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**Insights for a Post-Brexit Era:
Marketing the UK as a study destination – An analysis of
Arab, Chinese and Indian student choices**

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INTRODUCTION

International business and marketing are being shaped by deep geopolitical changes following

recent major events including Britain's scheduled exit from the European single market (i.e.

Brexit), US elections and waves of migration (Radu & Radu, 2017). Whatever post-

referendum trade deal is agreed, the impact on university student recruitment could jeopardise

EU student access to study at a UK university (Ayris, 2017) and mandate the repositioning of

British universities (BBC, 2017). As the UK's strategy for leaving the EU may include

discontinuing the free movement of EU citizens to and from the UK, it is likely that UK

universities will increasingly target non-EU international students. The focus of this study is

on Arab, Chinese and Indian students who represent some of the largest groups of non-EU

international students studying in British universities, but paradoxically are very under-

researched.

The rising number of students studying beyond borders (UKCISA, 2018) reflects both the

international expansion of higher education (H.E.) worldwide and the attractiveness of

internationalising the student experience (Wit et al., 2015; Healy, 2017). The demand for

international higher education provides an attractive financial incentive to a host country's

economy (Urbanovič, Wilkins and Huisman, 2016) and generates income for the individual

university – many of which charge premium tuition fees for international students (Wit et al.,

2015). In the USA, for example, international students contribute US$14.5 billion a year to

the host universities and local stakeholders. In this respect, H.E. constitutes the fifth largest

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service export (Owens, Srivastava, & Feerasta, 2011). However, in the post-referendum era, British universities are struggling to reassure potential EU students (Merrick, 2017) and will need to focus on recruiting students from non-EU destinations. Information available in the public domain (see Albert, 2017; HEPI, 2017; Merrick, 2017) suggests that international students who choose the UK as a study destination are facing a period of increasing uncertainty and risk, given the challenges of the post-referendum climate. Promoting a strong brand image of UK H.E. is becoming more complex for institutions. Intense competition is forcing academics, university managers, and policy makers to better understand the process by which international students select a country and an institution (BBC, 2017).

Marketers can influence student decisions through the effective use of marketing communication strategies (Urbanovič, Wilkins and Huisman, 2016) – however they require in-depth knowledge of the factors influencing student choice in order to develop successful recruitment and positioning strategies (Cassidy and Wymer, 2018). Although students can be segmented according to the reasons why they select a particular institution to study at (see Casidy & Wymer, 2018), most existing research of international student choices (e.g. Moogan, 2011; Padlee & Kamaruddin, 2010) has studied international students as a homogenous sector. As such, they overlook the specific needs of incoming students originating from different countries or geographic locations. Universities usually translate their website and marketing material into different languages but tend to use a standard approach rather than develop tailored marketing messages, images or value propositions aimed at attracting specific types of international students. In strategic marketing research, notions of country-of-origin have been used to further our understanding of consumer stereotyping vis-à-vis beverage brands (Mbah, Ogbuehi & Enyinda, 2011), the impact of the

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'*made in*' label (Bertoli, 2013) and image attributes as a source of competitive advantage (Sutter, Polo & Maclennan, 2014). More research is needed to further our understanding of the choice of study destination and institution by international students.

The objectives of the paper are to identify the factors that influence international student decisions to study at an international institution and destination. The focus is on summarising the results of a survey that compares and contrasts the perceptions of Arab, Chinese and Indian students who enrol at universities in the UK. While previous studies have explored Chinese and Indian student experiences and H.E. institution selection (e.g. Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Gu, 2009; Zheng, 2014), few have researched Arab students in a UK context, excluding Mellahi (2000) who draws attention to the need for universities to cast their perspectives beyond western idiosyncrasies and include non-western business perspectives.

