

EFFECT OF DESTINATION BRAND QUALITY ON STUDENTS' DECISION ON DETERMINING A COUNTRY OF THEIR STUDY: A CASE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT JORDANIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

The current research will focus on the effects of destination brand quality dimensions (political, economic, security and destination image) on student's choice which will provide the higher education department in Jordan with data on the element that affect international student's choices. Data was gathered using a sample of 151 Students. Results found influence between all factors and the students' decision is somehow strong and positive. The major finding of this study is that the Political Stability and Security found positively associated with the students' decision on a country and satisfaction. While Economic Factors and Destination Image found insignificant according to the International Students' responds.

Keywords: Destination brand quality, International Students, Private universities, Study Abroad Decision, Jordan

INTRODUCTION

The provision of higher education is one of the service industries that play a critical function in the economic growth and development of a state. Competition for foreign students across the world is influenced by the mobility of students globally in the current interconnected and technologically advanced environment (Gai, Xu & Pelton, 2016). Institutions of higher education in countries such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia have marketed their education programs to international students aggressively with marketing concepts that are tailor made to meet the needs of this constituency (Gai et al., 2016). The leading destinations for international students have traditionally been the United States and the United Kingdom, but there are progressively growing options for students who want to study abroad, with competitive value as well as pricing being offered (Stewart, 2017). These countries include Australia and Canada, while countries such as Singapore, South Korea, and Hong Kong are increasingly leveraging cultural similarities and proximity to attract international students from China (Stewart, 2017).

Thus, institutions of higher learning must maintain a competitive advantage in order to attract and retain students through a distinctive image (Cubillo, Sánchez & Cerviño, 2006). In Spain, for example, the Regional Government of the Community of Madrid has noticed increased interest from Latin American students, and is weighing the possibility of opening an office to focus on this specific region (Cubillo et al., 2006). According to Hartono (2012), understanding what international students look out for in choosing institutions of higher education abroad can provide critical knowledge relevant for developing marketing options, and is an effective means through which institutions can survive in the competitive landscape.

In Jordan, it can be argued that the study options non-Jordanian students make with respect to studying in the country's private universities are a form of consumer behavior (Al-Hawary & Batayneh, 2010). However, it must be borne in mind that many variables can have a bearing on decisions made by consumers, including cultural and environmental, influence of family, as well as availability of resources (Al-Hawary & Batayneh, 2010). It is these variables, among others, that must be considered by Jordanian private universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education in Jordan, Private Universities

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, also known as Jordan, is an Arab country situated at the banks River Jordan. The nation shares borders with Syria to the north, Saudi Arabia to the south, and Iraqi to the northeast ("Jordan," 2019). Jordan covers 89,342 km² in size with its capital city, Amman, being the most populated municipality in the country. According to ("Jordan," 2019), its population was 9.9 million in year 2017. With Islam as the dominant religion, Arabic is the primary and official language of communication. Jordan places much emphasis on the value of education, and the government strives to uphold high literacy levels across the country. Its education system comprises preschool, middle, secondary, vocational and tertiary levels ("Jordan Education System," 2018). At the tertiary category, learners can engage in undergraduate, masters, and doctorate studies by joining either public or private universities.

Upon completion of secondary level, learners can join universities. Students who have attained the General Secondary Education Certificate, known as Tawjihi, have access to higher education. Activities at the post-secondary level are under the mandate of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR). While there are ten public schools only in the country, Jordan has twenty-one private universities (Mahafza, 2017). The rapid increase in the number of privately-funded institutions increased due to the constant rise is students eligible for higher education and the rigidity of subsidies offered to public universities. Thus, as the burden on public schools increased, the private sector took up the challenge to provide a solution (Kanaan, Al-Salamat & Hanania, 2010). The institutions offer several services per international standards of quality assurance in higher education. Hence, through oversight of committees such as the Jordanian Higher Education Accreditation Commission, private institutions uphold good practices and quality service delivery (Mahafza, 2017).

