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Chapter 11

Motivational Factors Influencing Students to Study Abroad: A Case Study of Korean Students Studying in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Education tourism, despite being existed for several hundred years, has only recently been recognised as an independent sector worth studying. In today's globalisation era, knowledge is increasingly a commodity that moves between countries. Korean society adapts the globalization era, which is gradually narrowing the interval between countries around the world. The current study was aimed to explore factors that attracts students from Korea to Malaysian universities. Data were obtained from nine private educational institutions in March-August 2019. In the current study, 300 questionnaires were distributed by applying the unbiased sample and the non-probability convenience sampling technique. The results of the study confirm that higher quality education program, affordable tuition fees, and a higher standard environment are the key motivational factors attracting Korean students to study in Malaysia. This study proposes important implications for policymakers, institutional staffs, and other relevant stakeholders in prioritising action to position themselves in the market effectively.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's globalisation era, knowledge is increasingly a commodity that moves between countries. The growth of the knowledge-based economy has led not only to competition among employers worldwide for the best brains but also among the institutions that train the best minds. Globalisation is seen here as the root cause of changes taking place in higher education and defined as "the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, ideas across borders" (Knight, 1999). The traditional form of cross-border flows in higher education has been for students to migrate from one country to another to advance their studies. Several economic and social factors encourage international student mobility and competition between nations for international students (Clark and Sedgwick, 2005; OECD, 2004). Thus, it affects the overall society, including the job market. Nowadays, majority of the organisation required higher quality of human capital as this is one key indicator that students look forward to studying abroad so that they can equip themselves with better foreign language skills, various certificates and degrees which are considered as an essential requirement for employment. As the emerging globalisation on the rise, demand for English language usage became a requirement and international jobs recruitment. Korean firms are in the process of transforming their human resource management (HRM) systems to compete effectively in the global market (Kim et al., 2008).

Respond to these social changes, one of the drastic changes in Korean universities is the development and establishment of language schools and institutions. However, despite these increased levels of domestic institutions, the number of students travelling for education purpose for long-term is rapidly increasing. Travelling for educational purposes is on the rise, a trend in Korea society and very well adopts by many parents who willing and who can afford to fund their children.

Countries such as the USA, UK and Australia have been targeted as a preferred choice for education. For example, South Korean students account for as much as 18.7% of the entire international student body at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (University of Nevada - Las Vegas International Student Report, n.d.). Nowadays, many international students have laid their eyes on a different location for education. Perpetually, countries in Asia are gaining popularity as an education hub for international students to pursue. As for today, Malaysia is one of the countries which have recently become a popular education tourism destination. Students around the world have recognised Malaysia as the preferred choice for college and tertiary education (Arokiasamy and Nagappan, 2012). According to UNESCO (2014), Malaysia has been ranked the world's ninth most preferred study destination (EasyUni Staff, 2017a). An estimate of 151,979 international students enrolled in the year 2016, where approximately 80% of them were studying in Higher Education Institutes in Malaysia to benefit from its world-class teaching techniques and even avail of its specially tailored programs for international students (Easy Uni Staff, 2017b). With the realisation of the positive impact this industry has on the economy's growth, Malaysia also aims to increase its GDP through education services. It was highlighted in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) by setting a target of 250,000 international students by the year 2025.

Many Korean students choose Malaysia for education tourism and have a significant increase each year. From primary school students to university student's level, they are coming to Malaysia for education purposes. According to the Korean school of Malaysia, initially, many Koreans were drawn to Malaysia for work but, in recent years, education has become one of the main attractions for many Koreans to study here. According to the Korean Society of Malaysia (KSM), the Korean school of Malaysia ranked top 10 for the most Korean students in the world from the statistic report (Education in Malaysia, 2020).

Motivational Factors Influencing Students to Study Abroad

Higher education has become one of the most important sectors as the demand for international students for Western University education has increased, creating a healthy balance of supply and demand. Many Western institutions targeted the Asian market as well (Lee et al., 2010). Many countries intake or accept international students for the reason of gaining economic input. Still, countries that encourage students to study abroad can be accounted for foreign currency outflow and lead to the failure of talent acquisition or brain drain (Human capital flight). Thus, many universities are striving to search and train potential, competent and talented students internationally, which also includes government effort in attracting international students (Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe, 2008). Education tourism has been experiencing a steady pace of growth with the increased income level and leads to the opening of many new institutions of higher education around the world. Education tourists are long-term temporary consumers with continuous needs. These needs are translated into consumption and contribution to the overall income of the economy. For this to be recognised as a separate sector, there is a need for a continuous flow of tourists coming to the country to obtain an education (Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011). Therefore, the current study is aiming to explore factors in attracting students from Korea for education in universities/ institutions in Malaysia while examining the present conditions of the Malaysian education system. To achieve the aim of the study, following research objectives were drafted.

- to analyse the current status of globalisation and education in Korea,
- to explore Malaysia education institution's general conditions,
- to analyse the general characteristics of education tourists,
- to identify the motivational factors attracting Korean students to Malaysia for education purpose.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education Tourism

The term education tourism refers to any “program in which participants travel to a location as a group with the primary purpose of engaging in a learning experience directly related to the location” (Bodger, 1998). Education tourism has only been recently acknowledged as an independent sector worth studying, but education tourism has existed for several hundred years. CGS InfoTech states that “during the seventeenth century ... the sons of the nobility and gentry were sent upon an extended tour of Europe as an educational experience” (Smith and Puczkó, 2010). According to Chaney (2014), education tourism began from the Grand tour, which is conducted during the early 17th to 19th centuries for educational purposes. The Grand tour was undertaken by mainly upper-class European young men which embarks them to many different cultures, activities and others which they spend a relatively more extended period and destination, particularly in France, Switzerland and Germany. This form has evolved into or known as studying abroad that varies a different kind of educational purposes. Tourism activities, in general, gave the insight to widen the horizon of knowledge and education. Despite that, the effect of tourism purely for educational purposes and tourism activities are divided into separate independent educational tourism sectors positioned (Reeves, Forde, O'Brien, Smith, & Tomlinson, 2002). The quest for knowledge in specific areas such as art, music, architecture, folklore and the natural environment is an activity that can be realised to satisfy the curious as it can be distinct itself as educational tourism.

