University of Southampton

Faculty of Social Sciences

Southampton Business School

The Role of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations on Student Choice: an Evaluation of Key Motivators and Moderating Factors when Applying to University

by

David William Peck

BA (Hons), MRes, MSc, PGCE

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

July 2020

University of Southampton

Abstract

Faculty of Social Sciences

Southampton Business School

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The Role of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations on Student Choice: an Evaluation of Key Motivators and Moderating Factors when Applying to University

by

David William Peck

When making the decision to go to university, students are motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors (motivation variables), set against the backdrop of an evolving competitive UK Higher Education (HE) market, with increasing emphasis on institutions being self-sustainable. This is all coupled with the fast-paced introduction of new – and changes to existing – marketing communication channels.

From an academic perspective, existing theoretical models have either not been tested within or simply do not incorporate these changes to marketing communications channels. Employing the expectancy–value theory, this study provides an evaluation into the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation variables of students and explores the extent to which intervening variables moderate the impact of these motivations when making a final choice. This mixed methods research, involving both quantitative and qualitative elements, makes a comparison of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of students who chose to attend either a vocational or a traditional Higher-Education institution. The research also explores the extent to which intervening variables (socio-demographic, environmental, informational, and personal influences) moderate the impact of these motivations. The views of students, HE marketing and administration staff, and HE industry experts provide an insight into some key stakeholder perspectives.

The main findings of this study suggest that students at both the vocational and traditional institution place value on the employability intrinsic motivating variable, and there is adherence given to the role of the lifestyle intrinsic motivating variable at both institutions. However, while the city aspects of lifestyle are more prevalent to the students at a vocational institution, the institution-based lifestyle elements are more relevant to students at a traditional institution. The traditional institution has more credence with familial influencers, yet students at the vocational institution place emphasis on the digital influencers. What is particularly interesting is the extent to which parental influence plays a role as a familial influencer.

This study provides guidance for HEIs, students, parents, and policy makers when considering the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators of students and suggests how HEIs can intervene in the relationship between motivation and choice. Finally, this research presents a new conceptual

model in the field of HE choice. This model is empirically tested – a feature that has been generally neglected within existing studies.

CONTENTS

TABLE OF TABLES

TABLE OF FIGURES

ABBREVIATIONS

The following table lists the abbreviations and acronyms used in this thesis.

Abbreviation	Meaning
EVT	Expectancy Value Theory
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution(s)
UCAS	University and Colleges Admissions Service

RESEARCH THESIS: DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

David William Peck

The Role of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations on Student Choice: an Evaluation of Key Motivators and Moderating Factors when Applying to University

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where 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;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. 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;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signature: .... Date: ....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Paurav Shukla, whose guidance and probing questions have helped to shape this thesis, and whose encouragement kept me motivated when I was finding my enthusiasm waning. The progress that I have made under Paurav has even astounded myself, and I am grateful for his patience, expertise, and compassion. Thank you to my second supervisor Su White who has shown fortitude and friendship.

Thank you also to the marketing teams of the University of Southampton and Southampton Solent University for generously sharing their knowledge and experience with me, providing me with insights I could not have otherwise obtained.

Thank you to all the students who shared their own motivations behind choosing to study at a university and deciding which one to attend. They provided the data without which this research could not have taken place.

Thank you to Doctor Yvonne Moogan and Doctor Monica Mihalache for acting as external and internal examiners respectively. Thank you to both Monica and Doctor Weisha Wang for examining my upgrade from MPhil to PhD and providing clear guidance and support.

To the Holy Trinity of God, the Son, and the Spirit, for your guidance, love, and protection. Thank you for the gifts you have provided to me and my family.

To everyone who has helped me on my education journey – Theresa Connolly at Our Lady's; John Dexter, Mike McKeever; Mrs Nadin, Miss Green, Angela Prout, Helen Powell and the team at Trinity RC School in Nottingham. John Crosbie and Stephen Doyle at GCU; Alex Hiller, Tony Woodall, and Melanie Weaver at NTU; Christine Ennew and Mona Moufahim at NUBS; and Lisa Harris, Mike Molseworth, Andrew Farrell, and Debbie Evans at Southampton Business School – from the bottom of my heart, thank you for everything you have done for me.

Thank you to my friends at the various educational establishments that I have worked at and who have supported me on the journey. Particular thanks to Joanne Hooker and Annmarie Hanlon for all of the support and friendship that you have provided me.

Thank you to my long-suffering family – to my parents who financially and emotionally supported me throughout my education. I cannot put into words the amount of love and support you give me every day. To my brothers – Andrew and Joe – thank you to you and your families for the love, support, and encouragement throughout my life.

Thank you to my children – Thomas William, Emilia (Millie) Sadie, and Sophie Mary for bringing faith, hope, and love into our lives. I am so excited to walk with you on your life journeys.

Finally, to my wife – Emma Peck. Thank you for your patience, support, and love. Thank you for being my best friend and mother to our beautiful children. Thank you for supporting me to achieve my dreams and goals.

This thesis was formatted and proofread by Clearly Stated, to whom thanks is given.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Emma.

'Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.' (1 Corinthians, 13:7).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the research problem

Recent statistics (e.g. Universities UK, 2018) suggest that tuition fees have an approximate value of £17.8 billion (within the UK HE economy). Ostensibly, the primary challenge facing all Higher Education (HE) providers is the recruitment of students. In recent years, micro-environmental changes to the UK HE sector (e.g. Dearing, 1997; Browne, 2011; Augar, 2019) have had an impact on the competitiveness of institutions. The changes specific to the education market are framed by the backdrop of the referendum result of 2016, which sees the UK due to leave the EU common market in the short-to-medium future. , Understanding the motivation behind students attending HE (e.g. Maringe and Carter, 2007; Hemsley-Brown, 2015) has become ubiquitous with the challenge of seeking to recruit both more and a higher calibre of students. Hotels, airlines, department stores, credit card companies, and even supermarkets must understand the key motivation variables for consumers wishing to engage with their brands, and a HE provider is certainly no different.

The widespread choice of institutions for students within the UK's relatively small geographical spread means that understanding the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of students is more paramount than ever before. The increased array of informational sources available to applicants – such as digital marketing and social media sources (e.g. Constantinides and Zinck Stagno, 2011; Rutter, Roper, and Lettice, 2016; Palmer, 2013; Kuzma and Wright, 2013) – provides a new dimension that institutions and students alike need to consider.

However, much of the empirical work on student choice (which is presented in the literature review) is in the context of specific choice factors. There is minimal awareness of how initial motivation – let alone any distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations – can act as a catalyst to the decision. Whilst some researchers do refer to aspects of motivation (e.g. Maringe and Carter, 2007; Branco Oliveira and Soares, 2016; Chen and Zimitat, 2006) this research is either dated, and/or fails to address the UK undergraduate cohort. Furthermore, it does not recognise the extent that intervening variables can moderate the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and the ultimate choice made. As it stands, the existing body of literature is disparate and needs to be conjoined. This limits the available insights that can be derived about the motivations of students in applying to an institution. This challenge is addressed by developing a conceptual framework, borne out of initial research and the author's own observations.

A sizeable proportion of empirical research is generally viewed from the perspective of an individual institution (e.g. Agrey and Lampaden, 2014; Brown, Varley, and Pal, 2009). There are issues – as discussed in the literature review – around the transferability of results generated to any other setting (i.e. institutions). Furthermore, the UK HE market has a number of HE providers from both traditional, research intensive institutions, and newer, more vocational institutions. Existing literature is murky, with it being unclear whether findings are applicable across the whole sector, and/or transferable to a UK context. In addressing this, the viewpoints of students and marketing and administration staff at two institutions (a traditional, research intensive institution and a newer, vocational institution) are compared.

Whilst choice for entering into a HE institution is ultimately made by the students themselves, the vast majority of empirical literature (e.g. James, Baldwin, and McInnis, 1999; Le, Robinson, and Dobele, 2020; Constantinides and Zinck Stagno, 2011) fails to account for the perspective of stakeholders other than students, who are potentially able to influence the choice process. To address this, the perspectives of HE marketing staff and administrators at the same two institutions are evaluated in the qualitative stage of data collection.

From a theoretical perspective, existing research into HE student motivation has a clear failure, in that it is not underpinned by any appropriate theory. To address this, expectancy–value theory is utilised for the theoretical underpinning of this study. This is the dominant research gap that this thesis seeks to address.

1.2 Research objectives

In addressing the research problem, the following objectives are presented.

1. To develop, test, and affirm a model based upon students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for entering into the HE market.
2. To integrate expectancy–value theory (EVT) and develop hypotheses with the HE literature to investigate the role that EVT can play in developing the understanding of the HE environment.

3. To critically examine the perceptions of undergraduate students at two UK HEI institutions in respect to what factors act as intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and as moderating factors in the choice process.
4. To critically examine the perceptions of marketing and administration staff at two UK HEI institutions in respect to what factors universities believe act as intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and as moderating factors in the choice process.
5. To provide policy and practice recommendations based on sound theoretical research and understanding.

Research objectives 2–5 are explored by the testing of conceptual framework (the conceptualisation of which addressed research objective 1) via a mixed methods approach. This approach consists of a survey of undergraduate students, followed by face-to-face interviews with undergraduate students and with marketing and administration staff of two HE institutions. This is supplemented with the opinions of three HE Marketing experts (i.e. individuals who work in marketing consultancies and whose focus is on marketing for the Higher Education sector).

1.3 Research questions

In addressing the six stated research objectives, the following research questions are investigated:

1. What are the key themes from extant empirical literature into HE motivation and choice?
2. What are the key intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for a UK-based undergraduate student to attend university?
3. To what extent do intervening variables moderate intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of UK-based undergraduate students?
4. To what extent do intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, and intervening variables, differ based upon the type of institutions?

1.4 Rationale of project

The motivation for conducting this project can be separated into three areas: personal motivation; to facilitate a framework for students and parents in terms of simplifying their choice process; and to develop a framework for institutions to allow them to focus marketing efforts. These areas are explored below.

Personal motivation: Having worked as an academic and a marketing consultant for the past 10 years, there appears to be a disjoined approach to marketing within the HE sector. Changes to the sector – particularly the removal of the cap on tuition fees and the high levels of debt that students are saddled with – has led to a noticeable change in student expectations. Therefore, one is interested to explore the expectations that drive this demand in the first instance. The acceleration of the availability of social media also raises interesting debates into the extent to which students and institutions harness these channels to offer a more informed decision and to develop their course offering respectively. Carrying out this research will provide a clearer understanding of the student-choice market, allowing me to market the courses that one is responsible for in a more effective manner.

Facilitate a framework for students and parents: It is intended that a robust conceptual framework will be generated from the literature review that is subsequently tested via empirical data collection. Students and their influencers (notably parents) are faced with a multitude of sources of information at what is a challenging time for prospective A-level students. Simplifying the choice process into a clear, manageable framework (that explores driving intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and intervening variables) will hopefully facilitate an easier process.

Development of a framework for HEIs: The same framework – as discussed below – is also intended to be useful for HEIs. In a congested, competitive market, HEIs are striving to understand motivations behind student choice, and the role of intervening variables, to facilitate a more directed approach to marketing efforts. The development of said framework –rigorously tested via empirical data collection – will both enable HEIs to focus their efforts, and provide the rationale for appropriate policy.

1.5 Domain of research

It is acknowledged that there is certainly overlap within the topic areas of this thesis. Firstly, the desire to investigate the UK HE environment is driven by changes in the macro-environment (e.g. political legislation and changes that have brought student choice into greater focus). Secondly, the focus of student motivation has the scope to tie into Higher Education Teaching and Learning research (and there is certainly scope in the findings obtained that suggest the HE experience contributes greatly towards student choice). Thirdly, the underpinning theory used in this study (i.e. expectancy–value theory) was originally used to investigate employee motivation, and its application in the area of marketing is certainly limited. Nevertheless, despite these acknowledgements, the researcher’s interest – and subsequent research focus and guided literature search – is in the area of motivation (i.e. consumer behaviour) within the domain of marketing.

1.6 Theoretical gap

The main theoretical gap (as discussed in the closure of the literature review chapter in section 2.12) is that no conceptual framework exists that synergises the relationship between motivations for study, and the impact of intervening variables. Therefore, the model proposed (and subsequently tested) in this thesis addresses the theoretical gap that currently exists. Furthermore, as it stands there is minimal application of expectancy–value theory (EVT) into this (i.e. HE consumer choice). Applying EVT theory to the HE sector would assist students, parents, and institutions in understanding the choice process that students will go through. Such a model could act as a starting point for any future research.

1.7 Theoretical implications of research

The main theoretical implication of this research is the development of a model, as discussed in section 1.4. This model can be used to investigate how motivation and sources of information drive choice in other educational settings (including, but not limited to: UK-based HE; other HE institutions; FE colleges). The model can also be used as a starting point for evaluating the relationship that exists between motivations for a behaviour, and the subsequent choice that consumers make. Based upon the research findings, an awareness of any amendments to theoretical models in comparisons between traditional and vocational institutions should be obtained.

1.8 Practical implications of research

From a practical perspective, HE study decision makers – notably prospective students and their parents – will have a model that may simplify their decision process. If it is proven that substantial relationships exist between motivations and their subsequent choice, then decision makers would be able to focus their effort on key choice criteria, dependent upon what their motivation is for attending university in the first place. Likewise, these findings could be used to investigate what sources of information decision makers should consult, in relation to the 'fit' between them and the motivation criteria for attending university.

Institutions (i.e. marketing departments) are also likely to benefit from this research. Notwithstanding that there is a pertinent investigation into two institutions, a developed framework will allow institutions to identify retrospectively what the main motivations of applicants are. In appreciating any relationship that exists between these motivations and choice criteria, institutions will be able to develop marketing strategies that are based upon fulfilling these needs. Likewise, considering finite institutional resources, this research will hopefully direct institutions on what intervening variables are likely to impact upon both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. The findings should illustrate differences that exist in comparisons between traditional and vocational institutions.

Policy makers are likely to benefit from this research, as understanding what motivates students to enter into the HE landscape will facilitate an adaption to existing and the development of new guidelines to institutions both in respect of how they are permitted to recruit students and what their focus should be.

1.9 Structure of thesis

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 provides a detailed literature review. In this chapter, there is a review of key changes in the UK HE market, coupled with an overview of the University College and Admissions Service (UCAS) application process. From here, theories of motivation are introduced, with a specific focus on expectancy–value theory. The literature review then goes onto review existing empirical research into the area of HE choice, with focus placed on: (a) existing choice models in the HE sector; (b) intrinsic motivations; (c) extrinsic motivations; (d) research into socio-demographic factors; (e) research into environmental factors; (f) research into informational influencers; and (g) research into personal influencers. The discussion is interspersed with the development of hypotheses, and the chapter concludes with the presentation of the conceptual model due to be tested in this thesis (Figure 2.12).

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology for the research. Initially, this provides an overview of the philosophical debates, including the ontological, phenomenology, epistemology, and axiological nature of the research. A discussion of different research approaches is provided, with a clear justification behind a mixed methods approach. The chapter then proceeds to discuss the two stages of research that take place. This begins with a discussion into a survey of undergraduate students. Within this section, an overview of the research design is presented (incorporating sampling approach, sample size, access to participants, data analysis, reliability and validity, and ethical concerns). The second stage of research discussed is the face-to-face interviews with undergraduate students, marketing and administration staff, and HE marketing experts. An overview of the research design is presenting (incorporating the development of questions, sampling approach, approaching potential participants, data analysis, ethical concerns, and limitations of the research approach).

Chapter 4 presents the results for Stage 1 of the research – the survey of undergraduate students. These results are presented by means of a range of statistical tests – namely factor analysis, reliability analysis, merging components, binominal logistical regression, t-tests, one-way ANOVA tests, and slope analysis.

Chapter 5 presents the results for Stage 2 of the research – the face-to-face interviews. This chapter begins with an overview of the participants who took part in this stage of research. There is a clear presentation of the themes arising from the interviews. From here, there is a discussion of the different themes, with appropriate quotes offered to support points made.

Chapter 6 provides a discussion for the overall findings. Focus is placed on both the quantitative and qualitative findings to answer the research questions. Reference is made in this chapter to existing empirical literature coupled with expectancy–value theory.

Finally, chapter 7 provides a conclusion and recommendations. Recommendations are given into the form of theoretical, practical, and policy-based recommendations. There is a discussion of the limitations of the study, coupled with directions for future research that could take place. This chapter concludes with a brief reflection on the completion of the PhD provided.

This thesis now provides a detailed literature review into HE choice marketing.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review is multi-layered. Different, yet related, areas of existing literature are explored in detail. A thorough investigation has been undertaken, which is consistent with Collis and Hussey's (2009: p. 100) claim that '*… a literature review is a critical evaluation of the existing body of knowledge on a topic, which guides the research and demonstrates that the relevant literature has been located and analysed'*. The literature review is presented from a contextual, theoretical and empirical perspective. Contextually, this review provides an overview of the Higher Education sector, with specific focus on the UK market. The chapter also presents a critique of existing HE choice models, together with an evaluation of the key models related to the context of this study (i.e. motivation) with a specific focus on the expectancy–value theory (e.g. Vroom, 1964; Ajzen and Fishbein, 2008). This review predominantly evaluates existing empirical research on both drivers of motivation and the influence of the intervening variables in the HE market. These intervening variables incorporate socio-demographic influences, environmental influences, informational influences and personal influences. The discussion into existing literature is interwoven with hypotheses for *this* study. The chapter closes with a presentation of a proposed conceptual framework for this thesis. This conceptual framework is developed based upon a congruence of analysis of the existing theoretical frameworks and past empirical studies that have taken place. This model will be subsequently tested – and, if necessary, amended – during the data collection stage of this thesis.

At this stage, it is worth indicating how the literature was identified and subsequently obtained. Library databases were used to search for key words for the primary search. Examples of search strings include:

- 'higher+education+marketing';
- 'student+consumer+behavio(u)r';
- 'motivation+university';
- 'intrinsic+motivation+university'; and
- 'extrinsic+motivation+university'.

These initial searches returned a multitude of potential sources, with varying degrees of usefulness. Whilst some academic articles were relevant, and are included in this literature review, the nature of the broad search terminology meant that articles related to the student classroom experience were also interspersed throughout the search results. In addition, due to the use of library and online databases, completely unrelated articles were listed.