Destination Brand Quality

Institutions of higher learning need to define themselves as a destination that is attractive to both local and international students. A private school such as Al-Ahliyya Amman University can achieve this by creating a brand that impacts their position in the market and emphasizes the unique features of the place that will attract learners. Strategic brand management is a necessity given the competitiveness of the higher education sector in Jordan. Establishing a brand that meets the needs of the customers through top quality service provision is critical since it defines the specifics of an institution that appeals to clients (Pinar, Trapp, Girard & Boyt, 2011). As the Arab world continues to witness rapid development across the education sector, interruptions in service delivery may occur. Hence, taking into account these changes, destination brand quality management in the school seeks to provide a response that assures users of continuous provision of quality services while hoping to retain a competitive advantage over competitors satisfaction. Additionally, a brand is meant to protect the whole enterprise against imitation or unnecessary competition. A strong brand tends to win customers' loyalty and in the event of any sort of under-performance, it is easily given a second chance by the consumers (Mukhtar, 2017). Customer loyalty is a cornerstone for any type of consumer goods or services and therefore

frequent innovation enhances the brands image in terms of quality which calls for more consumer-demand.

In the higher education sector, destination brand quality is a multifaceted phenomenon that captures the value of a unique and reliable brand. For instance, Al-Ahliyya Amman University can establish its position as a superior institution by meeting the needs of its students as a way of building a brand that reflects the school's commitment to the customers' preferences. Brand quality, as an invaluable intangible asset, differentiates an organization from its rivals due to its consideration and representation of the clients' perceptions and feelings about services provided. Pinar, et al., (2011), claim that, at their best, brands reflect promises made and kept by a business, leading to the development of a loyal customer base achieved through trust. As a result, a school can maintain a high demand for its services as well as profitability. Therefore, by developing a meaningfully differentiated image and brand personality of Al-Ahliyya Amman that students identify with, the school can guarantee student satisfaction. Brand destination is dependable with various and optional dimensional characteristics such as culture, accommodation, activities and resources of a destination (Jawahar & Aslam, 2021). This explains why a certain institution for higher education learning such as Al-Ahliyya Amman s would be preferred more than the other. One dimensional factor is usually dependable on the other. Unlike consumer goods, brand destination's loyalty by the customers can only be achieved through the repeated visits A brand strategy therefore depends on consumer experience which compels the stakeholders to bring together additional attractions to the related destination with the aim of enhancing the identity of the brand (Larsen, 2018).

The increase in competition in the institution of higher learning has led to increased branding in the institution whose aim is to promote the institutions reputation. Furthermore, this helps in the generation of revenue by the institution through the sell of trademarked goods and services. Consequently, students play a significant role in conveying an institutions brand promise.

If the identity of an institution is not recognized, the probability of a limited enrolment is more likely, and can have a negative or challenging effect on the incoming revenue for the university. Institutions of higher learning generate revenue from a number of areas; "students and their families, the county government, central position for accessibility of for the sake of support from the other stakeholders.

Impact of Political Factors on Brand Quality

There are diverse political factors that affect the brand quality and its management. The administration of an organization has to consider the implications of various laws, regulations, and policies enacted by the government that may affect overall performance as well as the impression that services rendered will have on consumers. Government involvement, in any country, impacts how all business organizations operate. Laws implemented by the nation's legislators influence the activities of both public and private entities. The leadership departments of private universities in Jordan have to study and anticipate different outcomes that arise due to local as well as international politics ("Political Factors Affecting Business," 2015). In some scenarios, political factors can lead to the creation of an advantage that allows schools to provide better services.

In a situation where the legal framework of a country enables the government to reduce the amount of tax levied on private institutions, brand quality can improve. Such a shift implies reduced outflow of revenue earned by the schools. Thus, they can divert the finances to other areas that need improvement. The funds can play a vital role in rejuvenating some aspects of the five dimensions. For instance, the renovation of physical facilities can take place with the

aim of impacting the user experience. Therefore, it is crucial for schools to consider the influence of political environment and factors such as governmental policies on brand quality.

Impact of Political Factors in Jordan and the Middle East on the Brand Quality of Jordan

Political stability in the Middle East region and Jordan is a factor that affects the brand quality and international students' satisfaction in Jordanian universities. Since 2010, the area has experienced an increase in domestic stability due to a wave of political reforms that swept across the Arab world ("Political Instability in Jordan," 2013). Whereas Jordan, and its capital, Amman, has remained relatively peaceful, there is a reasonably high risk of domestic instability (Yeşilyurt, 2014). Given the strategic location of the country's borders, there is a likelihood that the effects of external conflicts such as the Syrian civil war could spill over to Jordan ("Political Instability in Jordan," 2013). Thus, such a scenario will adversely impact learners' satisfaction as it could disrupt service provision.

