

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Student motivation and satisfaction: Why choose an international academic franchise programme rather than a home one?

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Abstract

As globalisation increases, Higher Education Institutions are challenged to produce more young graduates to meet the corporate world's demand for highly qualified, mobile international managers. Business and management programmes are required to have international components to attract the best students. To date, the majority of research has focused on the management and quality of such programmes with few studies undertaken from the students' perspective. This article examines students' motivations to study on an internationally franchised academic programme, prior expectations and whether these were met. Students of international franchised management programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level studying in five different countries were asked what motivated them to choose this form of study over other possibilities open to them, their prior expectations and how satisfied they were with their actual experiences. The results confirmed some previous findings, i.e. the significance of enhanced employability potential. However, they also identified new themes, showing how the students' funders influenced the choice of study and how that influence was affected by gender.

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The results also queried students' true motivation for these programmes and the international academic franchisees' potential to meet those expectations fully.

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to add to the body of knowledge regarding transnational education by investigating what motivates students to study on taught degree programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels on international academic franchised programmes; whether they are satisfied with their choice and how well actual experiences meet initial expectations. In the context of this paper, an international academic franchise (IAF) is taken to mean:-

an international activity where a university or [Higher Education Institution] HEI enters into a form of partnership with another university or HEI in a different country to deliver, wholly or partially, (a) specific academic program(s) to students of that country which leads to the academic award of the franchisor university.

(British Council, 2012, p. 69)

Levatino (2016) shows there has been much research into the swiftly expanding transnational higher education (TNHE) phenomenon. However, Pon et al. (2011) comment that in the context of TNHE, research into IAFs is often integrated as part of another study and published within the more general, wider internationalisation framework or TNHE, remains true. Pon and Ritchie (2014) suggested that for an IAF to be created both franchisor and franchisee must proactively want to develop collaborative programmes primarily to enhance their status and/or image, and increase income. Along with many other studies (e.g. Mellors-Bourne et al., 2015; Ramsey & Lorenz, 2016), Pon and Ritchie's (2014) study did not incorporate the students' perspective but did support the general belief that with the increase in globalisation there is a need for students to develop a more international outlook during their programme of study to enhance their future employability.

It is argued by some (e.g. Alexejun & D'Angelo, 2013) that only those students who have studied at a foreign campus will have truly acquired an international experience and perspective which will be of immediate benefit to future employers. However, pragmatically overseas study on a home campus is often beyond the financial reach of most students, especially at undergraduate level where it attracts little governmental support outside Europe (Leung & Waters, 2013; Pon & Ritchie, 2014).

Reflecting on this, it can be argued that students do not need to study on transnational programmes which are usually more expensive than nationally accredited programmes to enhance their employability in the global marketplace. This is particularly true with the increasing use of online international learning and virtual classrooms. However, as Heissel (2016) notes, e-Learning does not always improve student learning; indeed, Hwang and Cruthirds' (2017) work suggests that virtual learning works best when integrated into a blended programme in which student and teacher interaction still occurs. These findings plus the increase in IAFs (Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013) suggest that students see IAF programmes as having an added value over virtual, home and overseas study programmes. In addition, the assumption that an international

perspective will be of significant benefit to students (e.g. Ramsey & Lorenz, 2016) demonstrates a need for academic research that presents the student view. Therefore, a further question that this paper seeks to answer is what is the perceived added value of an IAF as understood by the students themselves and is this added value met?

Many studies have investigated the international student experience by either interviewing UK students who have studied overseas as part of their course (Mellors-Bourne et al., 2015) or interviewing international students studying in the home country of the researcher (Pedro & Franco, 2016). Where studies have specifically investigated the student view (Moufahim & Lim, 2015) they have tended to be quite small, based on one cohort in one university and often from an Anglo-Saxon cultural perspective (Pon & Ritchie, 2014). This study takes a broader multi-cultural perspective with one franchisor being based in the UK and the other in France and working in more than one country, thus providing a larger and more varied population.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This research therefore fills a gap in the existing literature relating to TNHE in IAF programmes by focusing on student motivation firstly to join a specific programme and then satisfaction with that programme and study mode (Alves & Raposo, 2009) across a range of IAFs. Enhanced understanding will enable academic franchise managers to better fulfill students' expectations by identifying how decisions to join a particular IAF programme are made and whether those expectations are met in reality. IAF managers will then be able to provide an enhanced experience of study to their students, increase student satisfaction, improve their international reputation and become more competitive in attracting higher level students.

The research therefore is designed around three questions:

RQ1: What motivates students to choose to pay more for a relatively expensive IAF programme rather than study on a national home programme?

RQ2: What or who are the external stakeholders who influence the decision to study on an IAF programme, including the influence of who pays the fees?

RQ3: Have the IAF programmes and universities within this study met and satisfied students' expectations?