Despite ample evidence regarding the influence of culture on consumer behaviour (Usunier and Cestre, 2008), there is little research on cross-cultural differences. Our results contribute knowledge on the factors that influence study destination choice for international students, expanding upon existing theories of country-of-origin. This information can assist managers in planning and allocating resources for developing a more effective marketing communication strategy to recruit Arab, Chinese and Indian students to the UK and thus address gaps in academic understanding. Unlike many previous studies that focus on a large number of variables, we use principal components analysis to identify underlying dimensions or factors that influence an international student's decision to study in the UK, thus enabling strategic marketers to focus on a smaller set of key performance indicators.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Decision-making processes & Country-of-Origin effect (CoO)

Decision-making processes can be interpreted through the theoretical lens of country-of-origin (CoO) effect whereby consumers purchase a product or service, not because of its brand or its price but because of where it is made (Javalgi, Cutler & Winans, 2001; Martin, 2010). Acknowledging 'reverse CoO effect', where influence flows from product beliefs to country image (Lee, Lockshin & Greenacre, 2016), CoO could be a source of competitive advantage, especially if a country has a strong positive association with a product or service – such as education. The way in which consumers perceive products originating from a particular country, in other words *CoO effect*, is thought to be an important consideration factor in decision-making (Roth & Romeo, 1992; Martin, 2010).

The image of a country or place plays a decisive part in selecting an international study destination (Srikatanyoo & Gnoth, 2002). A positive country image is necessary to bring about a positive attitude and a favourable image of service providers (Ahmed et al., 2002), confirmed by Elliot, Papadopoulos & Kim (2011) in their study of place image theory that explored relationships between destination, product and country images. Elliot and Papadopoulos (2016) suggest that cognitive country image has the greatest influence on product evaluations whereas affective country image has the greatest influence on destination evaluations. Similarly, Morrish & Lee (2011) put forward that CoO can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage in international higher education, and identified two key factors that are important to Chinese international students when deciding on a study

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destination for university in New Zealand: its relatively low cost and reputation of being a safe country.

Little comparative research has been undertaken into Arab, Chinese and Indian international students. There is an argument for linking CoO into marketing communication messages to highlight the opportunities for enhancing transnational identity and power asymmetries in international higher education. Classifying students into groups that have similar needs will enable a university to focus on segments of students with specific decision-making patterns and requirements – and customise its promotion and services to appeal to the needs of those consumers as part of their long-term strategy (Öngel & Öngel, 2014; Martin, 2011). As consumer needs vary considerably from country to country, owing to cultural and other contextual factors (Fischer & Zeugner-Roth, 2017), strategic marketers must recognise the different needs of culturally-diverse students and communicate the message effectively to those students. Decision-making processes and student recruitment are also influenced by external stimuli such as social media (Rutter, Roper, & Lettice, 2016) and international student recruitment agents (Beech, 2018).

Country and University Selection

When selecting a study destination, students go through a three-stage decision process: choosing to study internationally rather than locally; selecting a host country; and institution choice (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Various *'Push'* factors drive the student to leave their home country and study abroad, including: the perception that an overseas course is superior to a local one; difficulties in gaining entry acceptance at local universities; preferred programmes unavailable in the home county; a desire to understand Western culture and the

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intention to migrate after graduation (Schiermeier, 2012; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Equally, *'Pull'* factors encourage a student to choose a particular country, including: global recognition of the educational standards of the host country (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003), knowledge and awareness of a certain country, plus family and peer recommendation. As positive word-of-mouth is fundamental for the success of a long-term strategy to attract students, increasing emphasis is being placed on nurturing strong alumni links for future developments (Wilkins & Huisman, 2011). In addition, students often consider the geographic proximity to the home country when selecting an institution. Student choice is also influenced by cost-related issues, especially: direct fees paid to the university and living costs (Padlee & Kamaruddin, 2010), and also the regulation of part-time work in the host country (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Yang, 2007). Ancillary factors that students consider when selecting an overseas study destination can be broadly described as: racial discrimination, the presence of an established population of international students, straightforwardness of university admission system, immigration procedures and the local environment, as well as climate.

Although university marketing managers have little control over a student's decision to leave their home-land and study abroad, they can influence the decision process by developing effective marketing communication messages that attract students to a particular country and a particular institution. Accepting that the perception of a nation can be manipulated (Castano, Bonacossavv & Gries, 2016), *International Image Theory* (IIT) proposes that individuals retain holistic images of other countries that are similar to stereotypes and that these national images shape attitudes. Over time, 'push' factors have less impact on the student decision process, and 'pull' factors become increasingly important (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Wilkins

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& Huisman, 2011). Although 'push' factors operating in the home country will initiate a student's decision to undertake international study, 'pull' factors operating within the host country will enhance the comparative attraction of that country to international students (Mazzarol, 1998).