To combat this, databases of 3* and 4* 'Business Journals' were accessed. The classification of 3* and 4* journals was taken from the 2018 version of the ABS (Association of Business Schools) journal rankings list. Examples of 'higher quality' journals included are *The Journal of Business Research* (e.g. Vrontis *et al.* 2006; Gibbs, 2007; Hayes, 2006); and *The Journal of Marketing Management* (e.g. Bolat and O'Sullivan, 2017; Naidoo, Shankar, and Veer, 2011). Whilst some relevant results were obtained, the topic of 'HE Marketing' is not represented in these higher ranked journals. Nevertheless, the identification of these initial articles began a 'snowballing process', during which related relevant journal articles were identified from journals that were lower-ranked but proved to be more relevant. Examples of such journals include *Studies in Higher Education* (e.g. Kalafatis and Ledden, 2013); *International Journal of Public Sector Management* (e.g. Hemsley-Brown and Lowrie, 2010;); *Higher Education Studies* (e.g. Judson and Taylor, 2014); the *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* (e.g. Guilbault, 2016; Elshamouby, 2015; Mazzarol, Soutar, and Thein, 2001); the *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* (e.g. Szekeres, 2010; Palmer, 2013); and the *Journal of Further and Higher Education* (e.g. Moogan, 2020; Moogan and Baron, 2003). A full breakdown of the number of articles cited from each journal publication is provided below in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Journal in which authors' research was reported (Source: author's own). (Representative sample: full list provided in Table A - 1.)

Title of journal (alphabetic order)	Authors
Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education	Ahmad (2015); Gatfield (1999)
British Educational Research Journal	Foskett, Dyke, and Maringe (2008); Hemsley-Brown (2015)
Higher Education Quarterly	Cao, Zhu and Meng (2016); Davies and Williams (2001); Gunn and Hill (2008); Jongbloed (2003); Korfmann, Muller, Ehlert, and Haase (2019)

Naidoo, Shankar and Veer (2011) observed that (peer-reviewed) educational research is found in either marketing or educational journals, albeit there is a minimal amount of synergy between the two areas. Exceptions are provided by Foskett, Dyke and Maringe (2008) and Ng and Forbes (2009). Educational journals generally focus on how teaching and learning approaches contribute to enhancing the student experience, whilst marketing journals generally take one component of the marketing/promotional mix and carry out an evaluation of how the marketing theory is manifested within the sector, often with a sample taken from a single institution. Vrontis *et al.* (2007) explores how the changes in the profile of a typical student corresponds to vicissitudes experienced in a HEI's marketing activities. Gibbs (2007) and Hayes (2007) emphasised the need for an effective recruitment strategy of students. Notwithstanding the necessity for a more focused, strategic approach, literature is still incoherent (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). There is an apparent indiscriminate use of marketing metaphors in the HE literature which alters the relationship between HEIs and students in respect of the greater levels of consumerism in the market (Ramachandran, 2010). The general direction of HE marketing literature lacks both structure and an appropriate framework that can utilised the effectively measure the choice process (e.g. Nicolescu, 2009; Durkin, McKenna, and Cummins, 2012; Khanna, Jacob, and Yadav, 2014).

Whilst the empirical data collected in this thesis is from the UK HE market, the decision was made to include in this literature review empirical studies from different educational markets and – where relevant – research into non-undergraduate student motivation (e.g. Moogan, 2020 who focused upon international postgraduate students' decision-making process). There are two reasons for this: Firstly, presenting research from just a UK context would mean that the literature review would be sparse. Secondly, the issues of student motivation and student choice are explored in other Westernised contexts. Understanding student motivations in other Westernised contexts is relevant in developing the theoretical framework required for this thesis. This is supported by Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, and Hogg (2013), who purported that cultural aspects should be considered when interpreting the drivers and motivations behind consumer choice, the availability of a range of peer-reviewed journal articles must be capitalised upon to illustrate the general direction of literature in Higher Education Choice Marketing. As a result, whenever appropriate, relevant articles are included.

Table 2.2 provides a breakdown of the country of origin of the research.

Table 2.2: Countries where research was conducted, and the author(s) who carried out that research (source: author's own).

Country	Authors
Australia	Fujita, Harrigan and Soutar (2017); Galan, Lawley, and Clements (2015); Mazzarol and Soutar (2002); Fujita, Harrigan, and Soutar (2018)
Canada	Bélanger, Bali, and Longden (2014)
Germany	Obermeit (2012)
Italy	Petruzzellis and Romanazzi (2010)
The Netherlands	Constantinides and Zinck Stagno (2011)
Portugal	Alves and Raposa (2010); Maria-Cubillo, Sanchez, and Cerviño (2006) Simões and Soares (2010)
South Africa	Bonnema and Van der Waldt (2008)
UK	Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003); Bolat and O'Sullivan (2017); Briggs (2006); Briggs and Wilson (2007); Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009); Chapleo (2011); Dunnett, Moorhouse, Walsh, and Barry (2012); Foskett, Dyke, and Maringe (2008); Maringe (2006); Maringe and Carter (2007); Naidoo, Shankar, and Veer (2011); Rutter, Lettice and Nadeau (2017); Veloutsou, Lewis, and Paton (2004)
USA	Chapman (1981); Carter and Curry (2011); Lowrie (2007)

According to Briggs (2006), most peer-reviewed journals evaluating HE choice are USA-based (e.g. Manski, Wise, and Wise, 1983; Carter and Curry, 2011). This is unsurprising when considering the cultural context and funding mechanisms for studying in the USA (e.g. Baty, 2010). Specifically, the USA is a consumerist, demand-driven society, with consumers being enamoured with the idea of getting the best deal, irrespective of the type of purchase (e.g. Goodwin, Ackerman, and Kiron, 2013). It is, therefore, unsurprising that by comparison minimal research had taken place in a UK context, as – until recently – there has not been a commercial necessity (i.e. for the longevity and profitability of UK institutions) to thoroughly understand motivations and student choice. Prior to 1998, students (and/or their parents) were generally not required to pay any of the tuition fees for embarking on a course of study of Higher Education. Therefore, Wilkins, Shams, and Huisman (2013) state that – whilst a choice still had to be made – consumers were arguably more 'passive' when making their decision. The (large) exception to this is the recruitment of international students, often for taught postgraduate courses. For the majority, international students have never had their fees subsidised by the UK government. As a result, there is a greater body of research into this area (e.g. Maringe, 2006; Carter and Yeo, 2009; Ayoubi and Massoud, 2012; Branco Oliveira and Soares, 2016) and some empirical studies into this area are included to help in understanding the driving factors behind choice.

The remainder of the literature review is structured as follows. Firstly, an overview into the general direction of HE marketing literature is provided. Secondly, an awareness of the key changes in the UK Higher Education market is offered. Thirdly, a critique of the existing HE choice models is given, with a precise identification of the need for a new model to understand student choice. Fourthly, an outline of theory (i.e. the expectancy theory) is presented. Fifthly, a presentation of empirical research into the motivations, choice criteria, and sources of information (both traditional and digital) consulted when choice is made. This presentation groups together key themes of existing literature. Finally, the chapter closes by identifying the main gaps that are found in the current literature and initially highlighted in section 1.1, outlining how *this study* seeks to address those gaps using a proposed conceptual framework.

2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of university education

For the primary consumer (i.e. students) there are several advantages and disadvantages of university education. Advantages of embarking on a degree course may be experienced during the undertaking of a programme of study, or as long-term benefits that results from the experience and/or degree classification. One of these long-term benefits is employability. This alludes to the opportunities for enriching long-term job prospects that arise from obtaining a degree and learning to live independently. Universities collaborate with industry bodies, meaning that courses are designed so that they reflect the latest industry standards and requirements (Jabbar, Analoui, Kong, and Mirza, 2018). Furthermore, these contacts hopefully lead to work experience, placements, and long-term (permanent) employment upon graduation. A university degree is often a prerequisite for a number of job roles (BBC, 2017). There could be a requirement for subject-specific knowledge or transferrable skills (such as presentation and report writing skills) that students gain over the duration of a course. Obtaining a university degree also demonstrates a level of commitment (HE courses are generally for a minimum of 3 years on a full-time basis) and intellectual capacity (Reay, Davies, and Ball, 2011).

Whilst consuming the service, students can develop subject knowledge, coupled with the lifestyle benefits of attending a Higher Education institution. Students seek to balance study commitments with part-time employment (often out of necessity because student loans do not cover their living costs). Courses at certain institutions may facilitate students studying overseas and/or undertake a placement as part of their course (Crebert, Bates, Bell, Patrick, and Cragnolini, 2004; Jackson, 2015). Various social initiatives are aimed at the student market, both sporting activities and societies at universities themselves, and through various external partners (e.g. discounted cinema tickets; student themed club nights). According to HESA (2019) many students attend university straight from college (i.e. aged 18) and – particularly if they study away from home – they have the chance to make new friends, forging their own personal identify away from family and childhood friends (van Herpen, Meeuwisse, Hofman, Severiens, and Arends,2017).

Mirroring these clear advantages of attending university, there are also some disadvantages. Again, these can be framed from both an employment and a lifestyle perspective. Institutions need to recognise the various opportunity costs that students forego to attend university. Whilst employability is high on the sector’s agenda, there is no guarantee of a degree equating to being offered a graduate role (Owen 2016). Whilst undertaking a programme of study, students are not necessarily progressing on a career ladder. Secondly, whilst the student loan does not have to be paid back until income reaches a certain threshold, students on average will owe approximately £50,000 upon graduation (BBC, 2017). To combat this level of debt, increased numbers of students are living at home to reduce expenditure, meaning the independence and lifestyle benefits enjoyed by previous generations are not as prevalent (Busby, 2017; UCAS, 2018).

Now that an overview into the advantages and disadvantages of attending university has been presented, this chapter will now provide an overview of the key changes in the UK Higher Education market.

2.3 Changes in the UK Higher Education market

O’Brien (2019) highlights the breadth of challenges facing universities, including: Brexit[1]; the declining international reputation of UK institutions; global competition; variable student fees; concerns regarding research funding; increased costs; providing value for money; recruiting the right people; student welfare; and protecting free speech.

---

[1] Brexit is the terminology used to describe the decision of the UK electorate to leave the European Union.

Binsardi and Ekulugo (2003) state that the UK Higher Education market is an established, global phenomenon. This is a viewpoint shared by numerous author (e.g. Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007; and Zheng, 2014). McLeay, Lichy, and Assad (2018) assert that – in spite of uncertainty caused by Brexit – the UK HE sector remains well placed to recruit students. This contrasts with assertions by Adams (2019), who found that vice-chancellors are concerned that students from EU countries could decrease significantly. Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2010), Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2016), and James-MacEachern and Yun (2017) highlight that English-speaking institutions have a key role in recruiting and providing an enriching learning experience for students. The positive role that institutions can play is offset by the distress caused because of confusing government policy, particularly in relation to applications (e.g. Mughal, 2016). Whilst macro-environmental factors have caused substantial changes to the recruitment of international students, changes to the undergraduate provision has also been profound over the last 20 years (e.g. Jones, 2016; Thiele, Singleton, Pope, and Stanistreet, 2016).

Figure 2.1 demonstrates a range of developments that have impacted the UK Higher Education sector. These macro and micro-environment changes impact institutions and students alike.

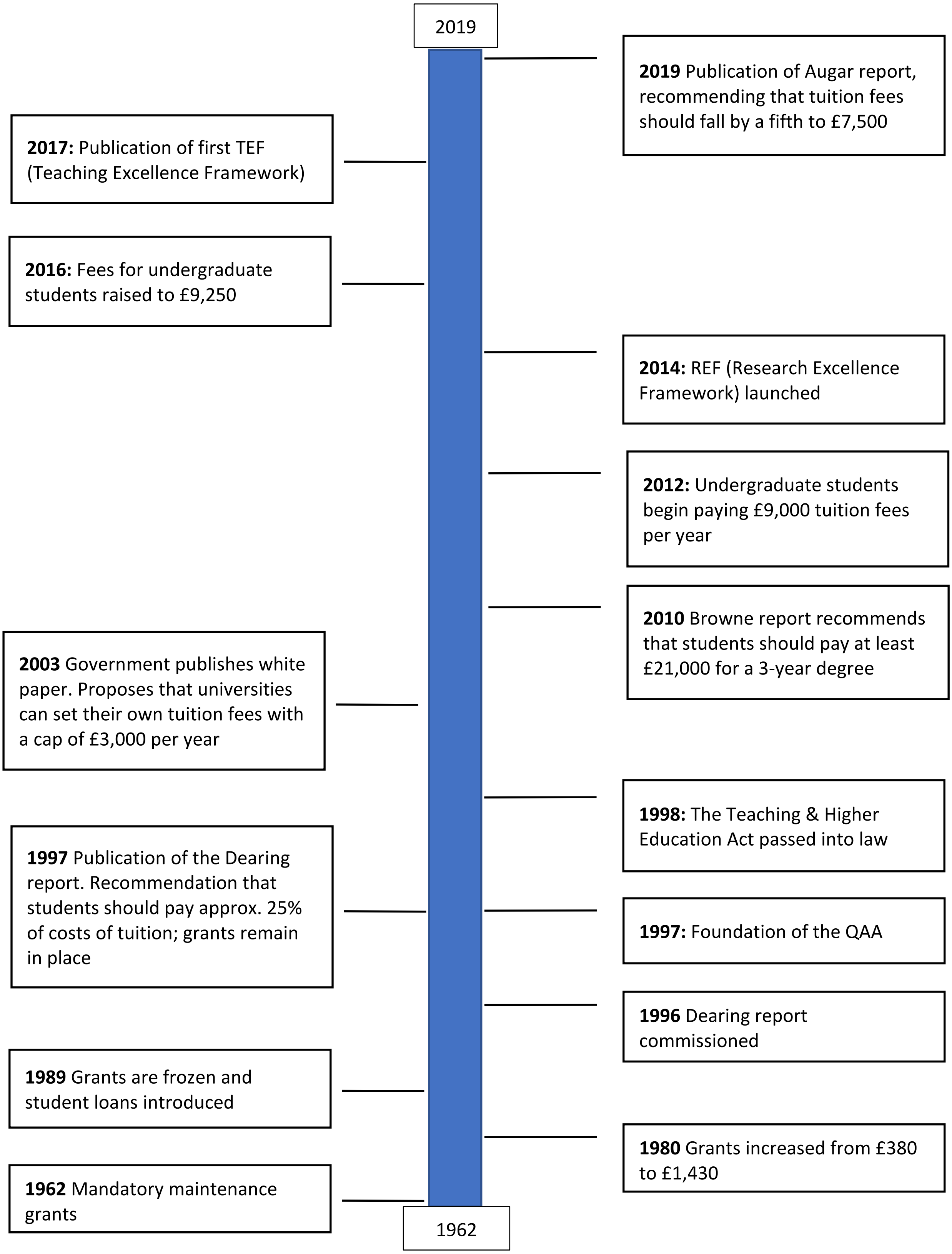

Figure 2.1: Timeline of developments in UK Higher Education sector (source: author's own).

One of the driving, motivating factors behind understanding student choice in the UK is the recent changes to the funding structure (e.g. Dearing, 1998; Browne, 2009; and Augar, 2019). Particularly for those who commenced their studies from 2012 – when tuition fees of up to £9,000 were introduced – there is an increased burden of debt placed upon students and their families (e.g. Melanthiou, Thrassou, and Vrontis, 2017; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2015; and El Nemar, Vrontis, and Thrassou, 2018). Increasing levels of debt has led to parents coupling their emotional interest (i.e. of their offspring attending university) with a greater level of financial investment (e.g. Papworth, 2013). Whereas students are attracted to the prospect of enjoying a student lifestyle (e.g. Lightfoot, 2016), this is now tempered with an awareness of needing to be focused on employment prospects resulting from any course of study (e.g. Woodall, Hiller, and Resnick, 2014; Haycock, 2016; James and Yun, 2018).

Whilst changes to the funding structure have received widespread media coverage and criticism, these changes have had a relatively minor impact on student enrolment numbers. In seven out of the ten application cycles since increased tuition fees were introduced, University College and Admissions Service (UCAS) applications rose. (The period where applications fell – between 2016 and 2018 – was attributed to a drop in mature and international students, coupled with the financial uncertainty of Brexit (Cashell, 2017). Furthermore, this figure reflects nationwide levels of applications, and fails to account for sustained rises at Russell Group institutions.) According to UCAS (2019), 561,420 applicants had applied for UK undergraduate places by the January 2019 deadline. Esson and Ertl (2016) highlight that students are aware that they will not have to pay back loans until their income meets a certain threshold, meaning that any concerns over increased levels of debt are offset against the short-term mindset of prospective university applicants. Though participation in HE has remained constant (e.g. Dearden, Fitzsimons, and Wyness, 2011), Wilkins, Shams, and Huisman (2013) asserted that students and their influencers (e.g. parents) spend longer making a decision. Various research concludes that there are increased levels of expectation from undergraduate students of whatever institution they decide to attend (e.g. Bates and Kaye, 2014; Cooper-Hind and Taylor, 2012; Kaye and Bates, 2017; and Jungblut, Vukasovic, and Stensaker, 2015).

Whilst student numbers have remained relatively constant, the changes also mean that universities are far more accountable to stakeholders (de la Torre, Rossi, and Sagarra, 2018). Stakeholders include staff, trade unions, local communities, business partners, alumni, existing and prospective students, parents, local and national media, and the local and state government (Chapleo and Simms, 2010). This accountability is embedded in a range of UK legislative measures implemented to ensure that an appropriate level of value is provided. Measures include the foundation of the QAA; and the launch of quality frameworks such as REF and TEF. The development of such measures has given rise to institutions being benchmarked and measured against one another, via various university league tables (e.g. Marginson and Van der Wende, 2007; Tapper and Filippakou, 2009; and Shields, 2016). Examples of these rankings include the 'Times Higher Education League Tables'; 'The Complete University Guide'; 'The Guardian League Tables', and the 'National Student Satisfaction (NSS)'. Adams (2018), however, highlights that such league tables can be misleading to prospective students and their key influencers. Nevertheless, Moogan (2020: p. 84) asserts that '*… HEIs must be more student-led and customer-focused…'…*

These changes have led to an incessant pressure to recruit an appropriate number of students for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. This was highlighted by a House of Commons Report (2018), which was informed by both the NUS (National Union of Students) and University Alliance that universities respond to an increasingly competitive market by investing more in marketing efforts. Whilst these efforts are needed, the report also stated that not all marketing efforts are above reproach, with the ASA (Adverting Standards Agency) having to intervene to ask institutions to either remove or alter specific marketing messages. For example, in 2017, claims were upheld against the University of Leicester and the University of Teesside, who did not make the basis for comparative claims clear. A claim against the University of West London was also upheld when an advertisement was ruled misleading because the terminology 'modern universities' was deemed to be ambiguous. Finally, a claim against the University of Strathclyde (Glasgow) was also upheld because reference was made to being ranked No.1 based upon REF 2014 rankings even though REF 2014 rankings did not formally rank institutions, making the advertisement misleading.