Besides political stability, the government's policies and approach toward the higher education sector can impact student's satisfaction. For instance, MoHESR has shown a commitment to creating a unique image and brand personality that advertises the positive experience institutions offer international students. The ministry's formation of a new directorate whose primary mandate and duty is to market Jordan as an educational destination depicts Jordan's political commitment to education (Prieto, 2018). The government understands that facilitating learning is central to the achievement of its economic development goals. Policies aimed at raising the percentage of international students seek to achieve this target by improving student satisfaction. Thus, political factors impact brand quality in Jordan. **Cny;**

Economic factors influence the competitiveness of the market in which companies operate. An example of an aspect that affects the performance of an organization and the quality of its brand is pricing. In the service industry, prices have a significant impact on consumer demands and satisfaction (Fornell, Rust & Dekimpe, 2010). Entities that position themselves as unique by offering high-quality service are more likely to charge high rates ("Analyze Pricing Influences," 2018). Such schools are expected to employ reliable staff members who are knowledgeable about their duties and polite when interacting with customers. Thus, having a team of employees who match the dimensions captured by SERVQUAL determines brand quality.

An economic factor like the level of competition that exists in the service industry impacts the level of quality of services rendered. According to ("Analyze pricing influences," 2018), when there is less competition, there is a higher demand for one institution. Such a situation creates a laxity in the management plans that improve client satisfaction since there are no rivals (Johnsen, 2015). However, the introduction of a new entrant into the market causes demand levels to fall. Avoiding such cases requires companies to assess whether clients' perceptions of issues such as accuracy and dependability of services provided (Mitrović, 2019). Based on the feedback, firms can work to improve consumer satisfaction.

Impact of Economic Factors in Jordan on the Brand Quality of Jordan

Categorized as an upper middle-income country by the World Bank, Jordan seeks to stimulate economic growth by developing specific sectors. Creating a knowledge-based economy implies that learning institutions have a significant role to play. Private universities, therefore, have to ensure that they meet the needs of the student population. A factor such as a cost of pursuing an education in the school impacts learner satisfaction. While Al-Haddad, et al., (2018) proposes that institutions need to focus on the quality of educational outcomes, they

should consider the impression that high fees have on students. Hence, levying high charges for the provision of education impacts learners' perception of services rendered.

Undertaking taking studies in institutions of higher learning is a form of investment in the future of the youthful population. People go to universities to acquire knowledge that will enable them to advance themselves career-wise (Çerri, 2012). An economic factor such as unemployment affects customer satisfaction in Jordan. According to IMF estimates, the economy needs to create 400,000 new jobs by 2020 to meet the rising demand (Idris, 2016). As schools churn out more graduates, the number of people who cannot secure employment in the formal sector rises. Thus, it continually widens the gap between students' expectation and perception. As a result, there is little satisfaction from pursuing higher education. A major economic constraint in Jordan is the scarcity of water. This is equally contributed by the poor infrastructures in the country. Water is basic human need and every economic activity of a given society revolve around availability of water (Grant et al., 2016). Despite the Dead Sea being a hotspot for tourism, the other economic factors affect its selection as a major tourist destination. The scarcity of water and the lack of accessibility means that reliable means of transport such as the air transport has to be preferably used which implies that the cost of transport will be equally higher.

Additionally, the scarcity of water makes it difficult to establish recreational centres such as swimming pools which are equally charged higher for the sake of site management. Hence, it cannot be a most appropriate selection for higher learning due to the undermining factors that are vital for students when selecting an institution (Ghantous, 2016). Nevertheless, their survival, which the private institutions cannot guarantee throughout the academic period.

Impact of Security Factors on Brand Quality

Service quality determines the attitude and preference that customers exhibit toward an entity. When an institution invests in establishing a unique image, it is essential to ensure that it maintains the quality of service and prevents damage to brand reputation (Esmaeilpour, Sayadi & Mirzaei, 2017). One of the issues that threaten the value of this intangible asset is security issues. When an organization faces the threat of insecurity, there is a minimal likelihood that it will serve the needs of the clients adequately. An insecure environment is not conducive for conducting business as it poses various risks to the customers. Inability to uphold the security of a physical dimension such as a firm's tangible facilities affects brand quality negatively.

