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Exploring the Students' Attitudes towards Studying Abroad

The Case of 2nd Year English Master Students at the University Center of Naama

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of **"Master"** in **Linguistics**

Submitted by:

Fatima Zohra AMERI

Khayra RABIA

Supervised by:

Dr. Asma KEBIRI

Board of Examiners:

Dr.Faiçal FATMI	**President**	**Naama University Centre**
Dr. Asma KEBIRI	**Supervisor**	**Naama University Centre**
Ms. Hayat BAGUI	**Examiner**	**Naama University Centre**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my sweet lovely Grandmother , her prayers and support kept me going , my Allah bless her Soul .

This dissertation is dedicated to my Family and my husband who encouraged me to pursue my dreams and finish my dissertation.

To my friend Khayra And Khadija Nour el Houda.

Fatima Zohra

Dedication

I humbly thank Allah almighty who gave me the opportunity and mainly force to achieve this work.

To the one who gave me the best of her life, to the persons who always been proud of my success to my wonderful, precious parents: My mother and my father who have been with me every step of the way; a great thank to my mother because she was my mother and my father in the same time, thank you for everything, for your love, support, sacrifice, patience.

To my best friend Chaimaa and her sister Ikram

To my sisters Khadija and Rim and their children

To my brothers: Mohammed, Ahmed, Abd Rahman, Abd djaber and Mostapha.

To all my best friends without exception and to all members of my family .This work is dedicated to my special friends, Zohra, Kholod, hafida and Fatima who shared the work with me .

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I would also like to thank all teachers at the English department for their efforts and assistance throughout all these years.

Abstract

Nowadays, studying abroad provides opportunities for students to have great experiences, to get better learning opportunities and even to have good jobs. The purpose of this research is to investigate the importance of studying abroad and to know the different point of views of students towards this matter. This research is a case study, about the students' attitudes towards studying abroad. This study includes participants of second year master students at "Salhi Ahmed University Center" in Naama, who have been investigated through the use of one instrument which is the students' questionnaire. The results clearly indicate that master students have positive attitudes towards studying abroad since most of the students demonstrated a great desire to study abroad and live this very exciting experience. Besides that, the results revealed that the majority of students believe that their financial status is their greatest obstacle that prevents them from studying outside their country.

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General Introduction

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General Introduction

Studying abroad seems to be a good opportunity to have a successful education and a future advantage in the labor market. Employers would actually love to hire people with international experience, independence, responsibility, the desire to take on new challenges, self-development, the ability to communicate with people who are from different cultures and other features and experiences that people get while studying abroad. Also studying abroad is an advantage to be added to the application for higher education and is taken into consideration when reviewing applications.

To study outside is a great opportunity to discover and see the world in a new and an enjoyable way. The student can organize his/her time so that he/she can take advantage of his/her leisure time to visit places and areas of the city. The student can also visit nearby places and not just one place; as it is known that with offers from airlines, exploring the world became easier.

Studying outside is an excellent opportunity to develop the language skills of students, whether through studying a second language, or dealing with the local language in writing and speaking in daily life.

At the present time, education has a fundamental role in the person's life. As matter of a fact, students especially FL students are looking for chance to study abroad and to continue their higher education there.

In order to achieve such a goal, the researchers aim to introduce the following research questions, which are divided into two inquiries:

1/What is the importance of studying abroad?

2/What are the students' attitudes towards studying abroad?

Accordingly, the following hypotheses have been put forward:

1. The importance of studying abroad lies in the fact that students would have better learning and job opportunities.
2. Students have positive attitudes towards the experience of joining foreign schools/universities.

The main objective set for this research work is to shed light on the importance of studying abroad and the student's attitudes towards this experience.

The researchers conducted the study in the University Centre of Naama through analyzing how much students are influenced by studying abroad. Accordingly, the objectives of the research are:

-To identify the main purpose behind studying abroad.

-To unveil the obstacles that would face students when trying to join universities abroad, and

-To manifest how much students are influenced by the idea studying abroad.

This research work is composed of two chapters; the first one deals with the theoretical part by providing valuable definitions for and information about the main concepts, whereas the second one is concerned with the practical work, in which the data are collected and analyzed to be interpreted after; in order to provide some recommendations at the end.

Students' Attitudes towards Studying Abroad

Students' Attitudes towards Studying Abroad

1.1Introduction

This research aims to emphasize the significance of studying abroad, through investigating the students' attitudes towards studying outside their countries; since studying overseas has become one of the best experiences that a person would like to live in nowadays. In fact, the students' attitudes towards studying abroad may be related to the programs of education available abroad or may it will be refers to the benefits gained through studying outside.

This chapter will deal with a general overview of studying abroad .Then, it will explain some educational systems and try to make a comparison between them; among which the Algerian program of education. Finally, in this chapter advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad or to be highlighted.