Based upon these recent changes to the UK HE market, there are a number of key influencers that are prevalent within the competitive landscape. Namely, students are focused upon the employment and lifestyle benefits that can result from undertaking a course of study. Furthermore, there are a range of familial influences – such as parents – that can also act as a catalyst behind a prospective student's decision to attend a university. These changes to the market are also offset against the development of digital channels, and this is explored in greater detail below.

2.3.1 The marketisation of Higher Education

Notwithstanding that most research prior to 2006 focused on a USA context, the UK, however, was the first country to adopt the approach of the 'student as a consumer' (e.g. Naidoo, Shanker, and Veer, 2011; Molseworth, Scullion, and Nixon, 2011). Viewing the student as a consumer is a clear shift away from students being co-partners, learners, students, and advocates for institutions. There is an overwhelming level of expectation that institutions must meet in relation to determining and addressing motivations for attending university, and this is the (broad) area that this thesis explores.

These core changes in the HE sector have led to the marketisation of Higher Education (e.g. Judson and Taylor, 2014; Molesworth, Scullion, and Nixon, 2011; Nedbalová, Greenace, and Schulz, 2014; Brown and Carasso, 2014; Nixon, Scullion, and Hearn, 2018). Nedbalová *et al.* (2014: p. 179) define marketisation as being *'… the gradual introduction of the Economic Market logic into HE'*. It should be noted that whilst the marketisation of HE is a driving factor behind varying levels of consumer demand, the literature on marketing for HE is distinctively different from the literature on the marketisation of HE (Nedbalová, Greenacre, and Schulz, 2014).

Molesworth *et al.* (2011) proclaim the following four ways in which the marketisation of Higher Education is characterised:

1. Institutional autonomy: this refers to the freedom that a university has to determine how it operates. This can include – but is not exclusively – the mission, subjects, admissions, students and staff members.
2. Institutional competition: the competition between institutions for students, revenue and status. There are four criteria that determine institutional competitiveness. Firstly, relative ease of market entry. Secondly, genuine possibility of student choice. Thirdly, the level of university funding being directly linked to the number of students enrolling on a course, and, finally, no imposed limits on the number of students that universities can recruit.
3. Price: this denotes the direct costs associated with studying a degree course (i.e. tuition fees and accommodation). In a marketised sector, it relates to whether universities can charge whatever fees they like.
4. Information: this evaluates whether students have access to information that facilitates a choice of programme and/or institution. In a marketised sector, how the quality of this information can be protected must be questioned. Information is often presented in the form of league tables (as previously discussed), and Molesworth et al. (2011) emphasise the need for transparency when interpreting the results of league tables.

It should be noted that whilst there has been increased levels of marketisation within the HE sector, the notion of marketisation appears to be focused from an institutional perspective. Whilst these may be the key micro drivers from a sector-wide perspective, these drivers – whilst impacting upon the sector – are (justifiably) unlikely to be in the mindset of prospective students (and their parents) when determining the extent to which institutions are likely to address their academic and pastoral needs. Whilst Angulo, Pergelova and Rialp (2010) highlight that these factors have led to increased competition between institutions, Hayes (2007) ponders what the future trends in Higher Education will be, and how this could facilitate increased levels of marketisation in the sector. In addition to the challenges of increased competition and benchmarking, institutions are faced with the challenge that students do not behave in a rational manner (e.g. Szekeres, 2010; Baldwin and James, 2000). Pimentel Botas, Huisman, and de Boer (2013) express the need for discourse, identifying the environment that students would like to be part of moving forward. From a student-choice perspective, probing questions into what motivates prospective students to commence the application process, and what moderates the relationship between a student's decision and these initial motivations, must be asked (e.g. Altbach, 2004).

Now that an overview of the main changes of the UK HE system have been provided, an overview of the process of applying for university in the UK is hereby presented.

2.4 The process of applying for university

In the UK, undergraduate students apply for a university place through UCAS (The University College and Admissions Service). UCAS is a central body that deals with undergraduate student applications, via an online portal. It can be assumed that applicants undertake their UCAS application after identifying a prospective course/university, and finding out as much as possible about that course/university. Information that prospective students can find out can include the entrance criteria; the course content; the halls of residence; the quality of the university; the ranking of the university; visiting the university on open days; and engaging with the university's social media channels.

Dunnett, Moorhouse, Walsh, and Barry (2012: p. 201) stated that '*….Higher Education is a significant, usually one-off, individual purchase; a decision likely to affect not only the next three or four years and degree outcome but also a future career'.* Therefore, deciding which university to attend should incorporate a high level of involvement. Involvement is a *'… person's perceived relevance of the object based on their inherent needs, values, and interests'* (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, and Hogg, 2013: p. 204). Babin and Harris (2016: p. 96) state that consumer involvement '*represents the degree of personal relevance a consumer finds in pursing value from a given category of consumption*'. Students should select a course that they believe provides them with the best opportunity to develop – both professionally and personally – and should choose to undertake a degree course at an institution that is consistent with their inherent values and interests.

McManus, Haddock-Fraser and Rands (2017) proposed three stages of decision-making that a student will go through:

1. Deciding to go to university
2. Consideration of which universities to explore further (information search stage)
3. Selection of a preferred university (choice stage).

For this thesis, focus is given to the third stage of this process (i.e. the selection of a preferred university – choice stage).

One way in which literature can be dissected is from whose perspective it is gathered. An overview of the different stakeholders is offered by Chapleo and Simms (2010), reproduced below in Figure 2.2.

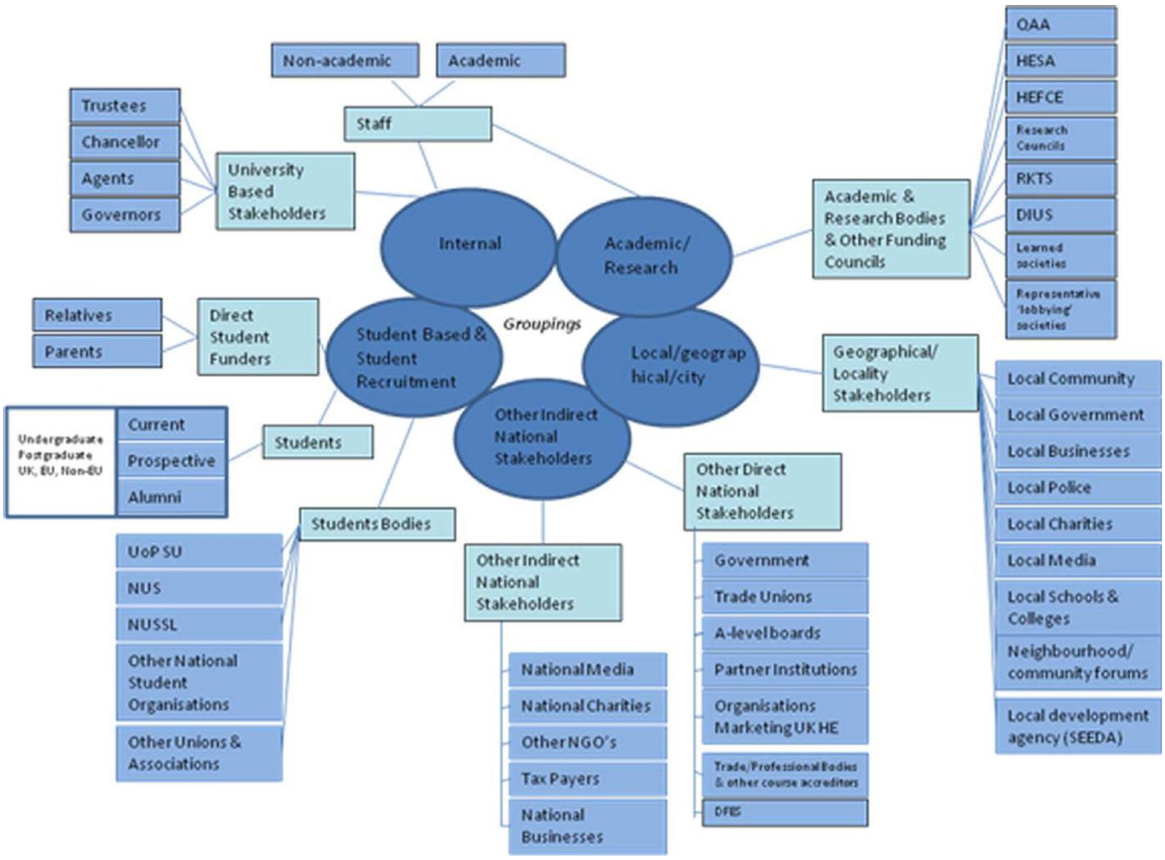

Figure 2.2: Groupings and types of stakeholders (Source: Chapleo and Simms, 2010: p. 16–17)

Prospective students are likely to have differing views to institutions, in terms of their motivation and what influences choice. Likewise, there may also be differences in the views of students in comparison with those of their parents. When reviewing literature on student choice, these are the three most prominent stakeholders when it comes to academic literature in student choice.

This literature review has thus far provided an overview into the advantages and disadvantages of an HE education to prospective students; key changes in the UK market, notably the marketisation of the sector, and the process of applying for university, coupled with an identification of the key stakeholders. This literature review will now present an overview of existing conceptual frameworks into student choice.

2.5 Existing conceptual frameworks on HE choice models

Whilst a range of traditional consumer behaviour/choice models have been applied to a range of sectors (including the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the Theory of Reasoned Action, and the Consumer Decision Process model), Gibbs (2007) and Helgesen (2008) assert that traditional marketing models are not fit for the HE environment as they fail to address the collaborative nature of relationships between HEIs and key stakeholders (as identified in Figure 2.2). Furthermore, these more traditional consumer choice models are linear in nature and over simplify a complex process.

Maringe (2006) identified four areas of thought when it comes to conceptually presenting consumer choice in a HE context:

1. Structural models – e.g. Gambetta (1996) Roberts (1984). Choice in context of institutional choice based upon economic and cultural constraints.
2. Economic theories (e.g. Becker, 1975).
3. The importance of personality and subjective judgement in choice and decision-making (e.g. Hemsley-Brown, 2001).
4. Choice being a 3-staged process (e.g. Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001). The first element is context that choice is being made. The second component incorporates the range of choice influencers. The third element comprises the choosers themselves in terms of their self-image, perceptions help about available pathways.

Literature into selection of a HE institution can be manifested in different ways. For example, it could refer either to the choice of optional module (i.e. ‘options’ in the UK system); or the choice to study overseas (either at a satellite campus to an institution or at an overseas based institution). Existing conceptual literature provides frameworks for these stages of choice. For example, Galotti (1999) and Beggs, Bantham, and Taylor (2008) provide conceptual frameworks to measure the choice that existing students go through when choosing a major. Furthermore, Branco Oliveira and Soares (2016) and Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) present models for the decision processes of international students; whilst Wilkins and Huisman (2011) propose factors that influence studying at international campuses. However, considering the context of this thesis, the decision was made to focus on conceptual frameworks that conceptualise the process of student choice of institution (i.e. consumer choice).

The following five models of student choice in Higher Education are hereby presented.

1. Chapman model (1981)
2. Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka model (2015)
3. Cubillo, Sanchez, and Cervinho model (2006)
4. Vrontis, Thrassou, and Melanthiou model (2007)
5. El Nemar, Vrontis, and Thrassou model (2018)

2.5.1 Chapman model (1981)

Chapman's (1981) model is presented as it provides a representation of some of the earlier models of student choice. Similar models were offered by Jackson (1982) and Hanson and Litten (1982). As depicted in Figure 2.3, Chapman's model is easy to interpret due to it being linear in nature. Subsequent conceptual frameworks have used Chapman's model as their underlying premise (e.g. Dawes and Brown, 2002; Harker, Slade, and Harker, 2001; Vrontis *et al.*, 2007). Nevertheless, Chapman himself cedes that this model is not exhaustive, and various extensions of this seminal model have been proposed as macro- and micro-environmental factors have changed. Furthermore, Chapman's model only incorporated minimal socio-demographic variables (i.e. students aged 18–21, an awareness of the student's family, and the type of college that students attended).

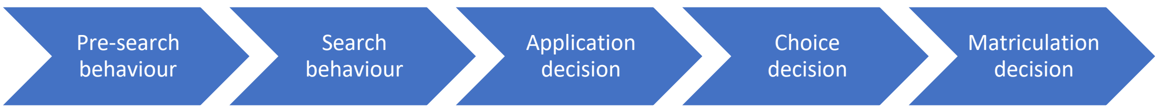

Figure 2.3: Chapman's Model of the College Search Process.

A model similar to the Chapman model is the Stimulus Response Model of the HE consumer behaviour process (Hemsley-Brown, 1999; Kotler *et al.*, 2014). This is presented below in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Stimulus Response Model of the HE Consumer Behaviour Process.

In conjunction with weaknesses found in the Chapman model, the stimulus response model is also too crude. It suggests that the choice to select a HE course is a simplistic, straight forward, linear process with no awareness of the impact of intervening variables. As previously discussed, the decision is complex, and such linear models do not give credence to the high-involvement decision that is made. Therefore, a presentation of more complex models is hereby made.

2.5.2 Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka model (2015)

Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2015) proposed a black box model of HE consumer behaviour. This incorporated amendments to a model first proffered by Kotler and Armstrong (2013). This model is designed for managers of HE recruitment and marketing. Keeping this in mind, it fails to account for the different thought and process iterations that applications are likely to go through. Akin to shortcomings in the previous models, there is minimal awareness of how different variables moderate the decision process, nor is there explicit awareness of the motivation variables of prospective students, although the model does have reference to consumer attitude, student characteristic and macro-environmental environmental factors. Notwithstanding this, the model is again presented in a linear manner, with little awareness of the extent to which intervening variables can influence the choice process.

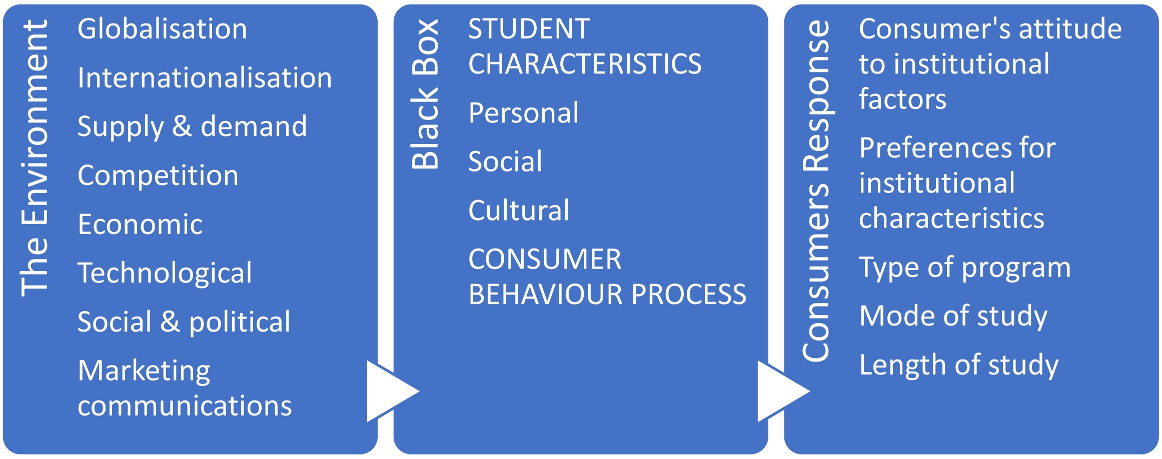

Figure 2.5: Higher Education Consumer Black Box Model.

2.5.3 Cubillo, Sanchez, and Cervinho model (2006)

Cubillo *et al.*'s (2006) model (Figure 2.6) identifies how five factors contribute to the purchase intentions of international students. With an initial list of 19 factors, five main factors were identified as contributing towards purchase intention. These were country image effect, city effect, personal reasons, institution image and programme. Whilst this model encapsulates a range of factors, Cubillo *et al.* failed to empirically test their model, making it is difficult to determine the appropriateness of the respective factors, and its overall strength. Other than reference to communication (within the institutional image variable) there is minimal awareness of how different sources of information drive choice. Nevertheless, this framework has been used as a starting point for other investigations (e.g. Rudd, Djafarova, and Waring (2012); Li (2019); and Lam, Yeo, Tan, Chong, and Oh (2014)). Rudd *et al.*'s research concluded that external factors related to a city can have an impact on a student's destination choice. There is a greater amount of research into the impact of 'country effect' on student choice (e.g. Lam *et al.* 2014; Agyei-Mensah, Ho, and Lee, 2016; Ghazarian and Keller, 2016; Morrish and Lee, 2011; Chee, Butt, Wilkins, and Ong, 2016; Herrero-Crespo, San Martin Guitierrez, and Garcia Salmones, 2016; and Ghazarian, 2016). In research carried out in New Zealand, Morrish and Lee (2011) identified that countries must sustain the perception of their states to ensure that institutions are able to maintain a competitive advantage. This was supported by Herrero-Crespo e*t al.* (2016) who concluded that the country-of-origin effect can lead to a sustained competitive advantage. Hemsley-Brown (2012), Wilkins *et al.* (2012), and Rudd *et al.* (2012) all found that personal reasons were reasons why students would apply to an institution. In terms of programme evaluation, Dunnett, Moorhouse, Walsh, and Barry (2012); Wilkins and Huisman (2013); and Wilkins and Huisman (2015) concluded that students would evaluate the specific course of study when selecting a university. Finally, the 'institution image' is the component that has been researched in the greatest depth (e.g. Tait and De Jager, 2009; Sultan and Yin Wong, 2014; Hemsley-Brown, 2012; Gibbs, Pashiardis, and Ivy, 2008; Alves and Raposo, 2010). For example, Alves and Raposa's (2010) carried out structural equation modelling on 2,687 students and found that a university's image was the most prevalent component in terms of driving choice.

