

**Exploring the Factors Affecting Destination and
Institutional Choice of Educational Tourists of
Emerging Economies: The Case of Nigerian Students
in North Cyprus**

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ABSTRACT

Substantial number of Nigerian educational tourists is travelling each year for tertiary education, making Nigeria a leading student exporting country in the world particularly in African continent. Although USA, Canada, UK, and Australia were the most common destinations, in recent years substantial number of educational tourists has also traveled to some other European and Asian countries. Recently North Cyprus has become an important destination for many Nigerian educational tourists despite its relatively young and developing tertiary sector. The research, aims to explore the factors affecting decisions of Nigerian educational tourists regarding study abroad from an educational tourism perspective. Knowledge about the reasons behind why Nigerian students have been increasingly enrolling to universities in North Cyprus is limited. Here it was aimed to make a contribution to the literature by thoroughly investigating this issue. Using the pull-push model, the researcher conducted a qualitative research to detect and examine factors influencing host country and host institution choices of Nigerian educational tourists and also to identify influences pushing them to seek for tertiary education opportunities elsewhere. The research identified four main categories of push-factors (family and peer influence, problems at local higher education system, problems at local higher education institutions, and personal reasons) that encourage and sometimes force the Nigerian educational tourists to seek for tertiary education alternatives outside their home country. Besides, six main categories of pull-factors (access, cultural factors, environmental factors, financial factors, plans for future, and influence of others) that attract Nigerian educational tourists to North Cyprus were identified. Finally, the research findings revealed that five main categories of factors (academic factors,

admission, financial factors, influence of others, and language) influence the decision of Nigerian education tourists in selecting the host institution.

Keywords: educational tourism, educational tourist, push-pull model, North Cyprus, Nigeria, small island states.

ÖZ

Her yıl önemli sayıda Nijeryalı eğitim turisti yükseköğretim için seyahat ediyor ve bu durum Nijerya'yı dünyada ve özellikle Afrika kıtasında öğrenci ihraç eden önemli bir ülke haline getiriyor. İngiltere, ABD, Kanada ve Avustralya en popüler yerler olsa da, son yıllarda önemli sayıda eğitim turisti diğer bazı Avrupa ve Asya ülkelerine de seyahat etmektedir. Son zamanlarda Kuzey Kıbrıs, nispeten genç ve gelişmekte olan yüksek öğrenim sektörüne rağmen, birçok Nijeryalı eğitim turisti için önemli bir hedef haline gelmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Nijeryalı eğitim turistlerinin yurtdışında eğitim konusunda karar vermelerini etkileyen faktörleri eğitim turizmi perspektifinden incelemektir. Nijeryalı öğrencilerin neden giderek daha fazla Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki üniversitelere kayıt yaptırdıklarının arkasındaki nedenler hakkında çok az şey biliniyor ve bu nedenle bu çalışma, bu konuyu derinlemesine araştırmak suretiyle mevcut literatüre katkıda bulunmayı hedefliyor. Push-push modelini kullanarak, Nijeryalı eğitim turistlerinin ev sahibi ülkeyi ve ev sahibi kurum seçimlerini etkileyen faktörleri ve ayrıca başka bir yerde yükseköğretim fırsatından yararlanmak için onları ülkelerinden uzaklaştıran faktörleri belirlemek ve incelemek için nitel bir araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma, Nijeryalı eğitim turistlerini kendi memleketleri dışında yükseköğretim alternatifleri aramaya teşvik eden ve bazen de zorlayan dört ana itici faktör kategorisini (aile ve akranlar etkisi, yerel yükseköğretim sistemindeki sorunlar, yerel yükseköğretim kurumlarındaki sorunlar ve kişisel nedenler) tanımladı. Öte yandan, Nijeryalı eğitim turistlerini Kuzey Kıbrıs'a çeken altı ana faktör (erişim, kültürel faktörler, çevresel faktörler, finansal faktörler, gelecek için planlar ve diğerlerinin etkisi) kategorileri belirlenmiştir. Son olarak, araştırma bulguları beş ana faktör

kategorisinin (akademik faktörler, kabul, finansal faktörler, başkalarının etkisi ve dil) Nijeryalı eğitim turistlerinin ev sahibi kurum seçimindeki kararını etkilediğini ortaya koydu.

Anahtar Kelimeler: eğitim turizmi, eğitim turizmi, push-pull model, Kuzey Kıbrıs, Nijerya, küçük ada ülkeleri.

DEDICATION

To my dearly loved wife Meryem and my precious daughter Yasemin who have brought great beauty and joy to my life. It was their moral support and constant encouragement that enabled me to complete this work.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EMU	Eastern Mediterranean University
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HTI	Higher Technological Institute

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Growing number of educational tourists have been travelling to various countries for tertiary education. In recent years, core countries, for example, United States, Australia, Canada, and United Kingdom have been the most attractive destinations for educational tourists however, considerable number of educational tourists have also been seeking for tertiary education in Europe, Asia, and Africa. According to Ritchie's (Ritchie, 2003) definition, all international students who travel to any overseas county particularly for educational purposes can be referred as educational tourist. Although educational tourism can take different forms such as conferences, language courses, and training programs; formal tertiary education is the most common and rapidly progressing form of educational tourism.

Students studying outside their home country was around two and a half million in 2007 (UNESCO, 2009), however the number almost doubled in 2014 (ICEF, 2015) and reached to five million students. According OECD (2012), by 2025, the number of international students travelling for tertiary education will reach eight million. It has been reported that (BC&OE, 2012; OECD, 2013; UNESCO, 2009) there is a growing trend among prospective educational tourists from relatively less-developed states entering to academic systems of more advanced countries; particularly where English is the official language or widely-spoken. According to Wilkins and

Huisman (2011), this development can be accounted for by the impact of globalization. Moreover, an increasing number of educational tourists regard travelling abroad for tertiary education as an opportunity for cultural enrichment, developing foreign language abilities, obtaining well-recognized qualifications, and gaining access to job market (OECD, 2013). Meantime, competition among the destination (host) countries and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has become severe in recent years and is likely to exacerbate in future. The English-speaking western countries have been aggressively competing to attract more overseas students.

Particularly in the last decade, the concept of educational tourism has attracted the attention of researchers (Chen, 2007, 2008; Daily, Farewell, & Kumar, 2010; Eder, Smith, & Pitts, 2010; Lam, Ariffin, & Ahmad, 2011; Maringe & Carter, 2007; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Pyvis & Chapman, 2007; Ritchie, 2003; Samah & Ahmadian, 2013; Wilkins, Balakrishnan, & Huisman, 2012; Wilkins & Huisman, 2011) specialized in diverse disciplines; for example, educational leadership, educational management, tourism, marketing, business, and international education to name a few. The researches that have been conducted until today mostly studied student mobility from China, Malaysia, India, and Africa to countries where higher education sector is very well developed and English is either native language or widely spoken. The recent developments in international educational tourism market have raised the need to identify and research the pull and push factors that influenced decisions of educational tourists regarding studying abroad. Studying the mobility of educational tourists from emerging countries to less developed or developing countries however have been neglected. This deficiency in the literature formed the starting-point of this research process.

1.2 Background of the Study

Following the foundation of Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) in 1979, educational tourism sector in North Cyprus has been steadily growing. The structure of the student population has also changed from Turkish Cypriot and Turkish students' domination to a much more multinational dimension. Furthermore, educational tourism sector have played a crucial in North Cyprus economy and considerable developments have been realised in different economic sectors (Katircioglu, 2010). Consecutive governments have developed and implemented policy measures sustain economic gains.

North Cyprus educational tourism sector have been facing fierce international competition from neighboring and other education tourist sending countries. The HEIs in North Cyprus need to formulate new marketing policies to maintain steady student flow from educational tourist exporting states and the origin of educational tourists should be diversifised and dependence on few markets need to be reduced. Official policy makers can formulate policies by thoroughly analyzing the educational tourism sector particularly from the perspective of key stakeholders, namely educational tourists. Understanding how educational tourists make their decisions regarding destination and institution choice is highly essential for the HEIs and policy makers so that they could develop comprehensive policies.

Past research focused on identifying and analyzing the role of different factors influencing decisions of students who travel from large student exporting countries to western countries where HEIs are highly developed and English is the official language. This research will differ in the sense that it will attempt identifying and

exploring factors impelling educational tourists' decision in choosing a HEI in a relatively much smaller and less developed destination where official language is not English; opportunities are less available compare to western countries; and the problems stemming from political non-recognition in international arena putting some obstacles to the further development of the sector. Therefore, the findings of the research will bring about invaluable benefits particularly to national and institutional policy makers and practitioners.

In this research, Nigerian educational students studying at a North Cyprus public university, namely Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), is studied. Nigerian educational tourists, as will be explained in the following parts, constitute the largest cohort of overseas students not only in EMU but in North Cyprus universities in general. Since the arrival of first group of Nigerian educational tourists, their numbers have been steadily growing as compared to some other nationalities which show serious fluctuations or declines over the years.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

In Chapter 3, literature review presented a gap in the research in regarding student mobility between developing countries, particularly the movement of educational tourists from emerging economies to small island states. The general purpose is to comprehend this issue that has not been thoroughly investigated by taking Nigerian educational tourists who are currently enrolled to a HEI in North Cyprus as a case. Therefore the research particularly aim exploring factors prompting international educational tourists' destination and institutional choice and establishing decision making mechanism of educational tourists regarding destination and institution choice. The research objectives are:

1. Identifying and analysing push factors that influence decision of Nigerian educational tourists regarding their departure from Nigeria to seek tertiary education opportunities at overseas.
2. Exploring Nigerian educational tourists' decision-making mechanism regarding destination choice (host country).
3. Exploring Nigerian educational tourists' decision-making mechanism regarding institutional choice (host institution).
4. To develop an educational-tourist-choice model of Nigerian educational tourists.
5. To develop policy implications and recommendations for the key stakeholders in the educational tourism sector.

1.4 Research Questions

There has been a steady flow of educational tourists from Nigeria to North Cyprus, particularly in the past decade, yet the factors affecting Nigerian educational tourists' decisions have not been thoroughly studied. Therefore, this research particularly aims answering following questions:

1. Which factors influence Nigerian educational tourists' decision regarding studying abroad?
2. Which factors influence Nigerian educational tourists' decisions regarding the choice of a host country?
3. Which factors influence Nigerian educational tourists' decisions regarding the choice of a host university?

1.5 Justification for the Research

This research can be supported on four key grounds:

1. Educational tourism sector is an important economic activity in North Cyprus and thus further development of the sector can be achieved particularly by progressively increasing student enrolment however in a sustainable way; increasing total student numbers may not be sufficient in the long-run. To achieve sustainable growth of educational tourism in North Cyprus, the educational tourist exporting markets need to be diversified. Educational tourism sector will benefit from this research in this respect.
2. Past research have mostly concentrated on educational tourists travelling from less developed countries of different socio-economic and political backgrounds to developed western countries. However in this research student mobility from developing countries to a small island state is studied. This will make serious contributions to the literature by filling the aforementioned gap.
3. Moreover, previous researchers have not carried out any study in developing small host countries context. Research findings would close a large gap in this subject area.
4. Conceptual model of destination and institutional choice that will be developed can be utilised by other developing small island states where educational tourism is advancing or has potential to establish such a lucrative tourism product. The contribution of this research is not limited to small island states. Countries and universities which recruit students from Nigerian market would also benefit from the research finding.
5. In practical sense, the research findings will assist policy makers and managers at international, national, and institutional level to comprehend how educational tourists choose destinations and institutions to develop comprehensive and sustainable plans and policies.

1.6 Thesis Organization

Six main Chapters comprise the thesis. Chapter 1 presents an introduction to main research theme. In Chapter 2 a thorough analysis of global educational tourism is presented. Moreover, the details of the educational tourism development and current state of the sub-sector are provided. Chapter 3 brought forward comprehensive discussion of relevant literature. In Chapter 4, details of methodology and information pertain to the research process are presented. In the penultimate chapter, research findings and analysis is presented in three separate but related sections. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the main research findings. In the closing chapter, whole research process is concluded and the research implications and policy recommendations particularly for the key policy-makers at national and institutional level is also presented.

Chapter 2

EDUCATIONAL TOURISM IN NORTH CYPRUS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to exhibit an analysis of educational tourism in global as well as in North Cyprus context. Initially, an overview of North Cyprus' conventional tourism in is presented. Nature of education service is discussed in section two to clarify certain issues that distinguish it from other types of services. Moreover, educational tourism which is relatively a new concept and its definition is not familiar to many people therefore the concept is explained in the succeeding part referring to the existing literature. Global educational tourism and an analysis of the recent trends is discussed in section four which will be followed by a review of the educational tourism activities in small islands with special reference to North Cyprus. The chapter is concluded by a discussion of the future prospects of educational tourism globally and in North Cyprus context.

2.2 North Cyprus Tourism Industry

In many countries, tourism industry occupies a central role; it contributes to different aspects of the economy and social life. Moreover, tourism sector has contributed to certain economic sub-sectors indirectly (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). Despite fluctuations in global economy, the growth of the tourism sector has continued and has turned into a large and dominating sectors in the many states (UNWTO, 2016). International arrivals augmented globally from 674 to 1,186 million between 2000 and 2015 and for the same period total amount of international tourism receipts

increased from 495 billion US\$ to 1,260 billion US\$ UNWTO (2016). On the other hand, global tourism sector accounts for 7 percent of global exports and moreover, over the past four years, the growth rate of tourism sector has recorded faster than the world trade (UNWTO, 2016).

Progress of tourism sector in small island states has been more visible (Sinclair, Blake, & Gooroochurn, 2005). Many small island states adopted tourism development as a strategy and they become dependent because of typical characteristics of the islands (Sharpley, 2001).

Small island states generally lack sufficient human and natural resources therefore they inevitably rely on service industries to stimulate economic activities and as argued by Mehmet and Tahiroglu (2002) tourism can be the only source of comparative advantage possessed by small island economies. Cyprus is an impeccable example of tourism development and economic achievement in small island states where the sectoral development started in early 1960s (Apostolopolus & Ioannides, 1999) and followed different paths in Northern and Southern parts (Alipour & Kilic, 2005) after the partition of the island in 1974. The development has been remarkable in South Cyprus while in the North of the progress has not been satisfactory (Alipour & Kilic, 2005; Ioannides, 2001; Warner, 1999; Yasarata, Altinay, Burns, & Okumus, 2010). Previous researchers (Alipour & Kilic, 2005; L. Altinay, 2000; L. Altinay, Bicak, & Altinay, 2005; Yasarata et al., 2010) assert that the impediments before the satisfactory development of the tourism industry are political as well as institutional.

Tourism as a leading economic activity in North Cyprus has had positive contribution employment (direct and indirect), infrastructure development, tax earnings, export and foreign currency earnings. Generation of foreign currency from tourism has assisted in closing the budgetary deficits which has seriously contributed to North Cyprus where foreign import overweighs foreign exports (Katircioglu, 2010).

Tourism sector in North Cyprus mostly relies on sea-sun-sand tourism; the sector has not been successful in developing wide range of tourism products that would cater to different type of tourists. Among the very few choices gambling tourism has been a popular tourism product in last decade and became an important economic activity in North Cyprus (Alipour & Vuhaingmeh, 2010; Emre, 2003; Scott, 2003).

North Cyprus retains under-utilized resources, for example, unspoiled natural environment and rich historical heritage. In recent years, projects have been developed to utilize these resources in order to produce alternative tourism products, for example, golf tourism, eco-tourism, mountain trekking, and exploration of endemic life. However, educational tourism has been contributing to the country's development since mid-1980s immensely. North Cyprus higher education sector and its impact on various aspects have not been regarded as a tourism activity by the authorities. In the following section, educational tourism in North Cyprus will be discussed in detail after presenting a discussion of education as a service industry and education tourism concept and global educational tourism issues.

2.3 Characteristics of Education Service

The decision of studying abroad is not an easy process for the education tourists as it involves serious considerations about diverse factors. More specifically, the educational tourist end up considering not only departing his/her home country for a relatively long time period but also take into consideration the monetary encumbrance of overseas study and also impact of socio-economic life in the host country. There are occasions where the educational tourists compare a number of alternatives in terms of host country as well as host institution where the decision process becomes even more tedious and complex.

When decision process is complete the educational tourist is ready to consume the service promised by the host nation and host institution. Cubillo, Sanchez, and Cervino (2006) argue that students who reside in an overseas country for tertiary education, besides fundamental educational services, he/she also obtains a bundle of other services jointly provided.

Educational services differentiate from other services in many respects such as in higher education quality aspects cannot be envisaged or experienced prior to purchase (Cubillo et al., 2006). The educational tourist end up travelling to the point of production and consume it there where in many cases it may be a completely unfamiliar environment far away from home country.

By quoting Patterson, Romm, and Hill (1998), Cubillo et al. (2006) discuss that higher education incorporates considerable volume of interpersonal interaction, complications, and customization compare to other service productions. It can be argued that providing a standardized service is hardly the case considering the

different anticipations and judgements of the educational tourists. Moreover, duration of consumption of educational service is relatively much longer in comparison to many other services. Undergraduate or postgraduate education lasts years compare to short educational services such as training or language courses which may last couple of days or weeks. Finally, the educational service, compared to many other services, is not a single service but can be regarded as a pack of services. Quoting from Grönroos (1994), Cubillo et al. (2006) assert that besides fundamental education service, students will be provided with a number of education related supporting services and a bundle of other services which would ease their lives in host institution and their residence location. Unlike many other services, the beginning of the educational service does not have a specific time. Grönroos (1997) argues that in higher education case, service possibly begins as soon as educational tourist makes his/her first contact with the institution to collect information. When choosing host country, service begins with the first contact of the host country's representative at home country (Grönroos, 1997).

2.4 Educational Tourism Concept

In many countries educational tourism is a lucrative sector creating considerable economic returns to the local as well as national economy. Besides its economic benefits, the sector has political, cultural, and social impacts on the host destination. As addressed in Literature Review, higher education and tourism sectors have been gradually integrating particularly in North Cyprus case.

The student mobility research has two perspectives. The researches which fall into the first group studied the student mobility issue from *internationalization of higher education* perspective. However, within the second group the phenomenon has been

studied from *tourism* perspective. Existing literature evidently demonstrates that two approaches have examined the same topic utilizing different concepts. Within the first group of studies individuals who travel abroad for education are referred as *international students* whereas in the second group they are referred as *educational tourists*.

The review of literature clearly reveals that the terms such as *international students*, *educational tourists*, *edu-tourists*, and *overseas students* have been used by different researchers basically to refer to students travelling to an overseas country for pursuing higher education. It can be argued in order to avoid any confusion it is crucial to make a distinction between terminologies used in the literature. Particularly the terms *educational tourist* and *edu-tourists* have been used interchangeably. According to Ritchie, (2003) a distinction about the *primary* and *secondary* motivation of the tourist need to be made prior to classification. Ritchie (2003) defined the first group as *tourism first* where *edu-tourism* products, for example, historical, artistic, cultural and attractions in similar fashion are included. In this group, some types of education or similar activities are central, and in many instances they form the motivating elements of the tourist involvement. According to Ritchie (2003), in the second group – which is called *education first* - the main educational component precedes the actual tourist experience. The activities in this group include student exchange programs, language education and degree courses at HEIs. According to these definitions, all international students travelling to another country can be referred as *educational tourists*. Throughout this thesis the term *educational tourist* will be used to refer to international students and the term *educational tourism* will be used to refer to a special type of tourism activity.

2.5 Global Educational Tourism and Trends

Development of global tourism sector and the changes in the preferences of tourists have paved the way of developing new and alternative forms of tourism such as sports, medical, rural, cultural, religious, culinary, wellness, and educational tourism. Among these, the concept of educational tourism is a phenomenon that received interest of researchers from diverse disciplines particularly in the last decade (Chen, 2007, 2008; Daily et al., 2010; Eder et al., 2010; Lam et al., 2011; Maringe & Carter, 2007; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Pyvis & Chapman, 2007; Ritchie, 2003; Samah & Ahmadian, 2013; Soutar & Turner, 2002; Wilkins et al., 2012; Wilkins & Huisman, 2011) following the developments in internationalization of tertiary education and consequent increase in student mobility. Educational tourism is a term which refers to formal university education; however it can take many other forms such as conferences and seminars, language courses, training programs, exchange programs, and site-visits.