1.2 The Concept of Attitude

Attitudes are important in our lives. They help people to interpret their surroundings, guide their behavior in social situations and organize their experiences. Attitudes will influence how you act on the beliefs and evaluations you hold about other people and other things or subjects. (Erwin, 2001, P.2)

Attitudes can also be aligned with key personal values and serve as mechanisms to protect the self. As attitude is defined in the Cambridge business English dictionary:

"A settled way of thinking or feeling about something, feeling or opinion about something or someone, or a way of behaving that is caused by this".

(Cambridge University Press)

1.3 Defining Studying Abroad

Studying abroad is the term generally used nowadays for programs that allow students in one country to do part of their degree studies in another. It is obviously meant to indicate that the main purpose of the programs is to enable you to study outside your country. Studying overseas has become much more popular and its academic value more widely appreciated. (Barron, 2006)

Studying abroad was largely undertaken only by language students, it is now often a requirement for other degree subjects,

particularly those with an immediate vocational relevance, like engineering or business, and those with a strongly international curriculum ;such as fine art or area studies. (Barron, 2006)

Studying outside one's country could be regarded as independent study. Since students are looking for independence they should take responsibility of their learning and of themselves because studying in a foreign country may look like a challenge in their life and this seems difficult. Thus for those who are looking for a chance to study abroad, they are required to prepare for this matter very well. (Barron, 2006)

1.4 The Educational System in Algeria

In Algeria, education is compulsory from the age of six. Education is one of the main priorities of the Algerian government. The educational system in Algeria is divided into several levels: preparatory, basic (primary and secondary), secondary, vocational and higher education.

After the independence of Algeria in the beginning, the Algerian government started the reformation of its country and its educational system. At that time, there had been only three higher education establishments in the north of Algeria (Algiers, Oran and Constantine).Then, Universities gradually came into being in the 1970's after the establishment of the Ministry of higher Education and Scientific Research in Algeria.(national report, September,2019)

Algeria has been confronted with the challenge of the globalization of the universities; the higher educational system of Algeria had two parts. First, Algeria worked with the former system in which there were 4-years Licence , 2-years Magister and 3-years Doctorate. In 2004, Algeria moved to the BMD system (3-years bachelor, 2-year Master and 3-years Doctorate). (National report, September, 2019)

1.4.1Public Institutions

Public higher education is supplied in academic centers, universities, and schools. There were some institutes created within the universities for the training of middle managers holding a professional degree.

That public academic institutions cannot be privatized because of some specifications set by the Ministry of higher Education.(National report, September, 2019)

1.4.2Private Institutions

Private higher education, recently created in 2014, has currently eleven private higher education institutions. However, these private higher education institutions cannot provide higher education in the field of medical sciences.(National report, September, 2019)

1.5. The Educational System of the UK and USA

1.5.1The British System of Education

There have been huge changes in the British educational system since 1988.In fact, many choices have been added to give the parents the choice and make further education economically possible for many people. The British system of education is divided into several levels: Pre-school education, Primary education, Secondary education and Higher education. (The British Education System /UK school system / bright world)

The Pre-School Education

In these schools families could afford private nurseries but these are expensive. Children have their lunch at school and a rest in the afternoon. They begin at 9.a.m.and end at 3p.m. (the British Education System /UK school system / bright world)

The Primary Education

The primary schools start at 9a.m and finish at 3p.m.At the age of eleven (11), here pupils attend mixed schools but the private schools are single-sex. They have classes from Monday to Friday; Uniforms are worn in most private schools. Also children in primary schools wear uniforms too, but parents vote about them.(The British Education System /UK school system / bright world)

- **The Secondary Education**

In this stage pupils go to two different schools. The majority of state secondary school pupils go to comprehensive schools and only the minority goes to grammar schools, both academic and practical. In fact, secondary schools are mixed ones. Young people at the age of 16-and 17 years old can get a full –time education or training and all suitable qualified people are encouraged to go into higher education..(The British Education System /UK school system / bright world)

- **The Higher Education**

Higher education institutions include universities, teacher training colleges and other colleges of technology, art and profession allied to medicine. In Britain only 30% of all young people go into full-time higher education.(The British Education System /UK school system / bright world)

1.5.2 The American System of Education

In the USA, each of the 50 states has its own school system and every state wants young people to go to school. Unlike the UK, in the USA the majority of all schools are public which mean free ones, only children from rich families attend to private schools which charge high tuition fees, but these schools offer scholarships. (Education in the united states – Wikipedia)

All the public schools are mixed schools, whereas the private schools are single-sex schools. Almost all state school's day usually starts between 8 and 9a.m and ends at around 3.p.m.(Education in the united states – Wikipedia)

The American educational system includes Pre-school, elementary school, secondary school, and high school.

