

# Investigating the Power of Social Media in Stimulating Push and Pull Factors, Encouraging Students' Intents to Study Abroad

Eiman Medhat Negm

Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Egypt, Alexandria

Eiman\_Medhat@yahoo.com

**Abstract**—This study investigates the power of social media in stimulating various push and pull factors that encourage students to develop intentions to study abroad. The study is a mixed research. 15 semi-structured interviews were steered and 400 administrated questionnaires were evaluated to test the hypotheses. Results indicated that social media triggers the promotion of the push and pull factors. The significant motivational push and pull factors in Egypt are: quality of home education, prestige, migration opportunity, international experience, career prospect, education cost, experiencing foreign culture, and institution reputation

**Index Terms**—education tourism, pull factors, push factors, social media, study destination

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, there is a significant rise of international students studying overseas [1], [2]. This occurrence can be initiated by the belief that higher education is considered throughout the world to be the key to both individual and societal aspirations [3]. For individuals, higher education is assumed to be the way to social esteem, better paying jobs, expanded life options, intellectual stimulation--and frequently a good time in the pursuit of any or all of the above [4]. Therefore, when people in developing countries face limited access to education in their own countries, it can led to a significant rise in the number of international students studying overseas [3].

Egypt has seen a soaring number of students seeking to study abroad [5]. The office for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Egypt declared that high birth rate and few job opportunities are pushing young Egyptian to take the risk and seek opportunities overseas for a brighter future [6]. Accordingly, students pursue higher education in overseas nations in hopes to raise the economic and social status or to seek migration opportunities [3]. Therefore, this study will focus on Egyptian context.

International competition between countries for international students has been escalating over the years [7]. For this reason, marketing and media activities and communications in higher education have increased markedly, especially through the usage of digital channels: websites, emails, and social media [8]. Students

entering colleges and universities are considered digital natives [2] and the “*Social Networking Generation*” due to their frequent engagement in social networking activities [9]. Morris [10] suggested that social media is used by international students to assist in the decision making process of studying abroad. Similarly, universities are also engaging actively on social media. Taylor [11] suggested if the media campaign is effectively thought-out and designed, it might help in the university’s branding. Hence, this paper seeks to build upon the Framing and the Elaboration Likelihood Model. Framing can simply be described as the: “*selection of some aspects of a perceived reality to make them more salient in a communicating text*”. Salient refers to: “*making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences*” [12].

Although numerous studies have investigated the marketing and communication value of social media, only a few studies focused on the impact of social media in international students’ decision-making process [1]. This study contributes to social media and marketing literature by identifying the main factors that motivate student to develop intentions to study abroad, introducing new social media strategies that can be used by universities and further examined by researchers.

It has become increasingly important to gain a better understanding of the factors that influence international students’ decision on study destination in order to create interest and desirability [1]. Studies indicate that there are a variety of factors influencing international students’ decision in selecting study destination [13]. Research has classified the factors that encourage students to study abroad are push and pull factors- “*the push factors are defined as the factors that operate within the home country and initiate a student’s decision to undertake international study while ‘pull’ factors refer to dimensions within a study destination that make it attractive to international students*” [3].

There is currently a lack of research in the Middle East, which focuses on understanding international students’ needs and effective promotional messages keen to Arab students [14]. It is crucial for western educational institutions to understand the factors that influence international students’ decision of study destination [13]. This will enable them to formulate better policy and recruitment strategies for attracting international students

[12]. There is currently little research in general about students' decisions as well as marketing strategies towards international students, especially in Egypt. This study is an attempt to fill in this research gap.

The purpose of the study is twofold: To obtain measure the social media impact towards promoting the push and pull motivational factors as marketing strategies; and to investigate the factors that influence students' decisions in choosing higher education study abroad from a student perspective. The study is guided by the following research questions: (1) what are the factors that influence international students' decision in selecting higher education abroad? (2) Will social media trigger the push and pull motivational factors for studying abroad?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Globalization- the interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments of different nations [15] – sparked the recognition and demand for students to study abroad [13]. International students are individuals that are: *"admitted by a country other than their own, usually under special permits or visas, for the specific purpose of following a particular course of study in an accredited institution of the receiving country"* [16]. Successful international student recruitment and marketing techniques rely on promotion of motivational decision-making factors of consideration [4].

