their mobility in the country. This also made it difficult for them to travel back to their countries of origin. Others also faced financial difficulties and had no social networks to fall back on. Without the necessary support from the University, these international students found it difficult to cope with the stress of being away from their families and friends.

4.6.7 Experiences with the weather in Ghana

With regards to the weather in Ghana, all non-African students that were interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the weather. Considering the differences in the climatic conditions of Ghana and the USA, Sweden, and Denmark, all of the respondents from these countries were generally happy about the warm weather.

Nia from Sweden shared this:

Oh, I love the weather, I love it. I really do love the weather here in Ghana. it is mostly warm compared to the weather in Sweden I really love it here. Although I must say I find it difficult to study when the weather is extremely hot which is the only disadvantage of the effects of the heat on me. (Nia, 29, September 2020)

A student from Denmark recounted: “It is always bright and sunny, like it is summer every day. Denmark is usually cold especially during winter. I really enjoy this weather” (Natasha, 27, October 2020).

4.7 Future immigration intentions and aspirations after completing university

When the respondents were asked about immigration intention after graduation and whether they intended to stay in Ghana, there were varying responses that suggested that they had imagined

different possibilities. Out of the total number, 2 undergraduate students said they wanted to stay in Ghana to continue to study for their master's degrees. For instance, a Congolese student had this to say: "I think I will stay here for my studies, maybe get my masters. If I do maybe get an opportunity to, I will take it. I will really like to continue my studies in Ghana" (**Laurel, 20, September 2020**).

Nine of the students said they wanted to return to their home countries to find jobs because they could not compete with the locals and also, they had their networks there that would be beneficial.

A Nigerian narrated;

I would go back to Nigeria for my national service. After that my uncle has promised to help me find a good paying job. At least that is better than not knowing your future in a different country. (**Lolu, 27, September 2020**)

Another Togolese student shared this:

"My certification from here holds a higher value back home. I am thinking of going back home for the opportunities that are there. I think my skills will be needed back home" (**Marcel, 24, September 2020**).

Three other respondents hoped to migrate to a different country after their education to either work or school. These international students had hopes of migrating to countries in the global north. One Ivorian student had this to say: "I actually want to get a job and go back to school. I do not think I will stay here but I would rather go to another country preferably in Europe, America or Canada" (**Claire, 19, October 2020**).

This respondent also shared that she had the option of moving back to her home country Ivory Coast.

The rest had hopes of staying back in Ghana to find good paying jobs. For instance, this Congolese had this to say:

I intend to stay in Ghana for a few more years and work. I have fallen in love with Ghana and I have had more positive experiences here in Ghana so I do want to stay and then later go back to my country. I do not have family here but I am hoping to rely on my Ghanaian friends to help me find work after my studies. **(Marie, 19, October 2020)**

Another student from Sweden also shared this:

I would like to find a job as soon as I finish my dissertation. I would preferably want to work and to stay in Ghana if I ever find a job here but other than that I would return to my country after my graduation. **(Nia, 29, September 2020)**

Daniel, a Nigerian also shared:

I have all the intentions of staying in Ghana and not returning to Nigeria. Ghana is peaceful and the system works well here than in Nigeria. Well of course I will go there to visit but it will mostly be for family visits. Once I graduate, I will have to go back for my national youth service and I have family here that are willing to support my goal of living here and working so I will say with that I am hopefully sorted out. **(Daniel, 25, September 2020)**

5.8 Case Study of Two Respondents

From 20 international students interviewed for the study, I focused on two cases. Nia, a 29-year-old female international student from Sweden and Marcel, 24-year-old a male international student from Togo. Both international students were residents on the University of Ghana campus. Marcel was an undergraduate student whereas Nia was a graduate student.

NIA

Motivation for studying in Ghana and at the University of Ghana

Before her arrival in Ghana, Nia reflected on the possible destination she wanted to study for her postgraduate degree and shared that she was motivated to choose Ghana as a study destination because the cost of studying in Ghana was relatively cheaper than other countries. She also shared that the language of instruction was a major factor in her decision to study in Ghana. What led Nia

to select the University of Ghana was her interest in the Migration studies course that was offered at the university. She expressed that she was particularly interested in migration within Africa and the University was the only one within the West African region that offered that program. The last reason informing Nia's choice of the University was the location of the university. She shared that she wanted a place where "all the action takes place" which informed her decision to choose University of Ghana over other universities in Ghana.