- **Pre-school and Elementary Education**

These schools include nursery schools and kindergartens, most of these kindergartens are private, but also public schools have ones .The elementary education is comprehensive. (Education in the united states – Wikipedia)

- **Secondary Education**

Secondary education is provided by middle schools, there are some secondary schools which give an opportunity to learners to choose a level of academic study that known as **track,** also there are some others which may offer different programs of study. (Education in the united states – Wikipedia)

- **Higher Education**

Higher education in the USA is extremely competitive and selective, and the universities are coeducational and comprehensive. The student to study at American universities needs high tuition fees, especially at private ones. (Education in the united states – Wikipedia).

1.6 Advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad

In fact, studying abroad has so many positive results. However, there is a negative side as well; which are all presented in the following sections:

1.6.1 Advantages

When someone studies abroad, he/she would gain many positives, the following mentioned are few advantages of studying overseas.

- **Developing an independent lifestyle:**

Studying outside the country will help the student to improve a self-sufficient attitude and also to develop the student to develop an independent lifestyle. When a person studies abroad, this will make him know to adopt and live independently.

- **Better job opportunities:**

Because of the higher education standards available abroad, students who study in foreign countries have better job opportunities in their hometown. This is the major reason which makes any one wish to study abroad.

- **A lot of change in mindset:**

Students who want to study abroad will have a good mindset in analyzing things because they are generally exposed to the various cultures of people. Studying outside will impact, in a good manner, their mindset.

- **Social interaction and creation of new friends**

When a student chooses to study abroad, he/she will want to join universities that have better learning opportunities, higher education, and where there are many topmost successful people in his/her field of study. Here, the student could create friendship relations with many people from different backgrounds.

1.6.3 Disadvantages

- **Difficulty in communicating with people**

For some students, it seems too difficult to communicate with people that they do not know; especially at the beginning .when being in a foreign country, it is not an easy task to use its language and know its culture since this needs time.

- **Racism harassment:**

In many parts of the world a lot of people are suffering from racism harassment .likewise, Students around the world are still facing racism harassment at universities or the places where they stay because of their religion or their skin. Unfortunately, Racism attacks have stopped many students from choosing studies abroad. (Top 22 Advantages and Disadvantages of studying abroad)

- **Loneliness and Homesickness:**

Because students move to new environments and because they see new faces all around, this might cause homesickness and disturbance. Due to unfamiliarity, students tend to avoid gatherings and choose to stay alone. In fact, it is quite normal that, at the beginning, the student will miss his/her family, friends and country.

- **Chances of exposure to non-ethical things:**

Students abroad will find people with a different lifestyle, and this might not suit everyone. The students will face lots of cultural shocks; this is why many students do not choose to go abroad for education.

1.7 Conclusion

Through this theoretical chapter, many explanations and clear discussion about studying abroad have been presented. Also, the student's attitudes towards studying abroad, Algerian system of education and other systems of education around the world have been mentioned .In addition to that, some advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad were explained. The next chapter will deal with the practical work that proves the theoretical one through the students' questionnaire.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology & Results

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2.1 Introduction

It is well known that studying abroad is a great opportunity for personal growth. By living the experience; one will significantly increase his/her knowledge. An international education; whether a semester abroad or a full degree program in another country, can be one of the most rewarding and exciting experiences in a person's life.

This chapter is devoted to the methodological framework of the research that was followed to conduct this study. It includes an overview of the subjects selected and the instrument used to carry out this research. At the end, in exploring the student's questionnaire and analyzing the data gathered, the different attitudes and beliefs of students towards studying abroad will be emphasized and discussed.

2.2 A General Overview

To investigate the students' attitudes towards studying abroad, a sample of second year English master students has been chosen for the investigation. In fact, there are a lot of master students who prefer to continue their higher education outsider their countries; especially those who studied foreign languages. Accordingly, the USA and UK are considered as the most places that students would like to study in .FL (foreign languages) students try to master the language in a good manner, so they can study abroad. There are many linguists and researchers who agree on the point that to master a foreign language one needs to learn the language in its real context; due to the great relationship between language and culture. Since there exists a seamless relation between culture and language, many FL students look for the opportunity to study abroad.

2.3 The Sample Selected

In this investigation, the researchers have chosen second year master students at "Salhi Ahmed University Center" in Naama. They are with different ages which range from the age of 22 to 28 old years; they are from different backgrounds with the same native language (Arabic Language). The sample selected includes students who were in a scientific class and others were in a literary class in their higher schools. It is also important to note that this sample is a mixed one, including both females and males.

2.4 The Research Instrument: A Students' Questionnaire

The Students' questionnaire seeks to unveil the learner's opinions and beliefs about the importance of studying abroad. It is very obvious that this questionnaire was designed in order to collect data, as well as to have different points of view in order to analyze the actual relationship between the importance of studying abroad and the students' attitudes.