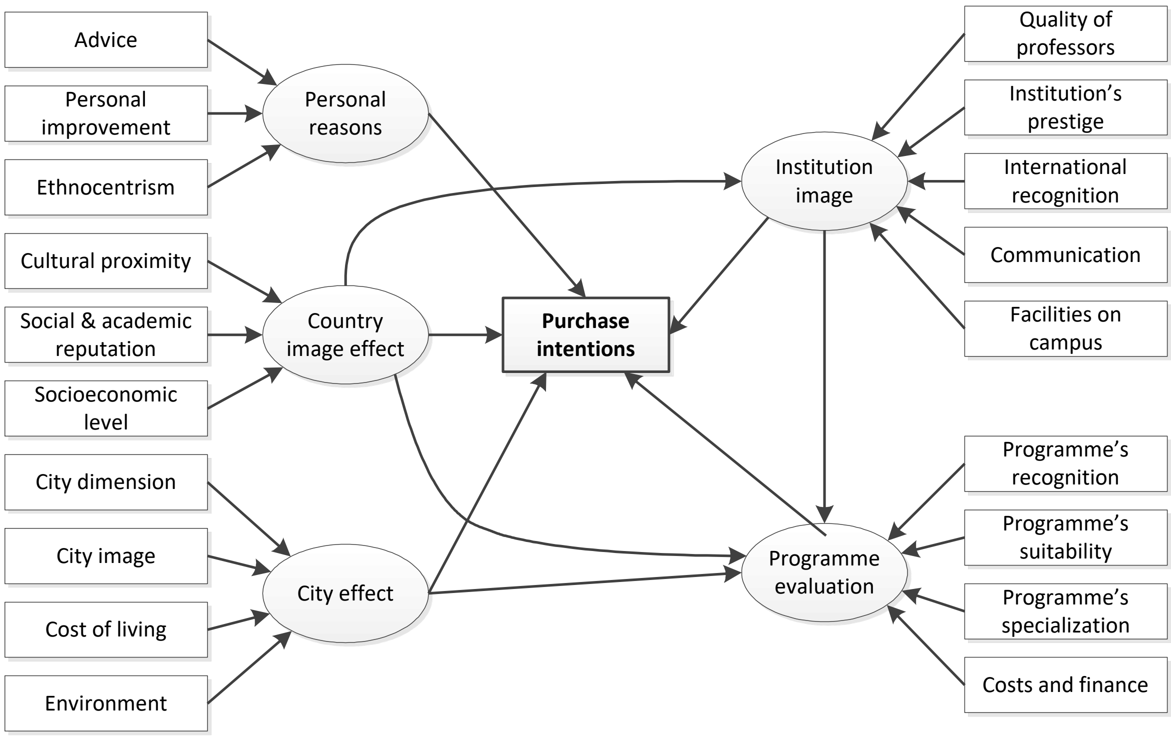

Figure 2.6: A model of international students' preferences (source: Cubillo *et al.* 2006).

Whilst Cubillo *et al's* (2006) model provides an awareness of individuals choice criteria, there is minimal awareness of the motivations to attend university, nor the different sources of information that are consulted when deciding (including digital channels, traditional channels, and personal recommendations. Reference is made to 'communication', though this appears to be an all encapsulating term).

2.5.4 Vrontis Thrassou, and Melanthiou model (2007)

Vrontis, Thrassou and Melanthiou (2007) presented a contemporary model of student choice, which incorporates the Chapman (1981) and Hossler (1989) models. The Vrontis *et al*. (2007) model provided an awareness of the service environment that HE institutions operate in with focus placed upon the quality of the student experience. This model is presented below in Figure 2.7.

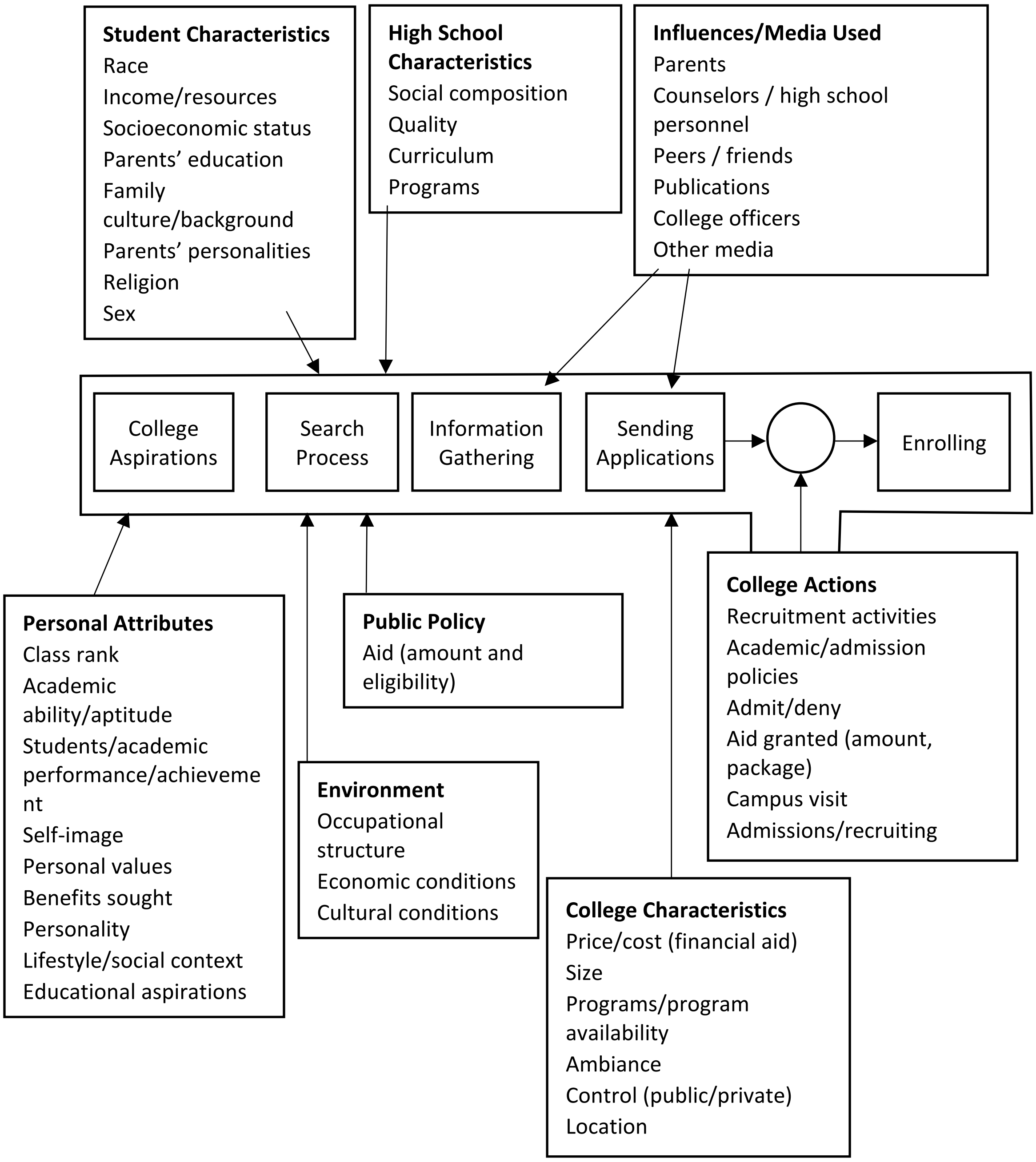

Figure 2.7: A preliminary integrated generic Higher Education student-choice model (Source: Vrontis *et al.* 2007).

In a similar vein to Chapman's model (1981), this framework adopts the consumer decision-making process of the central pillar of the model (e.g. college aspirations being the equivalent to identification of need; whilst sending application is the equivalent of shortlisting a range of options). Vrontis *et al.* identifies different points in the student-choice process where different moderators play a role. These can either be demographic components (e.g. student characteristics); information related to the background of applications (i.e. high school characteristics and personal attributes); sources of information consulted (i.e. influences/media used); marketing activities that can take place (i.e. college actions); and micro (i.e. college characteristics); and macro (i.e. public policy and environment) factors. In this initial model, Vrontis *et al.* pinpoints the respective stage in the search process that these moderating variables are likely to impact. This conceptualisation is, however, questionable. For example, Vrontis *et al*.'s model suggests that 'personal attributes' will come in at the 'college aspirations' (i.e. identification need) stage. However, it is argued that personal attributes could equally act as a moderator in the choice process. Furthermore, arguably, there is crossover with some of the items within the personal attribute's category (such as between personal values and self-image).

Whilst Figure 2.7 was the initial observation of existing empirical models, Figure 2.8 represents Vrontis *et al.*'s (2007) convergence of this review and the incorporation of other identified variables.

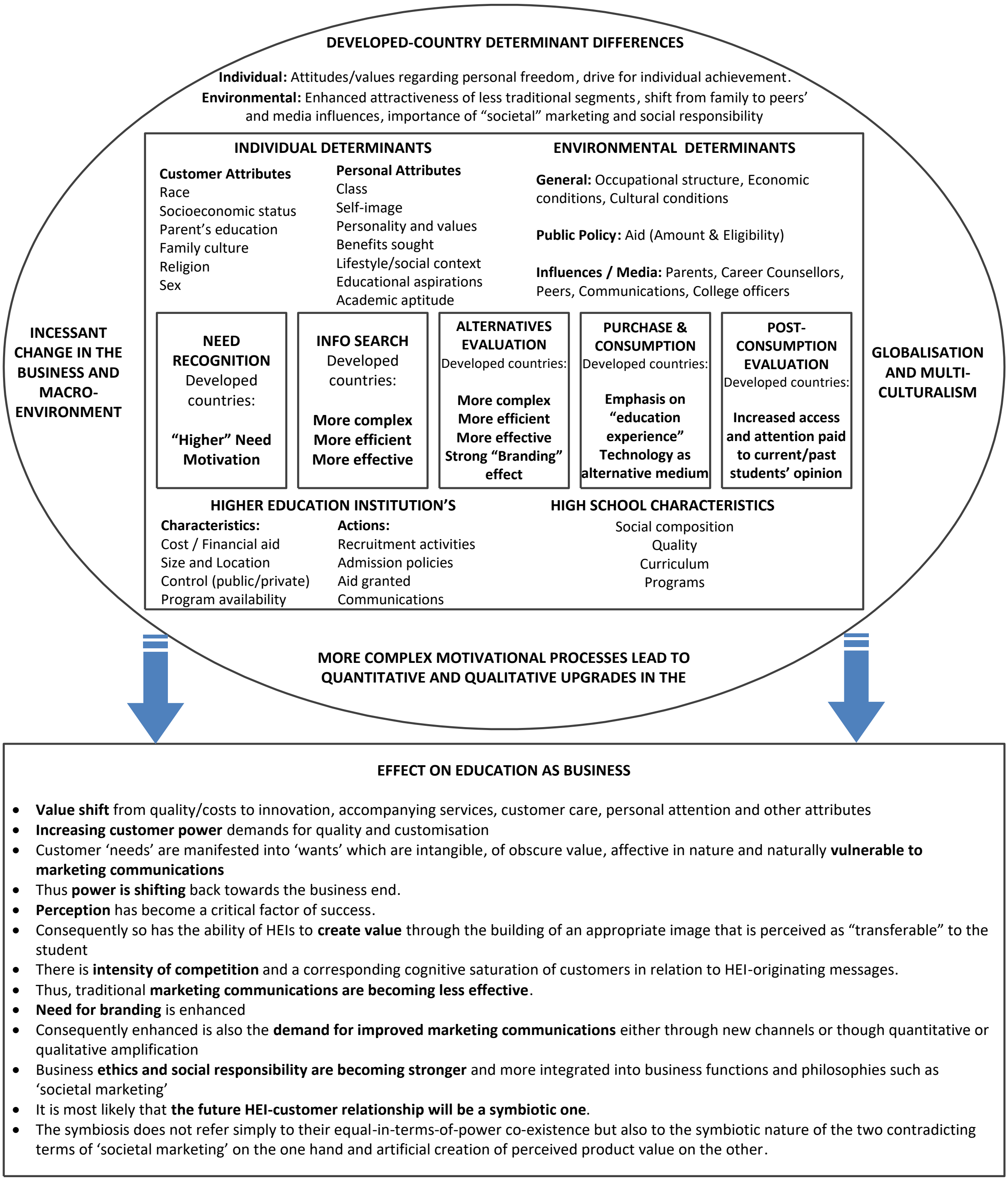

Figure 2.8: A contemporary Higher Education student-choice model for developed countries (Source: Vrontis *et al*. 2007).

This model merges the variables 'purchase' and 'consumption' (seemingly for practical purposes, as the service is consumed in conjunction with the purchase). Furthermore, the variable 'divestment' (that is prevalent in some variations of the Consumer Decision Process model) is removed (as students are unable to sell their qualification at the completion of their studies). In this adjusted model, Vrontis *et al.* addressed the concerns raised above in relation to moderators only having an impact on certain stages of the student-choice process. In their model, Vrontis *et al.* recognise the place of the HE sector in a global context and the constant changing of the sector, albeit with minimal awareness of the key drivers in relation to a global setting. Reference to motivations for study and sources of information are given (with reference to benefits sought, and lifestyle and social aspirations, and communications respectively) but these are very broad terminologies that are used, with minimal reference in terms of where motivations fit within the wider discussions. For example, what are the specific lifestyle and social aspirations that applicants would look to achieve? What sources of information are consulted (e.g. digital/face-to-face/rankings systems)? This paper was admittedly proposed 12 years ago, meaning many of the technological developments in terms of social media, virtual and augmented reality, and mobile marketing would simply not have been used as a source of information for prospective students. The biggest criticism of this model (that is arguably insurmountable) is in terms of testing it. This is reflected in the lack of authors who have subsequently used this model for empirical testing. Covering all five elements of the Consumer Decision Process model would mean that empirically testing this model would be difficult, as it would be very difficult to predict at what point potential students would move from one stage of the model to another. This point is supported by El Nemar *et al.* (2018), who presenting their own conceptual framework (below), though Moogan (2020) did test all five stages of the CDP, albeit over an 18-month period. This built upon previous work by Moogan and Baron (2003); Moogan, Baron, and Harris (2001), and Moogan *et al.* (2001).

2.5.5 El Nemar, Vrontis, and Thrassou *et al* model (2018)

With an aim of addressing the shortcomings of existing conceptual frameworks, El Nemar, Vrontis, and Thrassou (2018) model built upon the Vrontis *et al.* (2007) model, albeit El Nemar *et al.*'s model incorporated macro- and micro-environmental changes. This is presented below in Figure 2.9.

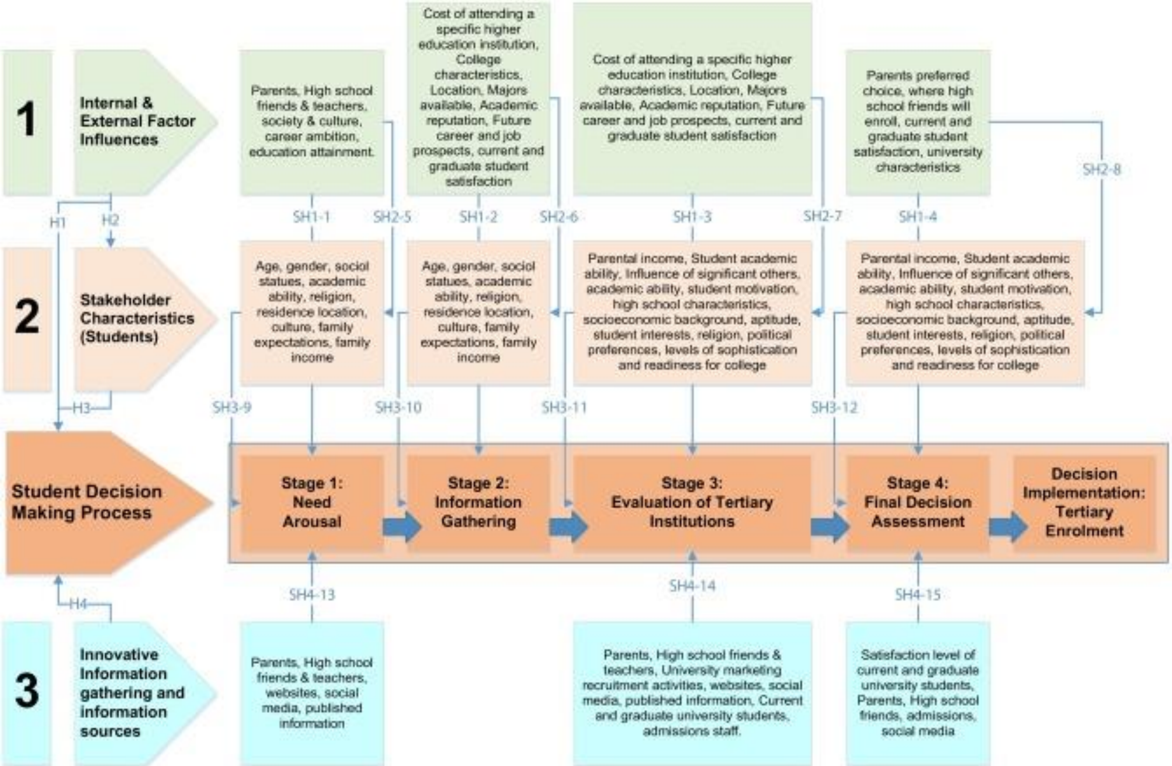

Figure 2.9: A preliminary stakeholder framework for the Student Choice Decision-making process (Source: El Nemar *et al.* 2018).

Akin to models proffered by Chapman (1981) and Vrontis *et al.* (2007), this framework incorporated the five stages of the consumer decision-making process. El Nemar *et al.* addressed shortcomings found in the aforementioned models (Chapman, 1981; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2015; Cubillo *et al.* 2006; Vrontis *et al.* 2006) by empirically testing these constructs (with a mixed methods approach of surveys coupled with focus groups) and proposed the following, adjusted, conceptual framework.