When overseas students look for potential colleges to attend, they use social media and other online communication channels to obtain information and other related academia information [1]. Websites and its social media are considered significant means to the marketing approach of universities, aiming to target international students [17]. University websites have become *'internationalized'* [13], [18] - becoming marketing service-oriented communication technology to reach out to international students and promoting education opportunities [17]. Thus, a profound understanding of the push and pull factors, which aid in gaining knowledge of what students want and where they want to study, provides universities with key pointers on how to improve online recruitment process and strategies [19]. Social media is information source aiding students in college choice.

Studies have indicated that socio-psychological needs motivate and prompt a person to travel to a particular destination [4]. These socio-psychological needs are considered the *push factors* [3]. The push factors are related to the emotional motives (mental preparation) for human activities - why people act the way they do [15]. It comprises the intrinsic and intangible elements that stimulate people to travel [3]. Intrinsic elements are the internal desires to perform a particular task, which leads to an individual level of optimal arousal [22]. In the educational context, the push factors are objects and features within the home country that triggers a student's decision to undertake international study [3]. Previous research has mentioned that the common push factors (socio-psychological and intrinsic motives) for traveling abroad include: the desire to escape, rest and relaxations,

adventure, prestige, and social interaction [1]. According to prior studies related to education, push factors can be comprised of the unavailability of a study program, lack of access to home universities, and poor quality of education in the home country [3], [4], [23].

Literature also indicates people choose to travel because of external attributes related to the physical condition of destinations [3], [23], [24]. Pull factors are known as extrinsic motivations, external influences related to the geographic scope of appeal and activities. There are pull factors linked with the destination environment, which include the natural environment, political and legal factors, economic factors, social factors, cultural factors and technological factors [24]. Furthermore, additional pull factors are associated with destination location [25]. Distance and destination cost of living play an important role in terms of relative cost of travel and the destination decision-making process of the traveller [26]. In the educational context, pull factors are comprised of factors in the host country or institution that attract international students [3], such as fascinating culture or cultural proximity, living standards, socio-economic status of the host country, improving career prospects and immigration opportunities [26].

Results of prior studies suggest that international students are motivated to study abroad by different factors. In Mazzarol and Soutar [3] research, the factors that influence students' selection of a host country are personal references, advices, or suggestions from interpersonal social ties and/ or personal knowledge, life experience, or awareness of the host country. In Maringe [27] research, the financial costs (living expenses, inflation, currency exchange, money value, etc.) and the availability of part time jobs for international students (one of the possible ways to finance their studies) are factors that influence education decision-making process abroad. Chen and Zimitat [24] conducted a study that clarified the choice of destination is influenced by multicultural values, safety or security, international experience, good facilities, quality university environment, liberalized immigration processes, less restricted visa application, and good quality of life. According to Cubillo *et al.* [28] investigation, city or a nation's image or reputation influences destination of study among foreign students. For example, many international students prefer to attend American universities since the U.S. is perceived as the majestic and ambitious nation, containing the finest universities in the world. Damijanić and Luk [29] proved that students have a personal desire to enhance their foreign language proficiency and better quality education encourages many students to attend foreign universities.

Other recent studies, like Sandel [17], illustrated that when choosing the study destinations, students appeared to be more concerned about practicalities for their survival, learning, and benefits gained upon graduation than other factors when choosing study destinations. Nghia [30] illustrated that social media and the influence of interpersonal social ties communication encourages cross-cultural adaptation of students studying abroad.

Njagi *et al.* [26] concluded that for many overseas students, the main motivations for choosing a college in western nations are related to improved job prospects; understanding of the Western culture; and to enhance their English skills and proficiency. In conclusion, there are a variety of factors that motivate students' to study in overseas destination. Those factors appear to cluster around (1) socio-economic and cultural issues of the host countries, (2) features of the host universities, (3) student motivation for studying abroad.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

The current study adopted the *deductive research approach*. The investigation of social media promotion of the push and pull factors on students' decision making about studying abroad will not lead to the development of a new theory. Instead, the researcher will focus on the formulation of hypotheses for testing in this study. This approach is supported by Easterby-Smith [31], stating that the deductive approach is necessary for the purposes of producing hypothesis in the research question. The aim of this study is to find out the significant pull and push factors that are stimulated by universities through social media, encouraging students to study overseas. This study uses *mixed research approach*. *Semi-structured interviews* were steered in the first stage in order to gain a deeper understanding of the research area by taking into account the perspective of the study population and the context in which they live in order to verify the hypotheses. When the researcher settled on the relationship between the variables, its international applicability was essential in the choice of the research strategy and surveys offered the best option for testing hypotheses, allowing the development of the research in a global perspective. Thus, the distribution of *administrated questionnaires* transpired in the second stage of the study.