Today's society represents as a knowledge-based society which means that the labour-intensive industry changed according to the information-oriented community. Human being desire for broader and more in-depth knowledge impacts the behaviour that affects them longing for continuing lifelong learning. The desire to experience something new and learning, develop it into Interdependence of tourism and education, which both mixed in the form of educational tourism. The developments of transportation widen the range of human activities, and it expanded the social activities such as picnics, field trips which were conducted in domestic or foreign countries. Besides, the importance of social education has improved as it brought in different types of people to be involved in educational tourism and it is expanded to many kinds of education tour such as language course, working holiday and internship.

Education tourism can be defined as "organised and systematic efforts to promote learning and related activities in the world to provide for" (Hill et al., 1987). Some education includes the students' participation in-class activities, typical of learning activities and tasks, such as language courses. Educational tourism can be defined as the "activities" to travel to visit the region, primarily learning and experience those participants (Slee, 1998).

The broader concept that includes experience in areas of interest to meet the learning needs of the tourism and educational purposes that contain most of the cultural heritage tourism, arts tourism, eco-tourism concept and duplication occurs (Gibson, 1998). Education tourism as a field to configure the SIT (Special Interest Tourism) and stay in selected areas, tourism activities, learning or gaining knowledge through systematic and organised training courses for a given field of deep understanding and knowledge acquisition that distinguish the concept premise that activity is defined as the area and the other SIT (Lee, 2010). Through educational tourism, provider of education is to provide the participants with the opportunity to cultivate knowledge and understanding of the specific issues.

Although the concept of educational tourism is very much related to activities of learning and experience, knowing the fact that studying aboard is very much define the concept education tourism viewpoint as going aboard for higher education purposes. The development of education tourism can relate to Ritchie's educational tourism market segmentation.

Ritchie's Educational Tourism Market Segment

Tourism is often related to specific typology of tourists from their motivation perspective linking to a past time, hobby, leisure pursuit or other interest, knowing that the focus of this interest can be under recreational and undoubtedly educational. The changes in the marketplace have given rise to a tourism transformation as the development of new tourism and new tourists (Poon, 1993). Education tourism was the view as emerging tourism products and services; thus, the concept of educational tourism lack recognition of the consumer needs and travel requirements of education tourist. Thus, the growth of tourism market potential is frequently characterised people having a relatively high tendency to travel and time to visit destination and attractions. The need for market segments on education institution such as universities, college, schools and others is inevitable to be ignored as tourism products and services. According to Ritchie (2003), adopts a segmented and systems-based approach to the concept of educational tourism from what he terms a 'tourism first' and 'education first' perspective. It considered as the most in-depth and rigorous exploration of vital conceptual themes specific to education tourism. Based on the illustrated in the figure below, dynamic external environmental influences the supply and demand of educational tourism products to satisfy the differing needs of a highly differentiated market.

Motivational Factors Influencing Students to Study Abroad

Educational tourism experiences can be differentiated based on length of stay, the primary travel motivation and the tourist's learning intention. Thus, the tourism products in education can be distinguished in term of the interaction factors which determine the pre-travel preparation undertaken, such as a short visit to the museum or a full four years of undergraduate study. The notion of educational tourism can be put as tourism first or education first which Ritchie presented in his model as;

Tourism first - where some form of education or learning is an integral, and in some cases a motivating component of the tourist experience. This may include 'education - tourism, products such as cultural or heritage attractions.

Education first - whereby the actual tourist experience is secondary to the core educational element. This may include exchange programs, language schools and university/college courses.

