USAGE OF INFORMATION BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: A STUDY OF MEDIA DEPENDENCY THEORY

GODWIN OBAJE

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USAGE OF INFORMATION BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: A STUDY OF MEDIA DEPENDENCY THEORY

By

GODWIN OBAJE

Project Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
as the Requirement for the Master in Communication
by Coursework in the Faculty of Arts, Communication and Education

IUKL

2015

DECLARATION

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a postgraduate degree from IUKL, I declare that this thesis entitled

"USAGE OF INFORMATION BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: A STUDY OF MEDIA DEPENDENCY THEORY"

And the work presented in it are solely my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I agree that the library of IUKL may make it freely available for inspection because, this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University. If any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work. I have acknowledged all main sources of help. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the IUKL in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my dissertation paper.

Signed: .....

Full Name: Godwin Obaje

Matric Number:141912272

Date: 27-11-2015

APPROVAL PAGE

We have examined this manuscript and verify that it merits the program and University requirements for the degree of Master in Communication.

Name of Internal supervisor: Professor Dr. Faridah Ibrahim

Faculty: Faculty of Arts, Communication and Education (FACE)

IUKL

Name of Co - supervisor: Madam Norzita Yunus

Faculty: Faculty of Arts, Communication and Education (FACE)

IUKL

Name of Internal Examiner: Amli Hazlin Ahmad Mokhtar

Faculty: Faculty of Arts, Communication and Education (FACE)

IUKL

.....

KAMALJEET KAUR
Director
Centre for Postgraduate Studies
Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur

Kamaljeet Kaur

Director,

Centre for Postgraduate Studies

IUKL

Date: 27/11/2015

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ABSTRACT

Investigating media dependency has attracted few studies; especially research on how international students depend on media theory in Malaysia is scarce. To fill this void, this research work uses media dependency theory to evaluate media dependence among international students. A sample of 200 international students was chosen at random, there after a well-designed questionnaire was administered on them. Reliability and correlation analyses were used in data analysis. As expected, education quality and media content both has a positive relationship with media dependency, media characteristics and media usage has negative relationship with media dependency. This study also found that there is a negative relationship between new media and media dependency. The discussions, recommendations as well as conclusions were made on this study. To affirm the media dependency among students, the author calls for further research to be conducted among local and international students in Malaysia.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

This study discusses about the background of why students move from their home country to study in another country. Some of the reasons given by previous scholars (Li et al. 1996) on why students migrate are: to search for higher education quality, conducive study atmosphere and so on. Also, the chapter of this study examines the sources of information that international students seek in order to survive in a new educational environment. From this, research problems, research objective as well as the significance of study are developed. The last but not the least section of this chapter talks about the organizations of chapters for this study.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Migration history has no definite time line as this has to be observed since the primitive era. There are many reasons for relocating from one point to another. According to Dreher and Poutvaara (2005) migration among student is driven by some factors fundamentally economic, educational and cultural that includes quest for raising standard of living, employment opportunities, similarity in language, and so on. However, it is observed over the years that students moving from less developed country to developed nations are increasing at a geometric rate (Brezis & Soueri, 2011). A study from Brezis and Soueri (2011) signaled that students migrate in search of the highest quality of education (Datta, McIlwaine, Wills, Evans, Herbert, & May, 2006).

Students over the years migrated from poor peripheral to a developed core countries in search of better and conducive educational environment. Supported with globalization and technological advancement not available in less developed nation filled the voids that exist between the extremely rich countries and the poorer ones in terms of information sharing. Economical evidence from scholars, show that advance economies or capitalist economies inviting young talents from developing countries hinder their country's economic growth (Datta et al, 2006). With this vast migration of students from poorer countries there is a need for reform in policies of host countries. As of 2008, reports by Brezis and Soueri (2011) estimated total number of foreign students to be 3.3 million.

Over the decades, Asian countries such as Malaysia, China, South Korea, Singapore, and Japan gradually become an education hub for foreign students. Malaysia being the context of this study has over 135000 international students. According to a statement by Idris Jusoh Malaysian second education minister said Malaysia is ranked at par with developed countries such as Germany, and Australia, in the ninth position of most popular destination for foreign students to study abroad (*The Sun*, 2015).

In Malaysia, immigration procedures and policy had been reformed several times within the last five years (Kaur, 2014) and this has some impact on foreign students as a whole. Most of these policies are made and implemented within a short period. An example of such is the visa reform.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

One of the strategies of Malaysian government in achieving vision 2020 through internationalization of tertiary education in the country is by promoting and branding Malaysian education system overseas. This promotion promises a work period of twenty (20) hours a week during a period of semester break or holidays exceeding seven days, University Malaysia Pahang (UMP) (2015) sees foreign or international students migrate from their country in search of greener pasture, improved standard of living, standard or high quality education and networking based on the information they get from diverse sources. Examples of which is the internet and various university brochure. Aside from this, Malaysia is said to have high receptive (hospitality) due to strong interrelationship that exist between Malaysian multi-races.

In addition to students in Europe, migration from home (particularly "war-torn" countries) abroad has seen a concern of refugee inflows, and many of the so; called refugees will settle down in their host countries, Preston (2007) noted that although, some of these refugees causes or creates social disorder, it shouldn't be forgotten that there is pressure relief inflow of highly skilled migrant whose skills are highly needed in key sectors such as high-tech services, finance as well as military. In view of this Preston suggest policy makers to strike a balance between inflow and restriction on refugees.

Contrary to this of the issues faced by international students as reported in the study of Yee (2014) include loneliness, social distancing between local and foreign students. Given this, there is the urgency to investigate the discrepancies that exist between the information received and digested by international students and what they realized in the host country. In this global age, many immigrants, especially from African states are tempted by the nature of advertisement read

online, broadcasted on radio and other communication media including peer communication as per work while studying, decide to further their education in Malaysia. However, getting here they met with different immigration policies that restrict them from working; likewise the social integration is deemed not to be available (Yee, 2014).

Having such problems, foreign students depends on lots of information to survive in Malaysia especially in learning Malaysian culture (Latif Ahmad et al. 2014). It is noted in their study that interaction with social media brought them closer to their culture and aid in learning their host culture simultaneously.

Hence, this study attempts to explore the extent to which foreign students in private and public institutions are dependent on relevant information to survive in a new culture based on the perspectives of media dependency theory. This theory posits that people use media as a source of entertainment and information on current affairs

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the above-stated objectives, the following questions were asked

1.4.1 Is there a relationship between education quality and media dependency?

1.4.2 Is there any relationship between media content and media dependency among foreign students?

1.4.3 Is there any relationship between media characteristics and media dependency among foreign students?

1.4.4 Is there any relationship between media usage and media dependency?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Aside from contributing to the knowledge in this field of study in form of literature, this study also aims at fulfilling the following objectives. From the background and problem statement stated above, the objectives of study are to investigate the following:

1.5.1 To investigate the relationship between education quality and media dependency among students in the two selected universities.

1.5.2 To identify the relationship between media content and media dependency among foreign student.

1.5.3 To identify the relationship between characteristics of media and media dependency among foreign students.

1.5.4 To identify the relationship between media usage and media dependency.

1.6 RESEARCH SCOPE

The scope of this study is to determine the dependency of media information among international students at Universities in Kuala Lumpur (KL) and its metropolis. To achieve the aims, international students will be samples taken from two universities namely University Putra Malaysia (UPM), and Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IUKL). A total of 200 foreign students will be sampled using convenient sampling.

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