This questionnaire consists of ten questions and it was distributed to a sample of (41) second year master English students at the University Center Ahmed Salhi of Naama, Algeria. Through this students' questionnaire, students were asked to answer different types of questions ,i.e. yes/no questions, multiple choices and open-ended questions by ticking the appropriate answer and by expressing their attitudes and thoughts towards the importance of studying abroad.

2.5 Analysis of the Questionnaire

As it was mentioned before, the questionnaire addresses second year master students and it focuses primarily on the attitudes of students towards the fact of studying abroad and its purposes. Each question will be analyzed separately.

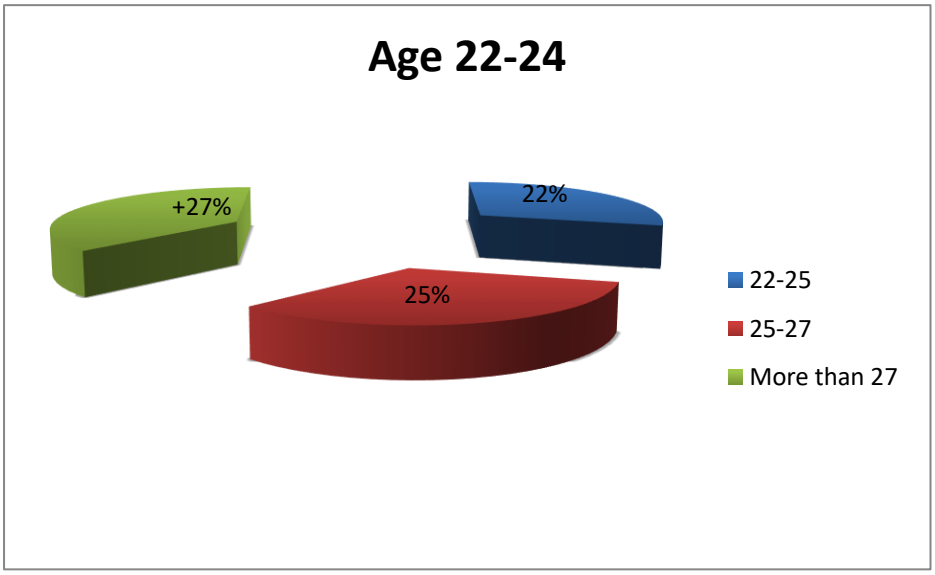
Part One:

Question 01: Age

The following table and pie-chart are provided to give an overview about the respondent's ages

Table 2.1: Student's Age

number	Age between
23	22-25
03	25-27
07	More than 27+



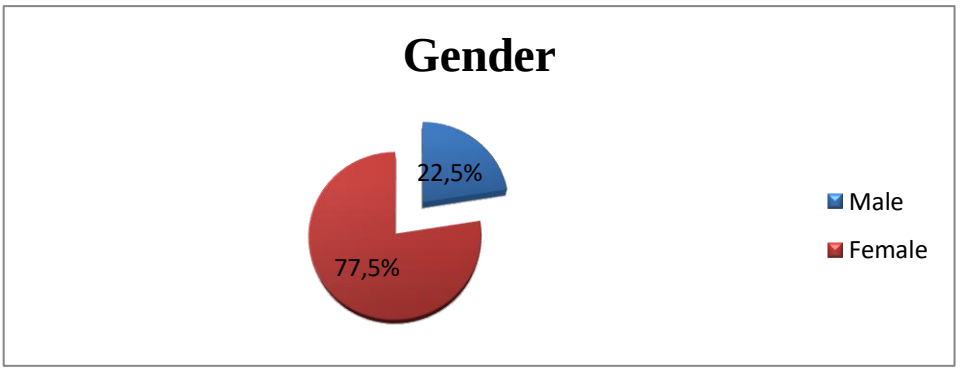
Pie-chart 2.1: Student's age

The table above shows that respondents of the questionnaire are from different ages; however, most of students are between 22and 24 years old.