In the case of university choice, many factors influence how international students select an institution – in particular, the career opportunities resulting from completing the programme (Geall, 2000; Schiermeier, 2012) the student's interest/ability in a subject area and the competencies of the academics. Wilkins and Huisman (2011) argue that university ranking and reputation are the two most dominant factors influencing the choice of an institution. Mazzarol (1998) and Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) suggest that choice of university is swayed by several issues including: university repute and quality, reputation of staff, number of students enrolled, alumni networks, word-of-mouth referral, university links with stakeholders familiar to the students, advertising/promotion, and finally whether the institution will recognise a student's previous qualifications. Further variables that influence university selection include: peer and parental advice, formal career guidance, field of study, price-related factors such as cost of living, regional and economic job prospects, availability of part-time work (Maringe, 2006), along with university facilities such as accommodation and library services (Padlee & Kamaruddin, 2010; Yusoff et al., 2015) and the prestige of an institution (Casidy & Wymer, 2018). In the field of international student recruitment, there is a need for additional research to build upon the existing body of literature on the constructs of country and destination images.

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The Arab, Chinese and Indian Student cohort

The number of international students studying in the UK is stagnating (Scott, 2017; Jubb, 2018) producing long-term ramifications for the UK economy in the post-referendum era (BBC, 2017). Chinese and Indian students constitute the largest intake of non-EU consumers of international H.E. within the UK and USA (IIE, 2017), although the number of Indian students studying in the UK has dropped by 44% over the last 5 years (UKCISA, 2018). The steady growth of students from Arab states studying internationally reached an all-time high in 2018 (Puka, 2018). Feghali (1997) emphasises the need to clarify the term '*Arab*' when used in research. In this study, *Arab students* refer to students who come from one of the 22 countries identified by the World Bank and the UN (UNESCO, 2012; The World Bank, 2012)[1]. Researching Arabs as a homogenous market is not unusual in academic research as many scholars have investigated the Arab world as one market (e.g. Elbashier & Nicholls, 1993; Mazawi, 2011; Barakat 2012; Miller-Idriss & Hanauer 2001; Elias, Benjamin & Shiftan 2015).

To provide an overview of the context, Table 1 presents a comparative illustration showing the nuances of the preferences and cultures of Arab, Chinese and Indian consumers. These factors offer some insight into the extent to which differences can be expected regarding the attitudes and choices of students from these regions who choose to study in the UK.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

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[1] Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen - over 350 million people who share similar values.

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METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in Northern England, in a city renowned for its large international student population enrolled at one of the two city-centre universities: one 'old' (pre-1992) and one 'new' (post-1992). Previous research based in the UK has used a similar technique of sampling 'old' and 'new' universities (e.g. Lomas, 2007). In the first instance, a review of each university's marketing materials was undertaken in 2017, identifying that certain brochures and web content had been translated into different languages – however no further adaptation appears to have been undertaken. A questionnaire was developed to explore factors that influence student decisions to study in the UK. It adopted twenty items originally developed by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) in their multi-year study of the factors that influence Indonesian, Taiwanese, Chinese and Indian student choices to study abroad. Although over decade old, their survey instrument remains one of the most comprehensive available for investigating international student study choice. Owing to high correlations between some items, we used principal component analysis to reduce the items to a smaller number of more focussed dimensions or factors – unlike Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) who analysed individual items. Our approach has been used in other studies of student choice (e.g. McLeay, Robinson & Yusoff, 2015; Yusoff et al. 2015; Wilkins and Huisman, 2011). A seven-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the importance of individual factors. A score of 1 indicates that a variable influenced student choice to a *low extent* while a score of 7 indicates that there was a *high extent of influence*. Items were authenticated, after consultation with university marketing managers and agents representing the university in the student's home country. The questionnaire was pre-tested with three sets of focus groups of mixed ethnicity; 8 Arab, Chinese and Indian students. The focus group identified two new items –

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'meeting different cultures', and 'not being able to gain entry to their first choice study destination' – which were subsequently added to the questionnaire.