Positive experiences of studying at the University of Ghana

Nia narrated her experiences with academic work at the University of Ghana with much enthusiasm, recounting that the overall quality of teaching and studying in Ghana was good. She was elated and satisfied with the quality of education she was receiving in the country and she expressed "... I was quite happy about it". Nia also shared that her class was a small one, with about 11 students which made access to professors easy and less stressful. She compared the small class size here at the University of Ghana to her bigger class size during her undergraduate study in Sweden, and shared, "I would say it was also very good that my class was small in a small centre and that helped, ... compared to over 50 students in a class which makes it difficult to develop student-professor relationships". Through the interview, Nia also recounted that her experiences with accommodation on campus was positive, although she experienced a setback when she first arrived at the Valco Hostel. She noted that this setback was a misunderstanding and miscommunication between the staff at the university hostel in which she was staying. In addition, Nia expressed her gratitude for being paired with a Ghanaian roommate. She recognized that this roommate became her source of information, and as well as her companion during her stay at the Valco Hostel.

In relation to her experiences with the weather in Ghana, Nia stated that she found the weather in Ghana more pleasant than that of Sweden. She narrated how cold it was in Sweden and how much she was enjoying the warm weather in Ghana. She expressed, “Oh, I love the weather, I love it. I really do love the weather here in Ghana”. Although she preferred Ghana’s warm weather, there were times she found it difficult to study because it was extremely hot. However, she shared that she prefers the weather in Ghana.

Challenges of studying in Ghana

Even though Nia was satisfied with the quality of education that she was receiving at the University of Ghana, she recounted her challenges with Ghana’s education system. She narrated that her challenges presented itself in the way exams are conducted in Ghana. For instance, she shared that whereas teaching is quite formal and examinations are conducted in a “sit in” at the end of the school semester in Ghana, examinations in Sweden were spread across, spanning a period of weeks. The difference in education systems between Ghana and Sweden caused her stress and put pressure on her. Nia also shared that another challenge she expressed in the academic setting was English. As a Swedish native, Nia narrated her challenges with the English language. She found it difficult to fully understand some phrases and nuances of the English language and was therefore sometimes unable to fully comprehend during lectures, causing her stress. She said “it is more stressful as English is not my first language which was also a stress for me”.

Nia also experienced challenges with access to information from the University of Ghana. The international programs office is in charge of disseminating information to all international students at the university. While laughing, she narrated how difficult it was to navigate the university’s website when she first applied to study here as well as access information when she arrived. Moreover, she “felt stupid” for not knowing “simple things” and recounted how rare it is for the

IPO to reply emails. She had to rely on information from other international students and her Ghanaian friends.

Another major challenge Nia experienced was during the COVID-19 pandemic. She recalled getting no information from the university during the lockdown instituted by the Government and how difficult it was for her to cope with the absence of her friends during the lockdown. She expressed “when the university was closed down, all my friends had to leave for home. I was on campus with no idea what to do until nationals from my country were evacuated”.

When asked which of these experiences she felt was most significant, Nia expressed that her constant communication with Ghanaians has improved her English-speaking abilities and her experience with the culture. She said “I have much love for Ghana and I like everything about the country”.

Marcel

Motivations for studying in Ghana

Marcel’s choice to study in Ghana was based on three considerations, with the most important being his desire to compete in the labour market in his home country. This was evident in his narration on why he decided to study in Ghana. He explained that there was a preference for foreign educated students in Togo and he “wanted a good paying job”. In addition, he was influenced by some of his social networks who had previously studied in Ghana and at the University. His social networks spoke about the prestige of the university and the standard of education that was offered. He believed that although it was quite expensive to study in the country, studying in Ghana increased his chances of getting employed. Lastly, Marcel was motivated to study in Ghana because it was close to his country of origin and “it will be easier to go home anytime I feel homesick”.

Positive experiences with studying in Ghana

Like Nia, Marcel narrated his experiences with academic work with enthusiasm, detailing how pleased he was with the standard of teaching and learning at the university. He was happy he followed the advised of his family and friends to study at the University.

Marcel also started his education with high hopes of improving his English proficiency and narrated how happy he was that he was able to speak more fluently because most people in the university spoke English. He however stated that he didn't find it easy when he first arrived. He was also excited he was able to speak Ewe, his local language with other Ghanaians.

In addition, Marcel described his experiences with the Ghanaian culture as positive. He stated he had no difficulty with adjusting to the culture in the country because they were similar to the culture in Togo. He noted that it was easier to make friends with other Ghanaians and he had no problem with the cuisines in the country. His interactions with Ghanaians also provided him with support whenever he need it and he also looked forward to spending more with them and said this; “the friends that I made here have been of great support... they showed me around, how to go about things, where not to go...they made me feel at home that I didn't miss much about Togo”

Challenges faced studying in Ghana

Marcel reflected on his overall experience and stated that his overall experience at this university has been positive. However, his only challenge was maintaining a strong relationship with his professors. He realized that his interaction with his lecturers was not as effective as he would have liked by describing this challenge, “for the course I am taking, the class has a large number of students so it is impossible to maintain the student-teacher relationship that I would like”. Although this was a challenge, he expressed he was willing to develop the relationships he desired with his lecturers.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

The dissertation explores the motivations of international students to study in Ghana as well as their expectations before they move to the country and the experiences of international students in Ghana. This chapter discusses the results of the study and is divided into 4 sub-sections. The first section presents the discussion of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second section analyses the motivation of international students to study in Ghana. The third section analyses the expectations and experiences of international students. The final section analyses the permanent immigration intention of international students.