Question 02: Gender

Table 2.2: Student's Gender

possibilities	Female	Male
N° of students	31	09
percentage	77,5%	22,5%



Pie-chart 2.2: Student's Gender

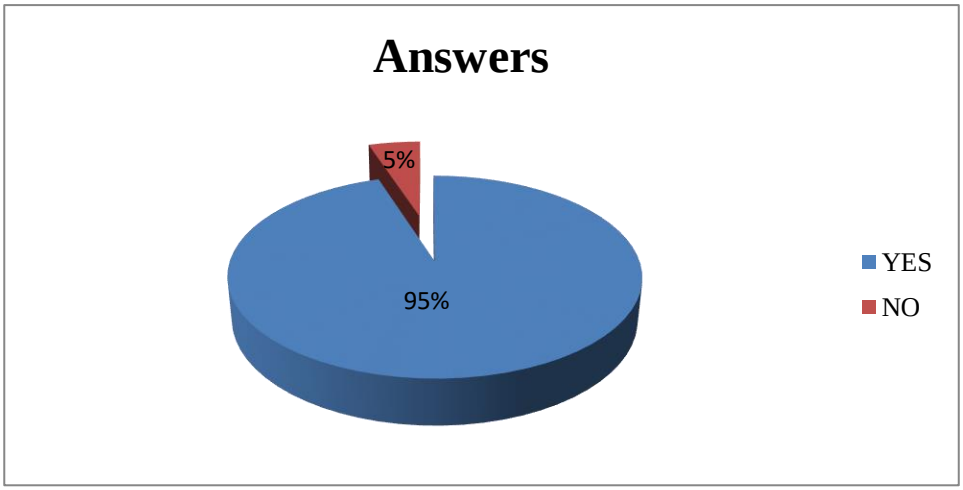
The graphic above shows that 77.5% of respondents are females; whereas, only 22.5% are males.

Part Two:

Question01: Do you like to study abroad?

Table 2.3: Student's feelings towards studying abroad.

answers	Numbers	Percentage %
Yes	38	95%
No	02	05%



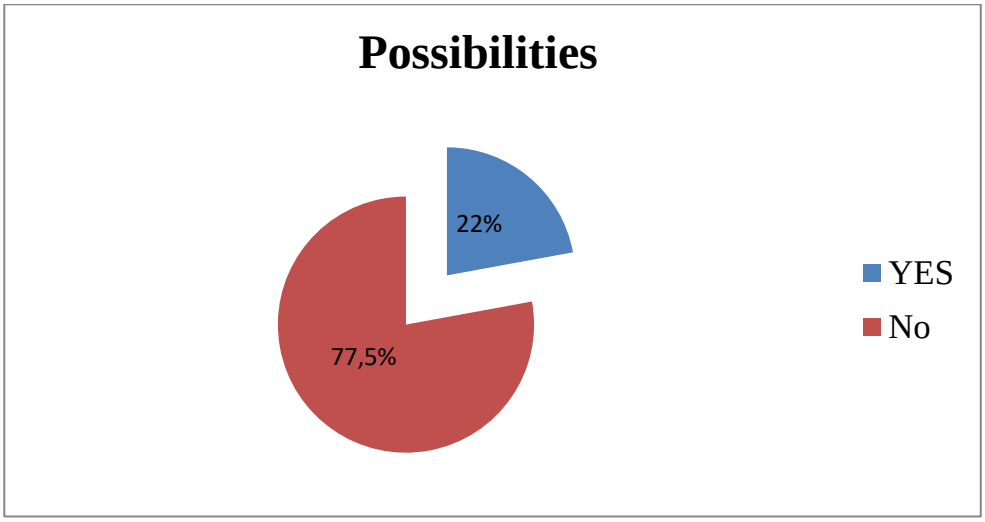
Pie-chart 2.3: Student's feelings towards studying abroad.

Most of students (95%) have answered "Yes", as they believe that, only through that, they can achieve a good educational level. However, 5% of the students dislike studying abroad because they like to study near their homes, as it is shown in the table above.

Question 02: Is studying abroad an easy task to deal with?

Table 2.4: Student's Views towards studying abroad as a task

Possibilities	Yes	No
numbers	09	31
Percentage %	22%	77.5%



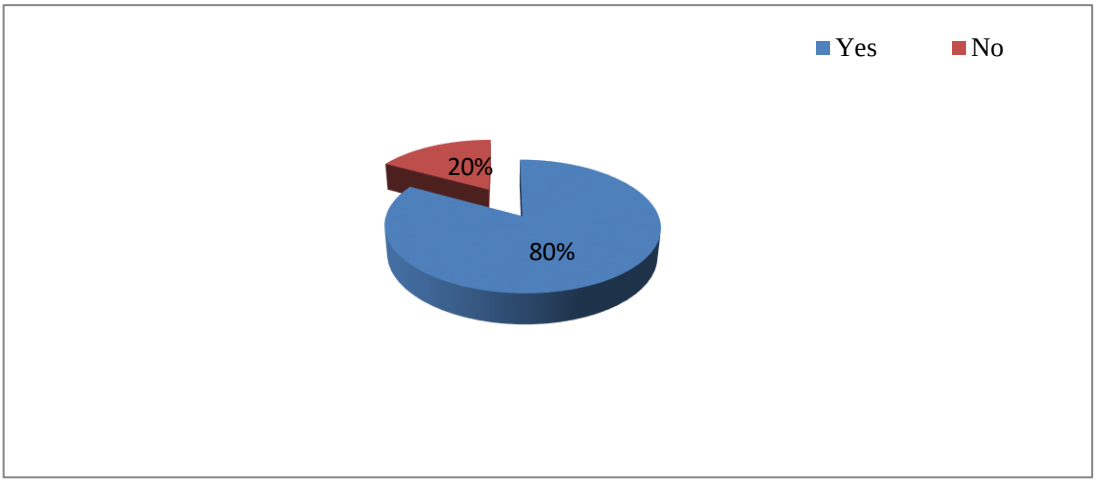
Pie-chart 2.4: Student's Views towards studying abroad as a task