Consumers need assurance that they will not get harmed when they visit an organization. There is also a need for them to be sure that they are safe when they interact with employees who work in the service industry (Jahanshahi, Gashti, Mirdamadi, Nawaser & Khaksar, 2011). Incidences such as loss of property, injuries and even loss of life can occur due to issues such as poor management or shortcomings of the security apparatus of an organization. Such events erode consumers' trust and confidence in an institution. As a result, security concerns lower the brand quality due to the negative impressions and fear that it creates among the public. Notably, it is evident that threats from international terrorism organized crimes, wars and insurgency have been the driving force towards the acquisition of secure brands (Bhattacharya, 2019). The results from such occurrences bring stigmatization. The efforts of the stakeholders to resolve the issues of security might take a period of time. Furthermore, the clients for instance students who were already confident about the brand destination in this case institutions of learning might not have the desired assurance on the security standards.

Impact of Security Factors in Jordan on the Brand Quality of Jordan

The state of insecurity in the Middle East is a primary factor that has affected Jordan's destination image. While the nation remains reasonably peaceful compared to countries like

Syria and Iraq that it shares borders with, the regional instability has impacted how customers regard the country. For instance, due to the Syrian conflict, the Jordanian government has had to increase armed forces along the borders. The presence of security forces has led to military engagements and activities that have led to fatalities and injuries (“Jordan,” 2019). Besides, the issuance of advisories targeting to warn visitors of potential threats, the brand quality of Jordan has taken a hit.

Another major security factor that has impacted the brand quality of Jordan is the danger of terrorism. According to (“Jordan,” 2019), terror attacks are often indiscriminate. Some of the groups targeted by the terrorists include expatriates, international travellers, and foreigners. Apart from these members of the population, militants seek to wreak havoc in places such as government buildings, shopping malls, restaurants and cafes, embassies, facilities of worship as well as public transport systems (“Jordan,” 2019). As a result, whenever there is a current threat of terrorism, all people have to maintain a high level of personal security awareness. Such a level of insecurity, regardless of how infrequent it happens, adversely impacts Jordan’s brand quality.

Impact of Destination Image on Brand Quality

Destination Image is a complex combination of one’s perceived thoughts, feelings, and the general impressions of a location. The view of others about a destination influences the image that unconsciously affects the destination image (Asunción & Josefa, 2017). The public image can be created organically or deliberately through marketing promotion strategies (Chin-Shan & Hsiang-Kai, 2020). Brand quality is the collective positive impression individuals have over a product, destination, or service. A negative image of a particular destination due to bad publicity on the media lowers the brand’s value. Additionally, perceived quality is pivotal in customer satisfaction (Tukiran et al., 2021). The primary impression of one customer can easily influence other people’s mentality and their take on visiting different destination or choosing a certain destination to acquire certain services (Faleh Obeidallah, 2017). This explains why the selection of a given especially on social platforms is highly dependable on the feedback given by other customers who have also visited a given destination. Such destination that are highly impacted by what people say include hotels, tourist attraction, airlines and even higher education learning.

Impact of Destination Image of Jordan on Brand Quality of Jordan

Jordan’s destination image has had a positive impact on its brand quality. Tourism is an important source of Jordan’s contributing 12 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Areej & Akram, 2013). Destinations such as the Dead Sea, Petra, and organic beauty lead in attracting foreigners to Jordan (Areej & Akram, 2013). The Jordan government has made a deliberate effort to create and maintain its destination image both at national and regional levels. However, not all images are strategically positioned and remain fuzzy, while others are camouflaged (Nour, 2015). Jordan’s deliberate effort in managing its destination image has had a positive effect on its brand equity. Consequently, exploration of the client’s brand loyalty is crucial in the development of marketing strategy to enhance the image of the brand (Saleem et al., 2015).