5.1 Demographic Characteristics of respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents show that the average age of respondents is 24.3 which indicates that most young people are migrating out of their countries of origin. Data from the UN shows that youth between the ages of 18 and 29 account for a large proportion of international migrants. This indicates that younger people are more likely to migrate than older people. In terms of gender, there were more female respondents in this study than male respondents. Data obtained from IPO indicates that there are more enrolled female international students than males. The literature shows that in recent times, females are more likely to study internationally than males (Stroud, 2010). As evident from statistics from the International Programs Office at the University of Ghana, there has been a decline in enrolment of international students at the university over the last five years, from 245 in 2015/2016 academic year to 149 in 2019/2020 academic year. However, between 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, there was an increase in enrolment. In terms of marital status, all respondents were single which indicates that single people

are more likely to migrate than married people because they do not have immediate family or social ties and will find it easier to migrate as individuals than with a family.

Results from the study indicates that students from Africa make a majority of international students, as many Africans tend to move within the continent. Twelve respondents were from the West African subregion and this can be attributed to ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of persons, right of residence and establishment which has facilitated easy movement for students within the subregion. The results also indicates that students from Nigeria and the United States of America comprise the majority of international students in Ghana which is consistent with the assertion of Kamran et al. (2019). The demographic characteristics of respondents also shows that 17 respondents, which makes the majority of total respondents were undergraduates which is consistent with data obtained from the IPO. The undergraduates were affiliated to the Colleges of Basic and Applied Sciences and Humanities whereas the postgraduates were affiliated with the Colleges of Humanities and Health Sciences.

5.2 International students' motivation for studying abroad

Ghana is emerging as a destination for international education and the University of Ghana as a university of choice. International students' motivation for studying in Ghana are the factors that influence them to choose Ghana as their country of destination for higher education. According to studies by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), there are "push" and "pull" factors that influence and encourage international students to study abroad. This research also found that the migration decisions were influenced by the interplay of "push-pull" factors that exist in both the origin and destination. Findings from this research also indicate that international students' motivations vary depending on the country of origin and for most of the students, decisions to study in Ghana were

taken by themselves, while others were also influenced by family. International students' mobility to Ghana is motivated by several factors. From this research, it is evident that the main motivation for studying abroad was education.

One of the common motivating factors aside from the desire to receive a world class education from Ghana was the desire and strategy to gain access to an international career or promotion at an existing job. Respondents from the interviews revealed that a degree from a prestigious university in Ghana like the University of Ghana would enhance their ability to compete in an internationalized labor market due to their exposure to different cultural experiences they have gained by studying and living abroad. Other students also believed that combining their undergraduate degrees with a postgraduate degree from Ghana was a way to give them access to job opportunities that exist in Ghana. This corroborates with the study conducted by King and Sondhi (2018) which analyses the motivation of international students from India to developed Anglophone countries and UK students to Australia, North America, and Europe. The study found that the motivation of the Indians to study in another country were largely influenced by the prospect of competing well in the international labour market after acquiring a foreign degree. Therefore, in the case of the Indian students in the UK and international students in Ghana, international students generate human capital in both local and global contexts that allow them access to labour markets in both the host and home countries.

Another common factor motivating students to study abroad in Ghana is to learn new and different cultures and experience some indigenous cultures. Some students especially non-Africans believed that studying in Ghana would present an avenue to learn about the culture and history of Ghanaians as well as the art forms of the people. These cultures are relatively new and different from what these students are used to and therefore serves as a motivating factor to study in Ghana. Since

cultures around Africa are mostly similar to each other, African students are usually not motivated to study in another African country to experience the culture of the country.

As found in this study and the study by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), international students were motivated by financial factors like the basic cost of tuition, accommodation, living and travel expenses. Tuition fees paid by international students vary, depending on the duration of the course programme, from short courses to Bachelors, Masters and PhD programmes and are usually higher than what domestic students pay. Some interviewees pointed out that the cost of tuition in Ghana was relatively cheaper than in other countries especially those in the global north. This was done by comparing tuition costs with other countries. Although some students saw these costs as cheap, others also believed that the costs were the same as in other countries, especially for postgraduate programs. Therefore, costs of tuition combined with quality education were the factors that motivated some students to study in Ghana, not just affordability.