Participants in this study included *students who plan to study abroad* or wished to begin their overseas study in the upcoming academic term during 2018. The population for this research is defined as potential and currently enrolled students undertaking different international study programs (undergraduate and postgraduate levels). Since it was difficult to reach a large number of targeted participants, *the snowball sampling technique* was used to recruit the students. The researcher contacted potential participants based on the referral of another participant. This approach allowed the researcher to recruit the targeted participants more quickly.

During the first stage of the study, the interviews were conducted during May and June 2016 in Metropolitan cities of Egypt – Cairo and Alexandria. These cities were selected because they are among the biggest cities and educational hubs in the country, which would produce more opportunities to recruit potential participants [15]. The aim of the interviews was to identify the overseas educational pull and push motivational factors that exist among Arab students. Sampling procedure was undertaken on a convenience basis (purposive sampling), through assistance from local schools, colleges, and

recruitment agencies. Discussions with different students were conducted until data saturation was reached (emergence of new information stopped). The *content analysis* was used in the evaluation of the interviews. This analysis is based on the identification and quantification of significant classifications of content within the interaction.

During the second stage of the study, the researcher tried to collect at least 384 questionnaires since Krejcie and Morgan during 1970 declared that if a population is over one million then 384 was an adequate sample quantity. During July and August 2016, the researcher visited various college guidance offices in high schools and international offices in universities where students with the intention to study abroad are accessible. Students who completed the questionnaire had made a firm commitment to study abroad. They confirmed their desire by enrolling in a pre-departure program (language training course such as TOFEL or a program such as the GMAT). Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 20. This analysis aided in answering the research questions and to support or invalidates the hypotheses.

### IV. QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The first phase entailed the generation of theoretical framework with reference to extant literature in the areas of social media impact on students and the push and pull factors that the students use in their decision making tendencies to study abroad. The specified significant occurrence of variables and the pattern relations across various literatures informed the working up of interview guide which aided in the identification of the main push and pull factors that exist and encourage Egyptian students. The interview guide contained four sections: Introduction section, a section asking about factors related to education in the home country (push factors), a section asking about motives to travel abroad and the qualities they seek in a university overseas (pull factors), and the final section considered the role of social media stimulating the factors.

Fifteen participants were interviewed until saturation level was met, recognizing the main factors influencing students' choice to attain education overseas. From discussions, students strongly want to study abroad. Subsequent, the selection a host country and university are based on a variety of 'push-pull' factors. The analysis identified around nine initiative factors to study abroad.

There are four 'push' factors that motivate the decision to study overseas. The students seek to study outside Egypt owing to: (1) the poor quality of education in the home country, (2) seeking immigration opportunities, (3) the belief that studying abroad gives them more prestige in their home country, and finally (4) their family asks and encourages them to seek education abroad as they desire a better future for their children.

The interviewees mentioned that there are features within the host country or institution that attract students to undertake international study. The five main 'pull'

factors declared by the interviewed students are: (1) obtaining international experience, (2) improving career prospects and immigration opportunities (students have intentions to migrate after graduation), (3) educational cost (tuition, living expenses, other indirect factors) are relatively cheaper than home country, (4) experiencing foreign culture - fascinating culture or cultural proximity, and finally (5) international institution's reputation for quality (staff, curriculum, alumni base, etc.).

The interviewees indicated that: worldwide, the variety of institutions from which a student can make a choice is so large that the decision to attend a particular institution is a trade-off and is likely to be influenced by opinions from family, friends and education agents or counselors. Furthermore, social media is significant in illustrating the push and pull factors.

The second study objective during the interview was to determine if social media influences the desire to study abroad by stimulating the push and pull factors to potential students. The interviewees explained that people on social media always notice shares, comments, and posts of news related to the undesirable events (economic contraction and sluggish growth) due to the aftermath of the 2011 revolution. Thus, the feeling of discouragement and disheartenment exist among students, resulting in pessimism of their futures in their country. Accordingly, demand for education overseas has traditionally been driven by expectations of its ability to raise the economic and social status of the graduate.