According to a study by UNESCO (2009), in 2007, the population of international students were around two and a half million.. The number almost doubled in 2014 (ICEF, 2015) and reached to five million students. According OECD (2012), by 2025, the population of international students is expected to hit eight million. Recent advances in student mobility is accounted for by multi-dimensions of globalization (Wilkins & Huisman, 2011) and intensification of perceptions regarding the benefits of international study (OECD, 2013) among the students. The report by British Council and Oxford Economics (BC&OE, 2012) states that countries such as India, US, Germany, South Korea, Malaysia, Turkey, Nigeria, France, Kazakhstan, and China, will be the leading student sending countries by 2020. According to the same

report (BC&OE, 2012), the growth rate of student outbound mobility will be the highest in Malaysia, Nigeria, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey, and India. Besides, the most popular host countries will be US, Australia, UK, Canada, Japan, Germany, France, and Russia by 2020. However, growth rate in student inbound will be higher in Australia, UK, US, and Canada (BC&OE, 2012). China has also become a popular host country for international students recently and estimates reveal that the rate of growth will be increasing in future (BC&OE, 2012).

The mobility of educational tourists between countries is not a static process; on the contrary some countries become popular for a number of reasons while educational tourists lose interest in others. Australia, UK, US, and Canada has always been popular destinations for students originating mostly from Asia and Africa because of education opportunities in English medium of instruction, socio-economic factors, proximity to homeland, historical links, future employment prospects, etc. However, fresh actors have appeared in recent years on the educational tourism marketplace, for example, Russia, Japan, and Spain OECD (2013). Other important host countries are Germany, France, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Korea, the Netherlands, Greece, Italy, and Ireland.

Time to time, flow of educational tourists between specific countries mitigate for the reasons specified above or possibly for personal or political reasons. China and India are currently the leading players in outbound student movement and it is estimated that the trend will continue in same manner. The figures also reveal that the number of Chinese educational tourists travelling particularly to US and UK will slightly go down due to policies adopted by Chinese government (BC&OE, 2012).

The volatility in global tertiary education marketplace and growth potential of emerging markets are two important issues that need to be seriously considered by educational tourism marketers. Developing new educational tourist recruitment schemes is a must to reduce the dependency on limited number of markets and safeguard the enrolment of educational tourists in a sustainable manner.

The studies referred above (BC&OE, 2012; OECD, 2013; UNESCO, 2009) disclose that movement of international students follow distinct tendencies. Group one is occupied by Asian students flowing into academic structures of Western Europe, North America, and Australia where English is official language or widely spoken and the other is within the European Union benefiting from Erasmus and similar exchange programs. Put it in other words, students travel with an increasing rate from developing countries to relatively developed nations for tertiary education. Meantime, competition among the destination countries and HEIs has become fierce recently; trends indicate that it is possible to exacerbate in future. Western countries particularly those where native language is English have been aggressively competing to appeal new overseas students from diverse states. Moreover, in recent years universities from developed countries have set up off-campus in China, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Korea, Mauritius, and Cyprus to recruit students who cannot financially afford to go overseas universities, obstructed by strict visa regulations in some host countries, or not willing to study away from home. These off-campus are now putting additional burden on local universities particularly on profit-seeking private universities and colleges which in some cases have limited facilities or relatively less reputation. Augmentation of student mobility particularly from East to West and within European Union and the growing rivalry in global tertiary education marketplace has developed the need to identify and research the

factors that play role on the decisions of students regarding studying abroad. Particularly in the last two decades, several researches (as stated previously in section 2.5) have been conducted to identify factors influencing decisions of students about travelling abroad for tertiary education and detecting factors which encourage them to go to another destination (*push factors*) and factors which attract them (*pull factors*) to a certain destination and institution. The researches that have been conducted until today mostly studied student mobility from China, Malaysia, India, and Africa to countries where higher education sector is very well developed. The literature review reveal that (*see* Chapter 3), up to now no research has been carried out to study the student mobility between developing countries, particularly the movement of educational tourists from developed or developing countries to a less developed country such as North Cyprus.

2.6 Educational Tourism Sector in North Cyprus

Tourism researchers paid special attention to tourism in small islands however past research has been mostly limited to impact assessment (economic, social, environmental, and political) of mass tourism and sustainability of the sector. The literature shows that very few researches have been carried on alternative form of tourism in small island context. Particularly, research on educational tourism in small islands context has largely been neglected by the previous researchers. More specifically, the questions of why educational tourists prefer moving to small islands for education and what influence their motivations and choices of destination is an important topics of inquiry which have not been studied thoroughly up to now.

The general aim of this research is to study educational tourism activities particularly in small islands which have limited resource base and highly dependent to tourism

sector. Educational tourism in small islands can be regarded as an alternative option to “conventional” tourism activities which in many cases are subject to the problems associated with seasonality. Particularly in Small Island states such as North Cyprus where tourism sector is confronting with problems associated with seasonality and limited resources, educational tourism can be an alternative option or even a substitute.

2.6.1 Educational Tourism in North Cyprus

Following the division of the island in 1974, Turkish Cypriots established a new administration in northern part of Cyprus and developed policies in regard to different aspects of economic and social life including educating and training qualified technical staff. In 1979, Higher Technical Institute (HTI) was established in northern part of Nicosia to educate and train young Turkish Cypriots who would join the work-force of newly established administration in the northern part of Cyprus. The HTI was later moved to Famagusta in 1980 to a location surrounded with uninhabited land that would allow for expansion of the premises. Following the mutual agreement between Turkish and North Cyprus governments in 1986 the HTI was transformed to Eastern Mediterranean University. As a state university it was then fully accredited by Higher Education Council of Turkey which established global acknowledgment to the degrees issued by EMU despite non-recognition of North Cyprus administration in international arena.

State and private individuals realized benefits of higher education; thus higher education sector was foreseen as a substitute economic activity to make up for the decline in tourism and agricultural sectors due to problems arising from international political non-recognition (M. Altınay & Ezel, 2011). As a result, starting from mid-

1980s, private universities were founded in various regions by Turkish Cypriot entrepreneurs.

Table 2.1: Universities in North Cyprus

No.	Universities	Location	Established
	North Cyprus Universities		
1	Eastern Mediterranean University (state)	Famagusta	1979
2	Girne American University (Private)	Kyrenia	1985
3	Near East University (Private)	Nicosia	1988
4	European University of Lefke (State)	Lefke	1990
5	Cyprus International University (Private)	Nicosia	1997
6	University of Mediterranean Karpasia (Private)	Nicosia	2012
7	University of Kyrenia (Private)	Kyrenia	2013
8	Cyprus Science University (Private)	Kyrenia	2013
9	American University of Cyprus (Private)	Nicosia	2014
10	Cyprus Social Sciences University (Private)	Nicosia	2015
11	Final International University (Private)	Kyrenia	2015
12	University of City Island (Private)	Famagusta	2016
13	Cyprus Health and Social Sciences University (Private)	Morphou	2016
14	Arkin University of Creative Art and Design (Private)	Kyrenia	2017
15	Bahçeşehir Cyprus University (Private)	Nicosia	2017
	Turkish Universities		
16	Middle-East Technical University (State-TR)	Morphou	2003
17	Istanbul Technical University (State-TR)	Famagusta	2011
	Other		
18	University of West of Scotland in Cyprus (State)	Nicosia	2016

Source: Wikipedia (2018)

In early 2000s certain Turkish HEIs, with the support of State of Turkey, were encouraged to establish branches and consequently, Middle East Technical University established a campus in Güzelyurt (Morphou) which was followed by the establishment of an off-campus of Istanbul Technical University in Famagusta region in 2011. Recently, a number of public and private universities from Turkey have been granted permit to establish campuses in North Cyprus and moreover some local investors have also been preparing projects to establish new universities.

Table 2.3: Student Population According to Years

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Turkish Cypriot	11,385	10,983	10,995	12,658	12,026	13,706	13,619
	29.7%	21.9%	21.0%	20.2%	16.2%	16.2%	14.6%
Turkish	22,674	30,173	31,152	34,828	41,928	46,937	52,135
	59.2%	60.1%	59.6%	55.6%	56.6%	55.5%	55.9%
Overseas	4,248	9,089	10,160	15,210	20,138	23,918	27,538
	11.1%	18.1%	19.4%	24.3%	27.2%	28.3%	29.5%
Total	38,307	50,245	52,307	62,696	74,092	84,561	93,292

Source: SPO (2016) and MNEC (2018)

Total student population in North Cyprus HEIs was more than 90 thousand in 2016 – 2017 academic-year. About 55 percent of the students were from Turkey and 18 percent were local students. The remaining 27 percent were constituted by the educational tourists travelling from other countries to study in North Cyprus.

The number of educational tourists from Turkey has gradually gone down in recently as more and more public and private HEIs were established in Turkey and intensifying competition in Turkish higher education market. However, student intake from Middle-East, Africa, Asia, and Former Russian Republics has shown considerable increase in the same era and they have made-up for the declining number of educational tourists from Turkey. The share of the overseas students in total student population was accounted for about 11% (2010-2011 academic year), which skyrocketed to almost 30% in 6 years (2016-2017 academic year). International students from 109 different countries are currently enrolled to North Cyprus universities. According to most update statistics, students from the following countries constitute the largest cohort overseas students : Nigeria (26.7%), Pakistan (8.6%), Iran (7.2%), Syria (6.4%), Iraq (4.6%), Jordan (5.2%), Libya (4.4%), Zimbabwe (4.3%), Palestine (3.7%), Azerbaijan (3.1%), Kazakhstan (2.2%), Turkmenistan (1.7%), Egypt (1.5%), Cameroon (1.4%), Lebanon (1.4%), Congo

(1.2%), Kyrgyzstan (1.1%), Russia (1.0%), and Somalia (1.0%). The remaining international students come from about one hundred different countries.

2.6.2 Impact Assessment

The most visible impact of educational tourism was experienced in economic life. According to TCYHB (2015), a student's average annual expenditure is around 38 thousand Turkish Lira per annum and overseas students injected around 1.8 billion TL to the national economy in 2014. The report (TCYHB, 2015) also revealed that student expenditure (all nationalities) contribution to the national economy (GDP) recorded as 35%. Around 28 percent of the student expenditures originate from education payments and the remaining 72 percent are distributed to other sectors in the economy.

The development of HEIs in North Cyprus fueled the growth in particular sub-sectors. Though local HEIs provide numerous accommodation facilities on campus premises to their students some students prefer to go for off-campus private accommodation. Consequently, numerous apartment flats have been built in recent years to meet the demand in the market. This has had considerable impact on the construction sector and its sub-sectors. Another positive impact of educational tourism development has been witnessed in mobile communication sector. Two local mobile phone companies have been fiercely competing to capture the lion share of the market by developing and promoting special packages for students. Parallel to the developments in the educational tourism sector, food and entertainment sector has also improved considerably. It would be wrong to argue that educational tourism sector have been seriously contributing to the development of the conventional tourism and transportation sectors in North Cyprus.

The environmental and social effects of the growth of education tourism have not yet been investigated in the context of North Cyprus. Observations reveal that rapid development of housing sector, increase in the usage of cars, increase in waste disposal, etc. have had a negative effect on the environment but one should not draw the conclusion that tertiary education sector solely responsible from environmental degradation; the impact of other sectors need to be studied as well. Rapid increase of overseas students in such a small society has undesirably affected local social life nonetheless the extent of the impact has not been thoroughly investigated.

2.5 Conclusion

In practice, educational tourism has developed into a massive and lucrative economic activity in many large and small developed and developing countries quite for some time. In the past, educational tourists mostly travelled from East to West to enroll to HEIs particularly in English speaking countries. However, in recent years the trend has moved to other directions. Nowadays, there are new actors in the market which have developed similar products to cater to the needs of the educational tourists from diverse parts of the world. Although still the lion share of the market is served by large tertiary education exporting countries (e.g., USA and UK), educational tourism sector has shown remarkable success in Eastern and Western parts of the hemisphere.

Similar developments in educational tourism have been witnessed in small islands as well. Some small island states have become an attractive place for reputable Western universities off-campus projects while others have developed their own HEIs. North Cyprus is an excellent example to the latter where currently there are 16 active HEIs enrolling students from all over the world and many more are currently waiting for the permission (license) from the local authorities.

North Cyprus educational tourism sector has shown remarkable success however this does not mean that the sector will continue to grow in a sustainable manner due to fierce competition particularly in the region and other factors peculiar to North Cyprus. The reasons for preferring northern part of Cyprus as a host country and what issues influence their decision are two crucial questions that have to be thoroughly studied in order to develop some policies by the HEI administrations and authorities. This research simply aims to find answers to these questions. The findings of this research will assist to different stakeholders in formulating new marketing policies in order to maintain the steady flow of students from educational tourist exporting countries.

Chapter 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This section aims to assess the extant literature on educational tourism with particular interest in educational tourists' decision making process regarding host country and host institution choice. More specifically, a thorough understanding of the theoretical foundation of the topic of inquiry and earlier theoretical and empirical research extracted from existing literature will be provided.

Literature review chapter is composed of two main sections. In the initial part, extant theoretical and empirical studies on decision-making procedure of educational tourists regarding destination and institutional choice is presented and discussed. In the penultimate section, specific host country and host institution choice models is presented and elaborated. The chapter is completed with a conclusion section.

3.2 Research on Educational Tourism

In this section extant theoretical and empirical literature on decision-making process of educational tourists regarding destination and institutional choice is presented and discussed. In general, this section aims not only to shed a light on how the conceptual models have been developed, but also to identify and present the gap in the literature.

3.2.1 Educational Tourist

Recently, the development of both education and tourism as sectors has resulted in increasing awareness of these sectors from financial and social outlooks (Lam et al.,

2011). As presented in Chapter 2, educational tourism has been considered seriously by the local economies in many countries simply because of the impact to various economic areas. North Cyprus constitutes a very good example of this case where conventional sea-sand-sun tourism and educational tourism sector positively contributes to the national economy besides noteworthy contribution to the development of local economy and social life (Alipour & Kilic, 2005; L. Altinay et al., 2005; Katircioglu, 2010; Warner, 1999). Moreover, both higher education and tourism sectors gradually integrating in the sense that students' families, relatives, and friends have been visiting the island and thus contributing to the conventional tourism sector. Moreover, existing students are behaving like tourist during their free times and consuming various tourism related and non-touristic products offered by various sectors such as leisure, food, accommodation, transportation, and so on and so forth. The contribution of non-educational activities are relatively more visible in North Cyprus due to small size of the country and economy when compared with much bigger and developed destinations where higher education sectors are very developed and attracts numerous students .

Extensive review of the literature revealed that considerable number of studies has been carried out to comprehend how students decide for overseas university education and what issues impact on the verdicts. Previous studies chiefly set out to identify the factors affecting the movement of individuals to overseas countries for tertiary education or more specifically to identify the factors affection students' decision concerning host country and host institution choice.

As briefly explained in Chapter 2, earlier research about student mobility can be put together into two main groups. The research which falls into the first group chiefly

analyzed the development in student mobility from '*internationalization of higher education*' perspective. The second group however adopted a different approach and studied the phenomena from '*tourism*' perspective. It is the second group of studies, which are much more limited in number and scope compare to the first one, that introduced a new concept called '*educational tourism*' to the literature. Literature review showed that both approaches analyze the same topic, however utilize different concepts. The first group of studies refers to the individuals who travel abroad for education as *international students* and attempts to identify the issues which influence their decisions about host country and host institution choice. Whereas the second group of studies refer to students *educational tourists* and generally use the same theoretical and methodological approaches in studying the same phenomena. Since both approaches aim to identify the same issues, throughout this research, '*international students*' and '*educational tourists*' will refer to the same unit of analysis.

It is important to make a distinction between terminologies used in the literature to avoid any confusion. The terms such as *international students*, *educational tourists*, *edu-tourists*, and *overseas students* have been used by different researchers basically to refer to students traveling abroad with an aim of pursuing for a university degree. Particularly the terms '*educational tourist*' and '*edu-tourists*' have been used interchangeably.

According to Ritchie's (2003) a distinction about the *primary* and *secondary* motivation of the tourist need to be made prior to classification. Ritchie (2003) defined the first group as *tourism* first where *edu-tourism* products, for example, historical, artistic, cultural and attractions in similar fashion are included. In this

group, some type of education or similar activities is central, and in many instances they form the motivating elements of the tourist involvement. According to Ritchie (2003), in the second group – which is called *education first* - the main educational component precedes the actual tourist experience. The activities in this group include student exchange programs, language education and degree courses at HEIs. According to these definitions, all international students travelling to another country can be referred as *educational tourists*. Throughout this thesis the term *educational tourist* will be used to refer to international students and the term *educational tourism* will be used to refer to a special type of tourism activity.

3.2.2 Empirical Research

As explained above, the extant literature can be collected around two core clusters . The studies in cluster one is carried out the analysis from *educational tourism perspective* and they basically have simply defined the students who migrate to an overseas country for tertiary education as *educational tourists*. The second group of researchers has studied the same phenomenon from the perspective of *internationalization of higher education* and the students who migrate to an overseas country are referred as *international overseas students*. On the baseline, both groups of researchers have carried out research of the same nature but adopting different concepts.

The literature review also revealed that the existing literature on educational tourism can be compiled into six groupings according to the research aim:

Group 1: Studies aimed at identifying only the issues which affect decision of international students about choice of a host state.

Group 2: Studies aimed at identifying only the issues which affect decision of international students about choice of a host institution.

Group 3: Studies aimed at identifying the issues which affect host country and host institution choice of international students.

Group 4: Studies aimed to identify the role of specific factors (e.g., family and peers) in affecting the host country or institution choice.

Group 5: Studies aimed to identify factors which affect student’s decision regarding the choice of an off-campus university at home country¹.

Group 6: Theoretical research aimed at developing models

Each category can also be sub-grouped in terms of applied research methodology. Some of the studies used qualitative research methods, while others used quantitative methods. A number of studies have also been identified which used both methods; in other words, mixed method approach.

Below, some of the selected key empirical research studies are briefly presented in a tabular form according to the groups identified above simply to present an overview of how the topic of inquiry has evolved.

Table 3.1: Selected Empirical Studies

Author(s)	Choice of Host Country and/or Institution	Research Method
McMahon (1992)	Multiple International Students Choice of Host Country	Quantitative Method
Mazzarol and Soutar (2002)	Overseas Students’ Choice of Host Country	Quantitative Method
Soutar and Turner (2002)	Local Students’ Choice of Institution	Quantitative Method
Pimpa (2004)	Thai Students’ Choice of Study Abroad	Mixed Methods
Shanka, Quintal, and Taylor (2006)	Choice of Host Institution	Quantitative Method
Briggs (2006)	Local Students’ Choice of Host Institution	Quantitative Method

¹ Very few studies in this nature have been identified in the literature; however recent developments in off-campus tertiary education will inevitably increase the need for further and more detailed research in the near future.

Gatfield and Chen (2006)	Taiwanese Students' Choice of Host Country	Quantitative Method
Cubillo et al. (2006)	No Specific Student Group or Choice	Theoretical Research
Pyvis and Chapman (2007)	Thai Students' Choice of Study Abroad	Qualitative Method
Chen (2007)	East Asian Students' Choice of Host Institution and Country	Mixed Methods

The precursor scientist who studied the factors affecting the flow of students from other countries for tertiary education was McMahon (1992). She developed two models to test the role of certain factors affecting the movement of students to USA from different Third World countries between 1960s and 1970s. The first model that she developed, which is called the outbound push model, tested the connection between the movements of students from a Third World country to various countries. On the other hand, the second model as called the inbound pull model was established to test the association between the student movements to the USA from Third World states. According to the findings, McMahon (1992) argued that nationwide economic and educational issues influence the patterns of study abroad. This macro-level study indicated the importance of individual case studies for validation of the findings and moreover inclusion of factors such as worldwide expansion of tertiary education opportunities and development of Third World student exporting countries in terms of manpower and instruction and research.

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) carried out a study from 1996 to 2000 in four different countries among prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students to detect the influences which impact the decision of students in selecting Australia as a host destination. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) reports that choosing a particular destination as a host country in pursuing tertiary education is influenced by a bundle

of push and pull factors. The first step taken by a prospective student is to decide whether she or he is willing to study locally or internationally. If the potential student makes a decision to study internationally, then a host country is selected according to a number of pull factors which may vary from one person to another. This is followed by the process of selecting a host institution (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002) based on a set of institutional pull factors which may be quite complex in some cases. Research findings showed that the key factors which influence the decision to study overseas are (1) courses at host HEI are superior to courses offered at local universities; (2) difficulties in entering universities at home country; (3) the desired course is not available locally; (4) becoming familiar with Western civilization; and (5) intent of students to migrate. On the other hand, according to the factors that affect the decision regarding the choice of destination is compiled under five groups (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002) which are (1) knowledge regarding to host country; (2) the references from peers and family; (3) financial factors; (4) the environment; (5) social relations; (6) and geographical closeness. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) report that, the student then choose a host institution where she or he will carry out the tertiary education. The decision to choose the host institution is affected by a number of factors such as education quality, institutional reputation, accreditation of qualifications, international relations, collaborations with other HEIs, staff quality, alumni relations; and finally student demographics.