A pilot study with 35 students was then carried out in which quota sampling was used to collect data and ensure a similar quota of responses was received from Arab, Chinese and Indian students. A pre-screening question checked for the respondent's country/region of origin.

RESULTS

In total, 450 questionnaires were distributed to Arab, Chinese and Indian students: 150 to each of the three groups. Some 317 questionnaires were collected, giving a response rate of 70%. Table 2 highlights the respondents' key characteristics across the three groups of students. Regarding university choice, 51.7% of the respondents attended a post-1992 university and 48.3% of respondents attended a pre-1992 university. The highest frequency of respondents was those attending postgraduate taught programmes (52.1%), followed by undergraduate programmes (43.2%) and postgraduate research students (4.1%). Students studying business and management related programmes represented over two-thirds (66.2%) of the total sample.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Though responses were received from over 100 students from each group (Arab, Chinese and Indian), female respondents represented only 30% of the overall total, revealing a potential limitation. At the time of the survey, there were more female students (55%) than male students (45%) enrolled in UK universities (Ratcliffe, 2013). It was also noted that 87.6% of

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the Indian respondents were male and 70.9% of Arab respondents were male. In contrast, there was an even gender split in the Chinese student sample. The high proportion of male respondents in the Arab student sample was expected. Data published by the HESA on international students in the UK indicates that there are almost twice as many Arab male students as female students in the UK (HESA, 2016).

Factors influencing student decisions to study in the UK

Eight factors were extracted from the original 22 items which explain 68% of the total variance – see Table 3. All loadings with less than 0.40 were suppressed, as recommended by Field (2009). The Bartlett test indicates that the data set has sufficient correlation between the variables with a high significant score of (0.000). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of adequacy (KMO) shows a value of 0.859, which is '*great*' according to Field (2009). Cronbach's alpha scores for all 8 factors were above 0.9 indicating high levels of reliability.

[INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Table 4 presents the results of ANOVA tests to measure differences in responses between different groups of students. *Social safety* is important to all three groups of respondents with no significant differences found between them. The recent decrease in the numbers of Indian students studying in Australia has been blamed on assaults against Indian students, emphasising the importance of social safety in international student choice (Morrish & Lee, 2011; Anderson & Bhati, 2012). *Education quality* is particularly influential for Arab and Indian students, supported by other studies that suggest the quality of education is the most significant factor swaying international student decision-making (Lam et al., 2011;Yang, 2007). *Entry obstacles* were more influential for Indian students than for Arab and Chinese

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students. Arab and Chinese students are most influenced by *environmental* factors such as geographic proximity, comfortable climate and a desirable lifestyle; these factors have been highlighted in previous literature and are considered a strong advantage for international students when selecting a country (e.g. Yang 2007). *Recommendations* were equally important to all three groups. Word-of-mouth referrals through family members and peers are one of the most successful strategies in attracting students especially through positive feedback from contented students and well-resourced alumni networks (Lam *et al.*, 2011). *Knowledge of host country* has parallels with the findings of Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) who indicate that the more knowledge a student has of a country, the more likely they will choose it as a study destination. This factor is most influential for Indian students. *Work and immigration* are also important motivators for Indian students but less influential for Arab or Chinese students. Immigration policy is a key factor for selecting a study destination (Cheung *et al.*, 2011), in addition to the existence of a skilled migration policy and the likelihood of permanent residency (Yang, 2007). It is also thought that gaining 'Western' experience and integrating with other cultures is a motivator for students to study abroad (Russell, 2005). In this study, it was found that *meeting new cultures* is an important factor, particularly for Indian and Chinese students.