Globalisation and Education

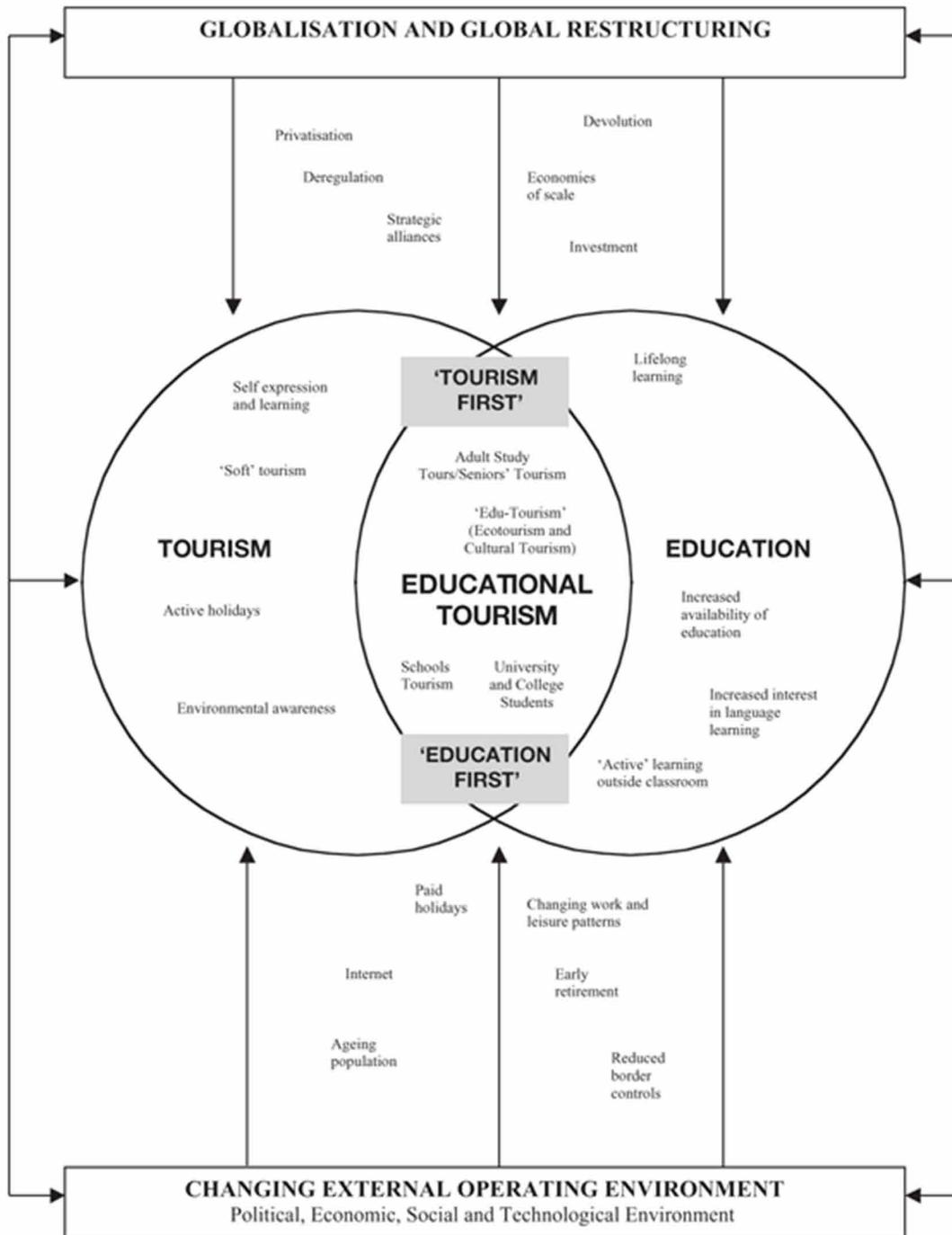
Globalisation is a suit to be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa (Giddens, 1990). It seems that globalisation can be simplified as processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society, global society (Albrow, 1990). Nonetheless, globalisation was known by the Third World as colonisation (Khor, 1995). Hence, educations promoting this ideology are rapidly growing as it can be seen as the need for English language skill becoming vital for today working industry as an example.

The role of education in promoting globalisation or promoting development has been much discussion on different perspective changing the social impact of the community on how some countries going about on free education, promoting compulsory education and many developed countries now boast 100% enrolment rates in primary school and an increase of access to secondary school (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). Globalisation in education can be seen as an economic perspective which in many ways can be seen as a critical factor inability such as on creative thinking, critical thinking, skills and others about the rise of globalisation.

Thus, education can be seen as a human development process that has a powerful effect on a human. Globalisation itself offers excellent potential for developing country economics as it can be seen as to why Malaysia is enjoying such benefit of economic due to the globalisation in term of education tourism. According to Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2004), globalisation posed opportunities and threat to education in 3 main channels. Firstly, it enables students to be more effective in the increasingly competitive global economy that allows improving productivity. Secondly, bringing nations closer together and bringing cross-national communication. Increased trade and international mobility mean countries are more interdependent, economically, socially, and politically as interaction is becoming more common in society between other countries. Lastly, education can be seen as the speed of change as it could be in a positive or a negative that determine the influences obtain by the students.

Globalisation posed many challenges for education but also created new opportunities. As demand is growing, the success in today's economy depends significantly on an individual education, which more and more parents are sending their children to school as well oversea. Expansion of education somewhat leads to deterioration of the education or threatens to dilute its quality. As lack of well qualify teacher and also failing to cope or failing to keep up with the demand and the resources. It indirectly leads to brain drain, which many students attracted to oversee education; thus, globalisation is an issue towards education rapid changing world. The need to improve quality has sometimes interacted with globalisa-

Figure 1. Educational Tourism Segmentation
 Source: Ritchie, 2003



Motivational Factors Influencing Students to Study Abroad

tion by creating the possibility that foreign corporation plays a significant role in running the school as can be seen many university and colleges setting up branches towards the world.

Education is a vital factor in determining a country's wealth as this extends to the rise of the global economy. The combination of education and globalisation can be compelling as companies that build up a well-educated workforce to trade successfully in the worldwide market. Much has been done in promoting access to education across the world as it is beneficial from the many opportunities offered by the globalisation.

The Age of Globalization and Emerging Education Tourism in Korea

Korean society adapts the globalisation era, which is increasingly narrowing the interval between countries around the world. Entry into the globalisation does not merely mean the fragmentary fact that has been enhanced exchanges with foreign countries. Another mean, this is changes in the Korea employment requirement. Appadurai (2003) indicated that the globalisation has been developed to generate maximum profit focused on financial capital, its effects do not only money but also the dynamic movement of the job market, media, science and technology.

According to Drucker (1994), said that growing demand of the 'knowledge worker' who is joint in a global job market with the expansion of industrial site toward oversea, high level of dependence on foreign, new economic policy. Following this, Korean enterprises are being broadened globally, they have relocated their industrial sites oversea, and it does not hire within the limits of domestic as well as international. Competition for jobs has not existed among only applicants in Korea, but also it is included global competition with young people to enter the job market. According to 'Job Korea' which is the biggest job website in South Korea, Samsung is willing to hire hundreds of employees from the United States and as well as LG Electronics Corporation is also planning to retain 10% of their entire new employees from abroad (Rowley and Bae, 200).