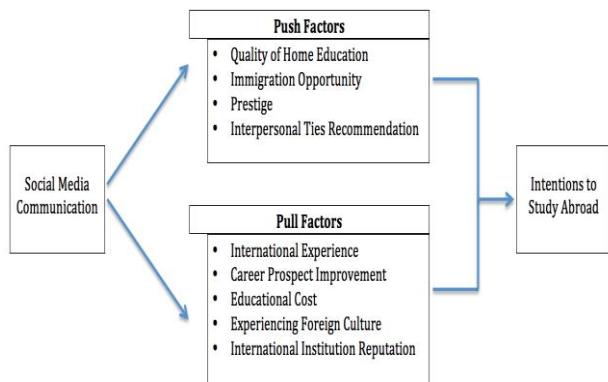


Figure 1. The proposed research model

The interviewees specified that they use social media aids in decision-making. They use social media for a variety of information purposes: to explore career prospects; to explore cost issue to determine affordability; to investigate the international university collaboration with other accredited sister institutions; to gain information about programs and activities (insight about course expectations); to obtain information about university's facilities, services, events, activities; to weigh the cultural fitness for study; and to consider the success in a preferred course. These reasons achieve persuasion to actually enroll in programs overseas. Hence, students are more concerned about the learning environment and will most probably investigate the situation by reading messages, explanations, and remarks for clarifications via social media or other online

platforms. In conclusion, this content analysis developed the proposed model that will be tested in the research (Fig. 1). The researcher hypothesized that each variables influences students' intention to study abroad.

## V. QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The factors identified in the first phase of the study were used to develop a paper-based survey to collect quantitative data. The scales used to measure the variables were taken from previous research. The items were based on the pull-push dimensions by McMahon [21] and Mazarrol and Soutar [3]. Each variable was measured using a five-point Likert scale - (1) Not Important at All to (5) Extremely Important.

The questionnaire contained 5 sections. Section one required the respondents to indicate their choice of the host country to study at; section two evaluated of the push and pull factors that influence studying abroad; section three assessed the role of social media in promoting the push and pull factors; and the final section requested respondents' background information. The survey was originally created in the English language. However, an Arabic version was also created due to the fact that the native language in Egypt is Arabic. The researcher used the back-translation process to ensure that the language conversion was done accurately. Further, in order to ensure the validity of the study, a pre-test involving a sample of ten people was conducted to refine and adjust the survey. A total of 550 questionnaires were distributed, but 400 were returned (73% response rate). Table I shows the respondents' traits.

TABLE I. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Socio-demographic Trait	F	%	Socio-demographic Trait	F	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Level of Program</b>		
Male	250	62.5	Bachelor	120	30.0
Female	150	37.5	Masters	178	44.5
			PhD/ Doctorate	102	25.5
<b>Age</b>			<b>Current education year</b>		
18 – 19	79	19.8	1st year	218	54.5
20-30	181	45.3	2nd year	63	15.8
31-40	85	21.3	3rd year	60	15.0
41-50	55	13.8	4th year	39	9.8
			other	20	05.0
<b>Marital Status</b>			<b>Source of Funding</b>		
Single	281	70.3	Personal	290	72.5
Married	70	17.5	Governmental	2	0.5
Divorced/ widowed	49	12.3	Scholarship	108	27.0

The researcher conducted the reliability analysis to check that the scales consistently reflect the construct it is measuring. The results showed that the all the scales were reliable with a Cronbach's alpha above 0.700. Further, the overall items in the questionnaire had an acceptable level of internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ).

After extracting items into principal components, mean and standard deviation scores were computed to find the influence of each factor on participants' selection of studying abroad. The respondents appeared to be very strongly influenced by factors related to both the push

and pull motivational factors. For instance, the respondents' selections were strongly influenced by the push factors: quality of home education ( $M= 3.73$ ,  $SD= 1.00$ ), immigration opportunities ( $M= 3.73$ ,  $SD=1.00$ ), prestige ( $M= 3.60$ ,  $SD= 0.76$ ), and interpersonal ties recommendation ( $M= 3.49$ ,  $SD= 1.16$ ). The following table illustrates the mean score for each item in the scale and the cronbach alpha of the overall scale.