Effects of Destination Brand Quality Dimensions (Political, Economic, Security, and Destination Image) On Students’ choice

The political and economic situation of Jordan significantly impacts the user experience for the university students. The adoption of an initiative that seeks to open doors to a more significant number of students from different counties reflects Jordan's commitment to

improving student satisfaction. The government is a critical determiner of the perception that learners have from services offered by institutions of higher learning. The economy of the country also influences the students' satisfaction. The nation has taken measures to create a destination image that identifies it as a nation that supports the pursuit of higher education. For instance, there was an allocation of JOD 10 million annually as well as the issuance of 40,000 scholarships in 2015 (Mahafza, 2019). Thus, the two dimensions have proven Jordan's dedication to enhancing client satisfaction.

The security state of the nation has impacted student satisfaction. With issues such as fears about the spilling over of effects of the civil war in Syria into the borders of Jordan, there are concerns among the student body. Living and studying in an atmosphere that does not guarantee learner safety significantly reduces the perceptions that students have about the services issued by the school. Given the threat of terrorism and the implication that it has on the public, insecurity hinders student contentment with the institution. However, assessing the gap between the expectations and perceptions of learners regarding the security services offered by the personnel can enable entities to improve brand quality.

Security and political factors in the middle east and Asian countries affect student's satisfaction and decisions to study at Jordanian private universities. Political and safety issues in the countries surrounding Jordan have led to a reduction in the quality of education, which is a significant factor that international students consider (Bataneh & Pierluigi, 2018; Murad & Nooh, 2019). Global learners contemplate the quality of education a country offers before enrolling and the wars in Syria affects Jordanian's ability to provide quality education due to security-related concerns (Salameh et al., 2020). Additionally, the country has also not developed its higher education policies effectively, which is affecting the education quality and satisfaction levels negatively (Alsharari, 2019). Consequently, increased Syrian wars have changed the security and education sector negatively leading to reduced student satisfaction.

Although the economic situation at Jordan is unfortunate, private universities are not affected much because parents are significant financiers, creating a positive effect on learners' satisfaction level. Students also consider the economic situation of a host country before making enrolment decisions (Jarrar & Odeh, 2017). The conflicts in Syria have resulted in increased population in Jordan due to a rise in the number of refugees (Alougili, 2019). For example, approximately 13% of the economically active individuals in Jordan are unemployed, deteriorating the economy of the country (European Commission, 2017). The cost of education also matters in making choices, but the private sector seems to do well since learners' parents are the major financiers (European Commission, 2017). For instance, in 2007, ten percent of the higher education population consisted of international students and the community has increased over the years (El-Sheik, 2017). Although the country has a weak economy, private students choose to study in the country since their parents fund their education.

Jordan's image as a cross-cultural and cross-religious country that offers quality university education has increased enrolment by international students to their universities. The country hosts several refugees from neighboring countries, Syria and Palestine. Official reports have indicated that students studying in the country range from neighboring countries to Africa, Asia, and the Americas (ICEF Monitor, 2018). The professors' flexibility, friendliness, and patience have created a positive lasting impression among international students (Al-Shwayat, 2017). This is in addition to deliberate government efforts to market Jordan as a quality education destination. The presence of a diverse community and government policy has enabled Jordan to establish itself as a destination for educational tourism.

Private Universities as Destination Brand Quality

Management of brand reputation in the higher education sector requires a strategic approach. When an organization establishes a unique brand, it is crucial to protect it since it is

one of the factors that enable firms to attract and retain clients (Kladou & Kehagias, 2014). Forming or connecting with a loyal customer base is necessary for an entity to remain operational. Besides, a reliable brand guarantees a competitive edge over competitors. Unlike their rivals that obtain funding from the government, private universities have to work toward establishing trust by assuring clients that they will receive services worth their money. Thus, the management of these schools relies on the image, brand personality and quality to entice prospective applicants to enroll in private institutions.

Positioning private universities as a destination of choice for students requires the schools to attain loyalty from the public (Mahamad & Ramayah, 2010). The administration of the schools has to work toward creating an image that depicts a particular school as the best primed to meet the needs of the learners. One of the tools that institutions can use to promote destination brand quality is creating a unique environment that offers an exceptionally unique atmosphere and user experience (Alhroot, 2007). Given that learners pay a relatively large amount of money to study in privately-funded schools, they need the assurance that the university will enable them to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge that will empower them to pursue their dreams.