Using both under- and postgraduate management students based in five different countries, this paper reviews current literature in the area of IAF with particular reference to the student perspective. It then describes and justifies the data collection methods. The results of the primary data collection and analysis are then presented, and the paper concludes by presenting the student perspective on the value of studying on IAF programmes: their motivation to do so, prior expectations, actual experiences, and level of overall satisfaction in achieving the anticipated added value.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transnational higher education

Studies (e.g. Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013) have demonstrated that the opening of IAFs or branch campuses in countries outside the institution's home country has been a major factor for most of the growth in TNHE and that these IAF campuses are primarily run by either, British,

American or Australian universities. These IAFs tend to be set up in developing countries where there is both a real and a perceived lack of faculty expertise and/or collective societies where critical ‘westernised’ thinking ability is seen as a potential employment benefit (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016; Moufahim & Lim, 2015). Bohm et al. (2002) suggested that transnational education would account for around 44 per cent of the total demand for international education by 2025. More recently (Levatino, 2016) transnational education in all its forms has continued to rise significantly with demand being driven by government policy, student demographics (British Council, 2013), escalating costs (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016) and diminishing funds from public institutions (Ulhoi, 2005). HEIs recognise two primary forms of international education: internationalisation at home and internationalisation abroad (Teichler, 2007). In internationalisation abroad programmes part of the study may be in the home country but some will be overseas. Where all of the study is overseas, the students usually participate in the national degree programme of that other country.

One of the most common forms of internationalisation at home is the IAF where the student remains in their home country to study for an internationally recognised qualification and with components that make the academic content of the programme international such as foreign faculty teaching and/or an international curriculum (de Wit, 2002; Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013). A recent and growing development of IAF programmes is that of TNHE destination hubs where students study on an IAF programme in a neighbouring country rather than in the home, franchisor, country, e.g. Malaysia (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016; Levatino, 2016). This research investigates the perceptions of those students who choose to participate in internationalisation at home via IAF programmes, either remaining in their home country or travelling to a neighbouring country TNHE destination hub while studying for an international qualification.

Students as key stakeholders in the success of higher education institutes

The literature on customer satisfaction per se is rich and widespread (Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013). However, undertaking empirical research amongst student populations about motivation and satisfaction can be considered controversial since this places the student as a customer, consumer or user of education (Modell, 2005; Singh, 2002; Zocco, 2009) rather than an integral part of the holistic academic environment. In contrast Sophie Wach et al. (2016) point out that much research has been successfully undertaken into employee's satisfaction with and motivation to work and that the equivalent, student satisfaction with their academic studies, is an equally significant but underresearched area of study. Indeed, many (Elliot & Shin, 2002; Ramsey & Lorenz, 2016; Sophie Wach et al., 2016; Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013) believe that since students are a key stakeholder group, their view should not be ignored. It is only by better understanding the students' perspective as customer and consumer of the TNHE experience that their needs and other broader political goals can be met (Altbach & de Wit, 2015; Pedro & Franco, 2016).

Students who have positive experiences both in academic (i.e. personal performance) and social factors (i.e. interaction with the faculty) tend to express greater satisfaction with the institution and their academic experience overall (Ramsey & Lorenz, 2016; Suhre et al., 2006; Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013). Feeling positive towards a programme or institution is important for academic success (Sophie Wach et al., 2016), but it is also important for the institutions themselves living in an era of increased competition. All graduates are official and unofficial ambassadors for their alma mater; satisfied students are a good public relations asset (Altbach & de Wit, 2015;

Ramsey & Lorenz, 2016; Sinclair, 2011). Moreover, satisfied students can become the advocates of the institution they studied at (Amaro et al., 2019). High national and international rankings enable universities to attract top students and faculty members and charge higher tuition fees (Wilkins & Huisman, 2012). Given the highly competitive nature of higher educational markets (Knight, 2011; Wilkins, 2010) and the continual growth in the TNHE market (Bohm et al., 2002; Levatino, 2016) student satisfaction can be seen as an essential component of competitive advantage.

In completing this virtuous circle Booker and Rebman (2005) and Helgesen and Nasset (2007) suggest that a good reputation evidenced via high student satisfaction is a factor in the final decision of a student to enrol in a particular institution or remain there for further studies. Therefore, a better understanding of the student view is an integral part of increasing their satisfaction and increasing the quality of the HEIs' brand perception.

Student motivation to choose an international programme of study

As stated in the introduction, various authors have identified reasons for motivating students to choose different international study methods. For example, Mellors-Bourne et al. (2015) show that funding availability, attractive location, total cost, personal safety and language requirements are significant factors in influencing UK students when choosing whether or not to participate in a short-term mobility programme such as those provided through ERASMUS+ (a student exchange programme set up in the late 1980s to provide foreign exchange options for EU students within the EU). Tran's (2016) study of students in Australia suggested that for those already resident or who wish to become resident in a particular country obtaining qualifications recognised by that country to enhance their employability and ability to remain are the significant motivators, whether or not the qualification leads to their preferred career path. In a similar vein, Moreira and Gomes (2019) identified five groups of motives to study abroad: economic (e.g. expected future income, obtaining a foreign diploma), social (e.g. experience living in another country, establish new friendships), personal (e.g. be autonomous), academic (e.g. interest in the study plan of the foreign programme, learn languages) and migratory (know the country of the ancestors, obtain permanent residence visa).