This shows that there is a demand from Giant companies in South Korea to recruit new employees that had master English or native English speaker. According to the surveyed done by "Sae-Gye Il bo" (Kim, 2013), 74 human resource managers from big domestic organisation included within the 100 ranking organisation in South Korea, more than half of them are willing to implement the global recruiting system. And another means of it has changed the global recruiting and an environment where you can work overseas at the same time. Korean students are currently led to drastic changes as they are preparing for the job market as soon as college freshman year. Nowadays, Korea had a new word 'Spec' is showing the ability of college students planning career. Initially this 'Spec' comes from 'Specification' which refer to a detailed description of the product, or requirement which is clearly stated, for example about the necessary features in the design of something. However, in recent year, this term is commonly used in the meaning of human capital for the perfect jobs, it is included school name (school prestige), English skills, qualifications, career internship and award-winning. English ability is essential in a tight job market in Korea. English has a lasting effect on getting a promotion and salary after is hired. Besides, Korea students should consider being employed of enterprises both the domestic and overseas with the ear of globalisation. That is why English has become an amazing resource is increasing important day by day. A foreign degree is also considered as an essential resource in the global job market. The changes in the job market and human capital create global education consumers, and it develops to giant education tourism industry at the same time. Therefore, education tourist group is formed due to obtaining these resources. We can find out why Korean student goes education tourism for these reasons.

According to Lee (2010) articles in *The Korea Herald*, the number of Korean students studying abroad has jumped more than 32% over the past five years from the data unveiled as a total of 251,887 students were reported to have studied overseas in 2010, up from 190,364 in 2006, stated from the Education Ministry figures submitted to Rep. Ju Kwang-deok of the ruling Grand National Party. The number of Korean international students rose 4.5% from 2009 to 2010, despite a drop of 1,092 students in 2008 in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. From the total figure, 60.7% went abroad to pursue degrees, with the remaining 39.3% for language study.

Education Tourism in Malaysia

Malaysia aspires to be the hub for higher education excellence in the region. Therefore, the ability to attract international students is essential. Malaysia is considered unique in this sense because it offers a high-quality education at affordable prices and its multilingual and multicultural society appeals to international students. In 2014, the total number of international students in Malaysia was 107, 838 and about 70 percent were enrolled in private higher education institutions (PrHEIs). Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria and China were the top five importers. As of September 2019, 70% or 92,415 international students were enrolled in PHEIs compared to only 39,099 in public universities (Chin, 2019).

Over the years, Malaysia has developed in the educational industry. Therefore, it is one of the fastest-growing sectors in Malaysia, and it has given rise to tourism transform, which is education tourism. Malaysia is favourably positioned to become a study tourist destination for international students. In the year 2008, an estimated 63,000 students from 150 countries were already in Malaysia to pursue higher education (Arokiasamy and Nagappan, 2012). Accordingly, many foreign visitors are attracted to Malaysia for purposeful learning. Recently, Korean students seek cheaper, affordable educational oversea like Singapore, Philippine or Malaysia. Education tourism is proliferating in the Asia-Pacific region with a high demand for their graduate (Goos and Geiger, 2012).

With regards to students' enrolment by levels of studies, PHEIs focus primarily on studies leading up to certificate, diploma and bachelor levels. It is interesting to note that the highest number of students' enrolment is at bachelor level with a total of 329,136 students. Also, 231,504 students are pursuing their diploma. It is recommended that more students will be enrolled in a postgraduate programme (*The Sun Daily*, 2018). Malaysia has targeted 250,000 international students in 2025 and 335,000 in 2030. Thus, with the target of 250,000 international students, mostly in PHEIs in the year 2025, international students will contribute RM 11.6 Billion in tuition fees and another RM 14.2 Billion in cost of living in Malaysia. In total, international students in PHEIs estimated to contribute RM25.7 Billion to Malaysia' GDP and economy growth in 2025 and RM 33.5 Billion in 2030 (Study Malaysia, 2020).

As per Luo (2017), there were a total of 87,002 international students studying at several private universities in Malaysia in 2015. Where only 1% (1,100) were from South Korea, as shown in the table below.

Initially, many Koreans were drawn to Malaysia for work, but, in recent years, education has become one of the main attractions for many Koreans. A representative from one Seoul Company which helps to arrange overseas study for local students estimated that 90% of Korean students going to Southeast Asia choose Malaysia as their destination. However, some international schools have stopped accepting Korean students because they have become too large a proportion of their student bodies (Korea ministry of education, 2008). Korean students become a force to be reckoned with in education tourism industry of Malaysia.

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Table 1. Number of International Students in Malaysia

Rank	Country	Total	% of the Total
1	Bangladesh	29,166	34%
2	Nigeria	10,159	12%
3	China	7,863	9%
4	Indonesia	4,720	5%
5	Yemen	3,343	4%
6	Pakistan	3,243	4%
7	Sudan	2,009	2%
8	Libya	1,760	2%
9	India	1,558	2%
10	Kazakhstan	1,405	2%
11	Iran	1,404	2%
12	Sri Lanka	1,221	1%
13	Maldives	1,129	1%
14	South Korea	1,100	1%
15	Syria	1,038	1%

Source: (Luo, 2017)

Motivation

Motivation from the root word of 'motive', which also means needs, desire, wants or drives within an individual. It is a psychological feature that stimulates or arouses an individual to act towards desired or accomplished goals. There are many definitions suggested in defining motivation as according to Pintrick and Schunk (2002, p5), define motivation as "Motivation is the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained". The definition itself relates much of the influence, which helps to achieve goals, the intensity, guidance, and persistency of the individual. As motivation is made up of variables that are typically used in motivation research. According to Pintrick and Schunk (2002, p5), there are four (4) variables or characteristic which are task choice or direction (free choice in the selection of a task), effort (level of effort determination), persistence (the resistance in achieving goal despite obstacles) and achievement. Motivation has been shown in the field of physiological, behavioural, cognitive and social areas. Generally, motivation can define an act of the purpose or psychological cause of action (Mayer et al, 2008). Thus, motivation allocates the size of activity, behaviour and efficiency (Mayer, 2008). The motive of the internal forces that lead to actions designed to meet the needs and presented the goals and direction of movement of an individual how strong the desire to achieve something (Shank, 2009). Motivation is built on three essential elements (Plaks et al., 2010).

- Motivation starts with a need, vision, dream or desire to achieve the seemingly impossible. Creativity is associated with ideas, projects and goals, which can be considered a path to freedom.
- Develop a love-to-learn, become involved with risky ventures and continually seek new opportunities. Success is based on learning what works and does not work.