Language of instruction is another factor that motivated international students to study in Ghana. The opportunity to learn English and improve on proficiency encouraged some international students to choose Ghana as a country of destination. From the interviews, the respondents who were most motivated to study in Ghana because of the use of English as a language of instruction were mostly non-English speakers. Studies by Altbach (2007) and Zheng (2010) also suggest that international students are motivated to study abroad to improve their English proficiency. This trend of students moving to English-speaking destination countries is an indicator of how prominent the English language is which attracts international students.

In relation to the factors that influence international students to study abroad, one finding that emerged was that some international students were motivated to study in Ghana because of the proximity to their countries of origin. Some international students indicated that while deciding on

their study abroad destinations, they paid attention to the geographic proximity of the country to their countries of origin. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) found geographic proximity and the importance of being close to home as a motivating factor for some international students. For instance, this study found that West African students preferred Ghana as one of their countries of destination because they wanted to be close to home and be able to return whenever necessary.

Another motivating factor for international students that respondents revealed in the study was that studying in Ghana offered them some avenue to travel and seek adventure. As found in studies by King and Findlay (2012) and King and Sondhi (2018) studying abroad is seen as a 'rite of passage' at a particular stage in life. Although the essence of academic qualification remains constant, the main aim, however, remains experiential learning, moving away from what is known in the home country and being in another country with diverse culture, climate and scenery. The University of Ghana's marketing officers may explore the inclusion of tourism to the extracurricular activities on campus.

In terms of the motivations in deciding to choose the University of Ghana, some international students revealed that the prestige and ranking of the university was one major factor. According to Findlay et al. (2012), the internationalization of higher education and the increased differences that exist in universities globally has enabled some countries with the ability to place themselves as the gateway to quality education. The University of Ghana has a long-standing reputation for academic excellence and prestige based on the university's ranking. Higher education from Ghana is seen to be of better quality as compared to that of other countries in the subregion. Also, other international students chose to study at the university due to the programs of study here at the university. The study programs at the university are world-class and qualifications from the university are accredited and can be transferred or utilized in other countries. Therefore, to some

respondents, applying to embark on studies at the University of Ghana was a strategy to access the best university outside of their home countries. For instance, the high population growth rate in Nigeria has led to an increased demand for higher education. Nigerian students' decisions to study at the university could be attributed to the fear of not gaining admission into the country's top universities due to the high demand. This finding is consistent with the earliest study by Pugh (1973, as cited in Shanka et al., 2006) and King and Sondhi (2018) who have shown that the prestige of attending a world-class university for specific study programs is one major motivation for international students' choice of institution for further education. Because there is increasing competition in international education, University of Ghana's marketing strategies should play a crucial role in developing a distinctive image as well as the maintenance of its reputation in order to recruit more international students.

The location of University of Ghana was also a motivating factor in the selection of institution for some international students. Respondents in this research indicated that they were motivated to study at the university because it is located in Accra which is the capital city of Ghana. These respondents were motivated by the facilities and infrastructure in Accra compared to other cities in Ghana. One respondent revealed that she wanted to stay in the capital city to avoid travelling to another city after arriving in Accra where the international airport is located.

From the interviews conducted, some international students revealed that they were motivated to study at the University of Ghana due to some social networks. The influence of family and friends play an important role in international students' decision to study abroad and the choice of institution. Social networks play important roles in assisting new migrants in settling in, particularly by giving the necessary information about the quality of education, accommodation and transportation. Studies by Brooks and Waters (2011), Shanka et al. (2002) and Bourke (2000)

have shown that international students regard the opinions of social networks when selecting institutions for further education as well as have the desire to maintain close contact with their family and friends. From the study, international students revealed that family members and friends who had previously attended the university or are still in attendance influenced their decision to study at the University of Ghana over other universities in the country. Although both Africans and non-Africans were motivated to choose the university based on recommendations by their family and friends, more African students revealed that they were influenced by their social networks. Africans place more importance on the relationships that exist between students, former students, and non-migrants and how the presence of already established social networks at a destination can be a source of support for new migrants. Social networks have the ability to help international students overcome some obstacles such as financial or immigration laws they may face in the country.

The pre-departure phase, which comprises the application processes and source of funding for international students were also reported by respondents. For students whose native language is not English, the common requirement for admission was to present proof of English proficiency. Although some respondents revealed that they had bad experiences with the university application process, for the majority of respondents, the application process was fairly easy. Respondents also reported that their applications for visa and immigration into the country was a fairly easy process in comparison to other countries. The research also found that the source of funding for international students in higher education varied. Whereas some students were self-funded, others received help from their social networks and others were a combination of both. The application process for some international students may have influenced the experiences of some students at the university to an extent.