TABLE II. PUSH FACTORS

Push Factors	Items in Each Scale	Mean	Cronbach Alpha
Quality of Home Education	Quality of overseas course better than local	3.37	$(\alpha = 0.83)$
	Course not available at home	3.56	
	Difficult to gain entry at home	3.76	
Immigration Opportunities	Intention to migrate	4.16	$(\alpha = 0.81)$
	To visit and live in a new place	3.84	
	To satisfy the desire to work overseas	3.86	
Prestige	To increase my social status	2.56	$(\alpha = 0.77)$
	To impress friends and family	2.34	
	Indulging in luxury	1.36	
	Can help provide higher status for myself in future	3.34	
Interpersonal Ties Recommendations	Parent relative recommendations	4.16	$(\alpha = 0.72)$
	Agent Recommendations	3.84	

The respondents appeared to be very strongly influenced by factors related to pull motivational factors. For instance, the respondents' selections were strongly influenced by the pull factors: interpersonal experience ( $M= 3.54$ ,  $SD= 0.92$ ), improving career prospects ( $M= 3.31$ ,  $SD= 0.10$ ), educational cost ( $M= 3.19$ ,  $SD= 1.00$ ), experiencing foreign culture ( $M= 3.94$ ,  $SD= 0.77$ ), and international institution reputation ( $M= 3.35$ ,  $SD= 0.71$ ). The following table illustrates the mean score for each item in the scale and cronbach alpha of the overall scale.

TABLE III. PULL FACTORS

Pull Factors	Items in Each Scale	Mean	Cronbach Alpha
International Experience	Offer more travelling activities attractively	4.23	$(\alpha = 0.79)$
	Better understanding of the west	3.84	
Improving Career Prospects	Can help enhance my career prospects	3.63	$(\alpha = 0.75)$
	Can help enhance my future job prospects	4.75	
	Improve chance of overseas/ local employment	4.36	
Educational Cost	Overall cost of living	3.27	$(\alpha = 0.80)$
	Overall travel cost	3.92	
	Reasonable Tuition costs	3.64	
	Immigration procedures is less complex	3.56	
	Opportunity to work part-time during the study	4.23	
Experiencing Foreign Culture	Enable me to experience different culture better	3.72	$(\alpha = 0.71)$
	Enable me to improve my language skills easily	3.81	
International Institution's Reputation	Institution's image and reputation	4.74	$(\alpha = 0.76)$
	Institution's learning atmosphere and environment	4.32	
	Institution's academic infrastructure and facilities	3.89	
	Program suitability	4.26	
	Program recognition throughout worldwide	4.29	
	Study program quality	3.97	

The descriptive statistics - mean and standard deviation scores - were computed to find the influence of each factor on participants' social media usage and intentions to study overseas. The outcomes were: Social Media usage ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ) and behavior Intentions ( $M$

$= 3.69$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ). The following table illustrates the mean score for each item in the scale and the cronbach alpha of the overall scale.

TABLE IV. SOCIAL MEDIA AND BEHAVIOR INTENTION

Variables	Items in Each Scale	Mean	Cronbach Alpha
Social Media Usage	Social media makes you knowledgeable about overseas education	3.45	$(\alpha = 0.72)$
	Social media facilitated your travel decision for your choice of destination	3.01	
	Social media highly pull you towards studying abroad	4.34	
	Social media marketing can effectively influence international students' university decision-making process.	4.72	
	Students turn to social media for studying abroad decision-making.	3.89	
Behavior Intentions	I am happy with the idea of studying abroad	3.76	$(\alpha = 0.78)$
	Studying abroad is a wise choice	3.92	
	I feel good about the decision to Study abroad	3.88	

The next analysis conducted was the correlation analysis. The correlation analysis provides a single number that describes the degree of relationship between two variables, indicating the direction, strength, and significance of the variables in the hypotheses. This analysis helped test whether the hypotheses in this study were significant. According to the results, some hypotheses were supported while others were not.