- They are developing the ability to overcome barriers and to bounce back from discouragement or failure. Achievers learn to tolerate the agony of defeat. In any worthwhile endeavour, obstacles and failure will be there. Bouncing back requires creative thinking, as it is a learning process. Besides, bouncing back requires starting again at square one.

Motivational Factors

High-Quality Education Programs - Currently there are more than 20 public universities and 467 private higher learning institutions (HLIs) in Malaysia (Tapsir, 2019) which are categorised as universities, university-colleges, colleges and branches of foreign universities. These institutions offer a wide array of programs at certificate, diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate level. Since early 1980, Malaysian private higher educational institutions have collaborated with reputable universities from countries like the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand and Australia. Unique degree programs such as '2+1' twinning degrees (where students study 2 years in Malaysia and one year at the overseas host university) and '3+0' degrees (where the entire foreign university degree program is taught in Malaysia) offer international students abundant overseas Bachelor's degree options that meet their budget and academic needs. (Morshidi Sirat, 2005).

These types of programs not only offered a cost-effective route for Malaysian students to get quality education locally but also foreign qualifications from the developed countries, such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, Canada and so on. This 'Twinning program' is twinned with foreign universities can be the main reason for Korean students decide to come to Malaysia. With the establishment of branch campuses of international universities in Malaysia, students had the opportunity to obtain quality education as well as foreign qualifications from prestigious universities at lower tuition fees. The result is several educational facilities and infrastructures have been developed and improved (Carr, 2003). Malaysia government successively placed an enormous emphasis on educational developments to establish Malaysia as the educational hub in Asia (Bodger, 1998). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis One: There is a positive relationship between high-quality education programs and motivation to study in Malaysia.

Classes conducted in English - As a former colony of the United Kingdom, Malaysia uses English as their second language. This historical background develops in Malaysia as a popular education tourism destination. Colonial history has created an environment where the high usage of English, and it helped the spreading of English language in Malaysia. British also introduced English medium schools like high schools and convents as at these schools; the language medium used among students and teachers were English. Moreover, reference books were also being imported from the United Kingdom, which the betterment in the provision of education and the spread of English had resulted in the rise of some local English class educated groups (Said and Hanapiah, 2007).

When students started to learn English for the first time and not being a country which English is their native-speaking language, there is a problem in mastering English language skills for the demand in studying aboard as students are not at par with the standard offer from English language-based institutions. According to Cubillo, Sanchez, Pérez-Aguir (2006), research indicated that the students have difficulties in understanding the speed and pronunciation of foreigner, especially of them who are from

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English speaking natives. Learning English might be difficult with native in the United States or the United Kingdom, but in Malaysia, it is easier to learn for students who are learning English for the very first time. The students can quickly discover the English easier when they are talking with non-native speakers who use English as a second language. Accordingly, Malaysia can be an excellent location for learning English for not only Koreans but also other nationality. The use of English in the education domain in Malaysia is apparent, and it will continue to develop in the future. Based on the above discussion, the second hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis Two: There is a positive relationship between classes conducted in English and the motivation to study in Malaysia.

Competitive Tuition Fee - Cost is one of the main factors on why they choose Malaysia as an education tourism destination. Cost factor incurs tuition fees, cost of living, price of services and others. As the tuition fee increases, enrollment rates tend to fall (Mazzarol and Soutar 2002). The students enrol into a reputable foreign university for obtaining an international degree with the intention of a better job prospect and recognition but knowing that cost is one of the main issues in decision making tends to source out another alternative which provides lower price, credit and quality. Choosing Malaysia is one key indicator as international students seek to benefit from the higher education programs offers in helping lessen their financial burden. Cheaper tuition fee would appeal to both global and local students in terms of significant savings of living expenses while studying in Malaysia (Sohail and Saeed, 2003). Korean universities' tuition fee increase tremendous yearly but Malaysia universities offer lower tuition fee much more economical and more valuable degree due to the English medium that attracts many students to come to Malaysia. Based on the above discussion, the third hypothesis is proposed:

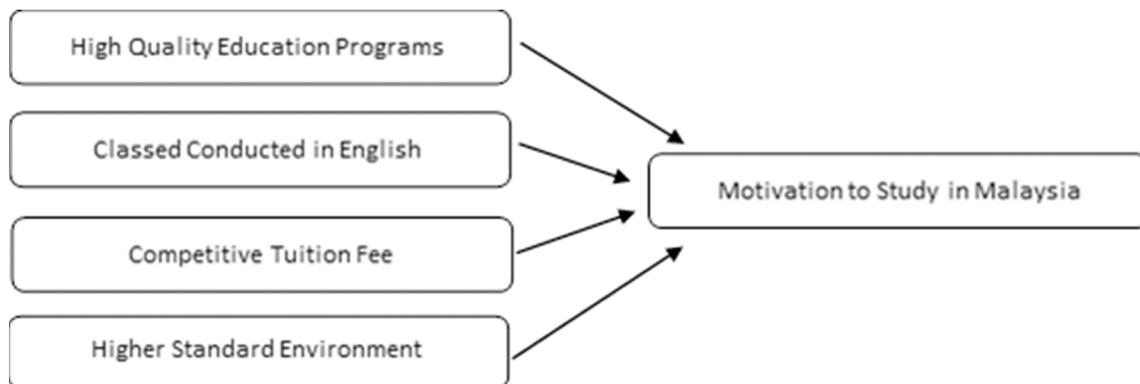
Hypothesis Three: There is a positive relationship between competitive tuition fee and the motivation to study in Malaysia.