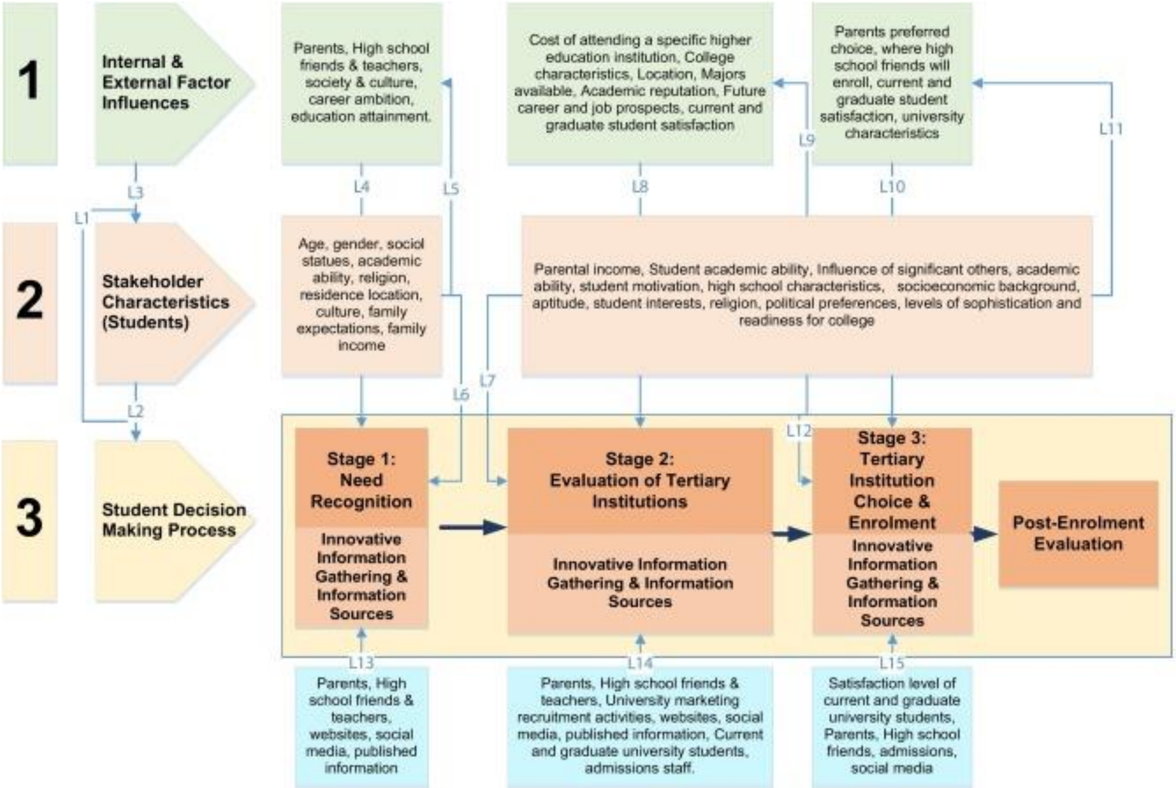

Figure 2.10: A stakeholder framework for the Student Choice Decision-making process (Source: El Nemar *et al.* 2018).

In this adjusted model, the stage 'information gathering' has been removed from the model, and 'enrolment' is merged with the 'tertiary institution choice and enrolment'. Therefore, criticisms aimed at the Vrontis *et al.* model are addressed in this research (i.e. re-testing the model would be a more manageable process). There are still concerns over the appropriateness of this model though. Namely, a student characteristic is given as 'motivations'. Motivations are a complex phenomenon, incorporating both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Integrating an all-encompassing statement of motivations alongside other demographic characteristics suggests that motivations are viewed as an intervening variable. Furthermore, in El Nemar *et al*.'s conceptualisation, motivations do not arise until the stage of evaluation of tertiary institutions (i.e. stage 2). Whilst this may be the perception of El Nemar *et al.*, there is a need to consider the conceptualisation role that motivations play in the student-choice process. Secondly, the use of the Consumer Decision Process model to conceptually base student choice on is a somewhat dated approach, for something that is demonstrably a high-involvement decision. As emphasised in section 2.5, the Consumer Decision Process model is a linear process and falls short of providing the necessary scope to illustrate the complexity of the choice process that students undertake. Finally, by El Nemar *et al*.'s own admission, this conceptual framework has been developed in reference to a Lebanese context (i.e. for student choice in the HE sector in Lebanon). Therefore, there are questions as the extent to which the framework is transferable to a Western, traditional

HE cultural context. Nevertheless, there may be parallels that can be drawn once empirical data collection has been carried out within this study.

2.5.6 Conclusion of review into conceptual models

From reviewing these five models of student choice in Higher Education, it is apparent that there are gaps in the conceptual framing of the debate. Firstly, whilst some recent models have been generated in terms of student choice (e.g. Vrontis *et al.* 2007; Cubillo *et al.* 2006; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2015), these are predominantly conceptual and have not been empirically tested by the original authors, albeit there have been authors who have used these said models as a starting point for their own investigations – as discussed above. The only exception to this is the model presented by Chapman (1981), who presented a minimalistic, basic model in relation to college choice. Secondly, the five models are presented either from the perspective of the student body, or institution. There is no model that has been generated and tested that reflects the perspective of both key stakeholders in this relationship (i.e. students and institutions). Thirdly, where 'source of information' has been discussed, other than El Nemar *et al.* (2018), there is minimal awareness of how digital media plays a role in the student-choice process of prospective students. There is a question of how appropriate digital media platforms are in relation to other informational influencers. Thirdly, from a practical perspective, there is a need to develop and test a model that is fit for the current competitive environment, considering the various macro and micro changes. Finally, a common shortcoming shared by the models is a minimal understanding of what the motivating factors behind student choice are. Whilst a major commonality within four out of the five models is the linkage to the traditional Consumer Decision Process model, there is a failure to appreciate the relationships that exists within and between the key drivers of a choice process (i.e. how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations influence student choice, and the impact of intervening variables on this process). The only models that currently incorporates motivation, choice criteria, and sources of information are presented by Vrontis *et al.* (2007) and El Nemar *et al.* (2018), where only minimal reference to motivation is given. It is this final gap – that was also highlighted in section 1.1 – that this thesis provides the primary theoretical contribution towards, by focusing predominantly on the area of motivation for the premise of the investigation.

This thesis addresses these limitations by, firstly, committing to testing any model that is generated. Secondly, ensuring that any empirical testing incorporates the perspective of both institution and students. Thirdly, ensuring that the role of digital media as a source of information is investigated. Finally, ensuring that motivations – with a distinction made between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations – are integral to any model.

There is a call, therefore, for the development and testing of a new conceptual framework. Prior to the development of such a model, a review into the constitutional components of consumer motivation is provided.

From here on, to support the development of a conceptual framework, the remainder of the literature review is presented in process order. In other words, the chapter is structured to correspond to the different stages/thought processes that prospective applicants are likely to go through when making an application for university. Therefore, the next section begins with an identification of motivating factors driving an individual's decision to attend university. To begin with, there is an evaluation on what constitutes motivation.

2.6 Motivation

Pincus (2004) states that the process that influences purchase decisions is of great interest to researchers and practitioners. Within interdisciplinary fields such as sociology, social psychology, and marketing, there are different theories that explain why consumers engage in certain behaviours. A fundamental component found throughout these theories is motivation (e.g. Pettinico and Milne, 2017; Goodwin, Smith, and Spiggle, 1990; Heath, Tynan, and Ennew, 2011). Pettinico and Milne (2017: p. 282) state that motivation is '*… the instigation and direction of behaviour; representing the desire to undertake the actions needed to achieve an outcome*'. Babin and Harris (2018: p. 92) define motivation as being *'inner reasons or driving forces behind human actions that drive consumers to address real need'*. Hausman (2000) states that whilst motivation may not necessarily lead to purchasing a product or service, in understanding what motivates consumers, marketers are able to spark an initial interest in a product, service or experience. Ultimately, motivations are the underpinning force behind every single consumer decision. Consumers embark on a purchasing process as they are seeking some sort of value to address a need or want. Key for marketers is understanding these needs, as they act as a catalyst to kick-start subsequent thoughts, feelings and behaviour (Babin and Harris, 2018). For example, in the case of HE consumer choice, if marketers understand the different motivations behind why applicants want to study in HE, then they can position their service offering accordingly. As will be explored in the subsequent sections, this is not to say that motivations completely direct behaviour – other sources will moderate the relationship between these initial motivations and the subsequent behaviours.

There are four key aspects of motivation, namely: homeostasis; self-improvement; value; and involvement. These are discussed below.

Homeostasis refers to the process in which the body seeks to regulate its internal environment (Parker and Tavassoli, 2000). Harris and Babin (2018: p. 2018) state that homeostasis refers to the fact that the body naturally reacts in a way to maintain a normal, constant blood stream. This touches upon the achievement motivation theory (i.e. Maslow's theory – explored below), whereby consumers are motivated to undertake purchase decisions that will maintain a relatively stable internal state. This can refer to the physical and/or mental health of an individual/consumer. Consumers will be motivated to choose certain products and services that maintain safety, security, and well-being. For example, a consumer may purchase a pair of gloves in winter to ensure that their hands are warm. Homeostasis extends beyond the idea of clothing. For example, social isolation may lead to feelings of loneliness and depression. Therefore, prospective students seeking out social circles could report a more appropriate level of happiness, thus providing a more appropriate level of happiness, thus assisting the maintenance of a stable mental state and potentially improving mental well-being. However, homeostasis should be approached with a note of caution. In particular, Marsden and Littler (1998) assert that homeostasis is linked to the behavioural perspective of consumer behaviour, and there is a call to adopt a more heterostasis perspective of consumer behaviour (which, according to Marsden and Littler is closer linked to the interpretive contemporary perspective of consumer behaviour). Whilst homeostasis suggests that consumers construct consistent, generic representations, heterostasis focuses more upon the '*… fragmentary and fluid nature of consumers' self-identity'*. (Marsden and Littler, 1998: p. 16).

Self-improvement as a marketing term refers to the ability of consumers to identify a future 'ideal self' that they wish to relate to (e.g. Schmitt, 1999: p. 62). Babin and Harris state that *'… self-improvement motivation are motivations aimed at changing the current state to a level that is more ideal, not at simply maintaining the current state*'. Rousseau, Eggermont, and Frison (2017) emphasise that the development of digital marketing channels has given rise to an increased emphasis being placed on self-improvement. For prospective students undertaking a HE course, self-improvement could refer to the ability to learn new skills/knowledge, develop presentation skills, develop their sporting prowess, and increase their confidence.

A concept that binds both homeostasis and self-improvement is regulatory focus theory. This theory identifies that consumers are motivated to focus their behaviour either via a prevention or promotion focus (e.g. Shah and Higgins, 1997). A prevention focus orients consumers towards avoiding negative consequences, whilst a promotional focus positions consumers towards the opportunistic purist aspirations of ideas (Babin and Harris, 2018: p,. 94). Mosteller and Poddar (2017) asserted that regulatory focus theory is an approach that can be used to manage the balance between sharing information online and the privacy concerns involved with sharing such information.

Value is measured on a continuum between utilitarian and hedonic value. Utilitarian motivation is '*a drive to acquire products that consumers can use to accomplish things'* (Babin and Harris, 2018: p. 95). The utilitarian motivation is closely linked to the idea of homeostasis, as utilitarian motivation focuses upon the idea of consumers maintaining their current state. For HE students, this could refer to wanting to have solid social networks (thus mirroring experiences at FE level) and clean, safe accommodation (thus mirroring experiences that they are likely to have at home). On the other hand, Babin and Harris (2018: p. 95) state that hedonic motivation involves *'…a drive to experience something personally gratifying'*. For HEI students, this may refer to wanting to enjoy the social aspects of a university life and develop experiences both inside and outside the classroom. It is emphasised that for both utilitarian and hedonic value, different students (and their parents) will place differing weighting on different experiences to determine whether value is obtained (e.g. Grebennikov and Shah, 2012; Casidy and Wymer, 2016). This is consistent with both homeostasis and self-improvement. A large proportion of the work on motivation in a HE context focuses on student's motivation for wanting to study overseas (e.g. Niles, 1995; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002 Lee, 2014; Ahmed and Buchanan, 2017; Wilkins, Balakrishnan, and Huisman, 2012). Subliminally, although studying overseas is not the context of this research, themes that consistently arise are still clustered around the two variables of 'lifestyle' and 'employability'. This links in closely to the notion of utilitarian and hedonic value – as discussed above – whereby the utilitarian motivation of consumers wishing to study in HE is driven by employability, whilst the hedonic value is linked to the lifestyle experiences that prospective students could enjoy at university. Some authors referred to motivations concerning reasons to studying overseas as wanting to develop the English language and the value of overseas qualifications (e.g. Chen and Zimitat, 2006).

Babin and Harris (2018: p. 96) define consumer involvement as being the '*…. Degree of personal relevance a consumer finds in pursuing value from a particular category of consumption*'. Whilst across product categories the level of consumer involvement is variable, prospective HEI consumers are likely to have a high level of involvement in pursuing value from their HE choice, due to the long-lasting implications of their choice. Specifically, the institution/course selection could have an impact on the career trajectory of a student coupled with certain long-term life implications (i.e. based upon the networks that students make). Therefore, a fair assumption is there will be a high level of involvement attached to this decision, albeit whilst a high level of involvement will be attached, different applicants will spend longer and have differing criteria for making their decision.

Locke and Latham (2004: p. 388) identify two distinctive strands of motivation by defining it as being either '*…internal factors that impel actions and to external factors that act as inducements to action*'. Bagga and Bhatt (2013) reinforce this by stating that consumer motivation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. Within an HE context, this can be encapsulated by what an applicant perceives to be the inherent benefit of going to university. These will not be homogenous across every single applicant, and arguably will be influenced by a range of factors included parental influence and culture. Alternatively, extrinsic motivation refers to the factors external to the applicant that can also act as a motivator, albeit not necessarily grounded internally within the consumer's mind. Extrinsic factors are outside of the internal mental mechanisms of a consumer. There is a clear requirement to understand what motivates consumer choice within the Higher Education sector (e.g. Maringe; 2006; Nicolescu, 2009; Petruzzellis and Romanazzi, 2010; Wilkins, Shams, and Huisman, 2013; Haywood and Scullion, 2017). There has been reference to motivations driving HE applications (e.g. Maringe and Carter; 2007; Wilkins, Shams, and Huisman, 2013; Padlee, Kamaruddin, and Baharun, 2010; Hemsley-Brown, 2012; Lilyman and Bennettt, 2014; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2015; Lee, 2014; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). However, these papers all very much focus on how motivation is enveloped into the choice criteria of HE applicants, as opposed to the motivating factors that lead to the development of a need to study at a HE institution in the first place. Prior to a more in-depth overview of empirical literature into motivation, this chapter will now present a range of theories of consumer motivation before identifying the chosen theory for the empirical investigation of this thesis.

2.7 Theories of motivation

Klein (1989) highlights that – due to the complexities of motivation which spans multiple disciplines – no one theory can explain all that is known about the motivation process. There are several primary theories used to decipher to process of motivation. These include Maslow's (1954) self-actualisation framework; Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory; self-determination theory (e.g. Ryan and Deci, 2000) self-efficacy theory (e.g. Bandura, 1986) and expectancy theory (e.g. Vroom, 1964).

Babin and Harris (2018) felt that the hierarchy of needs is arguably the most popular framework used in customer motivation. Maslow's (1954) self-actualisation framework built upon his earlier work (1943). Maslow focused on the idea that individuals are motivated to achieve needs, and certain needs will take precedence over others. In Maslow's framework, there are five levels: physiological needs; safety needs; involving a sense of belonging and love; esteem needs; and self-actualisation. In earlier iterations, Maslow suggested that individuals would have to achieve needs at each level prior to moving onto the next level. However, Maslow (1987: p. 68) conceded that the model was not as 'rigid' as he had previously implied, stating that behaviour can be multi-motivated, and flexibility is needed based upon the external environment and individual needs. In times of crisis, more emphasis may be placed on lower needs of Maslow's hierarchy (i.e. the physiological needs) whereby survival is integral. Conversely, during prosperity, consumers may assume that underlying physiological and basic needs are something of a given. This is demonstrated in consumer responses to global pandemics and natural disasters. Furthermore, there can be different perceptions of needs amongst different consumers (e.g. Raymond, Mittelstaedt, and Hopkins, 2003). As the macro-environment evolves over time, so does the perception of what is a need (e.g. Cao, Jiang, Oh, Li, Liao, and Chen, 2013). The more basic needs in Maslow's framework were addressed with utilitarian value, whilst the higher levels of the model (i.e. esteem; self-actualisation) are realised via hedonic value.

Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory purports that individuals possess an inner drive to hold attitudes and behaviour in harmony with one another, thus avoiding dissonance. Dissonance is whereby there is a disparity between two variables (in this context, attitudes and behaviours). In his initial work, an investigation was made of members of a cult who believed that the earth was going to be hit by a biblical flood. When the earth was not destroyed, Festinger found that committed members would be more likely to re-interpret evidence to fit their own narrative. This is reflected in choice research where authors have investigated a decision facing consumers (e.g. Cummings and Venkatesan, 1976, and Sweeney, Hausnecht, and Soutar, 2000). In a choice, consumers will have good and bad points, and cognitive dissonance refers to '*…thoughts that are inconsistent with one's pre-conceived notion around a product or service'* (Babin and Harris, 2018: p. 299). To reduce cognitive dissonance, consumers have to either further underscore the benefits of their chosen product/service, or minimise the advantages of the unchosen product or service, thus accentuating their choice more. In doing so, consumers can reduce the discomfort from negative post-consumption emotions. To reduce cognitive dissonance, there are several strategies available for consumers including having the opportunity to complain about the experience; seek positive information over a selection; seek negative information over alternatives not selected;

and having the option to return a product if possible. This saves consumers from having a feeling of finality about any purchase decisions. Marketers can also seek to engage with consumers once the service delivery has been given, thus reinforcing any positive brand image that consumers have.

Akhtar (2008) stated that self-efficacy theory centres around the belief we have in our own abilities, specifically our ability to meet the challenges ahead of us and meet the task successfully. Self-efficacy differs from self-esteem, in that it focuses more upon the 'doing' as opposed to the 'being' aspect. Self-efficacy theory does not focus on whether consumers believe they possess certain skills (such as intelligence or manual skills) or even 'truisms'. Self-efficacy theory involves personally developed perceptions. Therefore, there is often discrepancy between a consumer's capabilities and their perception of these capabilities. Applied to the process of applying for a place at university, this may refer to the ability to process the amount of information available to applicants or visit numerous institutions when deciding. Furthermore, it can also relate to the student's ability/perception to obtain a place within an institution with high entry criteria. Whilst self-efficacy theory has been explored in several marketing contexts (e.g. McKee, Simmers, and Licata, 2006; and Manyiwa and Brennan, 2012) it is yet to be explored in the context of HE marketing.