University administrators have a responsibility to create a brand that communicates value to the customers. The effectiveness of an excellent public image is evident in the number of students that universities attract and retain (Judson, Aurand, Gorchels & Gordon, 2008). Private universities in Jordan establish themselves as a destination brand quality through various strategies. One of the ways the management appeals to customers is through forming an image that serves as a promise to meet the clients' needs and expectations. Promotion activities revolve around publicizing private schools as a unique place that prepares students to achieve their ambitions. Hence, they strive to distinguish themselves from the government-funded institutions.

By emphasizing advantages such as smaller class sizes that allow for a more personalized level of interaction between the students and professors, private universities in Jordan capitalize on these factors as a destination brand quality. They present the individualized engagement as one of the primary features that allow learners to acquire a diverse range of skills and an enlightening experience that is unique from that available at public institutions. Besides, the management uses aspects such as communicative branding that simplifies the decision-making process for their prospective clients (George, 2017). Hence, the institutions create the impression that they are the ultimate destination for students seeking to enroll for higher education.

Aims and Objectives

- The primary purpose and objective are to identify the factors that can increase the number of students selecting Jordanian private institutions.
- To evaluate the effect of destination brand quality in terms of students' satisfaction.
- To offer recommendations based on the findings from the above three points.

Research Hypothesis

H01: Political factors do not affect students' satisfaction in Jordan.

H11: Political factors affect students' satisfaction in Jordan.

H02: Economic factors do not affect students' satisfaction in Jordan.

H12: Economic factors affect students' satisfaction in Jordan.

H03: Security activities do not affect students' satisfaction in Jordan.

H13: Security activities affect students' satisfaction in Jordan.

H04: Destination Image do not affect students' satisfaction in Jordan.

H14: Destination Image affect students' satisfaction in Jordan.

METHODS

Various research on factors affecting International Students in their choices were conducted. Most of these researches focused on different perspectives while just few of them explained how factors such as: Political; Economical; Security and Destination Image influence the International Students' decision and impact their choice. A structured self-administered questionnaire has been designed and employed to collect data from International Students registered in Jordanian Private Universities in Amman City, it included 29 statements covering the major four factors. The questionnaire was distributed on 180 students, 151 forms have been returned and were valid for analysis.

Most of the measurement items used to measure the proposed model which has been adopted from the existing literature, all items were measured using a five-point Likert scale on degree of agreement, ranging from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree.

MEASUREMENT

To determine what set of scale items can lead to results, the researchers validated the internal consistency of the questionnaire as an instrument of the study by applying Cronbach's Alpha for all the factors that formed each of the five blocks: Political, Economic, Security, Destination Image and Students' satisfaction.

Descriptive Statistic has been conducted to demonstrate the International Students' attributes, believes and perceptions affecting their attitude toward the Universities subject to study.

Multiple Regression Analysis: To contrast the hypothesis and to explain and demonstrate the effect of Political, Economic, Security and Destination Image as independent variables on the International students' selection of university and satisfaction as a dependent variable.

RESULTS

We found that Cronbach Alpha of the all items was 0.860, which is statistically accepted as good reliability. Cronbach's Alpha ranges in value from 0 to 1. In general, an Alpha equal to or greater than 0.6 is considered a minimum acceptable level. In order to ensure this analysis is consistent, we proceeded to eliminate each of scale items, the results obtained after eliminating the items one by one, were showing that the reliability of the scales was not improved dramatically.

Going into details to describe the sample based on its demographics, the following table number (1) shows each gender was included in our sample which formed by 152 representatives. The age ranges of the sample units were ranging from 18 to 42 years old while the category of less than 25 years shaped around 91% of the sample. Table (1) also indicates that more than two thirds of the respondents have monthly allowances between 200 to 500 JDs.

	Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	108	71.10%
	Female	43	28.30%
Age	Less than 18	1	0.70%
	From 18 to 25	138	90.80%

	From 26 to 40.	12	7.90%
	More than 40	1	0.70%
Monthly Allowance	Less than 200 JD	10	6.60%
	From 200 to less than 300 JD	35	23.00%
	From 300 to less than 400 JD	35	23.00%
	From 400 to less than 500 JD	34	22.40%
	500 JD or Above	38	25.00%

According to the International Students' point of view, the Safety issues and Stability are the most important factors which affect their decision while choosing a country for higher study, (40%) of the respondents consider the security and safety with maximum priority when they decided on the country for higher study.