Based on the analysis, social media communication appeared as an antecedent to trigger and stimulate both the push and pull factors among students. It had a strong, positive and significant relationship in fostering the pull factors with the correlation coefficient of ( $**0.671$ ) and a moderate, positive and significant relationship in fostering the push factors with the correlation coefficient of ( $**0.437$ ). In regards to the push values, the dimensions quality of education, immigration opportunities, and fulfilling prestige are significant and are linked to intentions to study abroad in a strong and positive manner with correlational coefficient of ( $**0.746$ ), ( $**0.683$ ), and ( $**0.631$ ). The dimensions recommendations from interpersonal ties are not supported (correlation coefficient = 0.422). In regards to the pull values, all the dimensions are significant, however, they were either linked in a strong or medium and positive manner with intentions to study abroad. The correlation coefficients were as follows: international experience ( $**0.531$ ), career prospect ( $**0.782$ ), education cost ( $**0.825$ ), experiencing foreign culture ( $**0.471$ ), and institution reputation ( $**0.433$ ).

The final analysis conducted was the multiple regression analysis, which is a more sophisticated exploration of the interrelationship among the studied set of variables. In order to conduct the analysis, the data had to undergo certain statistical tests so as to check if the data contained inaccuracies (data leading the multiple regressions analysis to have errors or over/under-estimations of significance). Accordingly, the researchers began the analysis by checking if the data statistics was suitable to give valid results. Conducting methodological



assumptions, the results showed that the data met the assumptions required for multiple regressions to give valid results. All the variables suggested the inexistence of multicollinearity; there was no high collinearity between the variables, which could impact the regression model. Furthermore, there was also no clear or systematic pattern to the residuals (a specified wavy or more points on one side than the other), the deviations did not suggest violation of the assumptions (data was correct). Thus, the researcher began the multiple regression outcomes.

The multiple regression first evaluated the model significance as a whole (the interrelationship among the set of variables). The researcher examined the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance), which tested whether the overall regression model was a good fit for the data. The results showed that the push and pull variables in the model predicted the dependent variable (intentions to study abroad). The variables were significant with an ANOVA value of 0.000. In addition, the researcher examined the adjusted R Squared value (coefficient of determination), which expressed how much of the variance in the dependent variable was explained by the model. In this study, the analysis showed that the adjusted R squared value was 0.481. This means that the push and pull variables in the proposed model explained 48% of the variance in the students decision to study overseas.

The multiple regression explain each variable's contribution in impacting wedding destinations selection. This discovery was recognized by the Beta coefficients (B). The variable with the largest Beta value had the strongest effect. Based on the analysis, the variables with the strongest contribution, impacting the decision makers' wedding destination selection, are successively: career prospect (B= 0.222), education cost (B= 0.205), quality of home education (B= 0.197), immigration opportunities (B=0.096), international experience (B= 0.092), experiencing foreign culture (B= 0.087), institution reputation (B= 0.057), fulfillment of prestige (B= 0.54).

## VI. RESEARCH DISCUSSION

In this study, social media acts as an antecedent in promoting various push and pull motivational factors. It triggers student mobility, the lure of students to education hubs outside their hometown. Choudaha [32] suggests that the collaborative and engaging nature of social media provides a communication platform built on opinions and experiences of staff, students, and alumni that promote motivational topics, reasons, and features why students might want to study at the institutions. The information obtained is considered informative and dependable to students. Social media provides an opportunity to: *"tame the fundamentally unpredictable and serendipitous nature of word of mouth without losing what makes it so valuable in the first place—its authenticity"* [33].

In this study, social media promotes push and pull factors: quality of home education, prestige, migration opportunity, international experience, career prospect, education cost, experiencing foreign culture, and institution reputation. These outcomes are similar to results of previous studies and holds mix implications.

Demand for higher education abroad is driven by expectations of its ability to raise the economic and social status of the graduate. Students seek to study overseas to increase their job prospect. Most respondents felt that the education received in the host country could enable them to get higher position, earn better salaries and receive promotions. Students may seek to study away from home due to current labor market requiring foreign language, intercultural experience, and specific skills to be able to interact in a global setting. Mazzarol and Soutar [3] indicated that in developing nations, limited access to education in their own countries lead to students studying overseas. Maringe [27] and Games [4] found that enhanced job opportunities and higher status are the assumed factors of studying abroad.