Kim's (2016) study of Korean graduates who had studied in the USA confirmed that enhanced employability through attaining a higher status qualification had been one of the major motivators. In particular, enhanced employability status had meant employment potential within an international company or within the USA. Interestingly, this study also suggested that international study was one route for female graduates to obtain equality of employment via participation in the global marketplace in a patriarchal society. Levatino (2016) suggested that both a lack of national programmes and a perception of poor quality is another significant motivator. Pedro and Franco's (2016) study of Brazilian students studying in Portugal on an ERASMUS mobility programme suggested that social networks and culture are also important factors motivating the choice of studying a programme. Portuguese is the language of Brazil, and many of the participants had family ties with Portugal and believed that they would understand the culture and so be able to form new friendships more easily than in other countries. This concept links closely with Ahmad and Buchanan's (2016) work on developing TNHE destination hubs. They suggested that some of the reasons for Malaysia becoming a significant TNHE IAF hub was because of similar cultures with neighbouring countries, ease of returning home for the students as well as the more generally accepted IAF benefits of lower tuition and living costs and the

attainment of a recognised international qualification. Interestingly, their results also suggested that because Malaysia was a known tourist destination and so perceived as safe this was also a motivating factor.

Reflecting Teichler's (2007) earlier work, Moufahim and Lim's (2015) study investigating Chinese students' reasons for choosing a British IAF programme found that the Chinese students believed that they would receive a better education, through western-style teaching which included critical thinking and challenging discussion, as well as developing their language skills. These two attributes would then lead to better employment prospects at home and abroad with global organisations, including better ability to understand a western-centric global organisations' culture and, therefore, their ability to succeed.

All these studies suggest that the key motivation for participating in any form of international study is to receive better quality, more international education which will enhance future employability, that there is a current cost versus future income potential trade-off (Yates et al., 2003) and that this can be expressed as an investment in the acquisition of personal 'capital' (Kim, 2016; Levatino, 2016; Moufahim & Lim, 2015; Tran, 2016). However, these studies do not identify how IAF programmes fit into this acquisition hierarchy. Nor has there been any significant research that the authors are aware of difference if any between the motivations of those who choose to study in their home country and those who travel to a TNHE hub to study on an IAF programme.

Student satisfaction

When students choose a course at any HEI, they naturally hope for positive outcomes at the end of their studies knowing that there is a risk that their expectations before entering the programme may not be met (Zocco, 2009). While there is much literature on anticipated trade-offs within the corporate world there are only a few within the education setting (Edwards et al., 2007; Schneider & Shanteau, 2003; Zocco, 2009). This may well be because the motivations for selecting a particular programme of study may be varied and often continue to change as the student progresses through the programme (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006). Additionally, there are differences between under- and postgraduate students' motivation at the same institution (Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013). Therefore, students on the same programme may well have different expectations and the reflexive and reactive nature of students' motivation will impact levels of satisfaction with their programme at any given moment in time. As Wilkins and Balakrishnan (2013) and Ramsey and Lorenz (2016) show where prior expectations are met and the students are able to achieve their initial goals, the students feel greater satisfaction and become more motivated to work to meet other expectations and subsequent goals. This demonstrates the need for better understanding of the links between prior motivation to join a course and the reality of participating in it. This is particularly true since Wilkins and Balakrishnan (2013) also pointed out many of the studies which have been carried out on student satisfaction link satisfaction to teacher quality and learning outcomes to improve teaching effectiveness. They do not deepen understanding of whether the students' overall initial expectations have been satisfied or not. One reason for this may be the difficulty in defining the meaning of satisfaction. According to Sinclair (2011) out of 34 studies reviewed for a study on course selection and satisfaction only six studies defined the meaning of expectations and satisfaction within their study context. In most of these the theoretical underpinning was based either from literature in marketing or from social cognitive theory, for example, O'Leary and Quinlan (2007).

Wu et al. (2010, p. 157), when reporting on satisfaction in a mixed learning environment of distance and face-to-face learning defined satisfaction as “*the sum of a student's behavioural beliefs and attitudes that result from aggregating all the benefits that a student receives.*” In some other cases, definitions of satisfaction emphasise the perception of having a sense of accomplishment while enjoying the experience of learning or identify accomplishment as a motivator to achieve further success and satisfaction (Moore, 2009; Ramsey & Lorenz, 2016; Sweeney & Ingram, 2001; Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013).

For this study's purpose, student satisfaction with their programme of study is defined as meaning that the aggregate of their initial expectations, in both a physical and emotional sense, has either been met or exceeded.

By utilising French and UK franchisors this study compliments extant work on student satisfaction on home campuses, studies on international and transnational education and extends knowledge in relation to students studying on franchised campuses and IAF programmes.