	Frequency	Percentage
Acceptable Prices/ Cost Living	15	9.90%
Good Weather	10	6.60%
Safety	61	40.10%
Excellent Education	35	23.00%
Other reasons	29	19.10%

As shown in table (2), level of quality education that Jordanian Universities offer to International Students is also important; a 23% of the sample emphasized the excellent education quality as a determinant factor to select Jordan as a country for their study. According to various studies, although the cost living within a country is impacting the International Students in selecting the country for their study, however, in our research the students perceive the Security and the Quality of Education as most important factors that impacted their decision. Other criteria were considered by students but with minor influences; the good weather along with availability of attractions and social and cultural factors had no major role in students' determination on the country selection for their study.

Table (3) Average Mean and Standard Deviation of International Students' agreement level on factors influencing their decision on selecting Jordan as a country of study.

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Political Factors	I Prefer Not to visit a country that it is politically unstable	4.31	1.087	0.854
	A country whose political conditions are stable is still worth visiting more than unstable countries	3.7	1.11	0.856
	Political affiliations is one of the key factors that determine Student satisfaction in a destination	4.26	1.072	0.85
	A country that is politically stable is more satisfying to Students	4.34	1.062	0.851

	than one that is politically unstable.			
Economic Factors	High inflation results in costly and hence dissatisfying students experiences	4.06	0.992	0.852
	Countries that depend on others in the growth of their economies cannot attain high Students' satisfaction with reference to education.	3.36	1.294	0.868
	When I budget to my travel I don't care about the cost as long as the country have a very attractive places.	3.42	1.258	0.861
	High Taxes in Jordan leads to very costly staying	4.49	0.906	0.851
	The Public transportation in Jordan hard to use	3.55	1.26	0.859
Security Factors	I would not visit a country with potential terror attacks	4.33	1.126	0.849
	Terrorism poses a threat to the education sector by making every attraction appear unsafe	4.57	0.777	0.85
	The anxiety that arises from the fear of potential terror attack minimizes the possibility of enjoying the education process	4.36	1.032	0.851
	If my country announces a travel advisory against a country based on suspected potential terrorist activity, I would obey the advisory.	3.8	1.373	0.866
	Muslim countries rarely face terrorist attacks thus are satisfying with regards to provision of high quality and enriching experiences	3.16	1.333	0.864
	Terrorism is a major threat to international relations and thus affects the probability of outsourcing some of the education sector related	4.07	1.027	0.854
Destination Image	Jordan has a great Natural attractions	4.01	1.185	0.85
	The Jordanian food is very tasty	3.79	1.243	0.85
	The Locals are very Friendly	3.65	1.298	0.851
	Information and communication prior to arrival were available	3.47	1.266	0.858
	Jordan is a unique destination	3.67	1.206	0.852
	Jordan has Cultural and social attractions	3.95	1.153	0.847
Students' Choice	Education level in general is very good	3.83	0.961	0.858
	During my stay in Jordan I felt safe and secure	3.96	1.173	0.854
	Political condition in Middle East didn't affect your stay duration in Jordan in any way	3.86	1.282	0.855
	I found staying in Jordan expensive.	4.11	1.154	0.858
	Your overall satisfaction with your visit to Jordan was excellent.	3.99	1.168	0.852

Results obtained from table number (2) are in-line with the results shown in table (3). The International Students' perception of political and security factors is very high and played a dramatic role of influencing the International Students on selecting a country of study. As it is clearly seen in table (3), there was a high level of agreement among the respondents on Political Factors followed by the security issues with average mean of (4.15) and (4.05) respectively. This results indicates that International students who decided to study in Jordan were mainly taking their decision based on the perception of Jordan as a stable and safe destination to live in.

With reference to the Destination Image and Economic Factors, although respondents considered these factors, however, such factors came with lower the average of mean of with 3.76 and 3.78 simultaneously. This means, the Economic Factors, such as Cost of living and a Country Image are still of importance for International Students when they decide on a country to study, but, these factors have less influence when they are compared with the security and political stability. It is obvious that when the perception of students about considered countries is positive in terms of Security and Political Stability, the importance of other factors such as Economic issues will be raised in order to determine on which country to study by International

Students. This confirms what we discovered in the literature, as many similar previous studies concluded similar results.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	25.265	4	6.316	10.106	.000 ^a
Residual	91.875	147	0.625		
Total	117.14	151			

Table (4) shows the rejection of the major null hypothesis which consists in Political, Economic, Security and Destination Image do not have significant influence on International Students' decision of country selection to study. The results obtained from the multiple regression analysis demonstrates that (f value) is equal to 10.106 with significance level=0.000, which means that all aforementioned factors together explained the variation in students' perception towards their country of study, where the explanation rate was R²= 0.216.