To Study/Leisure in Higher Standard Environment - Several underlying factors also contribute to students' decision in selecting Malaysia as their education tourism destination is an ideal environment to study with quality education providers, pristine natural assets and attractions, a friendly community, a safe environment and a warm climate (Good and Geiger, 2012). The potential determinant dimensions of choices of criteria are aspects such as accommodation, library, laboratory, cafeterias and student union building. These aspects could be encompassed with facilities or infrastructure dimensions, as large faculty and facilities may attract more students (Jian, 2002). Josept, Yakhou and Stone (2005) study indicated that one of the overriding concerns of women is safety, and they would place campus safety as a high priority in selecting high education institutions. Malaysia has an efficient public transportation system supported by modern infrastructure. Travelling is very convenient, quick and inexpensive and this allows students to also visit the many places of interest for tourism purposes. Many students fall in love with the food in Malaysia, which has a massive variety of cuisines. Being multi-ethnic and multicultural, Malaysia is a food paradise offering a wide array of local food from different cultures in Asia as well as a massive variety from East and West. All this makes students more comfortable living and studying here (Kai, Chen and Weng, 2011). The students find it easy to adjust to Malaysia as their cultures are similar and full availability of Koreans necessity available. Based on the above discussion, the fourth hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis Four: There is a positive relationship between higher standard environment and the motivation to study in Malaysia.

Research Framework

Figure 2. Proposed Research Framework
Source: Authors



METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

Sampling is an essential technique which consists of selecting part of the population to estimate the sample size. The current study applied two types of sampling techniques, including purposive sampling, to qualify potential respondents; only Korean students studying at any level in any universities in Malaysia. Later, a non-probability convenience random sampling technique was used to select participants based on their availability to participate in the study. This technique is less costly and able to reach more respondents. Before the survey, respondents have briefed the purpose of the study, and they were informed that their personal information was treated strictly private and confidential. Furthermore, they were also told that their participation was on a volunteering basis. Data were collected at nine universities/ colleges (Inti university, Limkokwing University, Monash University, Nilai University, Nottingham University, Segi University, Sunway University, Taylor's University and Westminster International College) with the help of two part-time research assistant with the time frame of March-August 2019.

Survey Instruments

The measurement scales used in this study were adapted from previous studies. Changes have been made to suit the current research. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section included demographic questions regarding gender, age, state of South Korea from, course enrolled in, annual household income, monthly pocket money and name of the university/ college. The second section included four descriptive questions including; which foreign country did you most consider studying

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abroad before coming to Malaysia, the channel to know university in Malaysia, who recommend studying in Malaysia and experience of international stay before coming to Malaysia. In the third sections questions were asked related to variable used in the study by using five points Likert scale, where 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree. There were total 19 questions for 5 variables (4 independent variables and 1 dependent variable), “high-quality education programs (4 items)”, “classes conducted in English (3 items)”, “competitive tuition fee (3 items)”, “higher standard environment (5 items)” with regards to “motivation to study in Malaysia (4 items)”.

A pilot study was carried out before the data collection. The purpose of the pilot study is to ensure that the instructions and content of the questionnaire are clear and understandable by the respondents, also to test the reliability and validity. For pilot test 50 responses were collected. However, the results of the pilot study were excluded from this study. SPSS 22.0 for the windows was employed for the scale measurement, descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing.

RESULTS

Profile of Respondents

A total of 300 respondents participated in this study. However, only 278 questionnaires were usable. Female respondents accounted for 63.3% (176), while male respondent accounted for 36.7% (102). In terms of age, the respondents were spread across five age groups. Over 70% of respondent age ranging from 20 or below years old, while 16.9% were between 21-25 years old and 8.6% were aged between 26 to 30 years old. Almost 62% of the respondents were from Seoul, followed by 14% from Busan and 5.8% from Chungcheong-do. The finding also suggests that majority of the respondents (64%) were enrolled for diploma courses followed by (21.2%) for bachelor programs. In terms of annual household income, 37.8% respondents were falling in the income range of US\$2001 - US\$4000, 28.1% in US\$4001 - US\$6000 and only 1.4% participants hold the annual household income in the range of US\$10001 or above. With regards to monthly pocket money, majority of the participants (44.6%) confirm to get US\$801 - US\$1000 followed by (27%) US\$501 - US\$800 and only 3.6% were getting US\$2001 or above every month as their pocket money. The results confirm that participants were from 9 different universities/ colleges, where the majority of them (44.6%) were studying at Taylor’s University, followed by 25.5% at Sunway University and 9.7% at Limkokwing University. It was found out that there were less than 2% Korean students studying at Nottingham University, Segi University and Westminster International College. The details of the socio-demographic profile of respondents are summarised in Table 2.

With regards to descriptive questions in section two of the survey instruments, result concludes that participates were considering several foreign countries for study before coming to Malaysia including Australia on top (28.4%), United Kingdom (19.4%), United States of America (12.9%), Singapore (5.4%), Spain (6.5%). In contrast, for Canada, France and New Zealand, the participants’ percentage was less than 5%. Also, 16.5% of the participants were considering other regional countries. In terms of the channel to know university in Malaysia, majority of the respondents (48.9%) reported that study abroad agency suggested the university, 19.4% selected the university after visiting university website, 14.7% by using other channels and only 7.9% were persuaded to the university by their acquaintance. About recommendation to study in Malaysia, the family was on top with 38.8% followed by others (31.7%) and friend (18.7%).