METHODOLOGY

When carrying out student motivation and satisfaction surveys, it was considered necessary to identify all elements that should be measured to evaluate the overall student satisfaction level. However, as previously discussed (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006; Sophie Wach et al., 2016), there are difficulties in measuring students' satisfaction level since the time at which the survey is carried out during the period of study may have major effects on the outcomes. Not only may expectations and student satisfaction be different at the start of an academic course compared to the recollection of expectations at the end of one semester or the end of the course itself, but experiences undergone may also well affect the reconstruction of earlier memories and initial expectations. Additionally, motivation to join that programme or institution may impact upon the satisfaction level and have a varying degree of influence on the student. For example, Suhre et al. (2006) suggested that students who enter postgraduate studies tend to be more motivated than students entering undergraduate studies. Thus, both time and level may influence responses to questions about satisfaction. In this exploratory study, there were also issues of physical distance and linguistic difference. Therefore, the authors decided to use a questionnaire as a data collection instrument rather than interviews because questionnaires allow for the collection of more structured data from large sample populations which in this case would enable a much more accurate comparison of responses from the different countries and institutions involves (Saunders et al., 2009). Other exploratory studies have also utilised similar quantitative methods (e.g. Ivanov & Webster, 2021).

To mitigate these potential limitations, all of the participants were either in their final year of the franchised programme or on a programme which was only validated for one academic year leading to the academic award. In addition, the questionnaires were issued approximately halfway through the academic year. First, this was to ensure that all participants were at approximately the same stage in their programmes which would mitigate against the potential differences that could occur if the period of study completed varied. Second, this was considered to be the optimum time as the students would have been likely to have had some of their prior expectations confirmed or not (e.g. quality of teaching) even though others might still be outstanding. Therefore, they would be able to give an informed and reflective view about satisfaction with the programme to date and any modification of the pre-course expectations. All programmes were business management based (some with a hospitality management specialisation) at either Masters or Bachelor level.

All of the students who participated in this study were participating in IAF programmes for one of two franchisors. One franchisor is based in the UK and the other in France thus all respondents were taught (and questioned) in the medium of either English or French as per the language instruction requirements of their franchisor. As Table 1 shows, the students were based in Bulgaria, Morocco, China, Singapore and Egypt and three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa. This spread reflects the franchisors' international campuses and does not have any other significance except that, unlike many other studies (e.g. Moufahim & Lim, 2015; Pedro & Franco, 2016; Wilkins & Balakrishnan, 2013), it enabled comparisons between different cohorts of students, most studying on the same programmes, all at the same stage of study and all at the same time, but from different cultural backgrounds and in different countries.

Given the difficulty in measuring satisfaction, many of the frameworks designed to measure satisfaction such as ServPerf (Taylor & Kronin, 1994) use simple terms in questionnaires such as "exceeds expectations" or use a simple tool such as a Likert scale using similar descriptors. Babin (1998) points out that it is necessary to use an equal number of descriptors to differentiate between the two dimensions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. An additional factor to consider in this study was its international nature; questioning participants in one of two languages which, in most cases, was not the mother tongue of the participants. Therefore, to ensure uniformity within the data collection, it was decided to use a predominantly closed question questionnaire. Most open questions were simple ones, such as nationality, where the possible variables were too large to list, but some closed questions had multiple responses. For example, the participants were asked whether their expectations were met with an option of a simple yes, no or not yet. However, to probe their expectations more deeply, the participants were also asked why they had chosen to pay more to participate in an IAF programme rather than a national programme or at the franchisors home campus. In this question, the students were able to choose from eight responses. Such techniques have been used in other student satisfaction surveys (Butt & Rhemen, 2010) and the final eight response options evolved through the pilot testing based on the existing literature on student motivation to choose an international study programme.

The questionnaire was piloted in English at one of the franchisors, which has multiple partner franchisees. After the pilot some questions were amended as a few were identified as too complex for complete clarity particularly where multiple responses were permitted. The questionnaire

TABLE 1 Demographic data of respondents

Characteristics of respondents	Franchisor					
	UK		France			
	Franchisee					
	Bulgaria	Morocco	Egypt	China	Singapore	Total
Age (18–20)	14.7	0	63	0	22	19.8
Age (21–24)	44.1	100	37	100	51.2	62.4
Age (25 and above)	41.2	0	0	0	26.8	17.8
Gender (female)	64.7	57.1	74.1	57.7	63.4	63.4
Academic level (undergraduate study)	44.1	100	100	98.1	56.1	72.2
Academic level (postgraduate study)	55.9	0	0	1.9	43.9	27.7
Funding from parents	29.4	100	85.2	64.2	84.6	67.7

Note: Cell values in percent.

was then translated into French. The French version was translated by a member of the team who is bilingual English/French. A director of one of the French institution's franchisees (a French native speaker) then verified that the terms used in the questionnaire would be understood by their students and have the same connotations as the English language questionnaire. Thus, the same words and layout were used except where a technical term has no meaning in French, such as 'academic franchise'; in this case, the normal French equivalent was substituted, 'campus à l'étranger'.