The eight factors link into CoO effect, underscoring the extent to which consumers are influenced by the place where a product is made (or in the context of university education, consumed) rather than by the brand or its price. Similarly, the results correlate with IIT (international image theory) which supports the idea that national images can be triggered by subtle (and subliminal) cues about individual characteristics of a country, for example the foreign-sourced degree and cultural enlightenment. Such factors relate to CoO appeal, as

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evoked in research conducted by Sánchez et al. (2006) in their study of American, French and Chinese students (which highlighted the attraction of value of a foreign-sourced/foreign-earned degree), and also in the work of Massey & Burrow (2012) international student in Canada. Moreover, 'push/pull' factors are also relevant since marketing efforts can be used (such as agents and advertising) to create an aura of social safety, draw attention to an institution's reputation for quality education, and enhance the environment. Marketing efforts, online and offline, need to design tailored communication messages that correspond to the factors that are known to heavily influence student decisions to study in the UK. Overall, these results provide a contemporary and topical perspective of CoO, supplementing the work of Balabanis & Adamantios (2008) and in line with Castano, Bonacossavv & Gries (2016) on IIT.

[INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

As illustrated in Table 5, the results indicate that there are significant differences between male and female students regarding three of the eight factors that influence their decision to study in the UK (*education quality*, *entry obstacles* and *the environment)*. Table 6 provides a summary of the rankings for original question items.

[INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE]

[INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE]

Conclusions

Framed in the post-referendum era, the objectives of this study were to use CoO theory as an underpinning concept to identify the factors that influence international student decisions to

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study in the UK. Focusing on Arab, Chinese and Indian students studying in the UK, the study compares the attitudes of each group or segment, and attempts to address gaps in the existing literature. We identify 8 CoO-related factors that influence international student decisions to study in the UK (*social safety, education quality, entry obstacles, environment, recommendations, knowledge of host country, work and immigration,* and *meeting new cultures*). The results contribute to the area of geographic/ethnic segmentation in international student recruitment by highlighting detailed differences and similarities between Arab, Chinese and Indian students.

Our results have practical implications and can be used to provide recommendations to marketing managers in UK universities who are targeting international students with a view to recruiting, as well as to policy-makers seeking to support the UK's H.E. position in the highly-competitive global marketplace. *Social safety* encompasses an anti-discrimination, racism-free environment, with strong international community and rich social diversity; it is a factor that drives students to the UK and needs to be highlighted in marketing communication messages. The importance of *educational quality* emphasises the need for British universities to maintain and improve their strong educational reputation through internationally-recognised accreditation and overall position on global league tables. Marketers are advised to communicate various features including quality education, employability, research opportunities, student satisfaction and other key metrics. By doing so, they demonstrate to potential students the comparative advantage of studying in the UK and ensuing career prospects following completion of a degree. The comfortable external *environment* and opportunities for *meeting new cultures* are areas that marketing campaigns already highlight, however, attention should be drawn to CoO appeal, including the UK's distinctive night life, the historic heritage of many British cities, and the diverse multi-cultural student environment

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offered by British universities. *Knowledge of the host country* also influences student decision-making to select the UK as a study destination; therefore the onus is on policy-makers and marketers to provide potential students with adequate (and attractive) information that generates positive country image perceptions.

Acknowledging the limitations, there are a number of opportunities for further research. The study uses two universities in one geographic area of the UK; therefore, care must be taken when generalising the results to other locations. Only 30% of respondents were female, which is reflective of the high number of Arab male students studying in the UK; future studies may wish to focus more on female students. The questionnaires were distributed to students after their arrival in the UK. Measuring student attitudes prior to arriving to the UK would provide a deeper insight into the current knowledge and understanding of H.E. marketing. It would be equally constructive to compare a quantitative study with a qualitative study that considers emotions, feelings and experiences of international students. In addition, we analyse the responses of Arab students as a group, although cultural differences can be found in different Arab countries or even within a country (Obeidat et al., 2012).

Future research could conduct a longitudinal study to examine international student attitudes prior their arrival to the UK and after their arrival. This data would yield valuable knowledge by examining student attitudes towards communication strategies over a longer period of time and by investigating evidence of evolution in attitudes post-arrival. Despite the increasingly widespread use of social media marketing, few studies have explored the role that digital marketing and social media play in international student recruitment, thus providing an opportunity for future studies to explore these media in an Arab, Chinese and Indian context. Additional research could compare and contrast the results from the UK with those of Arab, Chinese and Indian students studying in other countries such as the USA, Australia or

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Canada. As we focused on Arab, Chinese and Indian students, further research could expand by exploring international students from other regions in the world, to bring the current literature a step closer to providing a broader profile of international students studying in the UK. Further research of the differences that exist within the Arab cohort would also be useful. The context of this study was UK universities and international non-EU students in a post-referendum environment. Research in other sectors and regions would further our understanding of the influence that deep geopolitical changes have on international marketing practice and research.