2.8 Expectancy–Value Theory

Within the academic parameters of a thesis, there is a need to incorporate an overarching theory. Focusing on more than one theory would mean the thesis would lack focus and the required strategic thrust of investigation. For this chapter and subsequent application, focus is hereby placed on expectancy theory – often referred to as expectancy–value theory (EVT). Expectancy theory is chosen for the theoretical underpinning of this thesis as it is a theory that acts as a catalyst for determining the mental calculations that occur when determining the level of motivation to engage in a process (Tyagi, 1990).

Expectancy theory assumes that motivation is a function of a person's anticipation that a behaviour will lead to outcomes of value (Simintiras, Cadogan, and Lancaster, 1996). Vroom (1964) argues that motivation is the result of the following 3 components:

- Expectancy – a subjective belief that effort will lead to an outcome
- Instrumentally – the perceived relationship between the performance level and the outcome
- Valence – a preference towards an outcome.

Vroom (1964) further asserts that all three of these factors were necessary for motivation to occur. Therefore, even if one of these factors has a value of 'zero' (and was therefore, omitted), an individual would not have the necessary motivation, even if the levels of the other two factors were high. Furthermore, Simintiras, Cadogan, and Lancaster (1996) cede that there can be disparity in valence between different individuals. This is manifested when considered the motivations of HE applicants. Deciding what HE institution to attend is complex and involves mental assessments (i.e. weighing up emotional and rational components) to make a choice. Whilst EVT is used as the theoretical focus for this thesis, this does not mean that an EVT model is empirically tested. Moreover, EVT is used to justify and evaluate any findings.

There are several EVT models. Atkinson (1957), Tolman (1955) and Vroom (1964) all focus on the importance of the cognitive assessment of an individual's capability to achieve a goal in the process of deciding whether to pursue it. Atkinson (1957) characterises expectancies as being an *'individual's anticipations that their performance will be followed by either success or failure, and defined value as the relative attractiveness of either succeeding or failing in a task*'.

Fishbein (1967) took the initial development of EVT and applied it to consumer choice (i.e. marketing). Klein (1991); Locke and Latham (2004); and Steel and Konig (2006) all agreed that the early expectancy theories proposed by the likes of Vroom (1964) and Fishbein (1967) were overly rationalistic, with too many mechanistic assumptions made about how individuals solve problems and make decisions. Furthermore, Wilkie (1975) asserts that expectancy–value theory models do not measure the actual processing of information. A more comprehensive discussion of the shortcomings of these initial models can be found in Wilkie and Pessemier (1973). In retort, Ajzen and Fishbein (2008) concluded that whilst there were questions surrounding the validity of the assumption that belief strengths (i.e. expectancy) and outcome evaluations (i.e. instrumental), these were unfounded in the body of literature. Furthermore, Ajzen and Fishbein also concluded (using an example of voting for a political candidate) that it is difficult to consider attitude from belief strength without knowing whether an outcome is likely or not. Ajzen and Fishbein concluded that fault is not found with the expectancy theory itself, but more by how the theory has been applied in a range of contexts. Further criticisms of EVT were offered by Lutz (1978) who stated that the structural nature of EVT models provide a clear diagnostic value in understanding information processing activity. Furthermore, Bagozzi (1984: p. 295) supports this by stating that it can be '*…considered a paradigm of far reaching proportions'.* Additionally, Evans, Margheim and Schlatter (1982: p. 39) concluded that the '*… intuitive, conceptual appeal of the expectancy model* *should provide encouragement for future researchers to improve definitions, measurements, and the identifications of variables which are believed to influence motivations'*.

These assertions give credibility for using EVT as the theoretical foundation of this study.

More recent conceptual frameworks using expectancy theory have either incorporated components of affective and contextual factors (e.g. Wigfield, Tonks, and Eccles, 2004; Wigfield, Tonks, and Klauda, 2009; Wigfield and Cambria, 2010; and Trautwein, Marsh, Nagengast, Ludtke, Nagy, and Jonkmann, 2012) or conjoined expectancy theory alongside other mainstream theories (such as Rayburn and Palmgreen (1984) who merged the uses and gratification theory with expectancy theory).

There are a multitude of studies that have used expectancy (value) theory as the basis for their investigation. Many existing studies in the broader literature have examined the application of EVT to management/employee related discussions (this is not surprising, as Vroom's (1964) initial research distinguished between occupational preference and occupation choice). This includes work carried out on library searching behaviours (e.g. Savolainen; 2012; Savolainen, 2017); employment seeking (e.g. Coleman and Irving, 1997; Savolainen, 2018; Vansteenkiste, Lens, and Deci (2006)); psychology (e.g. Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Locke, 1975); the use of blogging; (Liao, Liu, and Pi, 2011); sales force motivation (e.g. Evans, Meghiem, and Schalatter, 1982; Nasri and Charfeddine, 2011); the decision to retire (e.g. Parker and Dyer, 1976) and marketing (e.g. Lutz and Bettman, 1977). Regardless of the contextual focus, choice is determined by the outcomes or consequences of selecting an alternative, weighted by the value of those outcomes to the person (e.g. Crosby and Taylor, 1981). Areas that have investigated the application of EVT in a marketing context use Fishbein's (1967) offering as the initial starting point, and include holiday preference and choice (Witt and Wright, 1992); determining consumers' motivation to engage in innovation through co-creation activities (Roberts, Hughes, and Kertbo, 2013); participating in a consumer boycott (Barakat and Moussa, 2017); consumer loans (Ryan and Bonfield, 1980) ; travellers intentions to behave pro-environmentally (e.g. Kiatkawsin and Han, 2016); restaurants and automobiles (Mazis, Ahtola and Kilippel, 1975) purchasing carpet samples (e.g. Crosby and Taylor, 1981); ethical consumption (e.g. Hiller and Woodall, 2019); and the effect of loyalty programme fees on programme engagement (e.g. Ashley, Gillespie, and Noble, 2016).

As the focus of this thesis is on motivation in the context of marketing in Higher Education, focus is placed on literature that investigates the use of EVT, initially in the sphere of education. Eccles, Adler, Furrerman, Goff, Kaczala, Meece, Midgley, and Spence (1983) offered a robust EVT model that has been used as the starting point for subsequent research. As demonstrated in Figure 2.11, this model steps away from the initial EVT offering by the likes of Atkinson (1957) and Vroom (1964). This incorporates a complex, broader range of psychological and socio-cultural factors.

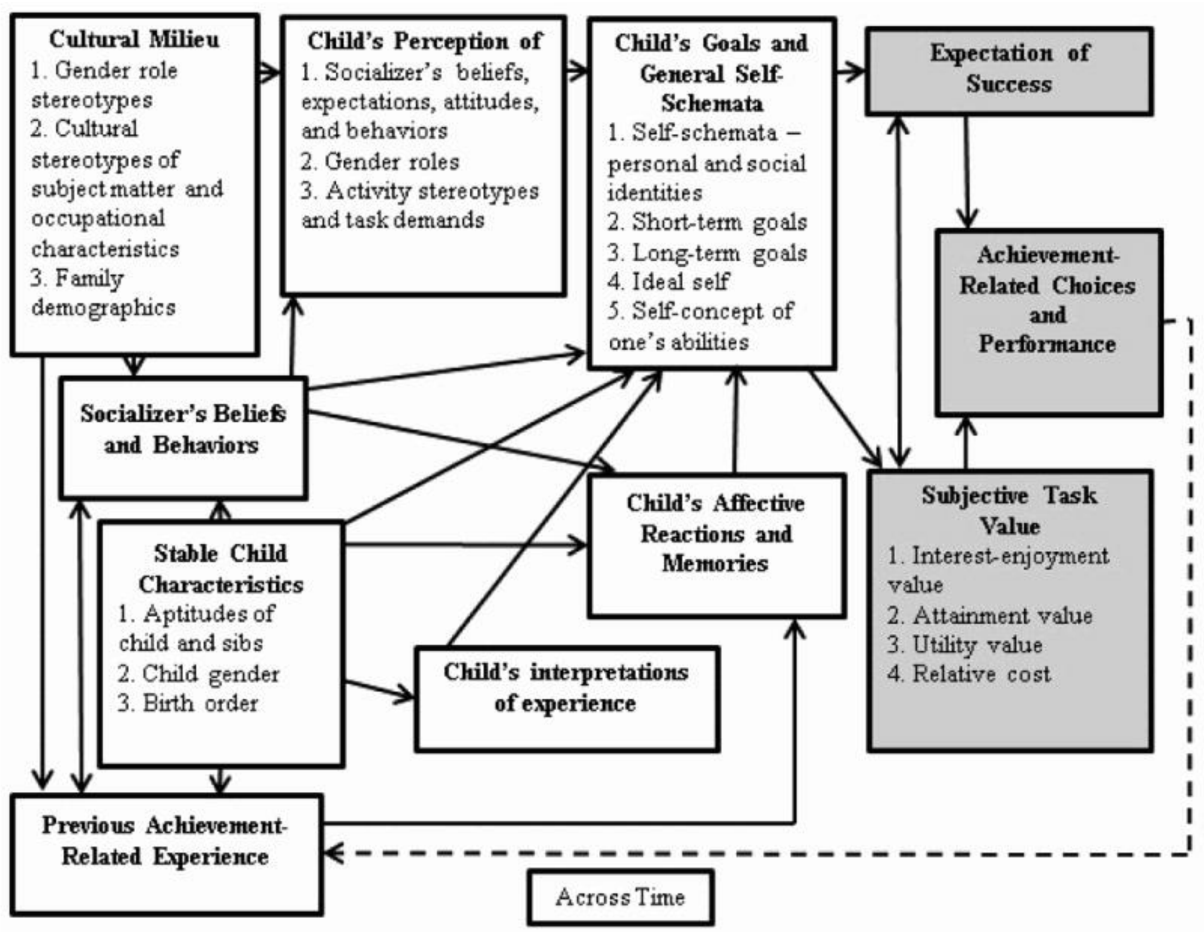

Figure 2.11: Expectancy–Value Model (Source: Eccles *et al.,* 1983).

Whilst initially EVT focused on the area of motivation, Eccles *et al.* (1983) tested it in active classroom situations Ball, Huang, Cotten, Rikard, and Coleman (2016) found that EVT has been the underpinning theory for investigating choice and motivation at all levels of education – ranging from children (e.g. Wigfield and Eccles, 2000) through to graduate students (e.g. Peters and Daly, 2013; Ball, Huang, Cotton, Rikard and Coleman, 2015). Peters and Daly (2013) used EVT to investigate the beliefs of graduate school student's ability to succeed in a programme of study. The empirical data collection was carried out using 10 face-to-face interviews, with findings that utility value (i.e. career) drove participants decisions to enter a graduate programme. In understanding the expected outcomes, the authors concluded that universities were able to use the findings to develop effective recruitment campaigns for students on their graduate programmes. Ball *et al.*'s (2016) research investigated factors that influenced US students' motivations to complete high school and attend college. This research was investigated by carrying out a survey. Findings indicated that students should seek to display EVT related values and beliefs at an early age (i.e. prior to the application stage). Whilst both Peters and Daly and Ball *et al*.'s research is interesting, it is presented from a US context. Elsewhere within a HE context, EVT has been applied to different aspects of university life. For example, Chen, Gupta, and Hoshower (2006) investigated how EVT can be used to assess factors that motivate faculty members to take part in academic research. Friednman and Mandel (2009) used expectancy theory to test student retention and motivation to engage in their HE learning environments. Similarly, Chen, Gupta, and Hoshower (2004) applied expectancy theory to determine marketing students' perceptions of their teaching evaluations. A problem encountered with the extant research is that – other than Ball *et al*.'s (2016) somewhat convoluted offering – there is no existing empirical study that has utilised expectancy theory for understanding the reasons behind why individuals apply to university, and how these motivations contribute to the choice process. Furthermore, there is a clear need to understand how EVT transfers to the driving intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and intervening variables. This thesis addresses this theoretical gap, by carrying out a more systematic and theoretical analysis into the application of EVT into student motivation. This is needed as there needs to be a more through identification of how different components of motivation (i.e. extrinsic and intrinsic components) contribute to the choice of an institution. There is also a need to appreciate how this links into the impact of moderating variables on the choice process – something that has not been explored in detail up to this point. This literature review now presents an overview of existing research on student motivation to enter the UK HE sector, as viewed through the expectancy motivation lens. Specifically, an overview of empirical literature into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is made.

Now that the underpinning theory of the thesis has been discussed, this chapter will go onto discuss different motivations for attending university. In conjunction with presenting these motivations, there is a presentation of hypotheses for investigation. Embedded into this discussion is an awareness of how expectancy–value theory relates to the specific motivating factor.

2.9 Intrinsic motivation for attending university

As highlighted in section 2.6, intrinsic motivations refer to the intrinsic drivers that act as a catalyst behind a consumer wanting to start on the purchase journey. In the context of this research, this alludes to the internal, inherent beliefs held by prospective HEI students. Hemsley-Brown (2015) highlights that there are two broad motivations behind students wishing to enter

HE: employability and lifestyle. Employability refers to needing to obtain a degree to obtain a long-term graduate level job. Whilst consuming the offering, a fair assumption is that students will obtain an array of skills and subject knowledge as a by-product of their decision to attend university (Santos, Rita, and Guerreiro, 2018; Glover, Law, and Youngman, 2002). Nevertheless, these are by-products of the reasons for entering a HE establishment. The other aspect of why students wish to attend university is due to wanting to experience certain lifestyle components associated with being a student. These could include the flexible patterns, free time, the chance to work part-time, the chance to live away from home, and the chance to meet like-minded people as they enter adulthood.

This literature review now presents an awareness of the key themes arising from research into intrinsic motivations for attending a HEI. This begins with a discussion of literature pertaining to employability.

Table 2.3: Key literature on the intrinsic motivational driver of employability as an influencer of student choice (source: author's own). (Representative sample: full list provided in Table A - 2.)

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Agrey and Lampadan (2014)	A survey was developed, based upon the literature review and eight interviews with first-year students. In total, 441 respondents participated in the survey. Employability was found as a prevailing factor in student choice.	Mixed methods approach	2
Bonnema and van der Weldt (2008);	Stratified sample of 19 secondary schools identified ten factors under the VARCLUS procedure, identified employability factors as one of the factors behind university choice.	Quantitativ e research approach	2
Branco Oliveira, and Soares (2016)	16 face-to-face interviews investigating motivation and choice criteria in universities. Found that wanting to develop professional contacts was a reason for international student mobility.	Qualitative approach	2

In total, 13 empirical papers have addressed the role of employability as a motivation for wishing to enter Higher Education. It is noted that these papers were not easy to find – there was certainly crossover with choice factors (as explored in section 2.12) to a thorough analysis of papers took place to ensure that the papers sufficiently addressed motivations. It is ceded that Table 2.1 presents papers from different regional contexts, incorporating: Pakistan (Sabir, Ahmad, and Ahmad, 2013). Whilst there are papers from a different context (Sabir, Ahmad, and Ahmad, 2013); USA (Spralls and Divine, 2009; Han, 2014); China (Cao, Zhu, and Meng (2016); Catalan (Trullas, Simo, Fusalba, Fito, and Sallan, 2018); and Portugal (Branco Oliveira and Soares, 2016), the subsequent review will focus on papers found within a UK context (e.g. McGregor, Thanki, and McKee, 2002; Glover, Law, and Youngman, 2006; Tomlinson, 2008; Naude and Ivy, 1999; Wilkins *et al.* 2012; Moogan, 2020). These articles were generally driven by macro-environmental changes.

Glover, Law, and Youngman (2006) highlighted that obtaining a degree is not enough for students to invest time in their educational experience – there is a clear need for the experience to be supplemented by a graduate level job role. This view was echoed by both Tomlinson (2008) interviews and McGregor *et al.* 2002) in qualitative research. Whilst Glover *et al.*'s and Tomlinson's research focused on the role that HEIs can play in developing employment opportunities, McGregor *et al.*'s research focused on students being motivated to leave their home town to obtain a degree to develop their earning potential. The context of this research (i.e. the remoteness of Northern Ireland) certainly drove this.

In empirical findings, it was apparent that there is a knock-on effect on the service offerings of institutions. For example, Garver, Spralls and Divine (2009) concluded that there had been increased investment into institutions' career services to meet growing demands. Research which did not take the perspective of students was offered by Naude and Ivy (1999), who found that employability was a driving factor amongst staff members at institutions, whilst Mogali and Yoon (2019) carried out a thematic analysis of prospectuses and found that employability was prevalent throughout the discussions in prospectuses.

Considering the increased emphasis placed upon employability (i.e. students looking for long-term employability coming out of their degree) it is surprising that the existing literature into this area is somewhat disparate. Applying the three constructs of expectancy–value theory to the discussion, an appropriate conclusion is that: making the decision to attend university with lead to employment opportunities (expectancy); carrying out a more extensive search into employment features will increase the likelihood of obtaining a job (instrumentality); and applicants will place increased levels of valence of obtaining long-term employment (valence).

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed for empirical investigations.

H1a Employability motivations will influence university choice.

Table 2.4 (below) presents an awareness of the literature pertaining to lifestyle factors as a motivating factor.

Table 2.4: Key literature on the intrinsic motivational driver of lifestyle factors as an influencer of student choice (Source: author's own). (Representative sample: full list provided in Table A - 3.)

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Agrey and Lampadan (2014)	A survey was developed, based upon the literature review and eight interviews with first-year students. In total, 441 respondents participated in the survey. The opportunity to join a sports club was found as a reason behind attending university.	Mixed methods approach	2
Ahmad (2015)	21 face-to-face interviews and 250 questionnaires distributed, investigating the motivation to attend branch campuses. Found that the chance to engage with sports clubs and societies (as if studying at the main campus) was vital for motivation to attend branch campuses.	Mixed methods approach	2
Ali-Choudhury, Bennett, and Savani (2009)	Interviews with 25 marketing managers and communications directors at universities in London and the South East of England (post 1992 institutions). Concluded that universities need to be 'friendly' and one way that this can be portrayed is via an active student union promoting vibrant sports and societies clubs.	Qualitative approach	3

In total, nine empirical papers have addressed the role of lifestyle as a motivation for wishing to enter Higher Education. In a similar vein to literature around the employability component, finding papers explicitly linked to lifestyle were difficult to find, and again, there was crossover with moderators of choice. Again, Table 2.4 incorporates literature from different regional contexts, with the US (Townsend and Wilson, 2006) and Australia (Bailey, Gosper, Ifenthaler, Ware and Kretzschma, 2018) being represented.