Soutar and Tuner's (2002) study in Western Australia examined the meaning of some features to the choice of HEI of school-leavers. It was argued that some private and institution-related issues are considered by the students when they prefer a certain university. According to Soutar and Turner (2002), students take into consideration the factors which bears more importance to them and with or without

conscious they establish a balance among them. A questionnaire was designed including ten attributes such as university type, transfer opportunities, proximity to home, reputation, education quality, employability, peers, campus environment, and availability of courses desired. Results of the study identified that Australian students choose their host HEI according to academic program stability, reputation of HEI, employability and education quality. The study also identified that the difference between highest and the lowest rating attributes was not very high suggesting that selection process of host HEI is a complicated procedure and students may consider many other factors beside the ones which were considered as highly important (Soutar & Turner, 2002).

Pimpa (2004) explored the role of family related factors on choice of international education by Thai students to understand connection among family influence, overseas students, and HEIs. In this study, qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed to clarify the research questions. Initially, focus group studies were carried out to question the participants about how they chose international education and what was the role of families within their choices. The analysis of the focus group discussions revealed that proceeding to studying abroad Thai students go through the following processes: a study abroad or home, host country selection, host city selection, academic course; and (v) finally choice of a host institution. The participants commonly agreed that family influence in their choices carried out utmost importance. Particularly, family influence over the students' choices came in the form of cost of education, gathering knowledge, anticipation about future, and encouragement. In the second part of the study, the association between selections mentioned above and family influence is examined using a survey questionnaire. It was found out that students' choice regarding

studying abroad is predominantly affected by financial support from family which is followed by expectation, information, persuasion, and competition. This study basically reveals that decision regarding studying abroad and the choice of a HEI and an academic program is a complex procedure.

Shanka et al. (2006) employed a correspondence analysis technique to understand how international students choose a host institution for tertiary education. A comprehensive literature was reviewed to identify factors likely to affect decision of international students. Factors such as reputation, course availability, education quality, safety, cost of living, fees, location of campus, prestige of the school/department, curriculum, campus activities, students' financial situation. full cost of education, campus location, and opinion of family and friends were identified from the extant literature review. The questionnaire designed based on literature was employed to collect data from current students. Analysis results indicated that differences exist between student cohorts on the reasons for selecting a particular host institution as educational destination. The results of the study would benefit not only the international marketing officers of the host institution but also would assist developing a regional positioning strategy by other Australian universities that would reflect the needs of the students from major source countries. Finally, it was indicated that was no single condition that fits all the international students exist, but a number of factors influence destination choice of international students' and each HEI needs to consider their unique selling point and strategically concentrate on their competitive edge.

Briggs (2006) carried out a study in Scotland to identify which issues impact on the selection of HEI of undergraduate students. . A questionnaire was designed which

comprised of 22 items identified from the literature review. Survey of undergraduate students of two different disciplines indicated that host institution choice is multifaceted. The overall mean results reveal that items such as HEI's reputation, place, proximity to home, employability, social environment, personal insight, education reputation, admission conditions, information availability, staff quality, and research quality was perceived as the most important issues by the students. The importance of the items were perceived differently by students from different disciplines except the item of academic reputation which is identified as the most powerful factor by all in choosing a host institution. This survey also questioned independently the importance of different sources of information to learn about the main information pathways. Items such as career teachers, career service, career convention, prospectus, university open day, newspaper features, university web site, league tables, peer influence; and word of mouth were scored by the respondents. Analysis findings revealed that university prospectus was the most influential information pathway proceeded by websites, open-days, and word of mouth. The important contribution of this research was that it highlighted significance of indebt comprehension of the choice of student and raises three crucial issues such as the importance of information quality, the need for developing a choice model and finally adopting of a marketing strategy that would assist to better inform student choice.

The research by Gatfield and Chen (2006) explored the differences in behavioral motivations of international students selecting a host HEI abroad using Theory of Planned Behavior model. More specifically the researchers aimed to comprehend the decision-making attitude of diaspora students from China specifically in Taiwan aiming to pursue their education in an English-speaking state such as USA, UK, and

Australia. A survey questionnaire was developed to measure Taiwanese students' perceptions meaning to enroll to universities in USA, UK, and Australia who had no previous overseas education experience after determining and examining the construct variables through focus group and in-depth interview techniques. The research identified that, to maintain its competitiveness, each country need to understand the fact that due to differences in cultural and other behavior influencing factors, they are obliged to develop and follow up specific marketing strategies for students from different countries. For example, American universities should consider role of family and friends in the process of decision-making when they promote their institutions. Moreover, for Taiwanese students, word-of-mouth is also a very important influential factor followed by study tours and total study cost. For the UK institutions, adopting the power of media was found to be a strong influence. It was argued that the British government should put special weight on promoting the high quality of the services provided by its HEIs and promotes some specific courses which are highly popular among Taiwanese students. British universities can utilize their postgraduate admission conditions (less costly compare to USA) and widespread British university alumni for more influential promotion activities but need to be careful in emphasizing total study cost which is prohibitively high. Finally, the research identified that there is a need for the Australian universities to intensify their promotion activities toward Taiwanese students, particularly through media and emphasize more on Australian higher education system and its academic research achievements particularly in science disciplines. Moreover, special emphasis needs to put on postgraduate admission conditions which are similar to UK system; encourage alumni and local migrants to promote and find means to influence the perceptions of the families.

Cubillo et al. (2006) suggested a theoretical model that would incorporate multiple factors that have an effect on the foreign student buying decision process. The researchers argued that this work analyzes the various aspects of the decision-making process and attempts to clarify the factors that determine the decision of learners and the interactions underlying the process when choosing the host state to pursue their education. In this study, a non-observable dependent variable (purchase intention) and five factors such as personal reasons, city effect, institution image, country image, and program evaluation (with 19 independent variables). The study concludes that existing literature had hardly studied decision-making process of international students in an combined way. On the contrary, many previous studies had analyzed the influence of particular issues on the course of decision making such as image of the institution, program evaluation, personal factors, country image, etc. This study inherited with inevitable limitations aimed filling the gap in the literature review by integrating different group of factors which impact on the decision of overseas students.

Pyvis and Chapman (2007) performed empirical research on an Australian university's offshore campus based in Malaysia basically to explore and comprehend why and how students are involved in Australian offshore higher education. More specifically, Pyvis and Chapman (2007) tried to understand what Australian higher education learners are looking for and how their investment decisions impact their academic experiences. The data was collected through exploratory unstructured interviews and in-depth semi-structured interviews from overseas undergraduate and postgraduate students. The findings of the research reveal that having access to education at a convenient site was primary reason in studying at an offshore Australian HEI. Malaysian students go for an international education in order to have

better job prospects in local job market where as non-Malaysian students choose such HEIs in order to transform the self. Basically, the motivations for pursuing international education at an offshore campus in a country may be pretty different for local students as compared to overseas students from other countries.

The study by Chen (2007) explained why and how East Asian students travel to Canada for graduate studies. More specifically, Chen (2007) aimed to understand the decision process of embarking on a postgraduate study abroad; to develop a framework to elucidate the factors manipulating host institution selection of international students. Moreover, in this study the strengths and the dynamics of the factors influencing the admission verdict of students is evaluated and possible consequences to higher education trading countries and HEIs was put forward. Mixed method was employed using mail survey questionnaire to collect quantitative data and in-person semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data. The college choice model which was developed according to the research findings reveals that international students' decision take place in three phases. Stage one is called 'predisposition' where students' decision is influenced by individual driving forces which consists of five set of factors such as personal motivations (language skills acquisition and value for foreign education at home country), student characteristics (academic ability), career-related factors (better job prospects), influence by others (peers, family, and supervisors), and academic-related factors (research interests, advanced technology, and research in the West). Chen (2007) argues that the decision was often made not based on one or two factors but a combination of them and to satisfy the private needs. Stage two is called the search/selection/application; students collect info about study abroad from different resources such as media, significant others, and organizations. The research findings reveal that Internet was

regarded highly as an information source particularly in collecting specific information such as academic programs, university rankings, and reputation. The final stage is called the “choice” which is defined by Chen (2007) as “international students revisited the same factors they considered during the “search/selection/application” stage, and made their final enrollment decision based on what each program, country, institution, and city had to offer” (pp. 291-292). The research concluded that international graduate students do not possess homogenous characteristics with undergraduates in terms of social, economic and academic background and factors influencing their choices. They have unique characteristics and therefore they should be studied separately and to attract top international students universities need to develop different packages of promotion.

3.3 Educational Tourist Decision Making Models

Numerous researches have been carried-out, regarding decision-making procedures of educational tourists that were seeking for tertiary education in order to develop an overseas student’s decision-making model. Vrontis, Thrassou, and Melenthiou (2007) argued that “A number of models arise from the literature on higher education management - economic models, status attainment models and combined models - each of which tries to rationalize a once-considered irrational and inexplicable aspect of human behavior” (p. 980). They also argued that these models try to offer a understanding of in what way students attempt to fulfill their tertiary education desires. Wilkins and Huisman (2011) argues that “whilst these models are not specifically concerned with the decision-making of international students, there also exist a rapidly growing body of literature that has examined or attempted to model student choice and decision-making in an international context” (p. 66).

The educational tourist makes two key decisions: decision regarding the host country choice and decision regarding the choice of host institution. Various factors affect the decision of educational tourists regarding these choices and the previous studies has already identified some of these factors which has an influence on students' decision making procedure particularly travelling from East to West for tertiary education. In its simplest form, the decision making model of students' host country and HEI selection is depicted in the following figure.

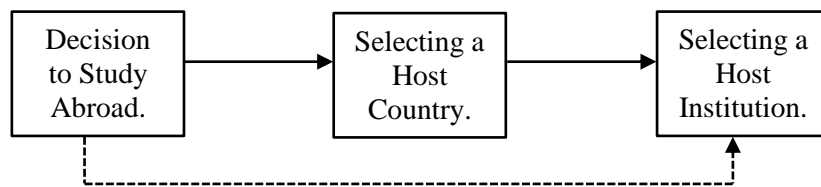


Figure 3.1: A Basic Student Decision Making Model
Source: Adapted from Mazzarol and Soutar (2002)

The simplified figure above reveals that an educational tourist, who has decided to study abroad, primarily makes a choice about the host country and then about host institution. Yet, cases exist where the educational tourist skips step two and go straight to the choice of a host institution. Basically, the decision making process can be analyzed in two steps and two theoretical approaches is needed to carry out such an analysis. In this section, specific key models of host country and host institution choice will be presented and elaborated. The first model will be Push-Pull Model that is grounded on Migration Theory. It is possible to analyze the second phase of the decision making procedure through a study of the Models of College Choice that is called HEI Choice Models.

3.3.1 Push-Pull Model

Maringe and Carter (2007) contend that decision making about studying overseas is modelled by a combination of push-pull factors. Economic and political environment shape the pull factors and impact on the choice of host country. However, institutional specific factors such as qualification recognition, academic excellence, quality of teaching and research and so on and so forth impact the choice of HEI (Maringe & Carter, 2007). On the other hand Wilkins and Huisman (2011) argue that push factors which originate in home country encourage a student to go overseas but on the other hand pull factors exist in a host country which make particular country more attractive to pursue higher education.

Several empirical studies (Chen, 2007, 2008; Eder et al., 2010; Lam et al., 2011; Maringe & Carter, 2007; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Pyvis & Chapman, 2007; Soutar & Turner, 2002; Wilkins et al., 2012; Wilkins & Huisman, 2011) have been carried out to identify key push and pull factors. Two studies - McMahon (1992) and Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) - made a notable contribution to the research on determining the pattern transnational students' flow on global basis. Origin of the push-pull models developed by McMahon (1992) and Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) was based on migration theory developed by Lee (1966). Both studies argued that certain 'push and pull' factors stimulate learners to depart their states for studying in a foreign country. According to Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), push factors function within home state and they inspire prospective students to commence transnational education while pull factors operating within a host state turn that country into comparatively attractive to learners seeking for tertiary education abroad. In simple terms, understanding the push and the pull factors assist to detect factors influencing

the choice of educational tourists regarding studying abroad and choosing of a host state.

Following the pioneering work of McMahon (1992), Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) developed the push-pull model which has been widely utilized in literature. According to this model, students' decision-making mechanism works in three stages:

Stage 1: Students make a choice of studying internationally or locally and their choice influenced by certain push factors at home country.

Stage 2: Students select a host country after the decision made to study internationally. This decision affected by the pull factors at the host country.

Stage 3: Selection of an institution is a decision that influenced by additional institutional pull factors such as education quality, academics, and promotion and marketing efforts of the host institution.

The simple model below exhibits the push-pull model developed Mazzarol and Soutar (2002).

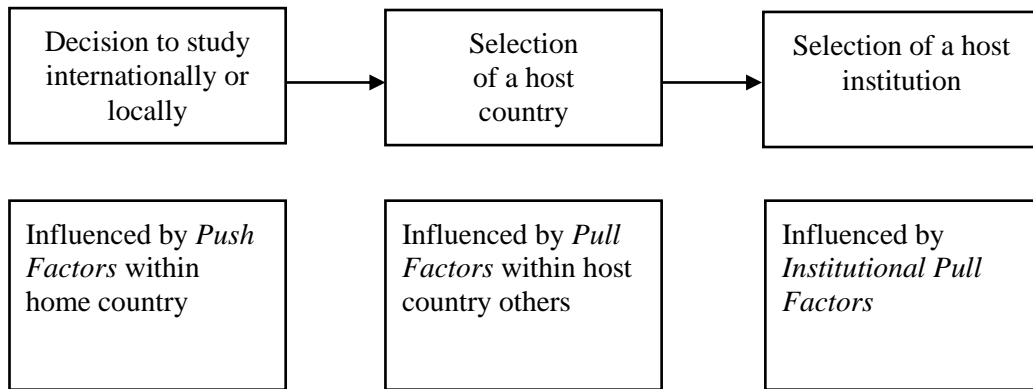


Figure 3.2: The Conceptual Model of Student Decision Making
 Source: Adapted from Mazzarol and Soutar (2002)

According to Soutar and Turner (2002) the issues that students might consider when choosing a host HEI includes the type of course they desire to enroll, academic reputation of the HEI, campus environment, and academic staff quality. They also consider private issues for example proximity to home, perceptions of family members regarding each HEI, and the HEI that peers are willing to enroll. Soutar and Turner (2002) argue that some factors may overweight the others, however students always take into consideration issues that they regard imperative and trade-off between them.

The model can be utilized to identify the factors affecting students' choice making regarding travelling overseas for higher education and selecting a destination country. However, identification of these factors may not be sufficient to develop policies regarding how to promote the HEIs and make the HEIs more attractive to overseas students. Wilkins and Huisman (2011) argued that conducting proper market research is crucial to collect detailed data to identify the needs and desires of overseas students.

3.3.3.1 Foundation of Push-Pull Model

The origin of the push-pull models developed by McMahon (1992) and Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) was based on Lee's (1966) migration theory.

The push-pull model developed by Lee (1966) aim to elucidate the factors influencing the people's movement for migration. Following the development of the model "it has since become the most common tool used by educational researchers to aid the examination and explanation of international student motivations and decisions" (Wilkins et al., 2012, p. 418).

3.3.3.2 Human Migration

Human migration is not a new phenomenon. However, over the years, its volume has exacerbated, it has taken different forms, and more importantly the factors behind the migration have diversified. Nowadays, people migrate to other countries for a large array of reasons including education. Moreover, globalization has had in impact on migration allowing people to have easy access to information about potential host countries and move around more freely.

Human migration refers to the mobility of people from a location (origin) to a new one (destination) for a number of reasons. The movement of people can take place within a country (e.g., moving from a city to another) or internationally (e.g., moving to another country). The duration of movement can also change in the sense that some people change places temporarily while others permanently. Moreover, the movement of people can be on voluntary basis or in some cases it is imposed on them (involuntary) because of social, economic, and political incidences and developments at home country.

For centuries, people have been migrating to other countries for an array of reasons ranging from employment to education. There are cases where people forced to migrate such as slavery or people from conflict zones had to leave their home to save their lives. Because of migration, whatever the reasons are, demographic structure of the host places in some countries has faced with a number of problems. The changes cannot only be attributed to the international migrants; in some cases, internal migrants have also caused concerns. In North Cyprus case, the population of educational tourists has expanded tremendously in recent years not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of ethnic background. Considerable number of students (*see* Chapter 2) has emigrated from their home countries to admit a higher education institution for tertiary education.

Educational tourists who have immigrated to North Cyprus can be classified as '*international voluntary temporary migrants*' since they travel to North Cyprus without any force imposed upon them and they generally aim to conclude their studies in a particular period of time and return to their home countries. Why educational students travel to overseas for university education? What factors affect their decisions to travel abroad? Why do they choose a specific country? What factors play role in selecting the country? These and some other questions need to be explored to comprehend the details behind temporary migration of educational tourists.

Pioneering studies (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; McMahon, 1992) in the field of educational tourism was based on Migration Theory. In simple terms, the mechanism which is called the Pull-Push theory was developed by Ravenstein (1885) and since then it's been studied by numerous scholars to elucidate the decision mechanism of

the education tourists regarding the choice of an overseas destination and host institution. Below, migration theory will be elucidated to provide an understanding of the theoretical background of why particular groups of educational tourists migrate to another country for tertiary education. Certain factors exist in home and host countries that motivate educational tourists to depart their native state and migrate to distant country. Migration theory assists to understand the back ground of how migration process works whether for education purpose or for other reasons.

3.3.3.3 Migration Theory

Human migration is related to a number of factors. May it be economic or non-economic; these factors may change from one person to another depending on the migrant's personal and family background, environmental factors at home country and personal features.

Throughout the years, theories have been established to elucidate the why individuals change places and what factors play role in both internal and external migration. Massey et al. (1993) argue that no theory alone can explain the reasons influencing peoples' mobility and the complex nature of this issue requires a multi-disciplinary approach. In other words, over the years, researchers developed various theoretical models to explain why and how people decide to depart their native states. Theories of migration are important tools that help us to comprehend this phenomenon. Massey et al. (1993) asserted that "although each ultimately seeks to explain the same thing, they employ radically different concepts, assumptions, and frames of reference" (p. 432).

Ernest Ravenstein developed the earliest theory on human migration in 19th century. The theory called Laws of Migration, has formed the basis of modern migration

theories. According to Ravenstein (1885), migration is mainly directed by a push-pull process where certain undesired conditions drive people away and meantime favorable conditions in another place pull them. Since then, many scholars have developed theories to elucidate underlying reasons of migration from different perspectives.

One of the earliest theory on migration was developed by Everett Lee in 1966 (Lee, 1966) following the footsteps of Ravenstein. The theory developed by Lee (1966) which is also widely known as Push-Pull Theory has been utilized by researchers to study reasons of why educational tourists seek for tertiary education in overseas countries. In his classical article, 'A Theory of Migration', Lee (1966) defined migration as "a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence" (p. 49). He also argued that "no restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between external and internal migration" (Lee, 1966, p. 49). On the other hand, Hagen-Zanker (2008) defined migration as "temporary or permanent move of individuals or groups of people from one geographic location to another for various reasons ranging from better employment to persecution (p. 8). Based on these definitions, it can be argued that educational tourists can be considered as migrants since they voluntarily travel to another country for a specific period usually from distant home countries.

Every migration act regardless the time duration, distance, and degree of difficulties faced "involves an origin, a destination, and an intervening set of obstacles" (Lee, 1966, p. 49). The factors which enter into the decision to migrate and the process of migration enumerated by Lee (1966) as "(1) factors associated with the area of origin; (2) Factors associated with the area of destination; (3) Intervening factors;

and (4) Personal factors” (pp. 49-50). In his pioneering work Lee (1966) asserted that there exist some factors retain that people in a location and there may be other issues which deter them. These factors affect different people in different ways.

Put it differently, certain set of factors exist which “push” the potential migrant to move to another destination and there are different set of influences which “pull” the potential migrant to select a precise location as a new destination. The factors which hold, attract, or push away people change from one person to another. In other words, every person evaluate his or her set of individual factors before making a final decision and make the final decision according to his or her circumstances and evaluation.

According to (Lee, 1966), factors related to the region of origin and destination indicates distinctions from a prospective migrant's view. Lee (1966) argues that people living in a certain place for a long period of time develop an familiarity about its characteristics however they have limited knowledge about the destination and pros and cons of starting a life there.

Moreover, Lee (1966) asserted that the act of migration cannot simply be decided by comparing the influences at the source and the endpoint. He argued that “The balance in favor of the move must be enough to overcome the natural inertia which always exists” (Lee, 1966, p. 51).