Cost value also plays an important role in impacting student to enroll overseas. The tuition fees and expenditure have always been primary concern for most students and parents. Consequently, when the cost of college in the home country soars, students in growing numbers are enrolling in schools abroad, where tuition fees are substantially lower or nonexistent. Eicher and Chevaillier [31] notices: *"there is a financial crisis in education in most countries. That crisis is much deeper than macro statistics reveal; and it is not going to disappear soon, especially in developing countries"* (p. 6).

Several studies have confirmed the influence of institutional reputation on the choice of international students of the host institution [3]. Elements associated with institutional reputation can be comprised of the quality of the teaching staff, interaction with faculty and staff, availability of a desired program, support services, language of instruction, facilities and infrastructure, flexible scheduling options and availability of financial aid. When the overseas university seems to provide more and better benefits from the home countries student then desire to travel.

Students seemed to consider studying abroad as an opportunity to develop or refine their skills – intellectual, practical, academic, and social skills. McCarthy *et al.* [19] indicated that students seek international education to grow intellectually and socially by exploring new cultures, obtaining new knowledge, and meeting new people. Choudaha [32] suggested that students abroad learn to become: *"self-motivated, independent, willing to embrace challenges, and able to cope with diverse problems and situations"*.

Students, apart from their formal study, wanted to enjoy their life. Traveling and visiting new social environment flourishes students' attraction to study in a foreign country. McCarthy *et al.*, [19] explained that students tend to have desire towards country that is well developed and eventful. When choosing a destination to travel to, individuals are more likely to favor destinations that are surrounded by art, museum, sport, concert, shopping, nightlife and other social activities.

## VII. RESEARCH CONCLUSION

The aim of this study illustrates that that social media triggers the promotion of the push and pull factors. The

significant motivational push and pull factors in Egypt are: quality of home education, prestige, migration opportunity, international experience, career prospect, education cost, experiencing foreign culture, and institution reputation.