5.3 Expectations and Experiences of international students in Ghana

5.3.1 Expectations of international students

The research sought to explore the expectations of international students and to establish whether the expectations of international students have been met. Regarding the expectations of international students, most of the factors found in the literature have been confirmed through the interviews conducted. Some international students reiterated that they came to Ghana with high expectations of receiving quality education and training that were practical and increased their future career aspirations and this result is consistent with an existing study that was conducted by Sherry et al. (2004) and East (2001). These researchers found that international students expected quality of teaching that responded to their needs. Respondents revealed that they were satisfied with the quality of teaching that they were receiving. The interviews also revealed that international students also expect to improve their language proficiency and expected institutional support to improve their English proficiency. These students were mainly from non-English speaking countries with English as a second language. This finding resonated with the study that was conducted by Ransom et al. (2005), which had shown that students with English as a second language expected to improve their language proficiency with support from their university. Respondents who expected to improve their language proficiency affirmed that their expectations had been met.

As found in this study as well as the studies done by East (2001) and Hellsten (2002), international students had the expectations of enjoying their social lives. The study conducted by Hellsten (2002) explored the expectations of international students in Australia and found that international students expected to integrate easily into the social and cultural lifestyle of the local communities. Similarly, the study conducted by East (2001) suggests that international students had expectations

of socializing with locals. This has been corroborated by this study which also found that international students expected to create friendships with the locals to foster easy integration into the Ghanaian societies and lifestyle. Most of the participants expected to enjoy their social lives and meet new people to make meaningful friendships, although some of the international students found it difficult to develop friendships and enjoy themselves due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the same light, some international students interviewed for the study revealed that they expected the cost of living in Ghana to be affordable or cheaper than their home countries and were disappointed when their initial expectations were not met. The interviews also revealed that some West African international students had low expectations regarding the cultural and social life, stating that their cultural and social backgrounds are similar to that of Ghanaians. This could be indicative of the fact that most countries across the African continent have similar social and cultural backgrounds. Other international students had high expectations of social and cultural life which is in line with the study conducted by East (2001).

Some international students interviewed revealed that they did not have high expectations of the facilities on campus. From the interviews, the students appeared astonished at the ease of access to facilities on campus. On the other hand, some students also had high expectations of the facilities on campus because of the prestige of the university as being one of the best in West Africa. The students who had low expectations of the facilities on campus could be attributed to the fact that the universities in their home countries were of low quality.

Also, this study found that access to information was a key expectation of most international students. The interviews revealed that most international students expected to receive help and support from the university authorities about academic life in Ghana and the university, the libraries on campus, the medical and transport services on campus and in Ghana. While the

University of Ghana provides support through the International Programs Office, some international students expressed that they received information from their fellow students rather than the IPO. Interestingly, some international students indicated that they had no prior expectations before moving to study in Ghana and at the University of Ghana. These students had similar economic and socio-cultural backgrounds as that of Ghana. The respondents who had no expectations revealed that they were surprised about the university and Ghana as a whole.

5.3.2 Experiences of international students in Ghana

International students face several experiences while studying in Ghana which could be either country experience or institutional experience. These experiences can also be positive or negative which can influence the students' perception of Ghana as a host country and the University of Ghana as a higher education institution. Respondents revealed some experiences with academic work at the University of Ghana. Experiences with academic work consisted of experiences with studies and lecturer-student relationship. Akensivie et al. (2013) and Hsu (2003) found that international students had diverse experiences with academic work and lecturer-student relationships in their higher education institutions. Hsu (2003) found that some Chinese students studying in the United States of America are likely to experience academic shock when they arrive at the university. Findings from this study confirmed that some international students felt that the academic environment at the University of Ghana is more rigorous than what they were used to and felt overwhelmed. Others also gave positive comments about the quality and style of teaching at the university. The study also found that faculty relationship with international students played a significant role in their learning experiences. Most respondents mentioned that they received academic support from faculty members. Some also revealed that they had no academic support

and interaction with faculty members. Also, no respondent revealed that they received emotional support from faculty members.