As discussed above, there exist some intervening minor or sometimes undefeatable obstacles that potential migrants would encounter between the source area and the destination area. Lee (1966) argued that “Different people are affected in different

ways by the same set of obstacles and what may be trivial to some people may be prohibitive to others” (p. 51).

Lee (1966) claims that people’s decision about migration are not rational at all times; there are even cases where irrational decisions overwhelm the rational ones. Moreover, the decision about migration is not always solely made by the individuals; sometimes close people such as family members and friends influence the decision (Lee, 1966).

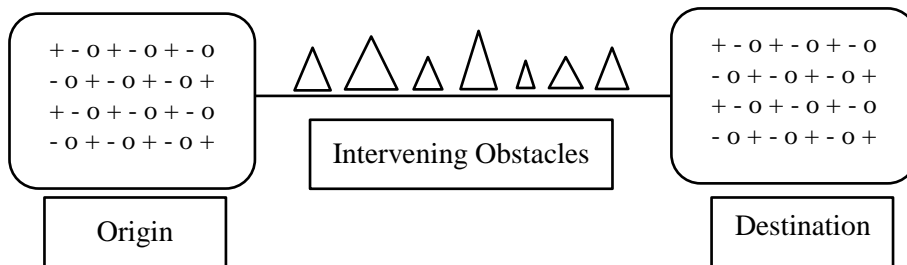


Figure 3.3: Lee’s Migration Model
Source: Based on Lee (1966)

The figure above underpinned the basis of the pull-push model of McMahon (1992) and Mazzarol and Soutar (2002). It was previously discussed that educational tourists are voluntary temporary migrants who depart from their native countries to a host country for university education and the process they go through resembles the process experienced by a migrant. Educational tourists are forced to depart from their home country by certain factors and seek for alternatives somewhere else like migrants and certain factors in the destination countries pull them to make a choice. However, the process is not as simple as it seems; there are what is called *intervening obstacles* that may change the course of the action even dramatically in some cases.

When the decision is made by the educational tourist, the next step is to choose a HEI to pursue his or her tertiary education. According to the earlier studies this is how the process works. The selection process of a HEI is not as simple as it seems; several personal and institutional based factors affect the decision process. In some particular cases, the decision is not fully made by the educational tourist per se but influenced or even guided by the influential people around such as family members, peers, school counselors, etc.

The section below will present literature overview associated with HEI selection process. A review of models will assist to recognize factors that have an impact on the educational tourists' decision and the relations among them and their impact on the decision process of educational tourists.

3.3.2 Higher Education Institution Choice Models

Researchers have advanced models to elucidate how choice is made by students about which HEI to enroll. Some researchers adapted a marketing perspective while others followed a different path. In this section, key models will be presented to clarify how students' HEI choice process works and which factors affect the whole decision mechanism.

Consumer decision-making models have been utilized to comprehend which process educational tourists' go through to select HEIs (Maringe & Carter, 2007; Moogan, Baron, & Harris, 1999). Given the bundle of alternatives, consumers make a selection among alternatives and at this point the HEIs marketing efforts influence choice of the educational tourists. Kusumawati (2010) argues that management of HEIs need to establish the uniqueness of their institutions to be able to convince and attract the students.

The most notable models developed are Chapman Model (D. W. Chapman, 1981), Jackson Model (Jackson, 1982), Hanson and Litten model (Hanson & Litten, 1982) and the generic model developed by Vrontis et al. (2007). They propose that educational tourists go through certain phases prior to final selection of HEI. These models have similarities with the typical five-stage consumer decision-making models developed by R. Chapman (1986) and Kotler and Fox (1995).

The research carried out by R. Chapman (1986) regarded as one of the pioneering work in applying buying behavior theory onto higher education; it was argued that learners follow certain phases to select an institution or subject of study. In the first step (Pre-search Behavior) the prospective student thinks about the future. This is followed by Search Behavior where information about HEIs is searched for. In the third step (Application Stage) prospective learners shortlist the possible HEIs and apply them. Students accept the offers made by the HEIs in the Choice Decision step and then finally at the Matriculation Decision step the student reach to a final decision and register to one of the HEIs.

This model explains the decision process that a potential student goes through in selecting a HEI; the process of selecting the host country is not incorporated into the model. More specifically, education service to be received is seen as a product and the point of consumption of this particular product is ignored.

On the other hand, Kotler and Fox (1995) developed a five stage model to elucidate how a product or service is acquired by a typical consumer. Initially, the consumer identifies a problem or a need and then search about the product or the service that would solve this problem or satisfy the need. These processes are called the

Problem/Need Recognition and Information Search stages. Once the information gathered, the consumer follow the Evaluation of Alternatives stage and identify the product or service that best suits to solve his problem or satisfy his needs. In the fourth stage the consumer finalizes his decision and purchases the product or the service. Finally the consumer evaluates his buying decision in the Post Purchase Behavior stage

The second aim of the study requires through review of the models of that explains the choice of a HEI by potential students. A number of models, which are referred as ‘Student College Choice Models’, have been established by previous researchers to explain what course students follow when choosing an HEI.

The choice of a HEI is not a simple process purely made by the students. On the contrary, the process a complex plus a multistage process that is impacted by a number of factors, that can be economic as well as social. It is highly critical to understand the relationship of the characteristics possessed by the students, parent, peers, and any other influential people and other non-social factors to comprehend how students decide regarding HEI selection is influenced. In short, the models of HEI choice assist to achieve these objectives.

3.3.3.1 Chapman Model

Chapman Model (D. W. Chapman, 1981) is probably the earliest model of student college choice ever developed. In his pioneering work, D. W. Chapman (1981) developed a complete longitudinal model presenting how dissimilar influences students’ decision making in selecting a HEI. The model demonstrates how a group of student characteristics combined with three groups of external influences (see Figure 3.4) affect general expectations of students about campus life which in turn

affect their decision making regarding choice of a HEI. D. W. Chapman (1981) argues that student's selection of a HEI is best understood by considering students' background and characteristics together with family and HEI features.

The model basically take into consideration key influences that impact on students' decision regarding HEI choice, however it does not contain full array of possibilities. D. W. Chapman (1981) also argues that college choice is a complex choice and different factors should be concerned. According to this model, once a student has developed his or her expectations about the campus life, application process is initiated. On the other hand, the HEI make a decision about accepting or rejecting the student's application. According to D. W. Chapman (1981) "Failure to be admitted sometimes but not always means that the student's selection of the college was inappropriate or unwarranted. Indeed, students may be rejected from colleges in which they would be well suited" (p. 500).

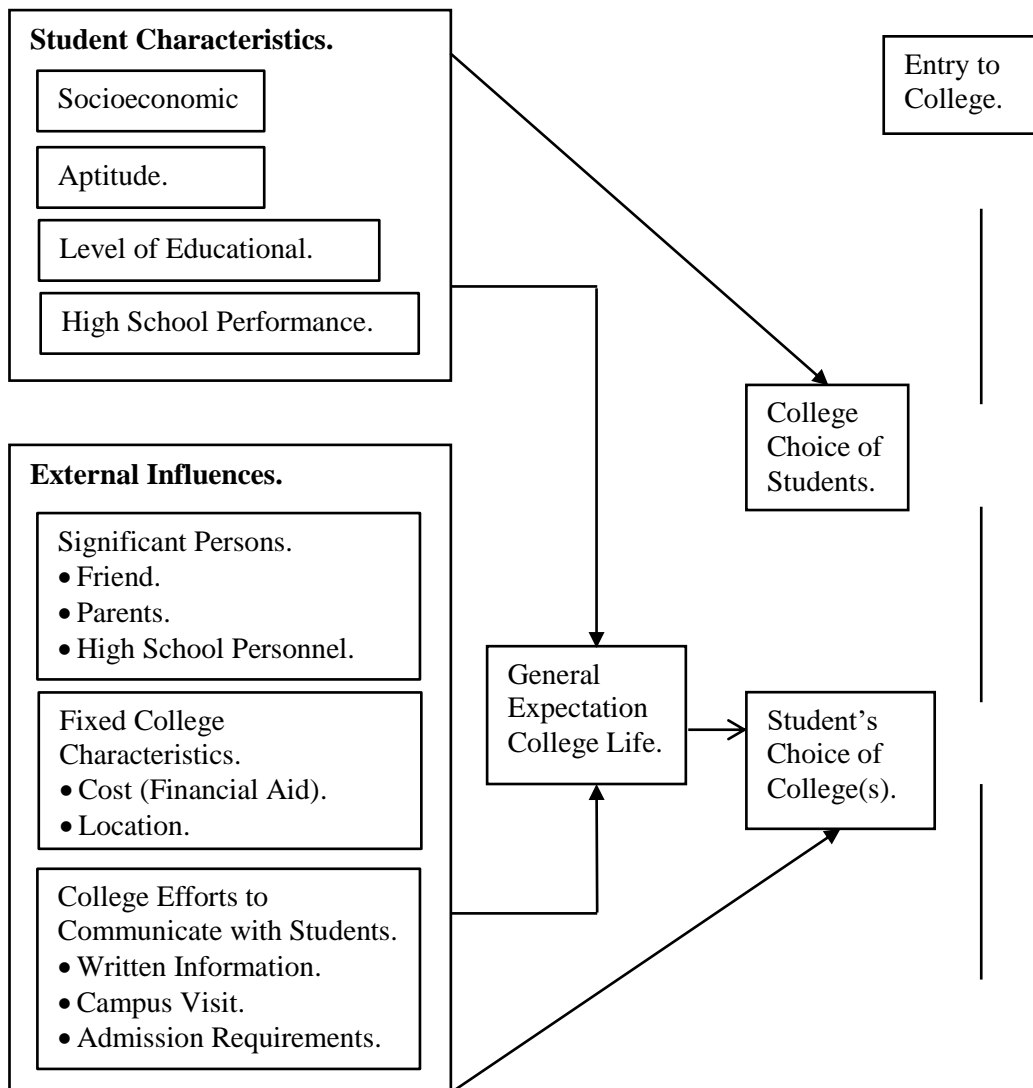


Figure 3.4: The Chapman Model
Source: Adapted from D. W. Chapman (1981)

3.3.3.2 Hanson and Litten Model (1982)

The model developed by Hanson and Litten (1982) is a three-stage model of college choice. The initial phase is referred to as *Predisposition*, which is a two-step process. In step one, the student show a desire to attend to a HEI and in the second step he or she makes the decision regarding to attend or not. While the process of decision to attend is in progress, the student, in parallel, initiates another process about making decision to process and application for financial support. During the second stage of the model, this is referred to as *Exploratory* stage, students seek for information from

various sources regarding the HEIs for example promotional materials, peers, family members, friends, school staff, etc. The search for information about financial aid continues during that stage as well. The third stage, named as *Application/Matriculation* stage, starts with application to selected HEIs by the students. Application for financial aid takes place during this stage. This stage is finalized by choosing a HEI from the list of all HEIs, which granted admission and offered a financial aid package.

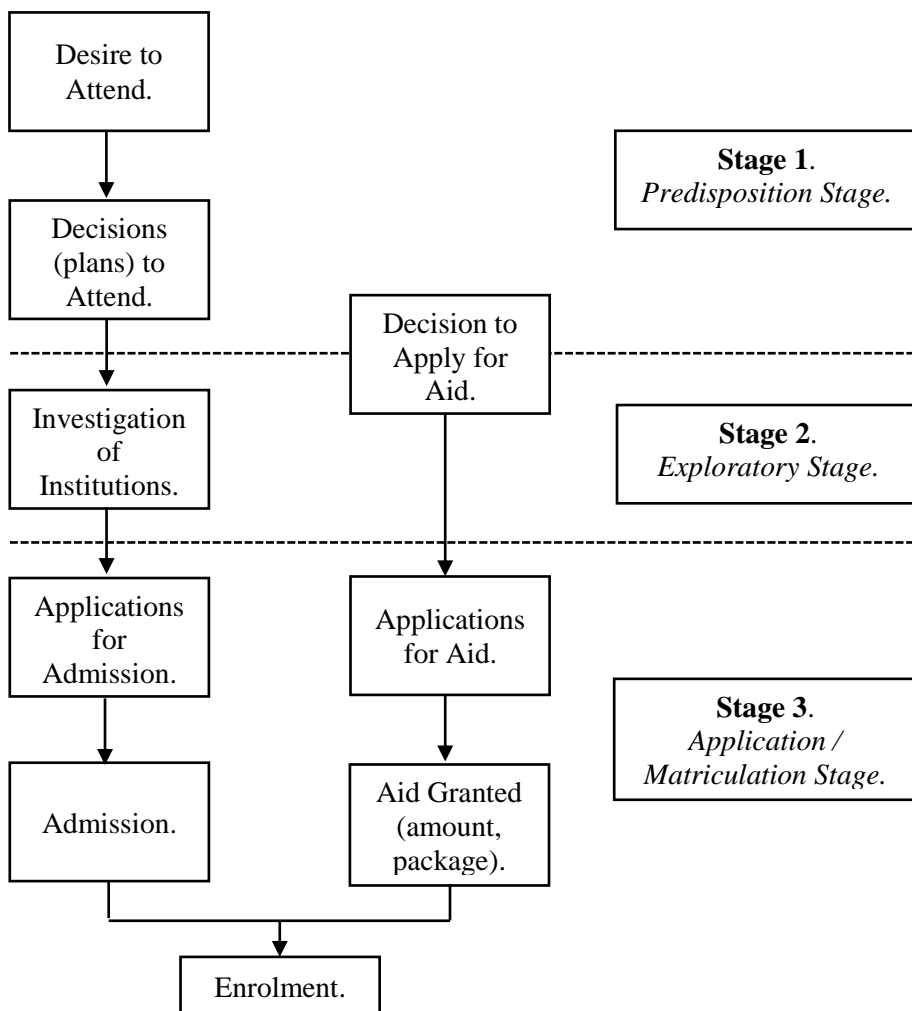


Figure 3.5: Three Phase Model of College Choice
Source: Adapted from Hanson and Litten (1982)

3.3.3.3 Jackson Model (1982)

Similar to Hanson and Litten (1982) Model, Jackson Model (1982) also has three-stages and the stages are called *preference*, *exclusion*, and *evaluation*. During the initial phase (*preference*), academic achievement identified as the most important factor influencing college aspiration. In other words, if the academic achievement of a student is high, he/she is possibly aim higher education. In the second stage, (*exclusion*) students consider their options and after rejecting some alternatives, they gather detailed information about the shortlisted HEIs. Collecting accurate information about the HEIs at this stage plays a significant role in making the ultimate decision. If for some reason information gathering is not done properly, there is a possibility of leaving out some good alternatives. The characteristics of the HEIs falling into students' choice set is plays a significant role in the decision making procedure at this stage. According to Jackson (1982), factors such as location, family input, access to precise information, and academic background are the key elements that exert impact on the students' choice set. In the final stage, (*evaluation*) students make a choice of HEI to attend. Factors such as job attributes, college attributes, cost, family background and academic experience are the main elements that impact the evaluation of alternatives by the students. According to Jackson (1982), parental influence and family background play important role at all stages together with academic achievement. Besides, social factors play a crucial part in the early stages and its role diminishes at the final stage. Finally, issues such as cost, price, and location of the HEI were found to be important at all stages but particularly more important in the later part of the process. Another important feature of the Jackson's Model is that Jackson (1982) introduced the concept of choice set which were later adopted by the other researchers.

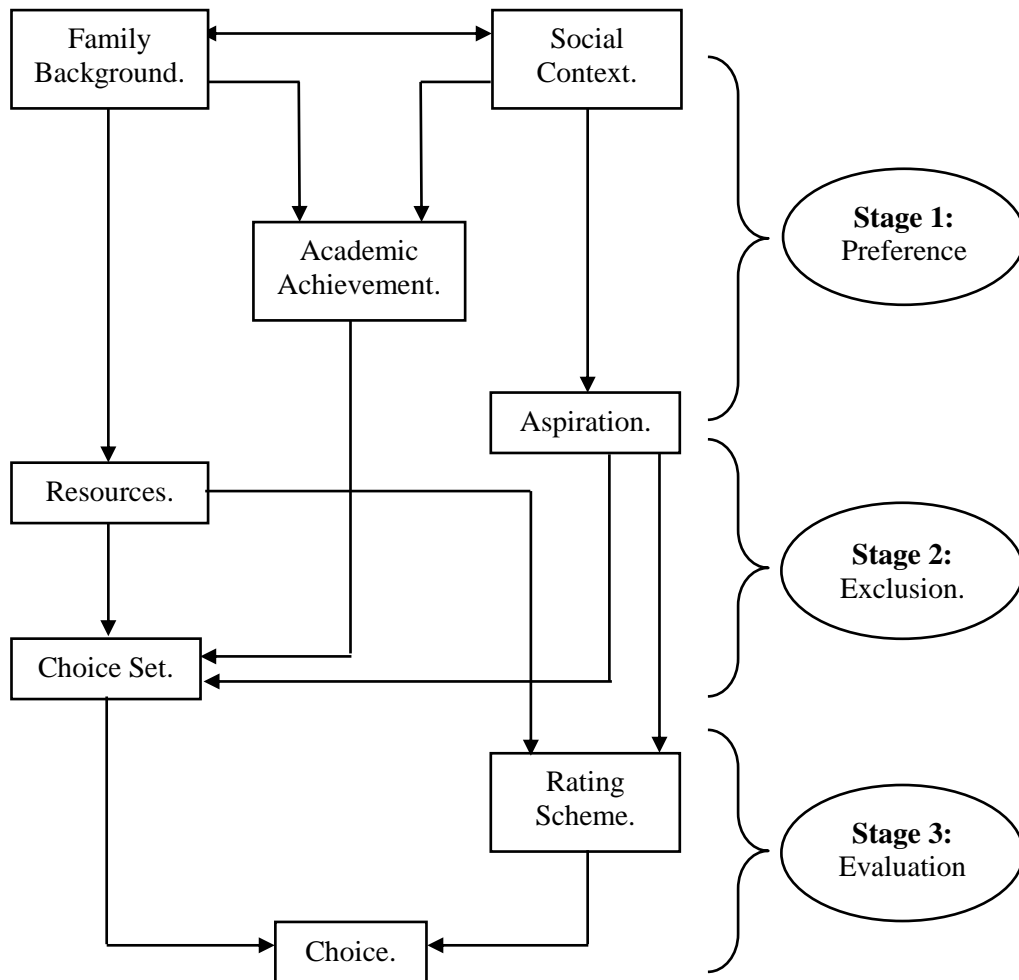


Figure 3.6: The Jackson Model
 Source: Adapted from Jackson (1982)

3.3.3.4 Hossler and Gallagher Model

One of the earlier model of student college choice was developed by Hossler and Gallagher (1987). Student college choice three-stage model argues that person and organizational variables interact at each stage to generate results that affect the process of choosing the college.

Model Dimensions.	Influential Factors		Student Outcomes.
	Individual Factors.	Organizational Factors.	
Predisposition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student characteristics. • Significant others. • Educational activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School characteristics. 	Search for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. College options. b. Other options.
Search.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student preliminary college values. • Student search activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College and university search activities (Search for students). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Choice set. b. Other options.
Choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice set. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College and university courtship activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice.

Figure 3.7: Three-Phase Model of College Choice
Source: Based on Hossler and Gallagher (1987)

The *predisposition phase*, is a developmental phase during which students decide whether to continue or not their education after high school. If the student wish to pursue tertiary education, information is gathered in the second stage about the HEI, which leads to formulation of a *choice set* that is simply a group of HEIs students are willing to apply. When the *choice set* is compiled, students' decision of selecting HEIs is influenced by individual and organizational factors. In the final stage, namely *choice*, students decide which HEI to admit. A significant characteristic of this model is that the model does not focus solely on the students' features but also considers other tertiary education options and institutional issues (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

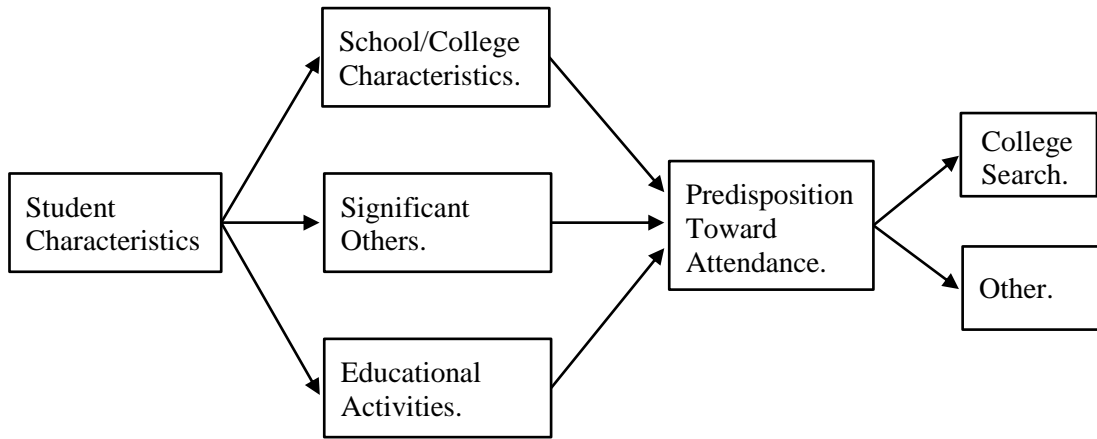


Figure 3.8: Phase One – Predisposition

At *predisposition* stage certain background characteristics of students influence students’ decision to attend a HEI. The background characteristics are socioeconomic status, ability (or achievement), and attitudes of parents and peers. Besides the individual factors, to a lesser extent, organizational factors also influence decision making procedure. Pre-college school experience in terms of successful participation in high school curricular activities, high school curriculum, high school status, and proximity of the high school to a college campus are identified as the key factors affecting students’ decision process.