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Table 2. Socio-demographic profile of the respondents (n = 278)

	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	176	63.3
Male	102	36.7
Total	278	100.0
Age		
20 or below	196	70.5
21-25	47	16.9
26-30	24	8.6
31-35	8	2.9
36 or above	3	1.1
Total	278	100.0
State of South Korea from		
Busan	39	14.0
Chungcheong-do	16	5.8
Daejeon	11	4.0
Gyeonggi-do	13	4.7
Gyeongsang-do	27	9.7
Seoul	172	61.9
Total	278	100
Course Enrolled in		
Diploma	178	64.0
Degree - Bachelors	59	21.2
Masters	27	9.7
PhD	14	5.0
Total	278	100.0
Annual household income (US\$)		
1000 - 2000	52	18.7

	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
2001 - 4000	105	37.8
4001 - 6000	78	28.1
6001 - 8000	27	9.7
8001 - 10000	12	4.3
10001 or above	4	1.4
Total	278	100
Monthly pocket money (US\$)		
500 or below	22	7.9
501 - 800	75	27.0
801 - 1000	124	44.6
1001 - 1500	31	11.2
1501 - 2000	16	5.8
2001 or above	10	3.6
Total	278	100
Name of the university/ college		
Inti University	15	5.4
Limkokwing University	27	9.7
Monash University	19	6.8
Nilai University	8	2.9
Nottingham University	5	1.8
Segi University	4	1.4
Sunway University	71	25.5
Taylor's University	124	44.6
Westminster International College	5	1.8
Total	278	100

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis has been widely used as a technique to develop scales and subscale. The purpose of factor analysis is to identify the fewest possible constructs needed to reproduce the original data. The relationship of each variable to each of the factors tells whether the item is related to only one factor (constructs) or more than one. Therefore, it was very important to apply EFA using principal components analysis with varimax rotation utilised to test the hypothesis for current study. As shown in Table 3, all the items were loaded correctly into their corresponding dimension with the factor loading of greater than 0.6, which is quite acceptable (Nunnally, 1978).

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Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Components					
Variable 1 - high-quality education programs	1	2	3	4	5
Item 1	0.814				
Item 2	0.780				
Item 3	0.735				
Item 4	0.710				
Variable 2- classes conducted in English					
Item 1		0.696			
Item 2		0.686			
Item 3		0.697			
Variable 3- competitive tuition fee					
Item 1			0.682		
Item 2			0.743		
Item 3			0.789		
Variable 4 - higher standard environment					
Item 1				0.853	
Item 2				0.854	
Item 3				0.649	
Item 4				0.716	
Item 5				0.708	
Variable 5 - motivation to study in Malaysia					
Item 1					0.866
Item 2					0.841
Item 3					0.694
Item 4					0.611

Reliability of the Study

Table 4 demonstrates that the overall reliability (internal consistency) of the study was found to be coefficient alpha 0.85, which is deemed acceptable (Churchill, 1979; Nunnally, 1978), which suggests that the “measures [were] free from random error and thus reliability coefficients estimate the amount of systematic variance” (Churchill, 1979). Reliability analysis is well known to test the ‘degree of consistency between measures of the scale’ (Mehrens & Lehman, 1987).

Correlations of the Study Variables

In the present study, correlation analysis was employed since “correlation analysis involves measuring the closeness of the relationship between two or more variables; it considers the joint variation of two measures” (Churchill, 1995). In Table 5, the results of correlation analysis are significant at the 0.01 level.

When the correlation coefficients matrix between study variables is examined, no correlation coefficient is equal to 0.90 or above. This examination provides support for the discriminant validity of this study, which means that all the constructs are different/distinct (Amick & Walberg, 1975).

Regression Analysis

Since regression analysis is “the technique used to derive an equation that relates the criterion variables to one or more predictor variables; it considers the frequency distribution of the criterion variable, when one or more predictor variables are held fixed at various levels” (Churchill, 1995, p. 887). Table 6 shows that the regression analysis was analysed having ‘Motivation to Study in Malaysia’ as the dependent variable and ‘High-Quality Education Programs’, ‘Classes Conducted in English’, ‘Competitive Tuition Fee’ and ‘Higher Standard Environment as the independent variables. It was necessary to use the regression analysis to test the hypothesis, and the obtained results showed that there was a positive correlation with R2 of 0.760 and F-value of 94.7 at a significance level $p < 0.05$. There is not such autocorrelation as the Durbin-Watson value is 1.94, and variance inflations factor is also below 3, which is clearly showing there is not any multicollinearity problem. It was found that ‘Classes Conducted in English ($\beta = -0.018$)’, does not have a positive relationship with Motivation to Study in Malaysia, making hypotheses H2 to be rejected. However, it was found that ‘High-Quality Education Programs ($\beta = 0.108$)’, ‘Competitive Tuition Fee ($\beta = 0.584$)’ ‘Higher Standard Environment ($\beta = 0.208$)’ have a positive relationship with ‘Motivation to Study in Malaysia’, making hypothesis H1, H3 and H4 to be Accepted. Moreover, all the independent variable jointly explains 76% of the variance (R2) in the ‘Motivation to Study in Malaysia’, which is very good.

Table 4. Reliability of the Study

Variables	Cronbach Alpha (α)	Number of Items	Mean
High Quality Education Programs	0.78	4	2.90
Classes Conducted in English	0.84	3	3.31
Competitive Tuition Fee	0.67	3	3.49
Higher Standard Environment	0.81	5	3.44
Motivation to Study in Malaysia	0.91	4	3.27
Overall	0.85	19	

Table 5. Correlation of the study

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
High-Quality Education Programs	1				
Classes Conducted in English	0.510**	1			
Competitive Tuition Fee	0.413**	0.673**	1		
Higher Standard Environment	0.393**	0.626**	0.672**	1	
Motivation to Study in Malaysia	0.588**	0.635**	0.571**	0.662**	1

Note: ** All the correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed)

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Table 6. Regression Analysis

Variables	B	t- value	p-value	Hypothesis
High Quality Education Programs	0.108	2.720	.007	Accepted
Classes Conducted in English	-0.018	-.266	.790	Rejected
Competitive Tuition Fee	0.584	3.248	.001	Accepted
Higher Standard Environment	0.208	2.701	.009	Accepted
Note: R ² =0.760, F = 94.7, p<0.05				

DISCUSSION

In the last decade, changing global developments have centred a great deal on Asia and the Pacific. Malaysia has developed its reputation as a regional centre for higher education and plans to become the sixth-largest exporting nation in the world by 2020 (ICEF Monitor, 2012). Other nations, such as Japan and South Korea, have been able to build on early moving advantages by being global centres (Takenaka & Tsuchida, 2010). At the regional level, student mobility is viewed as improving international competitiveness. This leads to high-performance labour markets and promotes cooperation between people of different countries (Institute of International Education, 2011).