In most cases, the questionnaires were administered during moderation visits. Where this was not physically possible it was administered by a member of the franchisor's administrative team. It was made clear to the students that participation was voluntary and that the raw data would not be seen either by their lecturers or programme administrators. Two-hundred and two usable responses were received from across the five campuses. Table 1 shows a range of demographic detail from the sample.

The data were analysed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) using cross-tabulation, Chi-square tests of association, correlation and principal component analysis (PCA) to evaluate how the students' expectations were met across the five cohorts. The data analysis started from the assumption that each franchisor would intend to meet their students' expectations in each campus; these assumptions were compared with the actual student response data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The influence of the funder upon motivation to study on IAF programmes

Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of the participants across the IAFs. A higher number of female respondents (62.4 per cent) across all the programmes reflected the demographic profile of the students enrolled on the programmes. From a distribution of three age groups, the age group 21–24 years accounted for 62 per cent of the sample. This result occurred because the Moroccan and Egyptian franchises had more students within the age group of 18–24 as all their students were enrolled on undergraduate programmes, unlike the other campuses where the students were enrolled on a mixture of under- and postgraduate courses. These results (Table 1) also showed that parents were the key funders (67 per cent). This was probably due to the lack of independent income for most within the 18–24 age group and government policies within individual national economies, such as limited availability of student loans or grants. The respondents at the Bulgarian campus had both the highest percentage of students studying on Masters courses and the lowest number of students supported by their parents. Interestingly, this campus is also a major tourist region where many students can find part-time employment to help support their studies.

Much of the research into students on TNHE programmes does not provide a gender breakdown (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016; Moufahim & Lim, 2015; Tang, 2016). In Wilkins and Balakrishnan's (2013) study of students on IAF programmes in the UAE, the gender split was smaller (48.6 per cent female) than in this study and also in Pedro and Franco's (2016) study of ERASMUS students in Portugal (55.6 per cent female). Conversely, in Ramsey and Lorenz's (2016) study of MBA students in the USA, 70 per cent of their participants were male. Although the British Council (2013) note that female students are more likely to respond to surveys than males, these percentages may simply reflect students' numbers on the

programmes. However, they may also be reflective of national culture as suggested in Tran's (2016) work: that highest status is given to the most expensive programme, study on the home campus, and then to study for an international qualification on a less expensive offshore IAF programme. The high number of female participants in this study may also reflect Kim's (2016) findings: that however obtained, an international qualification and accompanying enhanced global employment potential is seen by women in patriarchal societies as a method of achieving parity in the workforce.

Funding was used as a single variable and combined the optional responses of government sponsorship and other sources to investigate whether or not there might be a link between students' decision to pay for a more expensive IAF programme when there were equivalent national programmes available at each franchisee campus. Parental funding was 67.3 per cent of the sample with 55 per cent studying at the undergraduate level. The test of association with the level of study is significant ($\chi^2 = 18.233$, d.f. = 2; $p < 0.001$).

The students were asked in multiple response questions who they believed had been the main influencer/s of their decision to pursue their academic studies per se. The options included consulting with parents, deciding by oneself, past teachers, friends and other students. Unsurprisingly, the crosstabulation and Chi-squared test of association (Tables 2 and 3) show that consultation with parents played a significant role. To investigate the influence of parents in the decision-making process more deeply, the data were further analysed by undergraduate and postgraduate IAF programme. Deciding with parents (52.5 per cent) showed a significant association with the student academic level ($\chi^2 = 17.437$; d.f. = 1; $p = 0.001$); that is to say that, particularly in the generally younger undergraduate cohort, parents were seen as the main influencer to study on an IAF programme. Deciding by oneself (7.4 per cent) also showed significant association with academic level ($\chi^2 = 10.431$, d.f. = 1; $p = 0.001$) with, as may have been expected, the postgraduate level. However, even at the postgraduate level where it might have been expected to be influential neither teachers nor friends and other students were identified as significant motivators in the choice of method of study, see Table 2.

The students were then asked who they believed had been the main influencer/s of their decision to study on an IAF programme rather than a similar local institution. Again, the results showed that parents play a significant role in students' decisions, particularly at undergraduate level (see Table 3). The results were significantly and quantitatively similar with regard to who was funding the students' studies. Decision with parents was significantly associated with IAF study ($\chi^2 = 11.053$; d.f. = 1; $p = 0.001$) together with students' own decision and siblings and family members ($\chi^2 = 8.260$; d.f. = 1; $p = 0.004$). Interestingly, again decision with past teachers did not influence the student's decision and was not significant when associated with joining an IAF at any academic level ($\chi^2 = 0.8$; d.f. = 1; $p = 0.757$). Therefore, it can be concluded that students' decisions to enrol on expensive IAF programme are associated with parents, themselves, siblings and family members while past teachers do not contribute.