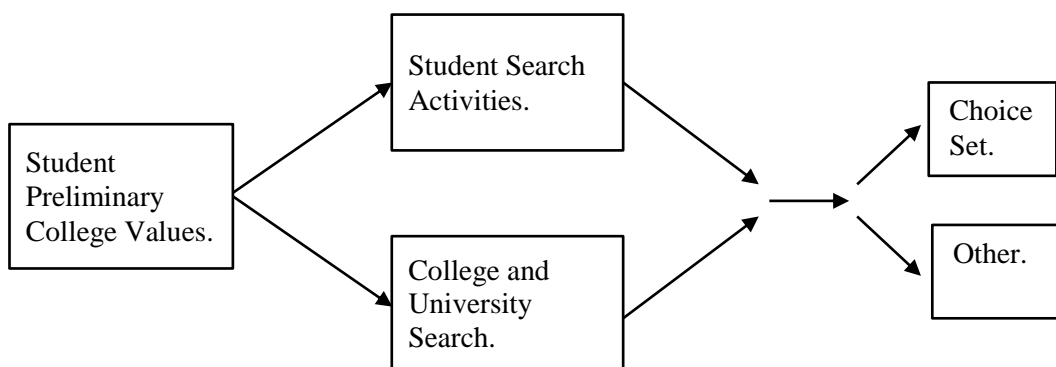


Figure 3.9: Phase Two – Search

At the second phase, potential students initiate information gathering process and start collecting more information about the HEIs they are willing to pursue their university education. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) argued that “it is during this second phase of the student college choice process that more interaction between potential matriculants and institutions begins to occur” (p. 213). At this phase, not only the students search for the HEIs but simultaneously HEIs also search for the students. Eventually, students put together a choice set (which is conducted in different manner by each student) which is a cluster of HEIs the potential student is willing to admit. Creating the choice set is followed by gathering more detailed information (sophisticated search) to make a genuine and precise final decision. Students consider factors such as the admission requirements, income level, geographical location, and the quality of the HEI. If there is no HEI meeting the expectations of the potential student, a non-college option may be selected.

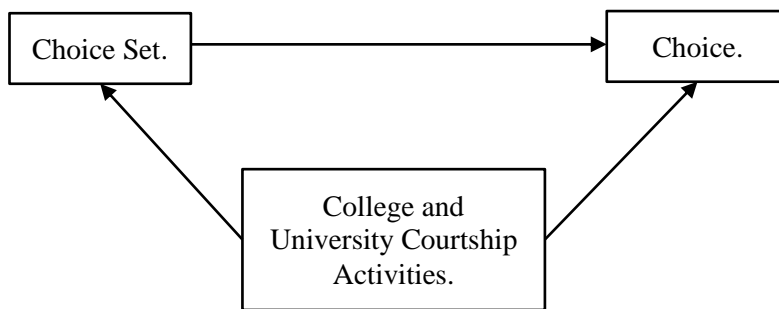


Figure 3.10: Phase Three – Choice

Hossler and Gallagher (1987) argued that in the third phase students appraise their set of choices and slim down their set to particular institutions they are willing to admit. The list can be limited to one HEI or several HEIs. A number of factors such as preference of the applicant, the characteristics of the HEI, quality of the HEI,

academic programs, courtship procedures, financial aid, net cost of education, family influence can affect the selection of HEI by the applicant.

The model attempted to clarify the choice of HEI by potential students, which is a complex phenomenon. Each phase works in an integrated manner and several factors affect the decision of students at each stage. Although the model explains how students make their choice about entering a specific HEI, it has rooms for development by considering other factors which may influence the decision making process of potential students. Tatar and Oktay (2006) made an attempt to develop the model by adding a fourth phase which is called the *persistence*. The decision regarding persistence is affected by some individual and organizational issues as in the first three phases.

3.4 Conclusion

The fundamental purpose of my research is to identify the factors that impact educational tourists' decision process regarding selecting a host country and host HEI. The literature review disclosed that once a student chooses not to study at home, a decision on a host nation and then a host HEI is the second step he or she is going through. The first aim of the literature review was to review the past empirical studies to recognize the gap existing educational tourism literature then to comprehend the mechanisms that educational tourists goes through in deciding about the host country and host institution selection. The particular review also enabled us to identify the key models that have been adopted in various studies. In the second part, key models about host country and host institution selection was studied to understand thoroughly how students' decision making mechanism works when a student decides to pursue his or her tertiary education abroad.

The literature review revealed that Pull-Push Model, which is based on Migration Theory, is the most ideal model that can be utilized to understand how students decided to study abroad and the selection of host country. Although this model has been extensively adopted by researchers, it has been applied somehow at different settings. Basically, the model can be used as a basis to come up with a all-purpose model which would be adapted to North Cyprus case which has peculiar characteristics. The push-pull model, which is based on migration theory introduced by Ravenstein (1885) and later developed by Lee (1966) is a more complete model and would serve better to the purpose of the research. Therefore, the push-pull model will be utilized as a guiding model identifying the issues affecting decision-making of students and also investigating the magnitude of the factors throughout the whole process.

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The ultimate aim of this section is to make an introduction to the methodology chapter which shapes and guides the entire research process. The methodology chapter constitutes an essential element of the work to be carried out in the sense that the whole research process is formalized at this stage and it acts in a way as a road-map to the whole research process. When the methodology chapter is formulated the main purpose of the research is inevitably affected methodological approaches and the methods of inquiry adopted.

Generally speaking, this research it is aimed to detect and study the factors that affect the host-destination and host-institution choice of educational tourist. More specifically, this research is carried out to comprehend why international students choose to pursue their tertiary education in North Cyprus despite a number of unfavorable conditions and also why do they choose to enroll to a particular HEI. The research is formulated to uncover an in-depth understanding of the factors affecting students' decision making process. Moreover, the research findings will assist the policy makers at institutional and national level if not at international level to understand the decision making process that international students go through before making a final decision.

4.2 Being an Insider Researcher

My previous research experience was in a completely different format in the sense that I was not related to the subject of inquiry or part of any organization related to the research. Basically, as a researcher, I was absolutely an ‘outsider’. However, current research was carried out in the institution that I have always worked with some interruptions. So, simply this will put me in a position of being an insider-researcher where the researcher is somehow involved the investigated topic (Sherry, 2008). Rooney (2005) argues that different ways exists in which a researcher is characterized as an insider. According to Rooney (2005), an insider researcher can be a practitioner researcher, a member of a community, or a collaborative researcher. Carrying out an insider-research has some advantages over traditional type of research as well as some challenges.

4.2.1 The Advantages of Being an Insider-Researcher

Compared with an outside-researcher, an insider-researcher enjoys the advantage of being familiar with the organizational structure, politics and culture. I have been part of EMU as student and staff (academic and administrative) for a long time. Basically, I have good knowledge of how the institution operates; its rules and regulations; structure of the hierarchy; and the power relations. Moreover, being so long at this institution inevitably made me to develop close relations with many staff at various departments and positions (some of them happen to be my former lecturers and/or class-mates). Knowing individuals at various levels in the administration and having easy access to them enabled me to eliminate the problems (e.g. language barrier, cultural differences, norms, etc.) related to orientating to the research environment. This will bring about the opportunity to develop good rapport with the staff (both academic and administrative) and have easy access to needed data and information

not only about EMU but also about higher education sector of North Cyprus. During this period, I have also developed strong emotional bond towards EMU in so far that I basically perceive this institution as my 'second home'.

In addition, I have had an excellent opportunity during this period to analyze and comprehend certain characteristics (e.g. socio-economic backgrounds, attitudes, values, etc.) of the EMU students which constitute one of the main subjects of study. I have been interacting with students in EMU as an administrator and instructor and this has made me to get to know how to communicate with them even about sensitive issues. Contrary to an outsider, because of my extensive experience and knowledge about the background of the EMU students, I managed to gain their confidence and approach them easily when probing about the topic of inquiry.

I also have easy access to data and information; even undisclosed files could be accessed. Moreover, since all the research was carried out within the boundaries of the university campus there was no need for travelling and I was flexible with regard to timing the interviews. All these put me as an insider-researcher into a more advantages position in terms of time and cost saving.

4.2.2 The Challenges of Being an Insider-Researcher

Being an insider saved me from a number of possible problems that typical researchers face but this did not mean that I did not faced with any obstacles or problems at all. Knowing the institution, its staff and its students so well is a valuable asset for an "outsider" but I, as an insider-researcher, felt obliged to pay extra attention for not threatening the validity of the research by making biased judgements because of my professional and emotional ties with the institution. Research validity is an important issue that challenges insider-researchers. Rooney

(2005) argues that the validity may turn out to be problematic with inside research since the investigator gets involved with the study subject. According to Galea (2009), validity for insider researchers becomes complex because of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. I, as an insider-researcher who have been part of the institution for a long time, took these questions into consideration for not threatening the validity of the research when formulating and conducting my research and analyzing and reporting the findings.

4.3 Methodological Approach

Alternative methodological approaches exist to be employed in a given research. Research methodologies can take different forms (e.g., surveys, interviews, case-studies) and moreover can be quantitative, qualitative or a mixture of both. Besides, methods such as observations and questionnaires can be employed for data collection. The choice of qualitative or quantitative research does not depend on the strength and weaknesses of the methodology but the subject of inquiry and the research objectives should be considered.

Two concepts, namely methodology and method, are sometimes mixed-up (Schensul, 2008). According to Schensul (2008) “research methodology consists of the assumptions, postulates, rules, and methods—the blueprint or roadmap—that researchers employ to render their work open to analysis, critique, replication, repetition, and/or adaptation and to choose research methods” (p. 516). However, research methods are “the tools or techniques with which researchers collect data.” (Schensul, 2008, p. 516)

4.3.1 Alternative Research Methodologies

A number of different methodologies have been developed and refined over the years. In this section different research methodologies will be presented and discussed.

One of the widely employed methodology in positive as well as social research is experimental research (Experiment Resources, 2008). Experimental research is a group of research designs using the process of manipulation and controlled testing to comprehend casual processes. In other words, one or more variables are manipulated in order to study the influence on the dependent variable.

On the other hand, survey research which is a commonly practiced methodology in social sciences is generally utilized to collect quantitative and qualitative data or a mixture of both. Julien (2008) argues that “Survey research refers to the set of methods used to gather data in a systematic way from a range of individuals, organizations, or other units of interest” (p. 846). In this type of research, questionnaires, interviews, and observations are utilized to gather data about the topic of inquiry.

Grounded theory is also a widespread methodology employed in social science research. Charmaz and Bryant (2008) argued that “As such, the grounded theory method consists of a set of systematic but flexible, guidelines for conducting inductive qualitative inquiry aimed toward theory construction” (p. 374). According to the Grounded Theory Institute (2009) grounded theory is not purely a qualitative method; the whole process is a systematic research leading to systematic generation of a theory which can be utilized with qualitative or quantitative data.

Another widely used method is action research which is frequently utilized in different fields such as social and health services, education, and community development research. The outcome of action research is theoretical as well as practical and the knowledge it generates impact on participants. According to Somekh (2008) “Action research involves fluid and overlapping cycles of investigation, action planning, piloting of new practices, and evaluation of outcomes, incorporating at all stages the collection and analysis of data and the generation of knowledge” (p. 4).

Besides the popular research methodologies used in social sciences briefed above, other methodologies such as ethnographic research (Fetterman, 2008); phenomenological research (Limberg, 2008); heuristic inquiry (Hiles, 2008); and discourse analysis (Potter, 2008) were also studied. A review of different research methodologies shows that survey is the most appropriate methodology for the current study. Below, discussion about the reasons for selecting survey research as a methodology is presented together with detailed information about survey research.

4.3.2 Quantitative vs. Qualitative Research

Distinction between qualitative and quantitative research will be presented in this section to clarify some issues and providing details before explaining the reasons for selecting survey research as a methodology.

Qualitative research is mainly carried out to gather in-depth insight into the subject of inquiry (Dawson, 2002). According to Dawson (2002) “Qualitative research explores attitudes, behavior and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups. It attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants” (p. 14).

Usually in qualitative research the number of participants are relatively much smaller and they are contacted much longer to enquire about their attitudes or experiences.

Conversely, quantitative research, as stated by Dawson (2002), is mainly geared towards gathering numerical data to carry out statistical analysis. Dawson (2002) asserts that “Quantitative research generates statistics through the use of large-scale survey research, using methods such as questionnaires or structured interviews” (p. 15). Contrary to qualitative research, in quantitative research more participants are surveyed however the contact hour is relatively much shorter.

Literature reveal that there are researchers who choose to employ mixed method where “the inquirer or investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of study” (Creswell, 2008, p. 526).

Table 4.1: Quantitative vs. Qualitative Methods

	Quantitative	Qualitative
General framework	Seek to confirm hypotheses about phenomena	Seek to explore phenomena
	Instrument use more rigid style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions	Instruments use more flexible, iterative style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions
	Use highly structured methods such as questionnaires, surveys, and structured observation	Use semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation
Analytical objectives	To quantify variation	To describe variation
	To predict causal relationships	To describe and explain relationships
	To describe characteristics of a population	To describe individual experiences
Question format	Close-ended	Open-ended
Data format	Numerical (obtained by assigning numerical values to responses)	Textual (obtained from audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes)
Flexibility in study design	Study design is stable from beginning to end	Some aspects of the study are flexible (for example, the addition, exclusion, or wording of particular interview questions)

	Participant responses do not influence or determine how and which questions researchers ask next	Participant responses affect how and which questions researchers ask next
	Study design is subject to statistical assumptions and conditions	Study design is iterative, that is, data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned.

Adapted from: Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest, and Namey (2005)

4.3.3 Why Survey Research?

This section will present the justification for choosing survey as a research methodology in this research. The reason is not because survey research is a widespread methodology applied by scholars from diverse disciplines. A brief study of the alternative survey methodologies showed that, there are two methodologies that can be chosen for this type of research, namely action research and survey research. According to Somekh (2008) “Action research is a flexible research methodology uniquely suited to researching and supporting change. It integrates social research with exploratory action to promote development” (p. 4). The results of action research can be theoretical as well as can have hands-on implications that would assist to make changes in the institutional practices. This method has been utilized in different disciplines for years varying from health services to education.

O’Brien (1998) puts it more simply and defines action research as “action research is “learning by doing” – a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again.” (para. 3)

By looking at these definitions one may argue that this method is ideal for the proposed research because this methodology basically aims to identify remedies to solve a problem within an institution. However, the ultimate of this research is not to solve a problem but to comprehend the reasons for choosing North Cyprus as host

state and EMU as a host HEI. Moreover, action research requires implementation of the research findings and evaluation of outcomes. In our case this is not possible since I as a researcher do not have this influence and power over the university administration. Therefore, action research is not really an ideal methodological approach for this research.

All these constraints leave no other option but to go for the survey research which is a very popular methodology utilized in social sciences. According to Julien (2008) “Survey research refers to the set of methods used to gather data in a systematic way from a range of individuals, organizations, or other units of interest” (p. 846).

Diverse data collection methods such as observations, interviews, questionnaires and focus-groups can be used in a survey research and through these methods both qualitative and quantitative data is gathered. In this research qualitative data was gathered by utilizing in-depth interview method.

To have a thorough understanding of the students’ decision process, face-to-face in-depth interviews was conducted with various students from a selected country. In social research there are many types of interview methods however, unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews are the most common ones (Dawson, 2002). In this research, semi-structured interviews was conducted since they provide more flexible structure for the researcher to probe comprehensively the factors affecting students’ decision compared to semi-structured and structured interviews which look more like a questionnaire.

Boyce and Neale (2006) argue that “The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys. They also may provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information - people may feel more comfortable having a conversation with you about their program as opposed to filling out a survey” (p. 3). Every data collection method has advantages as well as disadvantages and in-depth interview method is not an exemption. According to Boyce and Neale (2006) in-depth interview method has the following disadvantages such as it may be prone to bias, demand considerable time, interviewer need to be trained in advance about the method, and generalizing from the results is subject to criticism because of small sample size and lack of statistical sampling. However, these shortcomings can be overcome by taking certain measures.

The alternative method is to use focus group method that is acknowledged as discussion groups or group interviews (Dawson, 2002). In other words, interviews are not conducted on individual basis but a specific group of people, guided by a researcher, are asked to discuss what they think about a specific topic in order to generate qualitative data. Since both methods use interview as a data collection procedure, one might argue that it is unnecessary to use both in the same research. However, this is not the case. Morgan (2008) argues that “The focus groups would typically provide access to a greater number of participants, while the in-depth interviews would typically provide more detail about each participant” (pp. 352-353).

Having considered all the alternatives for this research, it was decided to employ interview method to conduct an in-depth analysis of the student at EMU from the perspectives of students.

4.4 Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research

Validity and reliability are two important concepts that impact on the quality of the research outcome. Both concepts have always been taken seriously by the researchers who followed a positivist approach and utilized quantitative research paradigm. However, that does not mean that these concepts should be taken lightly and are not applicable to qualitative research paradigm.

According to L. Altinay and Paraskevas (2008) validity refers to “the extent to which the data collection method accurately measures what it is intended to measure, and the extent to which the research findings are really about what they profess to be about” (p. 130). On the other hand L. Altinay and Paraskevas (2008) defined reliability as “the degree to which the data collection method(s) will yield consistent findings, whether similar observations could be made or conclusions reached by other researchers, and whether there is transparency in terms of how much sense was made of the raw data” (p. 130).

Validity and reliability are seriously considered issues in quantitative research with the purpose of enhancing research quality and safeguard its credibility. Both concepts can be measured using specific tests in quantitative research however this is not the case when a qualitative research is carried out. According to Golafshani (2003) validity and reliability are observed in a different way by scholars who conduct qualitative inquiry. Golafshani (2003) argues that “these terms as defined in

quantitative terms may not apply to the qualitative research paradigm” (p. 600). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) assert that “Validity and reliability have different meanings in quantitative and qualitative research, and it is important not only to indicate these clearly, but for the researcher to demonstrate fidelity to the approach in which she or he is working and to abide by the principles of validity and reliability they require” (p. 180). Noble and Smith (2015a) argue that methodological strategies can be designed and incorporated to safeguard the credibility of the research findings. According to Noble and Smith (2015a, pp. 34-35) these strategies are as followings:

1. Accounting for personal biases which may have influenced findings;
2. Acknowledging biases in sampling and ongoing critical reflection of methods to ensure sufficient depth and relevance of data collection and analysis;
3. Meticulous record keeping, demonstrating a clear decision trail and ensuring interpretations of data are consistent and transparent;
4. Establishing a comparison case/seeking out similarities and differences across accounts to ensure different perspectives are represented;
5. Including rich and thick verbatim descriptions of participants’ accounts to support findings;
6. Demonstrating clarity in terms of thought processes during data analysis and subsequent interpretations;
7. Engaging with other researchers to reduce research bias;
8. Respondent validation: includes inviting participants to comment on the interview transcript and whether the final themes and concepts created adequately reflect the phenomena being investigated;

9. Data triangulation, whereby different methods and perspectives help produce a more comprehensive set of findings.

Noble and Smith (2015a) finalize their discussion about validity and reliability in qualitative research as “it is imperative that all qualitative researchers incorporate strategies to enhance the credibility of a study during research design and implementation” (p. 35).

4.5 Survey Population and Sampling

The population under study in this research includes overseas undergraduate students at EMU. Students from North Cyprus and Turkey were excluded from the research. Main aim of the research is identifying factors affecting decision making of educational tourists in selecting a host destination and host HEI. One may argue that Turkish students should also be included into the survey population and be represented however the case of students coming from Turkey is very different from what is called overseas students.