Based on the correlation value R= 0.464, the relationship between all factors and the students' decision is somehow strong and positive.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Political Factors	0.301	0.09	0.263	3.339	0.001
Economic Factors	-0.152	0.123	-0.114	-1.232	0.22
Security Factors	0.571	0.111	0.432	5.155	0
Destination Image	0.01	0.075	0.011	0.131	0.896

Regarding to the specific hypothesis, the results obtained from Table.5 indicate the rejection of the first minor null hypothesis political factor does not have impact on students to select a country for their study. Where its significance is=0.001. This last result is very similar to others obtained from the Table 5 about the third minor null hypothesis, regarding security factors, where we found that security factor has a significant and positive impact on students to select a country for their study Sig.=0.000. So we reject these two minor null hypotheses.

In the case of Economic Factors and Destination Image, we accept the null hypothesis consists of Economic Factors do not have a significant impact on International Students to select a country for their study, and Destination Image does not have a significant impact on students to select a country for their study, as the results indicate that there is no significant impact sig.=0.220 and sig. =0.896 for each hypothesis respectively, which means there is no impact of economic factors and destination image on students to select a country for their study.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study will help the decision makers to identify and focus on main factors impacting International Students in their selection of country of study. Especially, there is

a good number of factors playing a serious and important role in creating a significantly positive effect on students' perception in terms of a country selection for their study.

Nevertheless, the major finding of this study is that the Political Stability and Security found positively associated with the students' decision on a country and satisfaction. This finding goes in line with the results confirmed and presented by (Bataineh & Pierluigi, 2018; Murad & Nooh, 2019), and it is may be due to the fact that the International students may have developed and gave higher priority to these factors over all other issues when it comes to deciding on where to live and study.

In essence, International Students need to sense that they will be safe and secure during all aspects of their academic and real life, they are aware about how important are these factors not just as basic requirements and general need, but also to allow them be secure that they will performing academically well and they can efficiently continue and accomplish with their academic objectives.

The Political Stability and Security can have a detrimental effect on International Students' decision in first instant, at the same time, there are other factors and criteria which are important to determine the International students' decision and to shape their satisfaction. Although, Economic Factors and Destination Image found insignificant compared with Security and Political Stability according to the International Students' respond to this research when they took their decision to study in Jordan, however, Destination Image and mainly the Economic Factors such as cost of living and study cost are major factors which impact the International Students' satisfaction, this confirms the results of the research of (Jarrar & Odeh, 2017). The importance of these last two factors may be increased to divert International Students to focus on Jordan Universities and will be clearly seen if more destinations appear to compete with Jordan in the future depending if they are Politically More Stable and Security situation being under control.

CONCLUSION

In Jordan, learning that is offered in private universities is of better quality since it is student centered. Students get more attention from their instructors because the student population in private institutions is significantly lower. Consequently, there has been a 16 percent growth in enrollment of international students, contributing 2.5 percent to the country's gross domestic product. Interestingly, this study uncovered a number of novel results that should challenge the Jordanian nation's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

The study has revealed that international students place safety and stability as the primary reason for selecting to study in a private university overseas. This is an intriguing perspective because it is more critical than cost of education. In fact, the fact that the level of private university education offered in Jordan is high emerges to be secondary. The cost of living and brand image, while important, pale in significance when compared to safety and stability in the country. The import of safety and security needs closer scrutiny and may be associated with the reputation of violence in this part of the world. Thus, while cost of living and brand image may not be as significant, it is possible that when confronted with a choice among universities in the Middle East, the role of safety and stability becomes of primary concern.

The significance of the findings in this study cannot be underestimated. Since Jordanian universities are in a part of the world where violence is endemic, a brand image of safety and stability can be promoted to endear international students to enroll with private Jordanian universities. Importantly, quality and cost of study cannot be overlooked, since these two factors can serve to retain international students in their respective institutions.

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