The research showed that students studying at different universities in Malaysia had several reasons. The academic importance variables reported by students include the popularity of the university, the higher standard of education available, the comparable degree program provided in Western countries and the best-known international university in their country. Concerning these reasons for selecting Malaysia as a choice for international education, the ideas put forward by the students included lower living costs and the perceived secured place to live and study.

The most significant influences indicate that students who choose a foreign university desire quality attributes in their education, combined with costs and lifestyle in the destination selected. The findings of this study have significant implications for policymakers, institutional personnel and other related stakeholders in prioritising action to position themselves in the market effectively. This includes applying an appropriate marketing mix and communication strategy to improve the internationalisation policy and process that promote the development of higher education in Malaysia. Consistent with a review of previous studies on this topic (Ahmad 2015; Ahmad & Buchanan, 2015; McBurnie & Ziguras 2007; Morshidi & Knight 2011; Wilkins, Balakrishnan & Huisman 2012), the findings of this study also highlighted that students are first attracted to the attributes of the destination country, followed by the characteristics and image/reputation of the higher education institution as the additional criteria for decision making to undertake their study internationally.

There is an opportunity for both marketing professionals and researchers to do further work on the decision-making processes of international students, particularly concerning their perceptions, views and opinions on foreign branch campuses and destination preferences, which have so far been largely overlooked in the literature. Nonetheless, further research is needed by the main conclusions of this analysis of the reasons for preferring foreign higher education. The results strongly agree with the concept of rising global and regional competition; pushing higher education organisations to carefully (re) consider their plans for internationalisation.

Implications

If Malaysia wishes to compete with significant study countries to become an international academic centre, it has to enhance the development of high-quality education constantly. The study puts forward some concrete suggestions to recognise and turn Malaysia's strengths into competitive advantages to compete more effectively against neighbouring competitors in the region.

- Strengthening the overall quality of higher education in Malaysia by streamlining the more top education framework to a comparable global benchmark. Getting a similar higher education framework consistently strengthens Malaysia's regional acceptance of qualifications. Students who wish to pursue their higher education in some other countries can also be accepted elsewhere for their previous requirements in Malaysia. Such realistic approaches that include a strict process of accreditation of private HEIs and educational programs offered and the implementation of a national level of evaluation and appraisal system that is acknowledged by global standards. In fact, to enhance the standard of higher education provision, HEIs should be audited frequently. Private HEIs that fail to achieve a satisfactory standard of service efficiency should be penalised from admitting international students.
- As far as the expense of course fees in private higher education institutions is concerned, it is much more costly than public universities. Allen and Shen (1999) have observed that costs are strongly adversely linked to the choice of college. In addition, the cost of living affects foreign students in selecting their universities abroad. However, the average cost of schooling and living costs in Malaysia is also the lowest relative to the countries providing programmes using the English language (Study Malaysia, 2020).
- Many of the world's leading universities are deeply involved in research and publishing. This initiative should be benchmarked by HEIs in Malaysia and cannot be rendered without government funding. Higher education authorities should understand that most of the private HEIs are self-funded, a shortage of research funding and facilities is always a barrier in restricting successful participation in research and publishing. To improve the quality of research in Malaysia in accordance with international norms, efforts to promote research are essential.
- While the government has intended to attract 250,000 foreign students by 2025 and 335,000 by 2030, it should also remember that quantity is not the only determining factor of excellence; it is the standard of the students enrolled that matters most. Specific understandings can also be extended to HEI management and employers. Overall, the main target would be to attract foreign students who have a genuine interest in studying.
- In regards to the research dimension, living and societal environments are also an essential component of the international learning experience of foreign students that cannot be ignored. In tandem with policy funding, HEIs may also set up more civic involvement projects targeting foreign students.
- The issuance of visas and the immigration process are two critical factors that cannot be ignored, as problems relating to visas have had a positive effect on participants' attitude towards Malaysia. The Malaysian government should focus on softening visa processes to improve consumer-friendliness of the process as visa and immigration procedures are among the early phases of foreign education, and a positive first impression of the host country is important for the confirmation of subsequent experience throughout the study period.

Limitations

This research has shortcomings that can limit the generalisation of its results and open up new avenues for future research. Samples of this research were confined to Korean students only. The purpose of this research is to study and recommend a number of factors specific to the Malaysian context through the adaptation and adjustment of the Korean student choices and decision-making model, although some researchers claim that studies from a particular country could be a restricted approach (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015). Samples were obtained from a small number of universities in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Participants to this research were chosen randomly from various private HEIs in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Since Klang Valley is stated to have the most significant number of institutions in Malaysia, collecting samples from a single country could lead to over-representation of research findings. The results of this research may not be relevant to foreign students in other geographical regions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For future research strategy, this study proposes an enhancement of the field of research, a longitudinal study, a bigger group sample size for comparative analysis. This study provides a suggestion for prospective studies to extend the study area by including universities in other regions beyond the Klang Valley. A larger geographical area of investigation could be beneficial in assessing the influence of different country personality traits on the preference and decision-making of international students. Likewise, a higher number of universities involved in the research may improve the generalizability of findings. Future studies may consider reinforcing this study by undertaking longitudinal research to monitor the various phases of decision-making of foreign students, in particular, to monitor pre and post decisions. Higher education typically takes place over a longer period of time, and the perceptions and expectations of foreign students can vary on the basis of the various encounters that they experience. The main advantage of longitudinal research is the possibility to analyse the shifting trends in students' behaviour over a period of time (Sim, 2019). This helps researchers to investigate the fundamental relationship between factors over a prolonged period, making longitudinal studies more effective in showing the causal influence of the relationship between variables.

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