As previously noted by various authors (Callender & Jackson, 2008; Kim, 2016; Pedro & Franco, 2016) an important reason for providing the financial support for studies on IAF programmes, which are always more expensive than home programmes, is the expectation of gaining a competitive edge in the global marketplace, better employment prospects in the future, higher earning potential and cultural status. This concept is strengthened by the results in Table 4 which show that only 21.9 per cent of all respondents believed that they had had an alternative option of going into full-time employment if they had not chosen their current IAF programme; all the others would have still have continued their studies in some format to gain a higher academic qualification.

TABLE 2 Decision to study influencers and funders by academic level

	Academic level			Chi-squared test		
	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Total	χ^2	d.f.	p-value
Decision with parents	52.5	11.4	63.9	17.437	1	0.001
Decision without parents	19.8	16.3	36.1			
Decision with past teachers	4.5	2	6.4	0.064	1	0.757
Decision without past teachers	67.8	25.7	93.6			
Own decision	7.4	7.9	15.3	10.431	1	0.003
Decision by others	64.9	19.8	84.7			
Decision with friends and other students	19.3	7.9	27.2	0.071	1	0.860
Decision without friends and other students	53	19.8	72.8			
Decision with siblings and family members	6.4	5.4	11.9	4.458	1	0.05
Decision without siblings and family members	65.8	22.3	88.1			
Self-funded	12.9	11.9	24.8	18.233	2	0.001
Funding by parents	55	12.4	67.3			
Funding by state/government	4.5	3.5	7.9			
Total	72.3	27.7	100			

Note: Cell values in percent.

In developing nations, where most IAFs are situated (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016; Moufahim & Lim, 2015) or those cultures where male status dominates over female, females (particularly, younger ones) are frequently seen as more vulnerable and in need of more care. Since parental funding and influence are so significant, especially at the undergraduate level, these results suggest that whilst the value of an international qualification is highly prized, because males are perceived as having higher status (and accompanying higher parental expectation), priority is given to male children to study on home campuses whilst females are influenced to choose IAF programmes in either in their own country or in countries with closer cultural ties to their own; a TNHE hub. This suggests a strong link in the relationship between the funder, motivation to study and choice of study mode, particularly on IAF programmes.

Meeting expectations

Since So and Brush (2008) and Wilkins and Balakrishnan (2013) amongst others have noted that students of different ages tend to differ in their levels of satisfaction, the students were split into three age groups for this analysis, 18–20; 21–24 and 25–39 (see Table 1). The 25–39 age group included

TABLE 3 Decision to study influencers and funders by academic franchise

	Academic franchise			Chi-squared test		
	UK	France	Total	χ^2	d.f.	p-value
Decision with parents	40.1	23.8	63.9	11.053	1	0.001
Decision without parents	30.7	5.4	36.1			
Decision with past teachers	5.4	1	6.4	1.284	1	0.353
Decision without past teachers	65.3	28.2	93.6			
Own decision	12.4	3	15.3	1.719	1	0.282
Decision by others	58.4	26.2	84.7			
Decision with friends and other students	21.8	5.4	27.2	3.099	1	0.078
Decision without friends and other students	49	23.8	72.8			
Decision with siblings and family members	11.4	0.5	11.9	8.260	1	0.004
Decision without siblings and family members	59.4	28.7	88.1			
Self-funded	21.8	3	24.8	13.843	2	0.001
Funding by parents	42.1	25.2	67.3			
Funding by state/government	6.8	1	7.9			
Total	70.8	29.2	100			

Note: Cell values in percent.

TABLE 4 Alternative to current study on IAF programme

	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Full time employment	18.1	28.4	21.9
Full-time study anywhere	70.9	58.1	66.2
Mixed responses of work and study	11	13.5	11.9
Total	100	100	100

Note: Cell values in percent.

mature students; the upper age limit was 39 simply because that was the oldest participant's age. The two other bandings were used as they are both norms for dividing under- and postgraduate groups and age bands frequently used in young adult studies (e.g. Velikova et al., 2016).

When the students were asked whether their expectations had been met or not the variables were significant at different levels of significance and level of expectations met correlated with how well the students thought that they were being trained to face future employment challenges (Table 5). In the Chi-squared tests the associations between meeting expectations and three variables were found to be significant. These were age group ($\chi^2 = 15.833$; d.f. = 4; $p = 0.003$),

TABLE 5 Meeting expectations

	Yes	No	Not yet	Total	Chi-squared test		
					χ^2	d.f.	p-value
Age							
18–20	8.1	6.1	6.1	20.3	15.833	4	0.003
21–24	42.1	10.7	8.6	61.4			
25–39	14.7	1.5	2	18.3			
Academic franchise							
UK	43.7	13.7	13.7	71.1	3.063	2	0.216
FR	21.3	4.6	3	28.9			
Academic level							
Undergraduate	41.6	16.2	13.7	71/6	10.557	2	0.005
Postgraduate	23.4	2	3	28.4			
Funding							
Self	20.8	0	4.6	25.4	21.869	4	0.001
Parents	37.1	17.8	11.7	66.5			
State/Government	7.1	0.5	0.5	8.1			
Total	65	18.3	16.8	100			

Note: Cell values in percent.

academic level ($\chi^2 = 10.557$; d.f. = 2; $p = 0.005$) and funding ($\chi^2 = 21.869$; d.f. = 4; $p = 0.001$). Interestingly, the choice of IAF ($\chi^2 = 3.063$; d.f. = 2; p -value = 0.216) and meeting expectations was not significant. This suggests that the choice of IAF does not influence whether expectations are met or not. It may also suggest that choice of IAF may be limited.