The student admission system in North Cyprus universities works in the following way:

1. Turkish Cypriot students sit for an entrance exam of any university they are willing to admit and if they pass the test they get admission to the program they applied for. Turkish Cypriot students are allowed to sit for the entrance exam of a number of Turkish Cypriot universities; there is no limitation in that respect.
2. Turkish students from Turkey however get admission to the North Cyprus universities through a central placement exam that is carried out by the Center

of Student Selection and Placement of Turkey. Students list a number of programs from different universities in Turkey and North Cyprus and depending on the exam score they are automatically placed by the Center. In other words, the student does not make any specific choice about the country and university but apply to a bundle of choices from a list of choices.

3. Overseas students on the other hand apply to North Cyprus universities personally or through representative agents in their home countries. Every university has a set admission criteria for candidates from different countries. If the applicants' credentials satisfy the requirements of the host university, the applicant gets the admission and enroll to the program of her or his choice. In other words, compare to other group of students, overseas students' admission process fit into the general aim of this research..

Postgraduates (Master's and PhDs) are exempted from this research. Unlike undergraduates, postgraduates are generally much more mature therefore have relatively more responsibilities therefore their selection process is not exactly the same.

4.6.1 Sampling in Qualitative Research

Targeted population cannot fully be investigated in qualitative research simply because of certain constraints faced by the researcher particularly when the time needed for conducting an interview and transcribing is considered. Researchers can face with situations where selecting sample is not needed because the targeted population is of a manageable size. A researcher, whether she or he is conducting a quantitative or qualitative research, is not solely faced with time constraint but there are many more to be taken into consideration.

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thurnhill (2009), sampling techniques can be divided into two groups such as probability (representative) sampling and non-probability (judgmental) sampling. Saunders et al. (2009) argue that “With probability samples the chance, or probability, of each case being selected from the population is known and is usually equal for all cases. This means that it is possible to answer research questions and to achieve objectives that require you to estimate statistically the characteristics of the population from the sample” (p. 213). However, for non-probability sampling the argument stated above is not valid however findings can be generalized but not on statistical base.

A number of sampling techniques is available to researchers for conducting quantitative research such as simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling, and multi-stage sampling. The choice of probability sampling technique depends on the research question(s) and the objectives of the researcher (Saunders et al., 2009).

In qualitative research, on the other hand, non-probability sampling techniques are used to select the unit of analysis (Saunders et al., 2009). Some of the most commonly used sampling methods in qualitative research are explained below.

One of the common methods is quota sampling. According to Bhattacharjee (2012) quota sampling is a technique where the target population is categorized into mutually exclusive sub-groups which is followed by choosing respondents from each sub-group in a non-random way until the predefined quota is met. Quota sampling can be proportional or non-proportional. Bhattacharjee (2012) argues that “In proportional quota sampling, the proportion of respondents in each subgroup should

match that of the population. Non-proportional quota sampling is less restrictive in that you don't have to achieve a proportional representation, but perhaps meet a minimum size in each subgroup" (p. 69).

On the other hand, in purposive sampling, participants are grouped according to a criteria related to the research question (Mack et al., 2005). Mack et al. (2005) argue that "Sample sizes, which may or may not be fixed prior to data collection, depend on the resources and time available, as well as the study's objectives" (p. 5). In purposive sampling, theoretical saturation set the limits of sample size where the newly obtained data does not add new insights to the research question (Mack et al., 2005).

Alternatively, some researchers employ snowball sampling particularly when sampling-frame is not readily available. Bhattacharjee (2012) argues that "In snowball sampling, you start by identifying a few respondents that match the criteria for inclusion in your study, and then ask them to recommend others they know who also meet your selection criteria" (p. 70).

Another commonly employed method is convenience sampling (also called accidental or opportunity sampling) which is a non-probability sampling method (Bhattacharjee, 2012). According to Bhattacharjee (2012) "This is a technique in which a sample is drawn from that part of the population that is close to hand, readily available, or convenient" (p. 69). Bhattacharjee (2012) argues that convenience sampling is an ideal sampling method for pilot testing, where the aim is to test the survey instrument or measuring the validation rather than obtaining generalizable inferences.

In qualitative research there exist alternative sampling methods. For this research, it was identified that purposive sampling is the ideal method to select the respondents. The general aim of this research is to identify the factors affecting the host country and host institution choice of Nigerian educational tourists. Currently, international educational tourists in North Cyprus HEIs come from more than one hundred different countries (*see* Chapter 2 for details) however there are certain cohorts of students from specific countries that dominate the population. Given the limitations faced in this research, it is not practical to select samples from each country therefore it will be more practical to concentrate on students coming from certain emerging economies for the reasons explained before. Consequently, it was decided to concentrate on students coming only from Nigeria.

4.6.2 Sample Size

Regardless the research approach (quantitative or qualitative) sampling is a process that is carried out by all researchers. Marshall (1996) argues that “Choosing a study sample is an important step in any research project since it is rarely practical, efficient or ethical to study whole populations” (p. 522). Setting the sample size in qualitative research follow a different approach compared to quantitative research. According to L. Altinay and Paraskevas (2008) the sample size in quantitative research depends on the researcher’s readiness for the extent of sampling error, confidence level, and the kinds of analysis desired to be carried out. On the other hand, in qualitative research, the aim is not to generalize from the findings but to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomena. L. Altinay and Paraskevas (2008) argue that “this does not mean that sampling is less important in qualitative research – quite the contrary; it can have a profound effect on the quality of the study” (p. 101). The sample size in quantitative research can be calculated given the constraints

stated above; however in qualitative research since the sampling procedure in non-probabilistic, sample size cannot be determined in exact numbers prior to the research. A rough estimate can be figured out before the research commences however this number can show variations as the research progress. Marshall (1996) argues that “An appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is the one that adequately answers the research question. For simple questions or very detailed studies, this might be in single figures; for complex questions large samples and a variety of sampling techniques might be necessary” (p. 523).

Mason (2010) argues that in determining the sample size in qualitative research researchers follow the concept of saturation. According to Mason (2010) saturation point is reached by the researcher when additional interview does not yield any new data on the issues that is under investigation. Mason (2010) analyzed a sample of PhD studies (560) which utilized different qualitative research methods and the results reveal that the mean sample size is 31. The analyses also revealed that the sample size changes according to the research approaches and methods used by the researchers. The study concluded that the most common sample size is between 20 and 30. According to Crouch and McKenzie (2006) sample size less than 20 is considered as small but this does not mean that the minimum number of respondents should be at least 20. For this research the initial number of respondents was determined to be 20 and throughout the research the “rule of saturation” was strictly followed.

As previously stated, only Nigerian educational tourists was selected as respondents for this research. Turkish Cypriot and Turkish undergraduate students and postgraduate students in any nationalities are excluded. Moreover, some Faculties

and Schools were also excluded from the selection process simply because the undergraduate programs offered by those faculties are fully or mostly in Turkish (e.g., Faculty of Law) and they do not admit overseas student.

4.6 Research Ethics

When planning and carrying out qualitative and/or quantitative research ethical issues need to be considered to prevent any privacy violation. According to CASRO (2008), “Researchers have professional and legal responsibilities to their respondents that are embodied in the procedures of a research study” (p. 5). As a responsible researcher, necessary measures were taken to impede the violation of basic ethical principles throughout the research process. It is strongly advised (CASRO, 2008) to take the following issues into consideration in order not to violate the principles of research ethics: (1) respondents should participate to the research willingly; (2) the respondents should be briefed regarding the survey intentions and how personal data and survey replies will be utilized and safeguarded; (3) the privacy and the sensitivity of the respondents should be protected; (4) the confidentiality of the respondents must be carried out and their anonymity and privacy must be secured.

My ethical responsibility toward the students was to ensure that all interviews will be based on strict anonymity and confidentiality. Anonymity and confidentiality can be met by disguising the names of the students or any other information which may indicate to a particular person (e.g. student number). Moreover, students were not pressurized by any means if they refused to do so; in other words their participation was voluntary.

During the interviews, the participants may criticize past or current policies of the university and/or the external policy makers (e.g. government) or certain individuals working for the institution. Utmost attention was given not to disclose any of their responses to the third parties. Confidence building between the researcher and the participant need to be established in order to develop good rapport and to get honest and clear response. This can be achieved by the researcher through making verbal promises and offering to sign a letter of confidentiality attesting that no information will be disclosed to any authority without the consent of the participant and the names or occupational titles will be disclosed in the final report upon request.

4.7 Development of the Questionnaire

An interview guide design needs to be done thoroughly to gather the qualitative data needed to achieve the objectives of the research. The wording of the questions is also central to the success of the survey and the usage of technical concepts, if possible, needs to be avoided to mitigate confusion and misunderstanding. Julien (2008) argues that “Questions should use language that is meaningful to respondents, with an emphasis on simple, direct, jargon-free language.” (p. 846). This is an important issue that should be handled with care in order to develop a good rapport with the respondent and gather valid information.

To avoid such possible problems the interview guide was first piloted with a small number of students (four students from different nationalities and academic programs) and finalized according to the feedback. The testing procedure assisted to correct wording of the questions and redesigning interview guide. The interview guide was drafted in English; back-translation (Van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg,

2010) is not needed since the whole interview process will be carried out with English speaking students. The interview guide consists of four parts:

Part 1 - Participant Information Sheet: This part is specifically prepared to convey some basic information about the researcher and the general aim of the research to the respondent. It also assures the respondent that participating to the research is voluntary and all correspondence between the interviewer and the respondent will be kept confidential.

Part 2 - Informed Consent: After reading the Participant Information Sheet the respondent is asked to sign the consent form should he or she agreed to participate to the research.

Part 3 - Demographic Form: This form includes some questions about the background of the respondent, his or her contact information, and also duration and place of the interview.

Part 4 - Interview Questions: Interview questions were grouped under five headings. In total, seven questions were directed to the respondent.

A list of probing questions was also prepared to stimulate the respondent to provide more detailed response about certain issues in case the respondent does not response in detail to actual interview questions.

4.8 Data Analysis

A qualitative research approach was adopted to gain in-depth understanding of the factors influencing educational tourists' decision regarding studying overseas, host country choice, and host institution choice. To have in-depth understanding of the

students' decision process, face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews was conducted with Nigerian undergraduate educational tourists. Each interview took about 30 to 40 minutes and they were conducted within the host HEI. In this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted since they provide more flexible structure for the researcher to probe comprehensively the factors affecting students' decision of students (Dawson, 2002).

In qualitative research, since targeted population cannot fully be investigated, a sample needs to be selected using appropriate sampling method. Purposive sampling was identified as the most appropriate method of selecting respondents. Determining the sample size follow the concept of saturation; the saturation point is reached when additional interview does not yield any new data on the issues under investigation (Mason, 2010). For this research the initial number of respondents was determined to be 20 Nigerian educational tourists enrolled to different undergraduate programs at the host HEI. Throughout the research the "rule of saturation" was strictly followed. The saturation point was reached at 12 respondents however the research continued and total of 11 male and 9 female Nigerian undergraduate students was interviewed in order to maintain gender-balance among the respondents.

Conducting qualitative research requires incorporating certain strategies to augment the credibility of the study during research design and implementation (Noble & Smith, 2015b). In this research the strategies recommended by Noble and Smith (2015b) were followed to improve the trustworthiness, rigor, and quality of the study. American Educational Research Association Code of Ethics (AERA, 2011) strictly followed throughout the research process. The respondents were asked to participate to the research on voluntary basis and sign a consent form to show their approval.

Prior to the interview the respondents were appropriately informed about the survey's intention and how their personal information and survey responses will be utilized and they were assured that the all information will be kept confidential and anonymity will be strictly obeyed. Anonymity and confidentiality met by disguising the names of the students or any other information which may indicate to a particular. Moreover, approval of Academic Research Ethics Committee of the host HEI had been obtained before initiating the research.

Thematic analysis is used as a method of analysis in this research. "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, interpreting patterns of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data" (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis method has the advantage of being a flexible research tool which provides rich, detailed and complex account of data because of its theoretical freedom. Basically six-phase process in thematic analysis recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used in creating established and meaningful patterns. A bottom-up approach is utilized during the data analysis process. The interview transcripts were read several times to become familiar with the data and to generate codes. Related codes then brought together to generate categories and finally data-driven themes emerged. Consequently following main themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) Studying Overseas (Home Country Push Factors); (b) Country Choice (Host Country Pull Factors); (c) Host Institution Choice (Institutional Pull Factors). A qualitative data analysis software (ATLAS.ti) was utilized to analyze the interview transcripts, conducting the coding process, and particularly organizing the data extracts. The categories and codes emerged under each theme is presented in the discussion section.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented a thorough review of all methodological issues covered in this research. In the following chapter, the research findings are presented and discussed in three main sections. The push factors which encourage Nigerian educational tourists to depart from their home countries for tertiary education and the pull factors that make North Cyprus an attractive host country for Nigerian educational tourists is discussed and explained in section one and two respectively. The institutional pull factors that encourage Nigerian educational tourist to select this particular HEI as a host institution is explained in the final section.

Chapter 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS

An educational tourist faces with two critical decisions before departing for a higher education journey. For higher education purposes, the educational tourist would either enroll to a HEI at home or travel to another location. The model developed by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) reveal that certain factors push the educational tourist away from home country to seek for higher education opportunities elsewhere and certain factors pull the educational tourist to the host state. Following the decision regarding the host country, educational tourist considers certain factors to choose an HEI among alternatives.

The findings of this research are discussed in three sections. The push factors which encourage Nigerian educational tourists to depart their state for tertiary education and the pull factors making North Cyprus an attractive host country for Nigerian educational tourists is discussed and explained in section one and two respectively. The institutional pull factors that encourage Nigerian educational tourist to select EMU as a host institution is explained in the final section.

5.1 Decision to Study Overseas – The Push Factors

Studying locally or internationally is a decision affected by push factors originating from within home country (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). The research identified that factors that influence decision of Nigerian educational tourists regarding overseas education can be grouped under four main categories: (a) family and peer influence;

(b) problems at local higher education system; (c) problems at local HEIs; and (d) personal reasons. Within each category, a number of factors were identified.

5.1.1 Family and Peer Influence

The research strongly indicated that members of nuclear family such as mother, father, brothers and sisters influence decisions of the Nigerian educational tourists. Even if the educational tourist has other views or plans, he/she, in many cases, is obliged to obey the decision made by the nuclear family members particularly by the head of the family (father). Within a patriarchal family system father has a dominant role; he is the main opinion leader and his decisions are hardly objected by the other members of the family. The following excerpts from the interviews demonstrate the influence of the family-head in final decision:

My dad he never wanted me to study in my country. He wanted me to travel. In my country after secondary school you have an exam you have to write. I got the form I wanted to fill it up for university in my country but he told me no. I do not want you schooling in my country. My dad was someone do everything for me to travel. (MI-Female)

That was a plan that my father already had since. He already had this plan that we not schooling in Nigeria. I asked him why because Nigeria education was really really not suitable for you. If you want to accomplish a lot you need to go out. Our education is not good so my father had this plan of we not schooling in Nigeria on the onset. When I was almost coming to Cyprus he told me about that. This plan something had since all his life. (JII-Male)

The strong role of the father in tertiary education choice of the educational tourist is not a surprising since in Nigeria patriarchal family system prevails (Dogo, 2014) where father has a dominant role; he is the main opinion leader and his decisions are hardly objected by the other family members.

Other influential people identified were immediate members of the family, for example, cousins and uncles and also peer. As pronounced by the following quotes, immediate family members and peers have an influence – though not as strong as nuclear family members – on the decisions of the prospective educational tourists as well:

Well I did consider two countries, because I already had a cousin here studying in the university in the department of International Relations so when I tried it the first and second time, my uncle was like okay why don't you just go and join your cousin at the university in Cyprus since she is there now and she is doing okay. Why don't you just go and join here or better still if you feel you don't want to pursue the education goal or career or just travel out of the country, because he didn't like me living around because the fact that, it's more like you get to just be less responsible with the environment. The general mindset of every individual in the country is that if you are not in school and you do not have work, generally you are irresponsible. So he did not like the fact that I was just living around in the first and the second year, it was really pissing him off so he was like just go out. (IAD-Male)

First and foremost the decision of leaving the country to study outside was not my idea initially. It was my uncle's talk that brought the idea to me, because I didn't even bother till the moment he said okay what do you want, do you want to study or do you just want to leave the country to go and work and survive. So I was like OK, want to study, I mean it is because of your own education level that got you to where you are now, so it is necessary actually attend this level as well. The moment he put it through to me, I did not bother to look for an alternative. (IAD-Male)

My family members not really, but I just wanted to be the first amongst my family members like my father's kids to study abroad. But friends yes, a friend of mine who is in Nigeria at the moment but a bit younger is my great friend, he influenced me a lot and we met since 2006 and we always said together we should school abroad and we should get a better life. (JIO-Male)

The influential role of family on international education decision is not peculiar to Nigeria. Thai students' international education choices is also influenced by family members (Pimpa, 2004). Moreover, similar findings were also identified by Shanka

et al. (2006) who had studied similar issue among international students in an Australian university.

5.1.2 Problems at Local Higher Education System

The research findings indicated that particular features of local tertiary education system for example, ‘limited access to local HEIs’, ‘state of private HEIs’, ‘tough education system’, ‘strikes’, and ‘low prestige of local degrees’, compel Nigerian educational tourists to seek for higher education options elsewhere.

One of the most striking problems at tertiary education system in Nigeria is limited access to local HEIs. Nigeria with almost 186 million people is one of the most populous (ranks 7th) countries in the world (WENR, 2018). According to UNESCO (2018), around 35 million people falls into the age group of 15-24 and 82 million people are 14 years and younger. Fast growing young population put formidable burden on higher education system in Nigeria which has been lacking proper state support to deliver sufficient resources. According to WENR (2018), in 2015, two thirds of the students who sat for national university entrance exam could not get admission to local universities. In simple terms, every year, thousands of fresh graduates cannot have access to HEI at home and seek for alternatives elsewhere. Moreover, there are many students who are already registered at local public or private HEIs who are not happy for certain reasons and therefore looking for better opportunities at home or abroad. The research findings revealed that this is an important factor pushing students to seek for alternatives outside Nigeria:

Well, it didn't come to my mind and okay I did try at a point in time because we have this format where, once you are done which college you have this exam called JAMB – Joint Admission Matriculation Board, so you write it and when you pass it you need to get a score before you could even apply for a university of your choice, so if you do not get that actual score or the corner mark of the university you do not get to even apply for university directly. So it was like a barrier so to say, because we get people writing a

JAMB like 5 or 6 times and it is not something you do in like 2-3 times but it is only done once in a year. So once you get an opportunity in that year, you omit another year. So you get see that someone who has finished college like 3 or 4 years ago trying to repeat the same courses every year every year, so if you do not get messed up by the JAMB you get messed up by the university, if you do not get messed up by the university and the JAMB maybe you get to hear that maybe you name got to come out from the list of the university, maybe because there was too much people on the list for the applicants and you don't get. I tried it once and for the second time and I said I won't try it again. So when another opportunity came and I was like you can actually go and study out of the country why don't you just try and try this university. (IAD-Male)

The demand for higher education is so high that many educational tourists who are seriously looking for an admission in local public universities cannot enrol to the program they would like to study and in many cases end up waiting a number of years. The shortage in supply of tertiary education is expected to be fulfilled by the private sector however because of problems in private higher education still the demand is far ahead of the supply.

Students who denied admission to federal or state universities alternatively seek for a place in local private HEIs (Ajadi, 2010). Private higher education in Nigeria is developing however it has not reached to the capacity to absorb the surplus of student population seeking for tertiary education. In 1979, Nigeria's earliest private university was established and since then many private HEIs were established by individuals, businesses, and religiously affiliated establishments (Olawore & Ajayi, 2016). Although establishment of private universities had a positive impact on Nigerian higher education system by providing alternative opportunity for students to have schooled at home, the research identified that there are some problems that deter many Nigerians to enrol such institutions because of their unpopularity among many prospective students. The respondents reveal that private universities in

Nigeria are expensive, strict, religiously affiliated, and corrupt and moreover education quality is low:

There are private universities, but the things they teach there and the finance it doesn't worth it. So it's better for him to take his child abroad than to take him to a private university in Nigeria, because I think they pay almost certain same amount as here and the kind of lecturers they have in private universities they are corrupt, there are lecturers where students can bribe and pay money to pass exam but all they care they care about the knowledge, they can have a son in a private university, they come back from university with a degree and you don't have the knowledge. (ATU-Male)

I felt like private universities are like higher high schools in a sense because they control you. You have to do this, you have to do that, if you do not do this you get expelled, you have to dress in a certain way, it would be like I left high school to go and have a free life but I am going to another high school again. [...] Unlike here you can go to school and probably live outside campus and stuff but a private university in Nigeria you have to live in the university, it's like you cannot be there till after the semester and they can go for a break and they have to come back and stay with them on the campus, they are not allowed to live outside. (SKE-Female)

If you have to study in Nigeria and you have to finish early you have to go a private school which is very expensive and when you graduate it's tough to get a job from a private school because they don't see as someone who has learnt, they feel like you didn't work for your grades. (SSA-Female)

Another factor which pushes Nigerian educational tourists to overseas is tough education system at local HEIs. Students are obliged to take excessive number of courses in every semester. The research identified that even the hard-working students find it difficult to handle this sort of work load:

In Nigeria they make you do things that, you are taking a course but you take other courses that do not even go with whatever you are studying in general so they give you this whole load work like here we take 6 courses per semester in Nigeria you could take 13 courses per semester so you can see that some courses there are not actually needed but you just have to do it. (SSA-Female)

Taking excessive number of courses coupled with the problem of frequent and long-

lasting strikes at universities causes serious delays in completing the academic programs on time. Strikes of academic staff on frequent and regular basis in local HEIs have had an adverse impact on the provision of education services in terms of disrupted lectures and delayed graduations and moreover mitigating the trust in the higher education system. For example, in 2013 the strikes disrupted delivery of education in 60 public universities all over the country for more than five months and in 2016 similar incidence took place in 10 federal and state universities (WENR, 2018).