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Table 1: Factors that may influence student choice

Shared between Arab, Chinese & Indian students	Arab	Chinese	Indian
- Preference for collectivism towards family and nation. - Past-oriented and hold onto traditional practices.	- Pyramidal class construction (lack of political power and socio-economic structures). - Hospitality is an important value in the culture. - Male-controlled relationships in the family. - Majority hold the Islamic belief (prohibiting alcohol/pork) - Strong emphasis on certain values: honour, pride, generosity, courage, dignity and loyalty. - Continuous change. - Naturalness and expressiveness in social interactions. - Continuing dependency and underdevelopment. - Segregation of the sexes.	- Recent rapid change (younger generation has changed considerably from parents'). - Continuous interpersonal relationships. - Governed by leaders rather than law. - Belief in harmony with nature and others. - Respect for authority. - Bearing hardship. - Tends to avoid confrontation. - Yuarn (Karma) is rooted in the heart of Chinese people. - Legitimate role of one's image in front of others (modesty/self-effacement) - Pragmatic and situation-oriented. - Flexible in learned principles. - Flexibility in interpersonal relations (doing favours). - Tend to seek parental approval.	- Society has a hierarchical structure. - Pursuit for economic objectives is discouraged for personal reasons, unless for the benefit of the family. - Actions are inferior to knowledge. - Ascendency of group goals over individual goals. - Encourage ascetic and non-martial behaviours. - Past time is connected to karma. - Belief that events in life are pre-determined and controlled by forces external to the person (subjugation to nature).

Sources adapted from: Elbashier & Nicholls (1993); Fan (2000); Feghali (1997); Gopalan & Rivera (1997); Hill, Loch, Straub, & El-Sheshai (1998); Abella (2015); Taylor & Ali (2017).

Table 2: Demographic profile of respondents

Factor	Arab n=103 (32.5 %)	Chinese n=101 (31.9 %)	Indian n=113 (35.6 %)	Total of three groups n=317 (100 %)
Gender				
Male	n = 73 (70.9 %)	n = 50 (49.5 %)	n = 99 (87.6 %)	n = 222 (70%)
Female	n = 30 (29.1 %)	n = 51 (50.5 %)	n = 14 (12.4 %)	n = 95 (30.0 %)
Year(s) spent in the UK				
Less than 1 year	n = 15 (14.6 %)	n = 49 (48.5 %)	n = 46 (40.7 %)	n = 110 (34.7 %)
1-3 years	n = 54 (52.4 %)	n = 40 (39.6 %)	n = 66 (58.4 %)	n = 160 (50.5 %)
Over 3 years	n = 34 (33.0 %)	n = 12 (11.9 %)	n = 1 (0.9%)	n = 47 (14.8 %)

Table 3: Factors influencing students' decision to study in the UK

	Factor						
	Social Safety	Education Quality	Entry Obstacles	Environment	Recommendations	Knowledge of HC Work & Immigration	Meeting new cultures
Social Safety							
No racial discrimination in the area of my study	.760						
Low crime environment	.752						
An established overseas student community	.582						
Education Quality (H.E. provision)							
The British quality of education is very high		.835					
The course in the UK is better than that offered back home		.736					
The high recognition of the UK qualification		.721					
Entry Obstacles							
It was difficult to gain entry to University at my home country			.754				
The course was not available at home			.737				
I was unable to gain entry to study in my first choice country			.688				
Environment							
It's an exciting place to live				.746			
The UK has a comfortable climate				.672			
The area had quiet living environment				.575			
The geographic closeness				.489			
Recommendations							
Recommendation by others					.777		
I have friends/relatives studying in the UK					.652		
Knowledge of host country							
I had a lot of knowledge of the UK						.696	
It was easy to obtain information on the UK						.668	
Work and Immigration							
The prospect job opportunities of working in the UK after completing my degree						.863	
I have friends/relatives working in the UK						.577	
The intention to migrate to the UK						.407	
Meeting new cultures							
To meet different cultures							.754
To gain better understanding on the UK/West							.740