A recurrent theme in the literature is the language problem that international students encounter in host countries. For instance, Kuo (2011) indicates that the language barrier is a major problem that most foreign students face, which adversely affects their study as well as everyday life. Due to this language barrier, international students can experience academic stress, and the inability to make friends and integrate into the local societies. From the results of the study, some participants from non-English speaking backgrounds revealed that they had difficulties in understanding and communicating well with their fellow students which is consistent with studies conducted by Ward (2001), Sherry et al. (2010) and O'Reilly et al. (2015). In contrast, some international students had no problem with the use of English as a language of instruction because of their proficiency in the English language. Through the interviews, the study also found that most of the international students encountered some language barrier in their out-of-school lives. For the students who did not understand any of the local languages spoken in Ghana, it was extremely difficult for them to go about their daily lives such as communicating with the locals, going shopping and simply asking for help. Some respondents acknowledged that they had to find some alternative by asking local students to help translate for them. Others also learned the Ghanaian languages through interactions with the local people to improve their daily experiences. Most international students encounter the Ghanaian language barrier because the languages are indigenous to the local people and other West African countries like Togo and Cote d'Ivoire and not spoken globally. Some international students thus face double linguistic challenges; English in academic settings and local languages for cultural adaptation. When local languages are used or encouraged in academic

settings by local students and lecturers, it becomes a barrier to academic success and creates a feeling of exclusion and discrimination.

In terms of accommodation on campus, residence halls provided international students with the chance to connect with people as well as participate in recreational events with Ghanaian students and other international students. Respondents interviewed expressed positive experiences with accommodation on campus as the University of Ghana provides accommodation facilities to all international students. Residential accommodation alleviated the international students' anxiety about being alone by having access to the necessities that saved them considerable time and effort. Some respondents also revealed that living with Ghanaian roommates have made friendships possible that would otherwise be hard to establish without living in the same accommodation space.

Respondents also experienced some cultural and social lifestyle of Ghanaians and other international students. International students emphasized the differences in socio-cultural norms in the interviews. Sawir et al. (2008) and McClure (2007) found that international students usually feel lonely and isolated and thus making new friends with the absence of networks helps students enjoy their educational and social experiences. This study was no different. Some respondents emphasized that new-found friendships with classmates and roommates helped them bridge their barriers to communication and also helped them access information. Hsu (2003) noted in his study about cultural adaption experiences of Chinese higher education students that adapting to new cultures was one of the experiences that international students are likely to face in the destination. Food is another aspect of the socio-cultural life that students shared various experiences with because the food served and sold on campus was mainly Ghanaian food, which most of the student respondents were not used to. Although some international students reported that they enjoyed the

local Ghanaian cuisine, some respondents also reported that they were unable to find food vendors that satisfied their food cravings. International students also expressed positive experiences with the nightlife in Ghana. Having enough activities for fun especially at night was a common positive experience shared by most respondents.

International students also expressed diverse experiences in relation to their access to information. Some international students were also helped by orientations and peer mentoring to access information about academics and campus resources. The inadequacy of information about campus life, living conditions and academic activities that some students faced created tremendous stress as international students did not know what to expect. The key sources of information for students before moving were the media, relatives and friends who had previously studied in Ghana. Sadly, both sources represent very different perspectives than those experienced by the respondents. Their expectations were not aligned with the facts on the ground.

Research findings of this study also revealed the experiences that international students face during a pandemic like the COVID-19. The pandemic has affected several families, communities and countries. One vulnerable group that the pandemic has affected is international students. Some international students are isolated in hostels with little interaction or assistance from the University. During the data collection process, most of the international students had been evacuated by their respective countries. Whereas the government of Ghana provided relief for some vulnerable groups, international students by virtue of their immigration status were exempted. Some respondents revealed that the pandemic impacted them negatively and the absence of family and social networks made it difficult to cope. Students reported cases of theft and neglect by the University during this pandemic.

Some respondents for this study also reported experiences with the weather in Ghana. Akensivie et al. (2013) found that international students in Ghana had problems adjusting to the weather conditions in Ghana. This study however found that some of the international students at the University had positive experiences with the weather and had no issues adjusting to the weather conditions in the country, depending on the nature of the weather in their home country. The respondents indicated that they enjoyed the humid weather in the country.

In the study conducted by Sherry et al. (2010) about international students' learning experiences at the University of Toledo, the researchers highlighted financial difficulties as a challenge that most international students are faced with. The international students in this study did not express any financial difficulties. This could be attributed to the fact that the cost of tuition and living expenses in Ghana is affordable as compared to other universities in developed countries.

5.4 Permanent immigration intention of international students

The findings of this research also indicated that a number of international students had the desire to stay back in Ghana to seek job prospects, which could be seen as international students' satisfaction with the quality of education received at the University of Ghana and satisfaction of Ghana as a country of destination. Most of the international students who wanted to stay back in the country were mostly other African students, which is an indication of their perceptions of the labor market and employment opportunities that exist in Ghana. This aspect of the findings supports Wells' (2013) suggestions that many students' intention to study abroad is a strategy to stay and work in the host country after their studies.