The table above demonstrates that the majority of students (75.5%) stated that studying abroad is not a difficult task to deal with while 09 students believe that it is indeed not easy. This is because the process of studying and living abroad requires a lot of efforts.

Q03: Do your parents support you to study abroad?

Table 2.5: Parents' support for studying abroad

Possibilities	Yes	No
N° of students	32	08
percentage	80%	20%



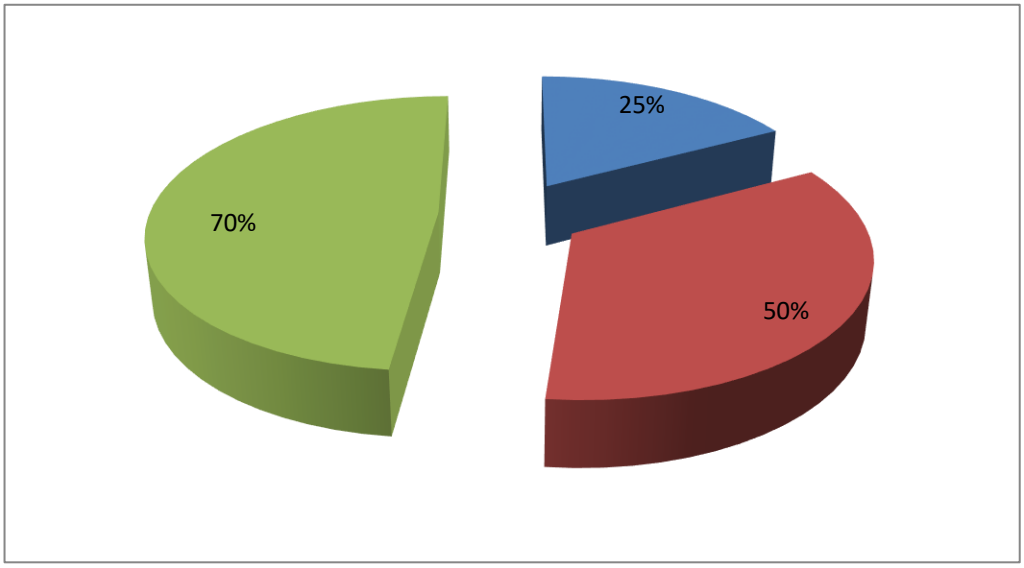
Pie-chart 2.5: Parents' Support for Studying Abroad.

The results have shown that nearly the majority of our respondents, which represents (80%), reported that their parents would give them the opportunity to go and study abroad, whereas, 20% of them claimed the opposite.

Question 04: what are the reasons which make you want to study abroad?

Table 2.6: The advantages of studying abroad.

Possibilities	N°of students	percentage
living a new and exciting experience	28	70%
Better learning opportunities	20	50%
To have an interesting C.V	10	25%



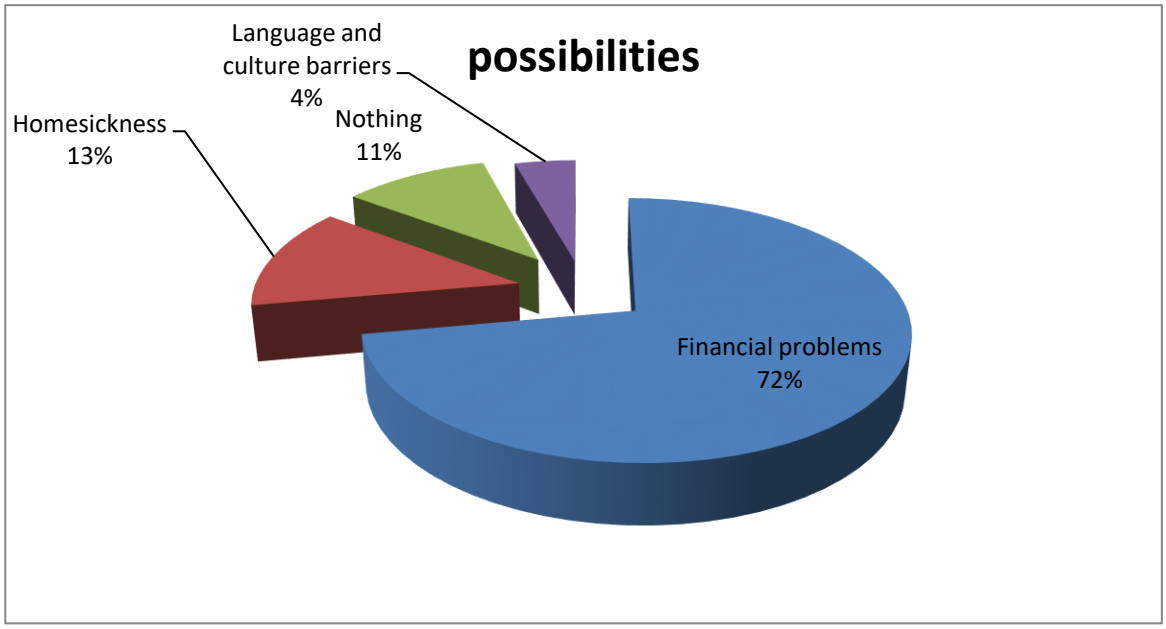
Pie-Chart 2.6: The advantages of studying abroad.