This study has some limitations when conducting the investigation. This study investigated only the push and pull factors that were mentioned by the interviewees in the first stage of the research neglecting other motives found in the literature review. This study also separated factors influencing international students' motivation for studying abroad and media as an antecedent to promoting the push and pulls factors. Prior studies indicated that media communication might actually be categorized as a pull motivational factor. Further, this study did not include student-related factors, such as their personal perception, academic competence or personal traits, among many others. Therefore, future studies need to add those factors together to give a clearer view of how those factors influence international students' choice of the study destination. Also, a nonprobability sampling method was used—in which the percentage of socio-demographic traits of the participants was not equally balanced. Thus, the conclusions might not accurately be generalized. Future study should address this issue.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Y. T. Alfarhoud, B. Alahmad, L. Alqahtani, and A. Alhassan, "The experience of international student using social media during classes," *International Journal of Education*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 32–47, 2016.
- [2] J. K. N. Singh, J. Schapper, and G. Jack, "The importance of place for international students' choice of university: A case study at a Malaysian university," *Journal of Studies in International Education*, vol. 8, no. 5, pp. 463–74, 2014.
- [3] T. Mazzarol and Soutar, "Push-pull' factors influencing international student destination choice," *International Journal of Educational Management*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 82–90, 2002.
- [4] C. Games, "Footloose transients: International students in Australia and their aspirations for transnational mobility after graduation," *Journal of Migration and Culture*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 41–57, 2015.
- [5] A. Ortiz, "Academic mobility in the Middle East and Egypt: If not west, where will students go?" *World Education News and Review*, 2017.
- [6] N. Nielsen. People leaving Egypt to Italy Doubled in Past Year. *EU-Observer*. [Online]. Available: <https://euobserver.com/migration/134163>
- [7] N. Rahman, "The usage and online behavior of social networking sites among international students in New Zealand," *Journal of Social Media in Society*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 65–81, 2014.
- [8] J. Sleeman, C. Lang, and N. Lemon, "Social media challenges and affordances for international students: Bridges, boundaries, and hybrid spaces," *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 2016, pp. 1–25.
- [9] K. Joly, "Facebook, MySpace, and co.: IHEs ponder whether or not to embrace social networking sites," *University Business*, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 71–72, April 2007.
- [10] T. Morris. (2012). How Higher Ed can Master Student Recruitment on Social Media. [Online]. Available: [http://www.customerthink.com/blog/how\\_higher\\_ed\\_can\\_master\\_student\\_recruitment\\_on\\_social\\_media](http://www.customerthink.com/blog/how_higher_ed_can_master_student_recruitment_on_social_media)
- [11] I. Taylor. (2008). Why Social Media Should be a Key Ingredient in Your Marketing Mix. [Online]. Available: <http://www.smallbiztrends.com/2008/05/social-media-key-to-marketingmix.html>
- [12] R. M. Entman, "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm," *Journal of Communication*, pp. 22–30, 1993.
- [13] P. Bodycott, "Choosing a higher education study abroad destination – What mainland Chinese parents and students rates as important," *Journal of Research in International Education*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 349–373, 2009.
- [14] H. Binsahl, S. Chang, and R. Bosua, "Identity & belonging: Saudi female students and their use of social networking sites, crossings," *Journal of Migration and Culture*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 81–102, 2015.
- [15] P. Kotler, J. Bowen, and J. Makens, *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*. Pearson: Prentice Hall, 2016.
- [16] OECD (2003). *International students*. [Online]. Available: <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1052>.
- [17] T. L. Sandel, "'Oh, I'm Here!': Social Media's Impact on the Cross-cultural Adaptation of Students Studying Abroad," *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, vol. 43, no. 1, pp. 1–29, 2014.
- [18] T. Adams, M. Banks, A. Olsen, "E-Commerce in International Student Recruitment: Three Years of Virtual Marketing by Four Australian Universities," *Paper for the 16th Australian International Education*, 2002.
- [19] E. E. McCarthy, A. K. Sen, and G. B. Fox, "Factors that influence canadian students' choice of higher education institutions in U.S.," *Business Education & Accreditation*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 85–95, 2012.
- [20] R. W. Griffin, *Fundamentals of Management*. Singapore: CENGAGE Learning, 2007.
- [21] M. E. McMahon, "Higher education in a world market: An historical look at the global context of international study," *Higher Education*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 465–82, 1992.
- [22] M. R. Solomon, *Consumer Behaviour: Buying, Having and Being*. Pearson Education, Inc., 2014.
- [23] J. Eder, W. W. Smith, and R. E. Pitts, "Exploring factors influencing student study abroad destination choice," *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 232–50, 2010.
- [24] C. F. Chen and D. C. Tsai, "How destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioral intentions?" *Tourism management*, vol. 28, no. 4, 2007.
- [25] H. C. Nguyen, "Vietnamese international student mobility: Past and current trends," *Asian Education & Development Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 127–48, 2013.
- [26] C. W. Njagi, R. M. Ndivo, and G. Manyara, "Understanding the travel motivation among youth travelers in Kenya: The 'push' and 'pull' paradigm," *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, vol. 6 no. 1, 2017.
- [27] F. Maringe, "University and course choice: Implications for positioning, recruitment and marketing," *International Journal of Educational Management*, vol. 20, no. 6, pp. 466–79, 2006.
- [28] J. M. Cubillo, J. Sánchez, and J. Cerviño, "International students' decision-making process," *International Journal of Educational Management*, vol. 2, pp. 101–115, 2006.
- [29] A. T. Damijanić and N. Luk, "The relationship between travel motives and customer value among wellness tourists," *Springer International Publishing Switzerland Tourism on the Verge*, p. 15, 2017.
- [30] T. Nghia, "Factors influencing Vietnamese students' decision to study abroad and selection of the host institution and host country: Implication for marketing strategies," in *Proc. 26th ISANA International Education Association Conference Proceedings*, pp. 1–25, 2015.
- [31] M. Easterby-Smith, *Management Research: An Introduction*, London, UK: Sage, 2002.
- [32] R. Choudaha. (2013). Trends in International Student Mobility. [Online]. Available: <http://www.wes.org/ewenr/12feb/feature.htm>
- [33] M. Zeisser, "Unlocking the elusive potential of social networks," *McKinsey Quarterly*, 2010.



**Dr. Eiman Medhat Negm** is a Lecturer at the College of Management and Technology, Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (Alexandria, Egypt). She holds her PhD. degree from Cardiff Metropolitan University (Wales, United Kingdom). Dr. Negm's main research interests include marketing practices, media influence on people's outlooks, consumer behavior, sociology, and the power of word of mouth in

various social contexts. She has taught courses on these and other subjects at all levels in the department of Media Management, Marketing, and International Business in both undergraduate and postgraduate programs.