In the largest age group, 21–24, 68.6 per cent believed that their expectations had been met; this rose to 80.6 per cent in the mature group. This contrasted strongly with the age group 18–20 (see Table 5) where only 40 per cent of the total agreed that their expectations were met. Therefore, and reflecting many previous studies (Kim, 2016; Levatino, 2016; Moufahim & Lim, 2015; Tran, 2016), the IAF programmes were, overall, able to meet the key expectations of the students in this study but to a lower level for the youngest age cohort. However, further investigation of the data showed that the highest number of students in the 18–20 cohort were from the Egyptian IAF. Their comments show that they were particularly dissatisfied with the teaching staff as most of their academic faculty were Egyptian nationals as were the vast majority of their student cohort. Moufahim and Lim (2015) and Levatino (2016) have identified international teaching staff as a key expectation of students choosing to study on an international course. It is likely that this factor significantly influenced the low level of satisfaction amongst the youngest age group in this study.

An exploratory factor analysis was performed to investigate further which expectations of the students were met and how they related to each other; the findings are reported in Table 6. Two factors were identified. The first factor, 'Learning experience', (Cronbach alpha = 0.864, CR = 0.901, AVE = 39.200 per cent), consisted of five items: international student cohort, more qualified lecturers and better teaching, different style of teaching and learning, new cultural experience, and international course content. The second factor, 'Opportunities after graduation',

TABLE 6 Exploratory factor analysis results

Question: Have your expectations of the international academic franchise programme been met so far? (Yes/No or Not yet) If yes please tick all areas where they have been met	Number of times the area was mentioned by the respondents	Factor loadings	
		Learning experience	Opportunities after graduation
International student cohort	34	0.816	
More qualified lecturers and better teaching	50	0.774	
Different style of teaching and learning	59	0.768	
New cultural experience	59	0.723	
International course content	53	0.707	
International job opportunities	60		0.780
Enhanced personal self-development	52		0.724
Better resources	52		0.639
Variance explained (%)		39.200	22.738
Cronbach alpha		0.864	0.626
Composite reliability (CR)		0.901	0.798

Notes: 1. Extraction method: principal component analysis; 2. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalisation; 3. Rotation converged in 3 iterations; 4. KMO = 0.839, Bartlett test of Sphericity = 575.721, $p < 0.001$; 5. $N = 202$.

(Cronbach alpha = 0.626, CR = 0.798, AVE = 22.738 per cent) included three items: international job opportunities, enhanced personal self-development, and better resources). The findings reveal that the learning experience explains most of the variation in respondents' answers on whether or not their expectations were met by the franchisees.

These results taken together suggest that the students were particularly satisfied when they believed that they were getting cross-cultural learning from the IAF because they thought this would positively impact future employment potential, a key motivator to study on international programmes. In this study there was a high level of female participants particularly in the Egyptian cohort (see Table 1) and, as previously discussed, it was this group which was the least satisfied with their IAF programme. The findings may be reflecting the work of Kim (2016) and Tran (2016): that however obtained, an international qualification and accompanying enhanced global employment potential is seen by women in patriarchal societies as a method of achieving parity in both the home and international workforce. Without the international element that they had expected in their IAF programmes this cohort was disappointed with them.

The results also show that there was an important relationship between expectations being met and who funds the studies. The group who had the highest level of expectations being met was the oldest. This group also had the highest number of self-funders, who were least influenced by parents, and most likely to be studying on a post graduate programme. Reflecting Suhre et al.'s (2006) work this result may have occurred because they had the most influence over where and how to study and because they had more realistic initial expectations and simpler aims; gaining a higher qualification to improve job opportunities.

Where there was less satisfaction shown, except in the Egyptian cohort, it could be due to few or no alternatives IAFs being available in the students' home country or any neighbouring TNHE hub. It may also have been due to parents and family's influence both as funders and as cultural

influencers in favouring study programmes that were both less expensive and closer to home, physically and culturally, rather than the student feeling entirely free to choose their preferred method of study. This reflects Sophie Wach et al.'s (2016) findings suggesting that where a student is less positively motivated at the start of their programme they are less likely to be satisfied throughout it.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results show clearly that enhanced employment prospects, including the development of what is perceived as westernised critical thinking via an international teaching faculty, other students and western organisational cultures are key motivators for participating in IAF programmes for all students. Since more satisfied students tend to work harder to achieve later goals, a virtuous circle of success and satisfaction can be achieved. Therefore, meeting the early expectations of the programme, such as international cohort and faculty members, is a key issue for franchisee and franchisor. Where these expectations are not met, as with the Egyptian cohort, dissatisfaction will make further goals harder to achieve. Also, where the students' prior expectations cannot be met in these key areas, the students will likely prove to be poor ambassadors for the university in the future, another key issue for the franchisee and franchisor. Some of the major implications of the study are outlined below.