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Table 4: ANOVA test on factors influencing student decision to study in the UK

Factor	Arab (A) Mean SD	Chinese (C) Mean SD	Indian (I) Mean SD	F ratio	Sig.	Inter-group Differences (0.05)*
Social safety	-0.197 *1.181*	0.697 *1.130*	0.117 *0.598*	2.938	0.056	
Education quality	0.394 *1.111*	0.017 *0.880*	-0.375 *0.833*	16.960	0.000	A,C>I
Entry obstacles	-0.345 *1.150*	-0.024 *0.924*	0.336 *0.794*	13.533	0.000	I>A,C
Environment	-0.163 *1.188*	-0.133 *1.000*	0.267 *0.728*	8.129	0.000	A, C > I
Recommendations	0.103 *1.159*	-0.115 *1.059*	0.008 *0.758*	1.003	0.368	
Knowledge of host country	0.019 *1.192*	-0.208 *0.968*	0.168 *0.789*	4.783	0.009	I > C
Work and immigration	-0.418 *1.194*	-0.097 *0.776*	0.467 *0.772*	25.656	0.000	I > A, C
Meeting new cultures	-0.347 *1.204*	0.320 *0.915*	0.030 *0.741*	10.012	0.000	C, I > A

Table 5: T-test of male/female students decision to study in the UK

Factor	Male Mean SD	Female Mean SD	t-value	Sig.
Social safety	-0.121 *0.939*	0.028 *1.134*	-0.306	0.760
Education quality	-0.088 *0.979*	0.206 *1.024*	-2.414	0.016*
Entry obstacles	0.098 *0.987*	-0.233 *0.996*	2.744	0.006*
Environment	0.075 *0.993*	-0.175 *1.000*	2.046	0.042*
Recommendations	0.047 *0.980*	-0.109 *1.043*	1.269	0.206
Knowledge on host country	0.000 *0.988*	-0.000 *1.033*	0.003	0.998
Work and immigration	-0.062 *1.035*	0.144 *0.902*	-1.680	0.094
Meeting new cultures	-0.035 *0.956*	0.083 *1.097*	-0.964	0.336

* The mean difference is significant at the >0.05 level

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Table 6: Key ranking factors

	Arab n=103	Chinese n=101	Indian N=113
Most influential factors to study in the UK (Rank 1 being the most influential)	**Rank 1:** The British quality of education is very high **Rank 2:** The high recognition of the UK qualification **Rank 3:** The course in the UK is better than that offered back home **Rank 4:** Entry qualifications were accepted **Rank 5:** Recommendation by others	**Rank 1:** The British quality of education is very high **Rank 2:** To meet different cultures **Rank 3:** The course in the UK is better than that offered back home **Rank 4:** The high recognition of the UK qualification **Rank 5:** Entry qualifications were accepted	**Rank 1:** An exciting place to live **Rank 2:** To meet different cultures **Rank 3:** Entry qualifications were accepted **Rank 4:** The UK has a comfortable climate **Rank 5:** The area had quiet living environment
Least influential factors to study in the UK (Rank 1 being the least influential)	**Rank 1:** It was difficult to gain entry to university at my home country **Rank 2:** Low costs (of fees, travel, living) **Rank 3:** I have friends/relatives working in the UK **Rank 4:** I was unable to gain entry to study in my first choice country **Rank 5:** The intention to migrate to the UK	**Rank 1:** Low costs (of fees, travel, living) **Rank 2:** The intention to migrate to the UK **Rank 3:** The course was not available at home **Rank 4:** I have friends/relatives working in the UK **Rank 5:** I was unable to gain entry to study in my first choice country	**Rank 1:** It was difficult to gain entry to university at my home country **Rank 2:** The course was not available at home **Rank 3:** Low Costs of (Fees, Travel, Living) **Rank 4:** The intention to migrate to the UK **Rank 5:** I was unable to gain entry to study in my first choice country

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