The findings of this research also indicated that when it comes to the decisions of international students to remain in Ghana, some push factors deterred some of the international students from considering the possibility of returning home after their studies. Some of these factors included a

lack of social networks and the desire to escape the social conditions at the origin. On the other hand, the formation of the social networks, job prospects and attachments to Ghana are some pull factors that influence international students to stay in Ghana, which is non-financial. Most of these influences are non-financial considerations that influenced the decisions to remain in Ghana are not in line with previous research which could be due to the fact that most of the earlier researches done on student mobility have focused on how the political economy has influenced international mobility.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of findings and conclusions of the study. Policy recommendations are also proposed to increase international students' mobility to Ghana.

5.1 Summary of Findings

With the majority of studies focusing on international students' mobility from the Global South to the Global North and limited literature focusing on international students' mobility in the Global South, this study employed a qualitative approach to analyze the motivations of international students to study in Ghana and explore their expectations as well as experiences while studying in Ghana. This study has revealed that international students' mobility trends are expected to increase attributable to globalization and internationalization of university education. The findings of this study indicated that in terms of countries with higher percentages in the University of Ghana, Nigerian and American students constituted the highest number of respondents. Females constituted the highest number of participants for this study which is an indication of statistics of the gender composition of international students enrolled at the university. The majority of the participants were undergraduate students. The age distribution of international students shows that a majority of respondents were young, with the youngest being 19 and the oldest 30. The average age of the respondents was 24.3. This finding shows that the majority of international students in Ghana are young. The findings revealed the reasons why Ghana is becoming a major study abroad country for international students in recent years.

The findings of the study revealed that an international student's motivation to study abroad varies depending on the country of origin. Some factors such as the ability to compete in the labor market, learning a new culture, finance, language of instruction, proximity, and adventure were highly influential in international students' decision and motivation to study in Ghana.

On factors that influenced international students' choice of the University of Ghana as an institution for higher education, the most influential factors were programs of study at the university and the university's ranking and prestige. The location of the university and the influence and recommendation of social networks also influenced international students to study at the University of Ghana.

Through the interviews, it was found that all respondents had a fairly easy process of applying for admission to the university. All international students who needed to apply for visas also revealed that the application process was not difficult and the process took less time as compared to other countries. The study also found that some students were self-funded and paid for the costs of tuition and other expenses with their resources whereas others also relied on their social networks for support.

Findings from the interviews on the expectations of international students about studying in Ghana and at the University of Ghana revealed that international students move into a country with high expectations. While some students had high expectations of the curriculum at the university and hoped that they would be offered quality education, others also had high expectations of improving their English language proficiency. Others also expected to have a fulfilling social life, to gain easy access to information and facilities. Other students however also moved to the country without any prior expectations.

From the interviews, it was found that international students' experiences can be both positive and negative. Based on the lived experiences of international students, one of the most significant experiences was the language barrier that international students face which influenced their academic and social lives. Whereas language barriers, experiences with COVID-19 were generally negative, experiences with studies, accommodation, lecturer-student relationship, weather, Ghanaian friends among others have been positive.

Finally, the study also indicated that a considerable number of international students are inclined to remaining in Ghana after their studies to either work or further their education. The study showed that although some (6) African students expressed their intention of staying to find employment in the country, five of them had the intention of going back to their home countries. Other African students also stated they had the intention of migrating to other countries outside of Africa. Only one non-African student stated that she had the intention of staying on after her studies while the rest said that they were intending to move back home. This is a significant finding since most non-Africans do not have the intention of staying on the continent.

5.2 Conclusions

Until recently, international students' mobility was considered to be a Global North to South movement (Kehm, 2005). New patterns of international students' flows have emerged, facilitated by the growth of "new" educational destinations. Globalization increased the possibilities of international students to study in different parts of the world and the internationalization of universities has increased the competition that universities face globally. The number of inbound international students to Ghana is increasing, making it one of the emerging destinations for international students. Therefore, attracting international students to Ghana can be advantageous

for both international students, universities, and the country. In developed countries particularly, international students have become central to the ability of many tertiary institutions to expand. These students contribute to the enrichment of higher education, the development of links between countries of the world, and the promotion of global understanding. Furthermore, international students provide both financial support and non-financial benefits like socio-cultural, cognitive, and linguistic transfers needed by many universities.

This study provides a qualitative description of the motivations, expectations and experiences of international students at the University of Ghana. Inbound students' mobility to Ghana is based on different rationales and differs for students from different geographical regions. The study concludes that both "push" and "pull" factors in Ghana and the respective countries of origin of international students motivated them to study in Ghana. These factors include learning new cultures, the language of instruction, the moderate cost of education, ability to compete in the labor market and the prospect of seeking adventure and lack of employment and poor social facilities in the home country. Furthermore, some international students view studying in other countries as an opportunity to gain employment or further migrate to another developed country. Therefore, it is important that government and stakeholders maintain the conducive environment that Ghana enjoys in order to attract international students. Focus should also be paid to international students' employment during and after their studies in Ghana. Some international students may want to remain in the country and therefore offering them employment opportunities is a way of retaining them in Ghana.