Parental influence, safety and tourism

It is accepted that the vast majority of parents want their children to be safe and that particularly in some developing and or patriarchal societies there is a view that women are much more vulnerable than men and so need to remain within their particular cultural environment. However, Tran (2016) suggests that female students in patriarchal societies see international qualifications as a method of gaining equity and status in the workplace. Therefore, these results suggest that part of the added value of an IAF programme is that it combines the parents' desires (funders) with the desires of their children (particularly girls). However, it may also suggest a tension, demotivation, if the potential student would have preferred to study on a home campus but could not take up that option.

In several earlier studies (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016; Mellors-Bourne et al., 2015; Pedro & Franco, 2016) the image of a safe destination is mentioned and the country or region of the HEI participating in the study being seen as a tourist destination. This raises the question of whether there is an added value in studying or working in an IAF/TNHE hub which has an image of being a desirable high-status place to visit as a tourist. It also asks whether or not if little is known about a destination from an educational perspective a positive tourism image substitutes as a suitable proxy. Due to Egypt's current political situation, along with much of North Africa, it is not seen as a safe country. Therefore, there may be a current reluctance for parents to send their children to study and international staff to want to work in this country. This may explain the lack of international staff and students in this study's cohort.

These results suggest that further research is needed into the relationship between IAF provision, perceptions of safety (physical, political and cultural) and the country or region's image as a tourism destination especially in light of the COVID pandemic. Does the image of a safe destination encourage international students and stimulate the development of an

international teaching faculty, thus enabling the IAF to provide some of the key international motivators required by students, personal safety plus international staff and western-centric critical teaching? A further draw of a recognised tourism destination may be that they can usually support large amounts of casual and part-time work through which many students help fund their studies.

Influence of past teachers

This study identified the very limited role of past teachers as influencers of current studies. This was unexpected because several of the HEIs involved in this research had both undergraduate and postgraduate management courses. Suhre et al. (2006) and Tran's (2016) work suggested that studying at postgraduate level is to meet specific employment goals rather than studying for its own sake. However, all extant research, including this study, shows that an international teaching faculty is key to attracting students to an IAF and meeting internationalisation expectations. This result suggests that from the student perspective the value of an international teaching faculty lies, initially at least, primarily in its provision.

Consequences of IAF programmes meeting all expectations of study of TNHE home campus study

Tran (2016) and Levatino (2016) both suggested that when the acquisition of an international degree is an overt demonstration of the acquisition of cultural capital, then only the ability to study on a home campus, which inevitably also demonstrates sufficient financial capital within the family, will meet all the needs of the student and family. However, this study suggests that IAF programmes can meet all other significant motivation factors, enhanced cultural understanding, linguistic skills and overall employability potential, better resources compared to local programmes especially with the contribution of faster and higher quality online resources and collaboration with the home campus. Therefore, a further added value of these programmes is that students whose social status is somewhat lower, either through financial restrictions or gender, can still receive these benefits but at a lower cost and in a more culturally compatible environment.

STUDY LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Whilst two hundred and two responses are sufficient for significant data analysis it is accepted that the varied size of the cohorts can be seen as a limitation of the study plus the fact that all the students were studying within the same discipline. However, the cohorts' varied size does reflect their actual sizes and the real variation in the numbers on programmes internationally. Where the results have suggested that bias may have been introduced, it has been identified and discussed, as with the Egyptian undergraduates' dissatisfaction. Therefore, the authors believe that the results are a true reflection of this population's perceptions but accept that if this study were to be repeated within a specialist discipline instead of the more general business management subject area, the results might differ.

The study does, however, provide valuable insight as to what students are looking for and provides food for thought on several levels such as the cross-cultural aspect which in the future could be maintained and improved with more interaction between home campus students and international campus students. Similarly, the increased opportunities in job seeking could be enhanced in the future by providing more support services in career development with specific focus on the country where the IAF operates and thus creating a more “one school, several campuses” approach to the mission and values of the institution that are so commonly looked for by international accreditation bodies.

It is also accepted that two hundred and two responses cannot be taken as fully representative of the entire IAF student population. However, this study was intended to contribute to a deeper understanding of the student perspective of motivations for joining IAF programmes, satisfaction with this mode of study and identification of added value. The authors argue that it has succeeded in this aim in that the results have confirmed some actual knowledge but has then gone beyond this by identifying new issues about motivation to choose IAF programmes which would benefit from further research. These issues are the influence of the funder and impact of gender both of which may be creating tension in the method of study chosen; the influence of perceptions of safety, what safety means, and a possible relationship to regional tourism image; the importance of academic staff in initial choice decisions in contrast to their complete lack of influence upon further study decisions. These results also indicate a final topic for further comparative study; investigation of whether or not there are any differences in the early career employment of students who study on the home programme or one of their IAF campuses.

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