It is apparent within the literature body that lifestyle is not explicitly referred to. Moreover, aspects of lifestyle are alluded towards, and linkage to lifestyle is made. For example, Wilcox, Winn, and Fyvie-Gauld accentuated the role that student support and socialisation can play in the approach of retention. Similarly, Ali-Choudhury, Bennett, and Savani (2009) emphasised the part that institutions have in positioning themselves as friendly, outgoing institutions that will seek to envelope new students into their communities. One way the authors state that this can be done is via an active student union, promoting participations in sports and societies. This was a consistent theme that was picked up on by other authors – namely Ahmad (2015); Gatfield (1999); and Agrey and Lampadan (2014). Gatfield (1999) emphasised the role that societies can play in promoting a friendly student environment. The other aspect of lifestyle that was mentioned was the idea of a flexible student lifestyle (e.g. Greenacre, Freeman, Cong, and Chapman, 2014; Bailey, Ifenthaler, Ware, and Kretzschema, 2018). It is surprising that there is relatively little empirical research into the intrinsic motivator of lifestyle. A reason for this is there are certain aspects that can be associated with lifestyle – such as living in a city or rural location – and student nightlife is difficult to measure at a pre-conceptualisation stage (i.e. prior to commencing the UCAS application). Furthermore, there is a challenge of what constitutes lifestyle variables – arguably, employability measures are far easier to measure (in terms of a certain salary or obtaining a job). Despite this, lifestyle is the variable that binds the empirical research together, and this can be explored in greater detail.

Furthermore, as highlighted by Mogali and Yoon (2019) student lifestyle is an aspect that institutions, students, and 3rd parties (i.e. other service providers) are keen to accentuate as a reason behind attending university. This again makes it surprising that literature into this area is somewhat disparate. Applying the three constructs of expectancy–value theory to the discussion, an appropriate conclusion is that: making the decision to attend university with lead to lifestyle opportunities (expectancy); carrying out a more extensive search into lifestyle features will increase the likelihood of having a positive experience (instrumentality); and applicants will place increased levels of valence in obtaining a positive lifestyle experience whilst at university (valence).Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed for empirical investigation.

H1b Lifestyle motivations will influence university choice

As Table 2.3 and Table 2.4 illustrate, two main themes are identified across a broad literature search. Finding literature in relation to what motivates a student to study a HE course has not been easy – particularly in comparison to the abundance of information found in relation to both 'choice criteria' and 'sources of information'. Nevertheless, this further supports the scope for addressing an existing gap with the empirical literature. From observations and evaluating literature, the two intrinsic motivations for attending a course of study in HE are as follows:

- Employability (incorporating sub-themes including career development; earning potential; and professional contacts).
- Lifestyle (incorporating sub-themes including making friends; joining a sports club or a society; and flexible lifestyle).

Having concluded the outline of what intrinsic motivations are apparent in the decision to enter HE, this literature review now presents an overview of literature into extrinsic motivations for students wishing to enter into HE.

2.10 Extrinsic motivations for attending university

As discussed by Bagga and Bhatt (2013), extrinsic motivations are the marketer generated marketing activities. Whilst there is a minimal amount of literature that directly addresses the extrinsic factors that address what motivates a prospective student to choose a university, for developing the research framework (given in Figure 2.12) an identification of factors that could be extrinsic factors (i.e. extrinsic factors which could motivate a prospective student) are presented below in Table 2.5 and Table 2.7.

A decision is taken to separate motivations into being either familial or digital influencers. Familial influencers refer to members of the same household that influence students to attend university. This will often be parents/guardians, and in some case siblings. The other extrinsic motivator identified was digital influencers. This is discussed as changes to the macro-environment (i.e. the proliferation of digital channels) has substantially altered how consumers are able to obtain information (e.g. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Hanlon, 2018; Eigenraam, Eelen, Van Lin, and Verlegh, 2018). As is identified in section 2.15, existing literature does not really account for these changes, so this is a key gap investigated within this study. To investigate this, an awareness of existing studies into digital influencers needs to be made.

Table 2.5 provides an overview of existing empirical research into the extrinsic motivator of familial influencers.

Table 2.5: Key literature on the extrinsic motivational driver of familial influences on student choice (Source: author's own). (Representative sample: full list provided in Table A - 4.)

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Chen and Zimitat (2006)	518 completed surveys were subjected to principal component analysis. Found that close friends and family members were a driving factor in students' decisions to study overseas.	Quantitative research approach	2
James, Baldwin, and McInnis (1999)	Two surveys carried out in 1998 and 1999, with 937 and 538 respondents respectively. Followed up with 12 telephone interviews with participants. Found that the opinion of parents was as key source of information.	Mixed methods research approach	2
Lee and Morrish (2012)	20 interviews (9 parents, and 11 students) in a study that explored. The research concluded that cultural relationships can influence the role that parents have on encouraging their children to attend university.	Qualitative research approach	2
Moogan, Baron, and Harris (2003)	Almost a third of respondents (out of a total of 19 pupils) highlighted that parents were responsible for their decision to attend university.	Qualitative research approach	2

In total, seven empirical papers have addressed the role of familial influencers as a motivation for wishing to enter Higher Education. Whilst papers were easy to find, literature into the role of familial influencers is still relatively sparse, particularly from a UK context. Due to the emphasis placed on the role of parents, most of the literature is from a Chinese context (e.g. Yang, Yen, and

Balmer, 2020; Lee and Morrish, 2012; Chen and Zimitat, 2006; Zhang, Sun, and Hagedorn, 2013). Further literature is found in an Australian context (e.g. James, Baldwin, and McInnis, 1999; Lee and Morrish, 2012), with a relatively fleeting mention found in Winter and Chapleo's (2017) paper.

Again, it is surprising that there is relatively little research into the role that parents play in kick-starting the process. Potentially, a reason behind this is the role that wider societal pressures can play in students wanting to go to university and, therefore, the role that parents play is somewhat diminished. The literature that does exist focuses on an international perspective (i.e. parents motivating their children to consider an internationalised education experience) and it is an interesting gap that could be investigated. Applying the three constructs of expectancy–value theory to the discussion, an appropriate conclusion is that: making the decision to attend university will have positive familial impacts (expectancy); consulting familial sources will increase the likelihood of making an appropriate selection (instrumentality); and applicants will place increased levels of valence of seeking the advice of familial sources (valence). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2a Familial motivations will influence university choice

The second extrinsic motivator identified in literature concerned the role that digital influencers play. By acknowledging this as an extrinsic motivator, focus was placed upon the changes to the different communication channels available to institutions.

Table 2.6: Key literature on the extrinsic motivational driver of digital influences on student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Teng,. Khong, and Chong (2015)	Based on a series of quantitative and qualitative studies, this research used the elaboration likelihood model to map out information students receive that may contribute to them entering Higher Education. Found that peripheral cues act as a key motivator.	Mixed methods approach	2

Only one paper, and that with a tenuous link to digital influencers, refers to the role that digital influencers play as an extrinsic motivator for entering into Higher Education. Whilst this is alarming, considering the increased importance of digital channels, it does provide an opportunity for a greater investigation. Applying the three constructs of expectancy–value theory to the discussion, an appropriate conclusion is that: consulting more digital sources will act as a positive motivator behind a decision (expectancy); consulting digital sources will increase the likelihood of making an appropriate selection (instrumentality); and applicants will place increased levels of valence of seeking the digital sources (valence).Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2b Digital motivations will influence university choice

2.11 Limitations on intrinsic and extrinsic research into HE motivation

There are a number of shortcomings with the literature found relating to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation into attending a HE course. These are hereby presented below.

Firstly, whilst reference in the methodology sections are made to either pre- or post-1992 institutions, none of the research into motivations for attending a HE institution seeks to make comparisons between these different types (i.e. pre- and post-1992) institutions. A valid area of exploration is whether students who attend a traditional, research intensive (i.e. pre-1992) university have different motivations compared to students who attend a more vocational (i.e. post-1992) institution.

Secondly, there is a clear need for far more research into the role that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations play in the overall choice process Whilst the traditional Consumer Decision Process model begins with a ‘need identification’ component, these initial motivations appear to have been bypassed in the existing literature body.

Thirdly, for most empirical research, only one data collection approach is used – either quantitative or qualitative. Exceptions to this is in the research provided by Greenacre *et al.* (2014); Ahmad (2015); Dunnet*t et al.* (2012); and Trullas *et al.* (2015). Existing quantitative research is problematic for two factors: either it fails to ensure that models/data collection tools are appropriate for the setting prior to collecting survey data (i.e. qualitative research would ensure that variables measured are relevant for the context), and/or it fails to identify the underlying reasons behind patterns identified by quantitative research (i.e. qualitative research would delve deeper to evaluate the reasons behind the development of any patterns found within the quantitative findings). Alternatively, qualitative research is generally not supported with quantitative findings from larger cohorts. This raises an uncertainty regarding the transferability of results.

Fourthly, there is only a minimal amount of research conducted into the perspective of HEIs, in terms of what they believe motivates students to attend a HE course (e.g. Ali-Choudhury, Bennett, and Savani (2009)). Whilst student motivation – as the name suggests – should be investigated from the perspective of a student, there is a need to determine what constitutes student motivation within marketing departments of universities.

Finally, considering the changes to the UK HE market (as discussed in section 2.3.1), there is a minimal amount of focus on the UK market in relation to motivation factors (e.g. Tomlinson, 2008; Wilkins, Shams, and Huisman, 2013; Walsh *et al.* (2015); Dunnett *et al.* (2012); and Ali-Choudhury, Bennettt, and Savani (2009)). From a contextual setting, there is a need to investigate this in far greater detail.

This thesis addresses these limitations by, firstly, the empirical investigation carries out a comparison of the motivating factors for attending university between students at two different institutions (i.e. a traditional and a vocational institution). Secondly, carrying out research into the role that motivations can play in the decision to commence the application process. Thirdly, conducting a mixed methods approach (i.e. quantitative and qualitative) to combat the methodological limitations. Fourthly, the qualitative data collection encompasses the perspective of HEIs, with interviews with a range of marketing and recruitment staff. Finally, this research focuses on the UK HE market. Therefore, the research findings can clearly be applied to the UK HE sector.

Now that this literature review has presented an outline of literature reviewing (intrinsic and extrinsic) motivations to study in Higher Education, literature into components that influence choice are hereby presented. For this thesis, these are referred to as moderating variables, though the term intervening variables was also sought in literature searches. The term moderating variables is chosen, as this thesis takes the perspective that motivation is the starting point of the consideration/choice process. It is assumed that prior to embarking on the search process students will have intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivations. The proposition given is that prior to a final choice being made, there will be several factors that may influence (i.e. moderate) this choice. These are hereby explored.

2.12 Moderators of university choice

Briggs (2006) states that selecting an institution is a complex process; overcomplicated, in fact, due to the plethora of information that is difficult to process for students and their advisors.

Foskett (1999) highlighted that choice is an iterative concept. Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006: p. 318) concluded that '*the literature on Higher Education marketing is incoherent, even inchoate, and lacks theoretical models that reflect upon the particular context of Higher Education and the nature of their services'*.

Whilst *'Marketing had once been a term that could be spoken only in the most hushed tones in academia'* (Edmiston-Strasser, 2009, p. 146), government deregulation and increasing competition (e.g. Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Jongbloed, 2003; Maringe, 2006) have accelerated the need for HEIs to market themselves to compete for students. In conjunction with this need, students (and other stakeholders, such as parents) will assess the credibility of an institution against a range of criteria. Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2015) provided a concise overview of recent developments into student choice (i.e. papers published between 1992 and 2013). In summary there were:

- 45 secondary data studies
- 13 qualitative studies
- 11 longitudinal studies
- 2 experimental designs
- 3 multiple methods studies (of which one was based in the UK).

Whilst not all of Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka's sources are subsequently referred to (some factors are considered irrelevant or links highlighted by the authors are too tenuous for the focus of this thesis), and there has also been papers published in the interim that are subsequently referred to, this snapshot of publications suggests that there are minimal empirical studies into HE choice factors.

It was apparent in the literature search that there are factors that can be viewed as being intervening variables (i.e. influencing the relationship between the respective motivation variable as identified in sections 2.10 and 2.11 and the actual choice made). When clustering the existing literature, four themes appear to be emerging. These are hereby presented below.

2.13 Literature exploring moderating variables

Based upon an extensive literature review, the following four areas of literature were identified.

1. Research into socio-demographic factors
2. Research into environmental influences

3. Research into informational influences
4. Research into personal influences.

This chapter will now present extant literature found within these themes.

2.13.1 Socio-demographic factors

According to Babin and Harris (2018: p. 125), demographics refers to '*… observable, statistical aspects of populations, including such factors as age, gender or income'.* Whilst Babin and Harris' definition refers to three components that could contribute to demographic factors, these are not all discussed here. The reason for this is because these socio-demographic factors are deemed inappropriate for the investigation within this study (i.e. the factors will have minimal impact on the motivations). More relevant observable aspects are the level of parental education; nationality; and type of school. Whilst some authors (e.g. Davies and Williams, 2001; Chase, Geringer, and Stratemeyer, 2019; Hemsley-Brown, 2015) have investigated the role that age can play in the choice process, this is not included here. This is because the context of the investigation is UK undergraduate choice process, and according to Universities UK (2018) most students are under 20 when commencing their programme of study.

The first socio-demographic factor explored is parental education. Parental education refers to the extent to which the level of parental acts as a moderator between the motivators and the final choice. What it does not refer to at this stage is the extent to which parents will give their opinions on a student's motivation and related choice (evidence of this is found in the discussion of informational influencers in section 2.13.3).

In total, eight empirical papers evaluate the impact of parental education as a socio-demographic factor that can have an impact on the selection of a specific institutions. Whilst more papers were found in the literature review, the decision was made to focus on papers with a Western context. Therefore, literature is sourced from Australia (O'Shea *et al.* 2016); South Africa (Lubbee and Petzer, 2013); USA (Cho *et al.* 2008); Canada (Boudarbat and Montmarquette, 2009); and the UK (Brown, Varley, and Pal, 2009 and Al-Youssef, 2009). The paper by Al-Youssef (2009) facilitated a comparison between Saudi Arabian and the UK cultures, coupled with only focusing upon the role of female applicants.

Table 2.7: Key literature on the socio-demographic factor of parental education as an influencer of student choice (Source: author's own). (Representative sample: full list provided in Table A - 5.)

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Al-Yousef (2009)	Focus groups and individual interviews with 54 young women (aged 16–20) from a range of cultural backgrounds. The study concluded that levels of involvement differed based upon the gender of the parent, although there is little relationship between the parent's educational background and the level of involvement.	Qualitative approach	2
Boudarbat and Montmarquette (2009)	Results based upon a survey of 18,708 graduates suggests that the weight placed on earnings depends upon the educational level of parents who are of the same gender as applicants.	Quantitative approach	2
Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009)	Examined applicant's choice with reference to Kotler's 5-stage model. four focus groups with 22 participants in total from one university. Concluded that their parental education has a large impact on selection.	Qualitative approach	2

Adjoined to the lack of literature in the role of familial sources as a motivator, it is perhaps not surprising the limited research that has taken place. Of the literature that does exist, there appears to be a correlation between a higher level of parental education and the role that this can play in moderating the choice process. This is evidenced in papers by Rowan-Kenyon *et al.* (2008) and Cho *et al.* (2009). Furthermore, research by Pugeley and Coffey (2002) further supported this, asserting that parents with no prior educational experience would be unaware of any alternatives that existed. A contrast to this view was offered by O'Shea *et al.* (2016), who concluded the 'first in family' students would be supported by parents, from parents both realising the long-term employment benefits, coupled with the aspirational benefits of going to university. O'Shea *et al.*'s research, however, did not provide a comparison with parents who had been to university. Literature generally supporting the higher level of education is arguably unsurprising, as parents who have a higher level of education are likely to have a greater appreciation of the value of the degree in terms of obtaining gainful employment, coupled with the lifestyle benefits that they previously enjoyed when attending university. It is felt that, irrespective of parental education, the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3 The level of parental education will positively moderate the impact of: (a) employability and (b) lifestyle motivations and (c) familial and (d) digital extrinsic motivations on student choice. employability intrinsic motivation on student choice

The second socio-demographic factor explored is nationality. In this context, nationality refers to the comparisons made within students between different nationalities. These are presented below in Table 2.8.

Table 2.8: Key literature into the socio-demographic factor of nationality as influencers of student choice (Source: author's own). (Representative sample: full list provided in Table A - 6.)

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Alfattal (2017)	1,304 usable questionnaires were collected in comparison of international and home students in the USA. Conclusions drawn suggested that international students are more likely to focus upon emphasis of familial sources as an extrinsic motivator.	Quantitative approach	2
Cho, Hudley, Lee, Barry, and Kelly (2008)	Web-based survey carried out amongst 1,549 incoming (i.e. freshman) students in the USA. Study concluded that nationality has a strong impact upon choice.	Quantitative approach	22
Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2016)	Based upon extensive review of existing literature, authors found that nationality will influence the choice in university, particularly amongst first-generation attendees.	Analysis of existing literature	

In total, six empirical papers which evaluate the impact of race as a socio-demographic factor that can impact on the selection of an institution are presented. Whilst a wider body of literature focused on the role of different cohorts of students (such as Rudd, Djafarova, and Waring, 2012; and Wu, 2014, investigating Chinese students), papers presented in the table focus upon comparisons between home and international students. Again, the decision was made to focus upon papers from a Western context. Therefore, papers such as Yin, Ruangkanjanases and Chen (2015), which investigated Chinese students applying to Thai institutions, and Dao and Thorpe (2015), which specifically investigated choice criteria of Vietnamese students, are discounted. The six literature papers are sourced from the USA (Pippert *et al.* 2013; Cho *et al.*, 2008; Alfattal, 2017) and the UK (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2016; Ivy, 2010; Moogan, 2020).

In a quantitative approach, Alfattal (2017) found that international students are more likely to focus upon familial sources as an extrinsic motivator than home students. Albeit in a different context, this supported findings proffered by Ivy (2010). A logical assumption is there will be a positive correlation between the familial extrinsic motivator and socio-demographic factors. Furthermore, whilst minimal research has taken place into the role of digital influencers, a further logical conclusion is that socio-demographic factors could positively moderate the role of digital influencers. It is felt that the location of applicants would mean a greater emphasis will be placed on digital sources to motivate the initial choice. It is assumed that there will be negligible differences on the intrinsic motivators of employability and lifestyle. The reason for this is because students – irrespective of their nationality – will be looking to university to provide them with long-term employment prospects, coupled with wanting to experience certain lifestyle components of being a student (though it is conceded that there may be differences between the type of lifestyle experiences home and UK students are looking to realise). It is felt that, irrespective of nationality, the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Therefore, the following hypotheses are offered:

H4 The nationality of an applicant will positively moderate the impact of: (a) employability and (b) lifestyle motivations and (c) familial and (d) digital extrinsic motivations on student choice.