The research findings reinforce the notion that substantial differences exist between the expectations and experiences of international students. International students arrive with pre-conceived thoughts and notions of the country and educational institution which may not always

align with the realities of on the ground. Experiences can differ from one international student to the other based on their country of origin, duration in the destination country, level of study among others. However, gender differences did not significantly affect the experiences of international students. Thus, institutions should not only manage the expectations of international students but maintain the services that enable these students to maximize their experiences.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendation for Policy

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

First, this research indicated that some international students wish to stay back in the country to work. The labour market and employment opportunities should be made available to international students. Universities can therefore design an international student's employment system to provide international students with job information and recommendations to guide their job search. Some countries including the United States, Canada and New Zealand have put in place immigration policies to retain international students after completion.

Also, international students' recruitment should be proactive. From the study, international students selected the University of Ghana for its prestige. Marketing strategies should look at maintaining the prestige of the University and other universities in Ghana in order to attract more international students. Marketing campaigns on various academic programmes provided by the educational institution and the different career opportunities should be easily accessible by international students on the institutional website. Again, the University authorities should regularly update the data on international students' enrolment on the university's website as a way

of demonstrating that the university is popular among other universities in Ghana for its quality education.

The university should also set up a pandemic relief package especially for international students. As indicated in this study, some international students were stranded on the University of Ghana campus with no assistance from the university and government. Therefore, a pandemic relief fund or package would help ease the stress and financial burden of international students during a pandemic.

Furthermore, departmental associations and student organisations can also include cultural exhibitions in their weekly celebrations aimed at engaging the international students and local students in order for students to learn about their cultures and taste the diverse cuisines from each respective country. Learning the local culture and establishing strong relations with the local communities are often crucial for international students' adaptation into their new environment.

The International Programmes Office should plan and schedule pre-departure orientations on what to expect with all international students before they arrive in Ghana and engage in further orientation about the academic system in Ghana, especially grade points and system of assessment. A brochure could be developed, updated and placed on the UG website for international students.

5.4.1 Recommendations for further Research

Although the research questions in the study have been analysed, it is recommended that further research on the expectations and experiences of international students at tertiary institutions in Ghana be funded on a larger scale to enable comparisons and generalizations to be drawn up. A future study could compare the similarities and differences in expectations and experiences of international students across multiple higher education institutions within Ghana. Also, other

studies can explore the expectations and experiences of international students based on specific home countries in order to improve government policies in the area of international student mobility.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



CENTRE FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Respondent,

My name is Ruth Fafali Aguzey. I am an MA student at University of Ghana’s Centre for Migration Studies. As part of the requirement for the award of an MA Degree, I am conducting a study on the topic “**International Students’ Mobility to Ghana-Expectations and Experiences**”.

I would be grateful if you would spend some time with me. Please be assured that any information provided for this research will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and responses are for academic purposes only.

Thank you.

Signature of Respondent

Date

.....

.....

Thank you for your acceptance.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



CENTRE FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Background Information

- Could you give me some background information? Probe for:
Age
Country of origin
Level of education i.e., graduate/undergraduate, program/ course
Duration of stay in the country etc

2. Motivation and Decision-making of International Students.

- Could you tell me about why you chose to study in a different country instead of studying in your country of origin? Probe for:
Image of host country
Prestige of educational institution
Influence of family and friends
Financial considerations (i.e.: tuition fees, accommodation, living expenses) etc.
- Reasons for choosing Ghana/ University of Ghana as preferred country of destination/ institution of study? Could you tell me some of the factors that influenced this choice?

- Could you discuss the process of preparation to study in Ghana? Probe for visas, transportation, university applications etc, length and duration of the processes

3. Expectations of International Students

- What were your initial expectations of studying in Ghana and the University of Ghana? probe for language proficiency, cultural integration (socialization), support services etc
- In which areas have your initial expectations of studying in Ghana been met?

4. Experiences of International Students

- Could you describe your experiences of studying in Ghana, particularly your day-to-day school life? Probe for access to information, culture (local language, food, night life, Ghanaian friends etc.), accommodation, quality of teaching and lecturer-student relationship, weather
- Can you tell me about the experiences that have been most meaningful? i.e., food, clothing, friends
- Do your experiences correspond to your earlier expectation of studying in Ghana?

5. Future Aspirations of International Students

- Could you tell me about your aspirations after completing your education/course work in Ghana? Probe for intentions to stay after studies or moving to another country,
- Do you have family or friends in Ghana or future destination country who could offer their assistance and guidance with these aspirations?