In Nigeria, in most academic disciplines, for example humanities and social sciences, the regular undergraduate program duration is four years (WENR, 2018). The research indicated that even the most regular and hard-working students can hardly manage to complete their studies within the standard duration of undergraduate degree because of delays resulting from strikes. The research also identified that the delays in education push students to look for options elsewhere for better education and graduating within reasonable time period.

Because of strike, keep going for strike every time. May be they are not paying workers they are not paying teachers so they keep going for strike. Sometimes they go for strike a year or sometimes six months. So you know you going to study four years you end up doing it for five or six years. (MI-Female)

In the Nigeria universities, apart from private university, because private university do not go for strike but the federal and also state universities and some polytechnics they do go for national strikes, once gone for strike it takes them like 6 months or may be a year to resolve the matter. It is very very bad because most students that I came with here they were telling me they were almost graduating before this ASU strike came on. It lasted for six months. My older brother also affected, he had to come home. This makes students lose for course, once they done with ASU strike the schools organize exams next week which is not very very fair. (AGO-Female)

Another serious problem at local higher education system is the low prestige of local degree among members of the society and the employers. The respondents revealed that degrees obtained from local universities (particularly from local private universities) are not highly regarded by the prospective students, members of the society and particularly by the employers at public and private sector:

In Nigeria is that getting jobs is very hard and studying outside is kind of an extra plus for you like I do not know they just look it as ohhh this person study outside country it is not the same system as Nigeria they have like more they believe you have more knowledge and like this system is better. [...] Basically it is more prestigious and they see you like as a different kind of on a different level compare to people that school in Nigeria. (HES-Female)

In Nigeria you know when you study abroad they feel whatever you study there it is better and you have more knowledge than in Nigeria so they value high more than those who study in Nigeria and they treat you more special. Like if you go for interview you finish in Nigeria you have your BSc and you have your master but I have just BSc they treat me more than you. (MI-Female)

The educational system in my country, it was poor, very poor, so we back home basically every parent have their reason, if they are able to take their kid out to school in a foreign country, they will have more opportunity to become a better person in future in life in the sense that, I'd say that schools outside the country are more recognized back home than schools in the country, you understand? So if a person goes out to study comes back home with a decent certificate, possibility of them getting a good employment with a good pay is higher the ones who study local, because it's not all schools in the country are well recognized. The other ones there it's just basically waste most students time, because by the time you are meant to graduate because of some reasons they hold you back. (IEO-Male)

There is a strong belief among the respondents that an overseas university degree is much more prestigious and valuable in Nigeria no matter which university you admit at overseas.

5.1.3 Problems at Local Higher Education Institutions

The research identified seven problematic issues prevailing at local HEIs which are likely to deter prospective students studying locally. One of these issues is the classroom environment at local universities.

Schooling in Nigeria is more tedious and difficult because it is not like here; you can ask questions. They are really concerned about if you understand or not but in Nigeria it is not like they don't care but the population is so much there in class you don't even get contact your lecturer. (JCU-Female)

On the other hand, corruption in Nigeria is a common practice in everyday life and inevitably Nigerian higher education system is also contaminated by this social disease (Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). Corruption in Nigerian HEIs can be in terms of bribing the lecturers to pass a course. The respondents frankly reported that:

For me studying in Nigeria I feel it won't be serious because sometimes you may be in a good school but you end up bribing a lecturer to give you any grade which you are not learning anything but you will have very good grade and stuff like that. [...] You know in Nigeria may be you write an exam you have very bad scores you didn't pass but you actually give the lecturer money to pass you. (MI-Female)

It's what I am saying, if you don't comply to what I am telling you to do then you will not graduate so that means you have to do what they are telling you to do, in terms of, they might tell you, you have to pay a certain amount a money to pass his course. Even if you don't take the exams and throughout the semester you were not in class, once you pay that fee, you are going to pass that course. Then, in terms of the female, they ask they have to sleep with them to pass the course, so those two are the reasons why most Nigerians prefer to school outside. (IEO-Male)

Corruption is also practiced at non-academic avenues. Bribery coupled with favoritism is also widely practiced during the educational tourists' admission process to local state HEIs:

Even if you pass all your exam they may not give you the admission because of corruption you have to pay someone who knows another person

that make it possible for you to gain admission to the course you desire. Sometimes even if you get admission they might not give you the courses you want or the course you want. They might just give you something like people don't really like except you know someone who knows another person. It is really complicated, so that's it. (JCU-Female)

Before you can get an admission you either bribe a lecturer or you bribe a head of department or whosoever is working in that department. [...] Sometimes you can be given like the admission but it will be what you cannot study. They can just give you any course to study which I think is inappropriate and if you want a course of your choice, you have to bribe someone. [...] In Nigeria, talk about exams or quiz like if you fail your exams, you meet a lecturer he either ask for money or if you are lady they ask for sex. But here it is just different; you cannot even compare. (RV-Female)

Cultism in Nigerian universities is a very sensitive issue that has serious implications on current and prospective students. According to Arhedo, Aluede, and Adomeh (2011) cultism in Nigerian campuses is a serious social and security-related problem confronting not only the Nigerian higher education but the whole society. Students who do not have any intention to be part of these groups see them as a discouraging factor. The respondents revealed that:

It's a group of students that come together and decide to harm students that comes together and starts kill one another. [...] Apparently it was really, the strikes and cults were much, so imagine students that just got admission into a school and the strike happens and you are just seated in your hostel or apartment for a year and then within that a year the cults start fighting and people start fighting and you are just walking in the streets and be its just a waste, so it was just crazy. (SO-Male)

They have cults and it is very strong, I have been in Cyprus studying here and I have not observed this at all, but over in Nigeria they are very strong. Even the academic staffs are part of the cults too. Cult is very strong in Nigeria, so you have to be careful who you mingle with and how you talk to people. Even sometimes the way you dress. If you put on certain kinds of dress, you attract attention from them, for example one of my friends wore all black and got their attention and they met him and told him not put on black because it's their own code, they always put on black. They just told

him that but did not ask them to join, so you do not have to put on all black, all yellow or red. (AO-Male)

Because of cult fight some students who are already enrolled to a program at local universities drop out and leave the country for tertiary education:

Actually its part of the reason I failed a couple of times. Sometimes I would see them coming towards me and I had to pass from another place and I would not go to school throughout that day and they took my phone sometimes, they take my money, to beat me and to ask me to join them and the government is not doing anything towards that, it keeps booming every day. (JIO-Male)

Quality of education at local HEIs is another issue that concerns the potential educational tourists in Nigeria:

Getting a degree outside Nigeria, I think the quality and standard of education is more high especially for the government and federal state universities. But with the private, I think the standards are same with the international universities. But if you are going for federal universities the standard is very low. So yeah, if you study abroad and have an international certificate, it is like an advantage to you, compared to those in Nigeria that went to local universities. (RV-Female)

Teaching is very bad, it's very poor, sometimes they bring in courses that you not meant to take, that is not related to what you have to do. They will just bring it for a reason and they will not explain it or teach you properly so you have to do all that by yourself and you will have to go back, even if you have the research and the answers, time for the exam it will be something different most time the teachers do not even come to class throughout the week and you end up have to take exam and that's when they tell you if you want to pass then you have to do what I am telling you to do and they will make you take the course carry over in the next semester. So you have no option but to drop out of school because you are stressed out. (IEO-Male)

As explained before admission to local HEIs is a formidable problem in Nigeria. Prospective students who manages to break-down this barrier faces the problem of enrolling to the program they are willing to study due to limited academic program portfolio at local HEIs:

Sometimes you can be given like the admission but it will be what you cannot study. They can just give you any course to study which I think is inappropriate and if you want a course of your choice, you have to bribe someone. (RV-Female)

I enrolled for both public and private in my country. In Nigeria we have the educational system, on paper it looks good, but they do not practice the educational system at all. I got an admission to a school, but I had some issues, so you can apply for a course you want to do, but they will not give you and instead give you another course to do. That is how the educational system is. (AO-Male)

Another striking finding of the research was about the attitude of lecturers and its impact on the prospective and current students:

I'd say some teachers who are not properly trained and all of that, they would like, the courses you take the exam, you take the quizzes, you have a very good grade but because of their own personal reasons they would want to hold you back, they will tell you that if you don't comply to what I am telling you to do, you will not be able to graduate. (IEO-Male)

Sometimes a teacher might not like you so you might keep on doing one course for so many years. The teacher wouldn't just let you pass. And then our classes like a course could have 800 students but the class could only take 200 students so you might not be able to get it and some teachers just don't, what we are being taught in class is very different from what comes out from exam. You might be, every note you have in class your teacher is going to get a separate question that does not match and you can't come and meet your teacher and tell your teacher that this is wrong, so our teacher are tough, the class is tough and we don't have like here we have text books and everything, you just read from anywhere and get yourself straight if not you can't depend on anything to actually know to actually know what you are going to get in your exam. (SSA-Female)

Problems with like students lecturer stuff especially in the federal universities, some of them you have to bribe them to get good grades and when it comes to like – I am a female – with the male lecturers some of them want to make advances and if you decline or something they might kind of punish you through your grades in a sense so one has to be really careful. And sometimes because of all these cults and everything in the federal universities, you can really be scared sometimes so when I think of all these things, the cults, the lecturers, and cause sometimes in the classes people literally listen in class through the window because the class is too

small to accommodate all the people. Most classes are overfull there is an overflow in the class and everything and at times lecturers are not really friendly, you find really few friendly like that. (SKE-Female)

5.1.4 Personal Reasons

The final push factor was identified as personal reasons. Young Nigerian students envisage studying overseas as an opportunity to depart their country and live in a completely different setting. Besides the urge for changing environment, the research also identified that young Nigerian students see themselves confined in Nigeria and studying overseas is an opportunity for them meeting different individuals, acquire new cultures and language and develop an international network.

I wanted a better life like I wanted to change my environment because all my life I been there. I wanted meeting new persons, make new friends, see different people from different countries and get to know their way of life, their language, their culture everything. (MI-Female)

When I was growing I truly desired going outside, I wanted to study since I felt like I had to learn more; I had to go out and see how the world is. I cannot just judge the world in one country. At least I had to go to a place where there are more people from different states, so I can be able to learn their culture and understand the world. (DA-Male)

The reason why I came out studying I can get education at home but I think if you meet other people you learn from different culture outside your home country. [...] It gives you the opportunity for partnership. [...] Partnership like in your field of study you can meet someone from other country in the same field. I may have something to offer to this country and they may have something I need from this country so coming together can make it easier for me to get things that might interest my country. (PIA-Male)

5.2 Host Country Choice – The Pull Factors

Once an educational tourist chooses studying overseas, the next step is to make a decision on a host state. Pull factors influence this decision which makes particular host country more attractive than others. In this research five main categories of pull

factors were identified: (a) access; (b) cultural factors; (c) environmental factors; (d) financial factors; (e) plans for future-migration; and (f) influence of others.

5.2.1 Access

Access basically refers to the degree of easiness in choosing a particular country. Educational tourists select a particular country much more easily either because it is the only choice available to them or they are ready to take the first available option because of desperation and limited time. The respondents reported that:

I had to take certain exams that I didn't have time, so there was basically no time, because when I am done with secondary education, I stayed at home for a year before I came to study in Cyprus, so during that one year gap I had, the exams were taken during summer and I left high school during summer too, but I had to wait like till next year to take the exam and once I was done with that, I had to take the schools' exam as well, so there was no time for that, like they don't want me to spend an extra year at home, so I should just take what's available. It was basically whichever comes first because there was not enough time to wait and get on the results at the same time. (IEO-Male)

You know most people come here they go to agents; they give them options. I did everything myself. There was no agent to advise me at all. Then all I needed to do just leaving the house cause I just doing what I desired doing in my life, I am just at home waiting for the next year. [...] What I just had in my mind is just to leave and that was like only option I had then. That was made me actually to come. [...] If I had waited like I do not believe I will be in Cyprus; probably in some other place. I didn't desire to wait. I told my dad I want to go I did not want to wait anymore. (JCU-Female)

The respondents generally revealed that they have very little or no choice because of certain limitations. Cyprus was almost the only option they have and out of desperation they finalized their choices.

5.2.2 Cultural Factors

Cultural factors refer to the cultural environment in the host country. North Cyprus higher education sector has proved remarkable progress recently and consequently student population has diversified which make the country very attractive place for

those who would like to study in an international environment, learn about new cultures and new languages. Moreover, in some cases local cultural attractions or religious monuments can also act as a pull factor:

My grandmother went for pilgrimage, this Christianity pilgrimage and all and North Cyprus has some Christian historical places. [...] So excited and of coming to a safe place to a religious place, of which I can actually tour around Cyprus at least for 4 or 5 years I am going to be around here, I can go around and once I am back to my country I am back in Nigeria I could actually be proud okay yes I have gone to this place, I was so happy like I wanted to like, I was more into monks, I wanted to see what monks look like, I have seen in St Barnabas but I wanted to see how they are, I was so inspired to see and I had to come to North Cyprus. (SO-Male)

I rather come here than go to Mauritius or South Africa which are African countries basically and going far East Asia or South Asia were I believed at the time that the people here will speak more English and it will be easier relating with public here than over there. (SOD-Male)

5.2.3 Environmental Factors

Environmental characteristics of the host country can also be an important factor in terms of attracting educational tourist who have certain expectations. One of these factors is quietness of North Cyprus and also it's safe environment. The respondents below explain this argument very clearly:

Actually another reason why I chose North Cyprus over other places like the two other choices I had, I thought it would be a nice experience not just, I prefer cities like these to industrious cities so because if I had gone to the USA it have been the same old buildings cars everywhere, the noise but here it is full of fresh air, I do not know how to put it, its peaceful so I and my friend when I found he would travel before me, I was always talking to him every day and asking him so how is the place, what is happening and everything and he would tell me it is quiet, not too many noise and all that, he would tell me different things about this place and I liked that, so it made me think okay I made the right choice other than other places and honestly I really do not like noisy places. (JO-Female)

My grandma came here before she gave birth to my mum, so apparently when, cause I was born into this religious home, so when I knew that it was North Cyprus and I googled and I checked and I was like it is an Island and

Cyprus is an island and the pictures I am seeing I was like okay I fell this place is safe. (SO-Male)

Going to South Africa there is a lot of things to consider. It is Africa there is a lot of xenophobic attacks and all that that my parents have to think about. Mauritius is a visa-free for Nigerians but it is one of the most expensive places to live in the world. India, India is the hygiene situation the assimilation their relationships with Africans are things like that, but I never quite got anything, any of those things with Cyprus. Cyprus was just a place where I know nothing about; I had to do extensive research and in those researches it is hard to see anything bad that has to be said about Cyprus. So I felt like there is nothing here that is screaming don't; so I felt like why not go! (SOD-Male)

As a black man - sorry I am not using the racist word here - but we would be led to understand something like it's meant to happen because of our color its normal, because the world believes the white is superior and black is the less one, let me just put it this way, but it's better than the UK, US because sometimes I drive and police stop me and I will even put my hand down, I am not scared of them which I find comfortable. In US one friend of mine said you should raise your hands when police stop you or I should be scared for my life. All those things is why people bring their kids here because it is safer and there is no cult issues like other countries and there is no like other countries cult related, too much party, drugs you know Cyprus is controlling everything which makes it great. (JIO-Male)

5.2.4 Financial Factors

The financial factors are highly regarded by educational tourists since many of them travel from less or developing countries and have limited budget. The cost of living and scholarship opportunities is found to have an influence on the host country choice of the educational tourists.

The friend that I had here, advised me to come because it is cheaper. Like tuition fee and the rest. At that time it was only option I had but actually it was cheap for me to come. (JCU-Female)

I considered US and then Canada and the UK but my mom said that she had heard about Cyprus from other people and it was as good as US and she was like why would I pay so much when I could same quality of education here so she advised that I come here (SSA-Female).

5.2.5 Plans for Future

Some of the education tourists from Nigeria who are considering migrating to Europe or other Western countries consider North Cyprus as a jumping-stone. Nigerians who apply for visa to Europe and some Western countries have to go through a tough and long-lasting visa application process and in many cases their applications are turned-down which cost them serious amount of money and time. There is a general impression among the respondents that if they study in North Cyprus and graduate it will be relatively much easier to get visa from European or other Western countries compare to graduating from local universities particularly for those who are planning to migrate to other countries.

[...] for me it is a lot of easier to get into another country from another country not from your own country because from your own country it is kind of difficult. (PIA-Male)

5.2.6 Influence of Others

The educational tourists' decision regarding host country selection is sometimes influenced by others. Particularly in host university selection, official university representatives at home country or student recruitment agents are known influencing prospective students' decisions. In this research the respondents clearly stated that student recruitment agents who promote universities for a commission fee plays a role in final choice:

My agent, I had an agent who did everything for me. Actually I wanted to go UK and he brought the idea of North Cyprus. [...] It was not something in my mind. I knew nothing about the country. So he said ok Canada is expensive, UK is expensive what about Cyprus. (MI-Female)

First I wanted to go to South Africa, that was my first choice actually, but why I could apply in South Africa was because I could not get any help. I did not know of any agency and I do not know anyone that can help me get admission there. And the secondly I applied for Turkey, but my agents is, he is one of the agents in one of the universities in Turkey but for some reason he encouraged me to come here rather than Turkey. [...] My agent actually

convinced me to come here, because I did not even know North Cyprus existed. I was not aware, I only knew of Turkey. But when I heard of Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, I thought they are same. I did not even know until I got here. I thought like it is just a state in Turkey or something. (RV-Female)

The research identified that another important who influence the decision of prospective students regarding host country selection is family connections:

Really, it was only Cyprus I considered because my sister also my brother was here doing his PhD. So it was the only country I was able to consider because they were here, so I was like since they are here it would be nice, having their family here and it would good to come here and be with the people that got the experience and so they got the admission for me and I came over here. (AO-Male)

Exactly since she [*his cousin*] is here. And it was more like me coming here because she is a lady, I am a guy – as a protector as guide for her, so it was more like I had to be here than being in the country so that we could be closer and she would feel more of being at home because she has another family member here that was why actually. (IAD-Male)

It was also identified that, besides agents and families, peers also influence final choice of educational tourists:

There was this friend I had in secondary school he is actually here, so he used to talk about Cyprus a lot but I never really used to listen to him a lot, because I had my mind on England and America and all places. So how I got to know about North Cyprus? [...] I'd say my friend that was here, we got talking at that point, it was actually looking like reality for me at that point so we got talking and he was telling me how the place is and said it was good and it was quite motivating for me. [...] Well I think because of that flier, that was the main reason and yes yeah I have this childhood friend so yeah when I got talking to him too about this school, I found out that he said that he actually found the flier too in my house and took it without us even knowing and that he showed his mom. So now we are roommates actually. (JAO- Male)

5.3 Host Institution Choice – The Institutional Pull Factors

Decision of host country choice is followed by selecting host institution. This process is influenced by certain institution-specific factors. In general, educational tourist is

expected to evaluate a number of institutions and make a final decision about one but in some instances he/she end up making a choice without considering the alternatives due to certain personal or non-personal factors. The research findings revealed that five main categories of institutional pull factors such as: (a) academic factors; (b) admission; (c) financial factors; (d) influence of others; and (e) language have influenced the institutional choice of Nigerian educational tourists.