As it is shown in the table above,(70%) of the students stated that they want to study abroad in order to live a new and exciting experience. However, twenty students want to study abroad just to have better learning opportunities and only ten of them said that they would study to have an interesting C.V.

Question 05: What are the reasons that would stop you from continuing your studies abroad?

Table 2.7: The disadvantages of Studying Abroad.

Possibilities	N° of students	percentage
Financial problems	33	82.5%
Homesickness	06	15%
Nothing	05	12.5%
Longer travelling time	04	10%
Language and cultural barriers	02	05%



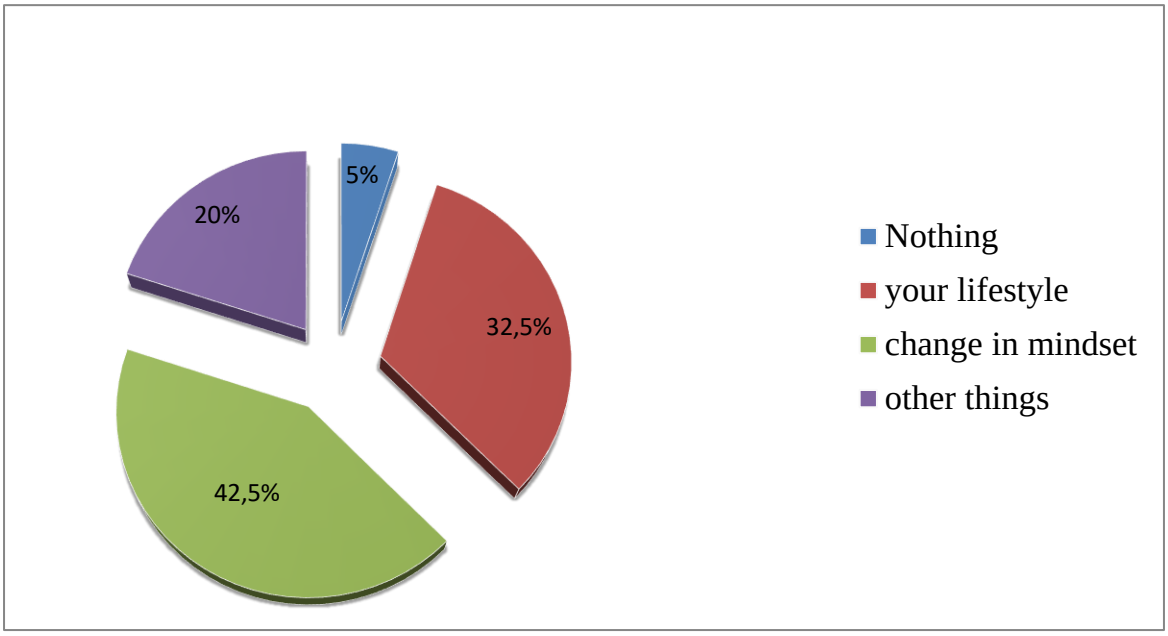
Pie-chart 2.7: The disadvantages of Studying Abroad.

Students had a chance to choose more than one answer to the reasons which would stop them from studying abroad; the majority of students, representing 72% declared that financial problems will stop them. It is clear, then, that it is only a matter of money for them. Then, 13% claimed that they will not study abroad because of homesickness, whereas 11% of them answered with nothing, and only some chose longer travelling time as the cause. Only two students mentioned that language and culture are so different abroad so they will not be able to study there because of these barriers.

Question 06: What are the things that would change if you decide to study abroad?

Table 2.8: Students' Changes Abroad.

Possibilities	Nothing	Your lifestyle	Change in mindset	Other things
N°of students	2	13	17	08
Percentage %	05%	32.5%	42.5%	20%



Pie-chart 2.8: Students' Changes Abroad.