5.3.1 Academic Factors

The most important academic factors considered by the educational tourists are attitude of the lecturers, accreditation of degree offered, affiliation with other reputable universities, and rankings of the university, diverse academic programs, reputation of the university, and teaching quality. The research findings revealed that prospective students gather detailed information about the host HEI. The information is gathered through peers and relatives who are already enrolled and also through other means such as student recruitment agents and online sources:

I had friends here who told me it's the number one school in Cyprus, I saw all the promotional materials online both from EMU and other schools, I saw the infrastructural endowment, I saw, I saw the list of teachers who are going to be teaching us, everything that is made available online. I soon as I got admitted in to tourism for example, I ran online to the tourism department website to look through my list of courses, the list of teachers, things like that and EMU significantly better than the other universities. I do not know about now but then they had more information online they have more, they have more promotion, they had more outreach program they. [...] So for you to even have access to your lecturer you have to be exceptional in class. The lecturer needs to know okay he is a good student; he is not just someone who is trying to get access to me. So I understand that these are we are getting used to as Nigerians. We have never been this free. I can't just come in to your office and sit and talk with my lecturer in Nigeria. It doesn't work like that. There is this type of, like I said big classroom, hundreds of students and the lecturer is carrying a megaphone or something. But here the maximum in a class is not even up to 50. The lecturer wants to know the name of every student in his or her class. It's something different. (SOD-Male)

Very free environment here. Back at home in Nigeria it is very difficult to meet your lecturer in person; especially when you don't understand something. I see may be it is because of environment, some of them are very stressed. When you go to meet them they shout at you or they ask you something in return like money or for ladies they may ask you for sex. So it is very different from here. Most times in the classroom the students are more populated. The teachers most of them are not in the mood of teach so the discourage students like they are not making it, the economy is not good, the system is corrupt. Here teachers are more free; most people do not go to meet teachers because of this fear in them. Almost all the lecturers that I met here are free; come to my office, come and ask (AGO-Female)

Accreditation, international recognition of the academic programs, and university rankings by National Accreditation Agencies or similar institutions is found to positively influence the decision of the applicants:

It was good and the accreditations, it was a plus over hat I would have gotten if I had stayed in Nigeria, because there is this thing when come back from schooling abroad and you come back to Nigeria, and you have a certificate from a school outside Nigeria, they will be like ooh this person really, even their results are not good they will just be like this person must have known something and sometimes they give that person a job over someone who stayed in Nigeria. But that was then but at least now it's a little different, they are looking for someone that they can pay less money instead of someone that has a degree from outside Nigeria and they get to pay so much because you cannot come back with a degree and they pay everything that they are paying every other person. Now I found out that it is not so. (JO-Female)

EMU is the best thing in North Cyprus and most people they come to EMU they don't go to any other school because this school is accredited in Nigeria. In Nigeria they know the school very well. So that what made me to pick EMU and I can remember he told me that it has ranking in the world. (JCU-Female)

Because based on the ranking then and based on a lot of things that we Africans always check it the school ranking and the way the school is recognized. So far so good EMU is one of the recognized school here. So I know definitely I would apply here, there is no choice I have to be here. (JII-Male)

Academic factors are not limited to accreditation, affiliation, and ranking. The availability of diverse academic programs is also considered seriously particularly if the HEIs in the educational tourists' home country offer limited options:

In Nigeria, I applied for courses but you were being given different course and I was like here you apply for courses and you get that course you want, no one is going to twist it or do anything. I knew people in Nigeria they had to do corruption and stuff to be able to do what they wanted and for us. Coming to Cyprus I knew I am going to focus on what I desired to achieve. I knew I will not study science because I struggle with science. I had applied for public relations in my country and they gave me engineering. I wanted to do something that really didn't have anything with engineering, maths. I know I am not good at that. So when I was coming I made a research on the department, visual arts and communication design and checked everything. (AO-Male)

Another pull factor is reputation of the university among the prospective educational tourists:

EMU is the best thing in North Cyprus and most people they come to EMU they don't go to any other school because this school is accredited in Nigeria. In Nigeria they know the school very well. So that what made me to pick EMU and I can remember he told me that it has ranking in the world. (JCU-Female)

EMU has the best school in Cyprus, so I decided to go to the best with the one that was federal and had a name. My dad always wanted us to go to a federal school, anything that has to do with the government. In my country if you go apply for a job, they first consider federal students, it is something that people that came from federal schools, before they check states and private school. I checked it was also federal and it was the best in Cyprus and they told also how big the campus is and how multi-cultural it is. (AO-Male)

EMU is like the best university in North Cyprus. And if I go outside Nigeria to study, I want to study in a really good university cause when I go back they will be rushing for me in a sense because I went to a good university and stuff and also the scholarship opportunity in EMU was really good and it also had my course and I felt that coming here I did not come as a visual art student at first, I changed my department so when I came here and they had my course , because I was first in architecture so I heard like that most

some students from other universities come here to EMU to study architecture and I was like okay and I just come here. (SKE-Female)

Teaching is another issue considered seriously. The quality of teaching cannot be evaluated directly by the educational tourist before enrolling however information gathered from trustworthy peers, current students, etc. is seriously considered.

My friends were making comparison that. [...] University [university name removed] is actually much cheaper than here and but EMU has high standard of education than. [...] University [university name removed]. So for me that was it, if EMU is better in terms of academics than I do not care about money, I do not need to change schools. (RV-Female)

5.3.2 Admission

The admission process may be quite tedious in some HEIs. Tough admission requirements coupled with visa process and the duration of admission process may cause serious delays particularly for educational tourists that have very limited time. HEIs that have less bureaucratic and speedy admission process become viable option for educational tourists that are in a rush to depart from their home country for tertiary education.

I did not even know about the scholarship opportunities or cheapness of the school fees and everything. It was given me an opportunity to leave home so I did not want to think twice. I just applied and got admission. I was even surprised that I did not write an exam. I applied and they gave me admission and I came. (AGO-Female).

I came here because I first got the admission before the rest of the schools I applied. [...] I made application to a school in Canada in Ukraine but I got here first. I do not know partly cause my cousins were here and they made everything fast. I got down first and my brother was here so soon. (JII-Male).

5.3.3 Financial Factors

Except in very few countries in Europe (e.g., Germany), HEIs charge certain amount of tuition fees particularly to overseas students. Therefore, in the absence of certain

of financial support, educational tourists from relatively less wealthy families have very little or no chance studying abroad. Considering the fact that educational tourist should bear other costs, for example such as accommodation, daily expenditures, travelling, etc., financial burden over the shoulders of educational tourists exacerbates unless financial support (e.g., scholarship) is obtained. Educational tourists should evaluate the costs and benefits (Prakhov, 2016) of making an investment in tertiary education prior to their decision. Shortly, availability of financial support plays an important role in admitting certain HEI:

Ooh yeah, yeah, the scholarship part, I think that was another thing that made my dad happy because he was like ooh you can also get a scholarship, but the scholarship did not come until after I had already applied, it came like as a gift, it was funny because after like my admission letter, then they sent the scholarship and my dad was like did you apply for scholarship and I was like no and then my dad was like you got scholarship so I was like ooh I thought it was because of my results but then I realized they give scholarship almost to everyone that comes. (JO-Female)

Well like I said I already had a family member here in but regardless of that, the proposal we had for international students that you get a 50% scholarship and the fact that when you get here and your grades are well to do, you can actually get a full scholarship. And some other little amenities being provided was a factor as well, so the offer was good and I was like just give it a shot. (IAD-Male)

5.3.4 Influence of Others

The educational tourists' decision regarding choice of host institution is influenced by some family members and agents as in the case of decision regarding studying overseas and host country choice:

I did not actually choose it myself. When I was done with my high school I was having up issues getting admission to one of the universities and I kept on every year I am always writing to get into university. So my family member found out and she suggested to go out and check out the Website of Eastern Mediterranean University. That is how I found out that there was a school like that outside. Secondly my cousin was actually here so it was easy for me. [...] My cousin was already here so I did not really have the choice to choose other universities because my family like. [...] the person who actually sponsored my cousins was actually insisting that I should

check this university out just to try and see what is going to happen so I just decided to come. (AGO-Female).

I applied for two in Cyprus, EMU and [...] University [name of university removed], but the one in EMU came, that's why I came to EMU and my sister had a friend in EMU, so my parents were like, well you already have someone here so it's safer for you to go to a place where you know someone. [...] My parents back home, my Nigerian parents actually, they trust, if they know that you have a friend or family in a certain environment, they trust that person more than 100%, I am not saying there is no one there you should just go there, but they feel that if you know someone there you will be safe, that it will not be a problem for you to become comfortable and socialize because you already have, you know someone there. So that environment will not be any different for you. (IEO-Male)

5.3.5 Language

Nowadays, in many non-English speaking states HEIs use English as language of instruction to offer undergraduate and postgraduate programs as a part of a strategy to attract educational tourists. Choosing English as a language of instruction similarly provides an opportunity to have access to the most recent academic works. The medium of instruction in the host institution is mostly English (certain programs are offered in Turkish as well) and English is also widely used on the campus because of student demographics and also among the locals (Cyprus used to be a British colony up until 1960). Therefore, educational tourists do not need to learn the local language to follow-up the programs or to interact with the society. Wider use of English language has been an attraction for Nigerian students:

Another thing is because it is international school everything is in English. Once it is international the only language is English. [...] I came Cyprus cause in other countries you have to study the language for a year before you start the program. [...] But it is different apart from what information I had. It is different not that you take the course you take as a course as a part of your program. It is not a necessity to study a language one year (PIA-Male).

5.4 Conclusion

The research particular intended exploring the factors influencing destination and institutional choice of international educational tourists and establish an understanding of educational tourists' decision making mechanism regarding destination and institution choice. More precisely, the research set off to detect and examine push factors which influence decision of Nigerian educational tourists in regard to departing from their home countries to seek tertiary education opportunities at overseas; to explore of the decision-making mechanism of Nigerian educational tourists regarding destination choice (host country); to explore of the decision-making mechanism of Nigerian educational tourists regarding institutional choice (host institution); to develop an educational-tourist-choice model of Nigerian educational tourists; and finally to develop policy implications and recommendations for the key stakeholders in the educational tourism sector. Based on these objectives three main research questions were formulated to lead the whole research. Research findings clearly reveal that factors that influence Nigerian educational tourists' decision regarding studying abroad are family and peer influence, problems at local higher education system, problems at local HEIs, and personal reasons. In the second phase of the research it was intended identifying factors influencing Nigerian educational tourists' decisions regarding host country choice. In other words, the aim was to detect the factors which pull them to North Cyprus for tertiary education. The research identified six main group factors namely, access, cultural factors, environmental factors, financial factors, plans for future, and influence of others. In the final part of the research, it was aimed to detect the factors that impact Nigerian educational tourists' decisions regarding the choice of a host university. Five

institutional specific group of factors were identified such as academic factors, admission, financial factors, influence of others and language.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

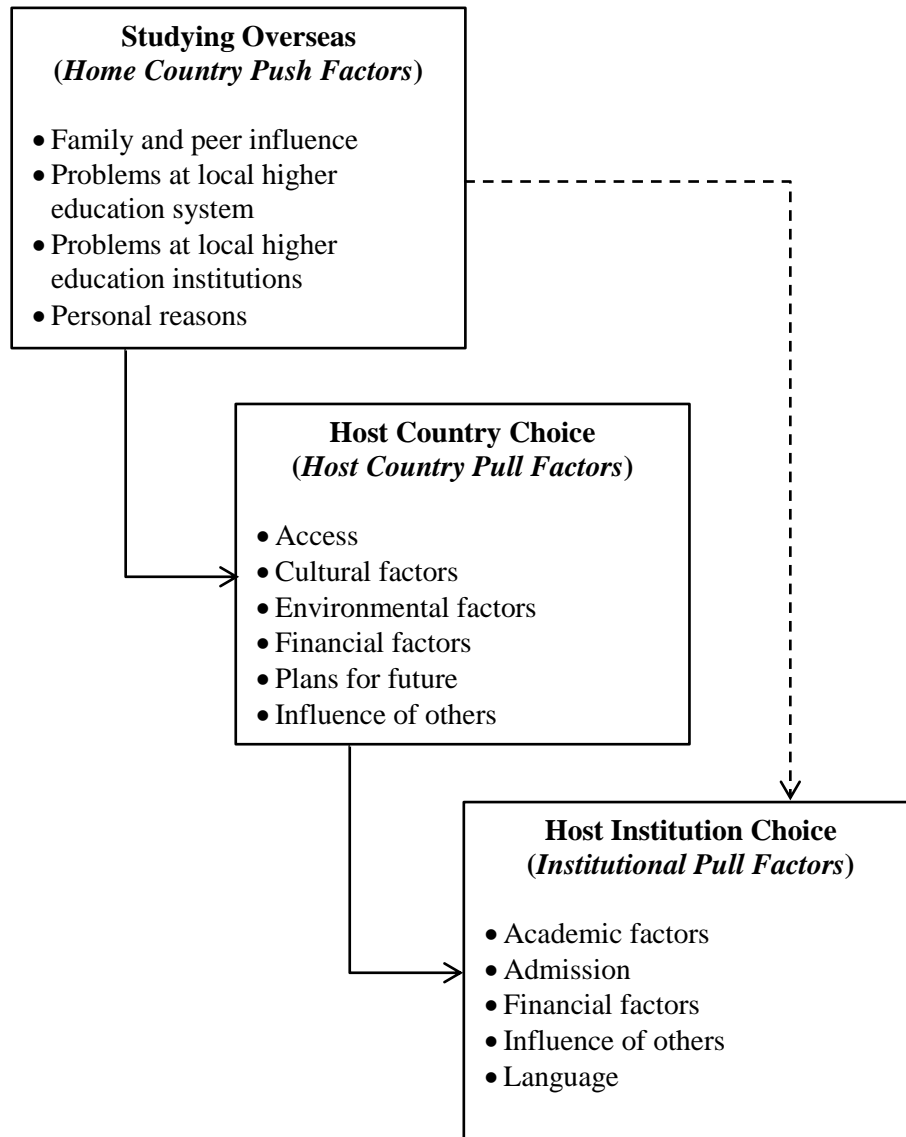
Over one-quarter (27%) of educational tourists (TCYHB, 2015) in North Cyprus are Nigerians. This research aimed to study this particular cohort to gain a thorough knowledge of its decisions regarding studying abroad, host country, and host university selection as well as to highlight some practical implications and develop references for additional studies. This study also aimed to provide insight for policymakers, not just at host universities but also within government authorities, both in North Cyprus and elsewhere.

Based on the research findings, a push-pull model for Nigerian educational tourists is depicted. One of the main results of this study is that, in every country, economic, social, cultural, and political structure influence prospective students' decisions regarding overseas tertiary education. Since each country possesses different structures, each educational tourist-sending country needs to be evaluated on its own merits. Factors that, for example, push away Chinese students may possess some similarities with Nigerians but will not be identical. Another important issue is that economic and political structures are not static and can be influenced by internal as well as global factors. Any sudden change in these factors could have various impacts on the factors that push prospective educational tourists away from their home countries.

The research suggests that North Cyprus' educational tourism industry has benefited from political and economic processes that are only partly under the control of government, policymakers and university decision-makers in North Cyprus. North Cyprus' status as a place simultaneously within and outside of Europe may prove problematic for other parts of the economy, but it has facilitated an educational tourism industry that possesses some of the cachet of Europe without many of the financial and legal restrictions of Europe, particularly in terms of visa regulations.

The fact that North Cyprus and its universities in many cases seem to be an educational tourism destination of last resort for prospective Nigerian students means that an improvement in conditions for educational tourists within the rest of Europe, the USA, and other desirable host countries could damage the relative attractiveness of North Cyprus universities. It also means that North Cyprus policymakers and university administrators should be wary of drawing too strong of conclusions regarding their country's or institution's place image or brand.

Pull-push model of Nigerian educational tourists in North Cyprus



Host country pull factors are also country specific. The important point here is to understand how well these factors can be matched with the expectations of prospective educational tourists. During the interviews, for example, some student respondents argued that they came to North Cyprus because it is quiet, yet other student respondents complained that life in North Cyprus was too slow and that there was less to do there than in developed Western countries. Identifying the gap

between the expectations of prospective educational tourists and the life and infrastructure of the host country is thus a formidable challenge that needs to be tackled by policymakers. Policymakers, particularly at the national level, need to incorporate these differences into their strategic plans. This requires serious research among the educational tourists as well as reporting and policy development at institutional and domestic level.

Finally, the factors affecting educational tourists' decisions regarding host institution choice are elaborated. Unlike domestic push factors and host nation pull factors, institutional pull factors are completely under university administration control. In this part of the research, the findings can only be directly exploited by the host university under consideration since each university in North Cyprus possesses its own unique characteristics. However, the findings can provide some hints to other universities about what it is that may attract potential Nigerian educational tourists who are selecting a host institution. Moreover, the identified factors can be utilized to develop promotional programs particularly for the Nigerian market as well as to develop programs to further enhance student satisfaction among current Nigerian educational tourists.

The research identified another important issue regarding the decision-making procedure. As elucidated in the literature review, prospective student first decides whether to pursue tertiary education at home or abroad. If the prospective student favors education in a foreign country, the next step is to decide on a host country and a host university among alternatives within the selected host country. In this research, we found that some of the Nigerian educational tourists skip the second step and end up applying to a university without considering the actual details,

conditions, and location of North Cyprus as a host country. In other words, the students choose to get educated in a foreign country, select a host university then search for information about North Cyprus and collect information from various resources. In this research, two factors behind this 'mixed-up' system of decision making are identified. One factor is student recruitment agents. They guide the students to the host university, and since many Nigerian educational tourists are very keen to leave their home country, they frequently put little thought into where precisely their overseas host university is located. Another factor is the manner in which a host university may gain a good reputation in Nigeria due to extensive promotional campaigns and its large alumni group. This raises awareness about the university among prospective educational tourists and their families, who play a significant part in decision process.

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the existing educational tourism literature in several ways. As stated before, the push-pull model follows a three-step procedure and in each step the prospective educational tourist goes through a series of decision making process where each process is affected by a number of factors. Decision to study at home or overseas is affected by home country push factors. These factors are country-specific and they are shaped by economic, political, social, cultural, and even by natural factors. Moreover, they are dynamic factors and changes over time. Therefore, educational tourist from each country should be studied separately. Studying educational tourist from different countries together will be misleading since push factors in every country is not homogenous. The home-country push factors identified in this research may show some resemblance to other countries but differences always exist.

On the other hand, host country pull factors are also country specific and they are influenced by local factors. Assuming these factors homogenous for educational tourists from different countries may also be misleading. Students from particular countries consider different issues when selecting a host country because their expectations from the host country are different and moreover their plans for future may show variations. This research also showed us the importance of studying educational tourists from different countries separately from each other.

Same discussion is valid for the process of selecting host HEI. Each institution have differences in the main education service and auxiliary services provided. Prospective educational tourists consider them according to their needs and wants and also their own academic and financial background.

Another important contribution of this research is the fact that the model does not always work in a sequence. The prospective educational tourist may follow the three steps specified in the model in an orderly fashion. However, this research showed that they may skip the step two (selecting a host country) and once they decide to study overseas they move to step three and select the host HEI.

In conclusion, the existing push-pull model can be utilized as a guide to conduct similar researches however the results will vary from country to country and from institution to institution.

6.2 Managerial Implications

One of this research's primary contributions is to fill a gap in Nigerian educational tourism literature. Nigeria is one of Africa's biggest student exporting nations, yet there has been little research into why Nigerian educational tourists travel to other

countries for tertiary education. This research identified important issues regarding educational tourists from Nigeria which is considered as one of the largest student exporting country. The research findings can be utilized by a number of players in and outside North Cyprus.

Student agents who recruit educational tourist on behalf of the HEIs for a commission can benefit from the research findings when targeting the potential recruits. The findings can also be utilized by the promotion staff of the universities when formulation promotional campaigns, preparing promotional materials and organizing promotional tours in students' home countries.

Moreover, local authorities in North Cyprus can utilize the research findings when formulating higher education strategic plans and other related policies. Finally, the findings may benefit other HEIs in and outside North Cyprus to develop

6.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Main shortcoming of this research is the sample of respondents was restricted to a state trust North Cyprus university. Selection of respondents from private universities in North Cyprus would provide grounds for comparison between universities with different ownership types, management models, and geographical locations.

Moreover, expanding the respondents to educational tourists from other countries would provide better insight into why international educational tourists choose to study in North Cyprus.

Based on the research findings and the review of literature a survey questionnaire can be developed to collect quantitative data and carry out different quantitative analysis

which can be used in generalizing the findings. The qualitative research provides in-depth understanding of a phenomenon but can not be used for generalizing the results for the reasons explained in the methodology chapter. Quantitative analyses on the other hand may overcome this issue.

If time and other resources permitted the number of respondents could have been increased. Although the responses reached to saturation point at certain number conducting more interviews would not cause any harm.

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