The figure shows that 42.5% of the answers were about their mindset; since they think they would have creative minds. On the other hand 32% of them chose the change in their lifestyle as the answer. 20% said that there are other things while only 5% think that nothing will change.

Part Four:

Question 01: What are the places that you prefer to study in?

Table 2.9: Students' Favorite Places for Studying Abroad.

Possibilities	European countries	American countries	Other countries
N°of students	29	09	04
Percentage %	70%	20%	10%

In this open ended question, the respondent is free to write his/her own answer, The most repeated answers about the places they prefer to study in were Europe; to be more exact ; UK, Switzerland , London , Germany and France , because of their good educational systems, while others considered USA as the right choice. On other hand, few students like to study in any Islamic Country because of their Hijab, as they are afraid of Racism.

Q08: According to you, what are the benefits that you would gain from studying abroad?

Through this question, the researchers attempted to know the benefits that students would gain from studying abroad.

Students' answers mostly agreed on the following points:

- Getting a good job and an interesting C.V.

-Learning a new language and a new culture.

-Being exposed to a better educational system, and

- Living a new experience.

2.7 Interpretation of Results

The results obtained from the students' questionnaire indicate that the majority of students have positive attitudes towards studying abroad and they believe that the international education aids for having an exciting and interesting C.V, and it also helps students to have better learning opportunities. From the data gathered, most of students like to study abroad but all students have not enough money to do that.

Besides, studying abroad seems to have a great influence on the students' attitudes. In addition to that, the majority of students believe that money is the essential thing that will facilitate to them the process of studying abroad. Most of students prefer to study in American or European countries because they are EFL students and these countries have good educational programs.

2.7 Recommendations

This section represents some recommendations concerning the importance of studying abroad in enhancing and assisting students to have an exciting and interesting experience in their lives. The international education is indeed regarded as a great experience in a person's life. Besides, in the light of the previous debate of results, researchers conclude the following points:

- Since students are very interested in studying abroad, they should try it.
- To solve the financial problem, students should try to discuss this important matter with the government which could assist students with more scholarships. In fact, there are also numerous foreign universities which provide serious students with a financial aid.

- ❖ Lastly, parents should consider the benefits of studying abroad and try to support their children, if possible, to join foreign universities and achieve better and successful learning objectives.

2.8 Conclusion

Through this methodological chapter, many explanations and clear discussions about the case study and the research design have been presented. Also, the data gathered from the students' questionnaire has been analyzed and interpreted. In addition to that, some recommendations have been mentioned.

General Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to uncover the importance of studying abroad and to know the different views of students towards this experience. After the data analysis phase, it has been found that studying abroad has a great significance. Also, students has positive attitudes towards studying outside their country since this latter has many advantages like getting better learning opportunities and getting to live a great and exciting experience.

Studying abroad is fundamental for students if they truly wish to achieve a noticeable progress in their lives; as it is acknowledged that this experience would help them to increase their knowledge about their fields of study. However, studying abroad is often a difficult task to deal with or even impossible due to the high tuition fees that international universities require. That is why it has become a stressful process for the majority of students who wish to join international colleges, instead of an enjoyable one. In order to face this difficulty, the scholarships offered are considered to be the last chance for students with limited budgets.

All the findings from the data collection phase support the idea that studying abroad has a great importance and students have positive attitudes towards this experience. However, studying outside the country might also be a great challenge for them, which is the reason they abandon the idea.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a part of a research work on investigating the purposes behind studying abroad and its influence on students. I would really appreciate your collaboration. Please, answer the following questions by ticking (√) the appropriate answer.
Thank you for your help.

Part One:

Age:…….
Sex :
Female ☐ Male ☐

Part two:

1) Do you like to study abroad?

   - Yes ☐
   - No ☐

2) Do you think that studying abroad is an easy task to deal with?

   - Yes ☐
   - No ☐

3) Do you think that your parents would support you if you decide to study abroad?

   - Yes ☐
   - No ☐

Part three:

1) What are the reasons that would push you to study abroad? To:
   - To have an interesting C.V. ☐
   - Better learning opportunities. ☐
   - living a new and exciting experience ☐
2) What are the reasons that would stop you from continuing your studies abroad?
   - Nothing. ☐
   - Homesickness. ☐
   - Language and cultural barriers. ☐
   - Longer travelling time. ☐
   - Financial problems ☐
3) What are the things that would change if you decide to study abroad?
   - Nothing.
   - Your lifestyle.
   - Change in mindset.
   - Other things.

Part four:

1) What are the places that you prefer to study in?

   ……
   ……
   ……

2) According to you, what are the benefits that you would gain from studying abroad?

   ……
   ……
   ……

Thank you for your help