The third socio-demographic factor evaluated is type of school. This refers to differences between student for attend state schools as opposed to fee-paying (i.e. private) schools. This literature is presented below in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9: Key literature on the socio-demographic factor of type of school on student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Hemsley-Brown (2015)	Survey of 10,723 respondents across 140 universities. Survey found that respondents who attended private school as opposed to state funded school were 1½ times more likely to attend a Russell Group institution.	Quantitative approach	2
Moogan and Baron (2003)	In a survey amongst 674 participants, the authors concluded that parents who had funded their children through private schooling were likely to have a greater impact on choice than state schooled children.	Quantitative approach	2
O'Sullivan, Robson, and Winters (2019)	Four groups (five participants in each) investigating the choice process of state school pupils to study at a prestigious institution (i.e. Oxford). Participants felt their status negatively impacted upon: (1) their aspiration to apply to prestigious institutions; (2) the help and guidance that was available to support their applications; (3) their potential to excel academically and attain top grades and (4) their confidence to compete in an unequal system	Qualitative approach	2

In total, three empirical papers which evaluate the impact of the type of school that applicants attended as a socio-demographic factor that can impact on the selection of an institution are presented. Again, a decision is made to focus upon papers from a Western context. All three of these papers are sourced from a UK context.

Moogan and Baron's (2003) found that parents who have funded their children through private schooling were more likely to have a greater impact on choice than state schooled children. A reason behind this is that parents may feel they have a vested interest in the decision. Whilst it could be hypothesized that this may be the case (i.e. there may be a closer relationship between familial sources and type of school attended) more research is needed to further support this point. Though the three research papers suggest that privately educated students are more likely to attend Russell Group institutions, there is a need for further research to reinforce this further. A fair assumption is – irrespective of the type of school attended – that all applicants will engage with digital channels and familial sources to moderate their choice. Similarly, all applicants will look to both the employability and lifestyle components that an institution can offer. It is felt that, irrespective of type of school attended, the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5 The type of school attended by an applicant will have no bearing on the impact of: (a) employability and (b) lifestyle motivations and (c) familial and (d) digital extrinsic motivations on student choice. employability intrinsic motivation on student choice

As Table 2.7, Table 2.8 and Table 2.9 illustrate, three main themes have been identified across a broad literature search. The three intervening socio-demographic factors which influence the student choice are:

- Parental education
- Nationality
- Type of school

There are, however, shortcomings found within this area of literature related to socio-demographic factors of prospective students.

Firstly, out of the eight studies presented, there is only one that provides a comparison between the impact of different socio-demographic factors (e.g. Cho *et al.*, 2008). In this case, it is surprising that there has been no attempt for follow-on research, particularly considering the context (i.e. USA) of the research. There could have been a greater comparison with other socio-demographic factors. Secondly, other than research offered by Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2016) and O'Sullivan *et al.* (2019) the majority of (recent) literature presented fails to investigate from a UK context (Moogan's (2020) offering focuses upon an postgraduate context). This is surprising given the macro- and micro-environmental changes to the UK undergraduate HE market. Finally, there is little awareness of the extent to which these socio-demographic factors moderate the relationship between motivation to study and final choice. Whilst observations have been made in the aforementioned discussions, these are assumptions made based upon a logical perspective, which have facilitated the formulation of the hypotheses. There is a requirement for these to be addressed in greater detail.

This thesis addresses these limitations firstly by providing a comparison of the relevance of different socio-demographic factors. Secondly, this research will present findings from a UK context, considering macro-environmental changes. Finally, the questions posed in both stages of data collection will clearly address how socio-demographic factors moderate the relationship between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to study and the final choice made.

This chapter will now present an overview of literature pertaining to environmental factors.

2.13.2 Environmental factors

The second category of intervening variables that was identified are categorised as environmental factors. This label is given as the three sub-categories identified (department; location; and rankings) are factors that are specific to the HE environment.

The first environmental factor identified in literature is given the label ‘department’. Department refers to aspects of choice which can be influenced by a specific university department. Extending the notion of department further, critics could argue that interchangeable terminologies could be faculty or school. However, it is noted that a faculties and/or schools are the structures in which specific academic departments sit. Therefore, department refers to the more micro-functions of a specific area of an institution. Elements grouped in this area include course content, faculty members, academic reputation, research quality, and teaching quality.

Table 2.10: Key literature on the environmental factor 'department' as an influence on student choice (Source: author's own). (Representative sample: full list provided in Table A - 7.)

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Bonnema and van der Weldt (2008);	Stratified sample of 19 secondary schools identified ten factors under the VARCLUS procedure, identified course content as one of the factors behind university choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that choice is complex, with academic reputation of department being one of the key factors of student choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009)	Examined applicant's choice with reference to Kotler's 5-stage model. Four focus groups with 22 participants in total from one university. Concluded that course content has a large impact on selection.	Qualitative research approach	2
Drewes and Michael (2006)	Used a set of microdata on university applications to examine role played by attributes of university in choice. Comparison of 17 universities in Ontario, Canada. Found that reputation of research quality was a driving factor in institutional choice.	Observation of existing data	2

In total, 16 empirical papers examined an aspect of the role that department played on a student's selection. The term department is used as it encapsulates the areas. Refreshingly, the majority of literature into this area is found in a UK context (e.g. Veloutsou *et al.*, Schofield *et al.* 2013; Rudd *et al.* 2012; Price *et al.* 2003; Maringe, 2006; Hemsley-Brown *et al.* 2010; Moogan *et al.* 2001; Brown *et al.* 2009; and Briggs, 2006). Other contexts of data collected include Germany (Korfmann *et al.* 2020); Spain (Miotto *et al.* 2019); Canada (Drewes and Michael, 2006); and South Africa (Bonnema and van der Weldt, 2008).

Literature appears to be grouped based upon the area of department that the literature focuses upon, with course content being the main topic (e.g. Scofield *et al.* 2013; Veloutsou *et al.* 2004; Price *et al.* 2003; and Brown *et al.* 2009) investigated, closely followed by teaching quality (e.g. Rudd *et al.* 2012; Khanna *et al.* 2014; Imeda *et al.* 2004; Hemsley-Brown *et al.*2010). It is unsurprising that these were the two most prevalent factors in relation to a department, particularly considering the samples that were sought for investigation (i.e. students who had commenced their programme of study). At the time of data collection, they would have been exposed to both the course content and the level of teaching quality, thus arguably making them more prevalent in applicants' minds. This view is supported by Maringe (2006), whose research was collected prior to commencement of the study and who found that academic reputation played a prominent role. Interestingly, Oplatka and Hemsley-Brown (2010) found that research quality was an indication of quality, though participants in this research were academics, as opposed to students. It is felt that if departmental factors play an intervening role, they will positively moderate the roles of the extrinsic motivators of 'familial influencers' (i.e. as parents will be exposed to the individual department features, thus developing their impression) and 'employability' (with prospective employers either having links with schools or being more aware of the reputation of certain departments). It is felt that the intrinsic motivator of lifestyle will not be impacted by the department, as logically the individual department is unlikely to influence to extent to which applicants expect to enjoy the lifestyle. Furthermore, the individual department is unlikely to significantly moderate the results of the digital extrinsic motivator, as it is unlikely that applicants will engage with platforms to the same degree. It is felt that, irrespective of type of department, the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout the role that a department plays in moderating factors, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H6 The department will positively moderate the impact of: (a) employability intrinsic motivation; and (b) familial extrinsic motivation on student choice.

The second environmental factor identified in literature is given the label 'location'. Location refers to the geographical location where a university is located. The location is external to an institution, meaning control over certain attributes of the location is minimal. However – as is discussed below – location-related aspects are a key driver in student choice, particularly in prevalence to the lifestyle intrinsic variable. Elements of a location that could be prevalent in student choice include local amenities, safety, transport links, and proximity to family.

Table 2.11: Key literature on the environmental factor 'location' as an influence on student choice (Source: author's own). (Representative sample: full list provided in Table A - 8.)

Location			Link to research objective?
Abubakar, Shanka, and Muuka (2010)	Survey completed by 190 participants into the role that location can play in the selection criteria in the preferences of international students – investigation focused on a comparison of two institutions in Australia – one on the east coast and one on the west coast.	Quantitative research approach	2
Agrey and Lampadan (2014)	A survey was developed, based upon the literature review and eight interviews with first-year students. In total, 441 respondents participated in the survey. A safe environment was found as a prevailing factor in student choice.	Mixed methods approach	2
Ahn and Davis (2020)	A survey completed by 426 participants found that the geographical location of an institution helped to formulate the sense of belonging felt by students.	Quantitative research approach	2
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that choice is complex, with city appeal being one of the key factors of student choice.	Quantitative research approach	2

In total, 17 empirical papers examined an aspect of the role that location played on a students' selection. Refreshingly, the majority of literature into this area is again found in a UK context (e.g. Winter and Thompson-Whiteside, 2017; Winter and Chapleo, 2017; Rudd *et al.* 2012; Chapleo, 2008; Hemsley-Brown, 2012). Other contexts of data collected include Germany (Obermeit, 2012); USA (Rekettye and Pozsgai, 2015; Pampaloni, 2010; Henriquez *et al.* 2018); Thailand (Agrey and Lampadan, 2014); and Australia (Abubakar, Shanka, and Muuka, 2010; Gottschall and Saltmarsh, 2017).

Literature pertaining to location appears to be grouped into one of two categories, referring either to the social benefits of living in a location (such as location amenities and transport links), or to the level of personal safety found within a location. Whilst location does appear to be a relatively prominent factor within the literature, Winter and Chapleo (2017) cedes that students are generally geographically unaware. It is felt that location will positively moderate both the familial and digital extrinsic motivators, and the lifestyle intrinsic motivators. There will be a positive impact on the familial motivators as parents are likely to have an opinion of the appropriateness of a location to match the character of their children. Parents may also want children to attend university either in close vicinity to the family home, or they may wish students to move a minimal distance away from the family home to develop life skills. Furthermore, institutions can accentuate the location features on their digital channels, thus championing the environment in which institutions are located. There are also likely to be certain connotations associated with the location in respect to the lifestyle benefits students will attain from attending university. This could, for example, relate to the number of local amenities in the vicinity. It is felt that, irrespective of location, the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout the role that a location plays in moderating factors, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H7 The location of an institution will positively moderate the impact of: (a) lifestyle motivations and (b) familial and (c) digital extrinsic motivations on student choice. employability intrinsic motivation on student choice

The third environmental factor identified in literature is given the label ‘rankings’. Rankings refers to the emphasis that prospective students place on university league tables. Within the UK, there are a range of university league tables that prospective students and their parents are able to consult. These include: The Complete University Guide; The Guardian HE League Table; and The Times Higher Education League Table. Students and key influencers are also able to consult sources such as Unistats and the NSS (National Student Survey).

Table 2.12: Key literature on the environmental factor 'rankings' as an influence on student choice (Source: author's own). (Representative sample: full list provided in Table A - 9.)

Rankings			Link to research objective?
Assad, Melewar, Cohen, and Balmer (2013)	In face-to-face interviews with 8 x marketing and recruitment staff members, found that rankings were a prominent factor in student choice.	Qualitative research approach	3
Bowden (2000)	Provided a review of existing UK (Times; Sunday Times; Financial Times) and overseas league tables. Research published in 2000, meaning some league tables that are prevalent (e.g. *The Guardian* and online league tables) not included in the review. Conclusions that league tables can often be misleading.	Observation of existing data	2
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that choice is complex, with academic reputation being one of the key factors of student choice.	Quantitative research approach	
Chapleo (2011)	Argued in literature review that 'league table' position can replace market share.	Literature review discussion	-

In total, 16 papers examined an aspect of the role that rankings played on a student's selection. Refreshingly, the majority of literature into this area is again found in a UK context (e.g. Veloutsou *et al.* 2004; Gibbons *et al.* 2015; Gunn and Hill, 2008; Chapleo, 2010; Asad *et al.*, 2013; Briggs, 2006; Bowden, 2000). The other main contextual setting of investigation was found in the USA (e.g. Tapper and Filppakou, 2009; Roszkowski and Spreat, 2010; Martensson and Richtner, 2015; Hazelkorn, 2008; Han, 2014) with Dao and Thorpe (2015) focusing upon a Vietnamese setting.

Within the literature, the terminology league tables (e.g. Poole *et al.* 2018); rankings (e.g. Tapper and Filippakou, 2009) and university reputation (e.g. Veloutsou *et al.* 2004) appear to be used interchangeably to refer to the academic ranking of institutions. Particularly from within a US context (e.g. Tapper and Filppakou, 2009; Martensson and Richtner, 2015), there is a note of caution in the literature in that too much focus can be placed on league tables, and they can provide a misrepresentation. To counter this, Poole *et al.* (2018) developed a model to classify institutions, though this was generally based upon the socio-demographic make-up of the institutions. A number of papers (e.g. Veloutsou *et al.*, 2004; Dao and Thorpe, 2015; and Briggs, 2006) identified rankings as being one of a number of factors that could influence choice. There is a need within the literature to reflect the diverse nature of the rankings system. Existing literature seems to focus upon certain academic league tables, with minimal regard for the spectrum of league tables. There is confusion within the literature in respect to altering between reporting upon subject-specific rankings and institutional rankings – minimal attempt is made to separate the two.

Logically, it is felt that league tables will positively influence the reliance on the intrinsic motivator employability and the extrinsic motivator familial. This is because prospective employees are likely to have a better impression of higher ranked institutions. Similarly, familial influencers – irrespective of the familial experience of engaging with HE – are also likely to have a greater awareness of stronger institutional brands, based upon their rankings. It is felt that, irrespective of the rankings (i.e. low or high), the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout the role that rankings play in moderating factors, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H8 The ranking of an institution will positively moderate the impact of: (a) employability intrinsic motivation, and (b) familial extrinsic motivation on student choice. employability intrinsic motivation on student choice

As Table 2.10, Table 2.11 and Table 2.12 illustrate, three main themes are identified across a broad literature search. The three intervening environmental factors which influence the student choice are:

- Department
- Location
- Rankings

There are, however, a number of shortcomings found within this area of literature related to sources of information that prospective students consult (it is worth noting that these limitations mirror the limitations found when discussing socio-demographic and environmental intervening factors).

Firstly, out of the 44 studies presented, there are only four that provide a comparison between factors (e.g. Briggs, 2006; Brown *et al.* 2009; Henriques *et al.* 2018; Veloutsou *et al.* 2004). It is surprising that subsequent research has not sought to build upon these initial comparisons.

Secondly, there is little awareness of the extent to which these environmental factors moderate the relationship between motivation to study and final choice. For example, whilst 'location' is recognised as a relevant external factor, it would be interesting to evaluate whether this moderates the intrinsic lifestyle variable, for example.

This thesis addresses these limitations firstly by providing a comparison of the relevance of different sources of information. Finally, the questions posed in both stages of data collection will clearly address how environmental factors moderate the relationship between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to study and the final choice made.

Now that a discussion into environmental factors has been provided, this chapter will now move onto present a discussion of existing literature pertaining towards sources of information.

2.13.3 Sources of information factors

Sources of information refers to the different material available to prospective students that they consult when they make their decision of what university to attend. Sources of information can either be organisational driven (in the case of Higher Education the traditional forms of communication are either face-to-face open days or the university prospectus); obtained through traditional media channels (such as the television news, newspapers, and noticed on billboards); peer-to-peer communications (such as speaking to friends) or via digital channels. Until relatively recently, the main digital channel for all institutions would have been a website, and this is reflected in the body of literature. However, as indicated below, there is a growing level of interest in the role that other digital channels can play as a source of information. This sub-section begins with a presentation of literature pertaining towards digital media.

Vander Schee (2007) stated that universities have four options when deciding how to respond to the development of digital channels. They can:

1. Distance themselves.
2. Monitor conversations.
3. Set up their own user group.
4. Create a companion website.

Whilst extant research extensively explores the role that traditional media plays in student choice, the rise of social media and its influence on HE motivations and choice is somewhat limited.

Bélanger, Bali and Longden (2014) highlights social media's potential to be used for student engagement, particularly with students being 'digital natives'. Hayes, Ruschman and Walker (2009) emphasised the importance of this, arguing that engaging with social media should be a logical step for institutions as they seek to affirm their market position. This perspective is supported by Fujita, Harrigan, and Soutar (2017: p. 149) who highlights the need for HEI's to '…*adapt to this new world as they build and manage their social media presence so as to communicate and interact with stakeholders, to promote positive student experiences and to manage brand visibility'.* Palmer (2013) and Busch (2011) both urged universities to develop a 'social media ideology' that looks beyond social media activity as solely marketing, that acknowledges that social media are much more than specific technology platforms and/or systems, and that actively engages with stakeholders who are seeking information about the university in the social media environment. Busch (2011) highlighted that the use of social media within universities is still relatively new. Despite the likes of Peruta and Shields (2017) and Robyler *et al.* (2010) highlighting the benefits of using social media, Shields and Peruta (2018) concluded that universities are not leveraging social media to its full capacity for marketing purposes. Peruta and Shields (2017) feel that – whilst there are numerous benefits found in utilising social media – literature into how universities can utilise social media is somewhat limited. Brech *et al.* (2017) highlights that many universities throughout the world use social media, with many having a main Facebook account to address different stakeholders. Whilst Brech *et al.* (2017) assert that social media marketing is a useful concept in marketing for Higher Education, and there has been research that has demonstrated how online marketing strategies can be used by universities (e.g. Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007; Lowrie, 2007; Jan and Ammari, 2016; Kincl, Novak, and Strach, 2013), literature exploring the importance of social media in student choice is still sparse. Very little is known about the underlying mechanism of social media marketing for the Higher Education sector.

Table 2.13: Key literature into digital communication channels which influence student choice (Source: author's own). (Representative sample: full list provided in Table A - 10.)

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Bélanger, Bali, and Longden (2014)	Collected data from both the Facebook and Twitter accounts of all 106 Canadian universities, over the course of six months. They concluded that institutions Twitter accounts were predominantly focused around a 'campus news' – broadcasting information from campus providing news and promoting the institutional brand.	Qualitative research approach	3
Brech, Messer, Vander Schee, Rauschnabel, and Ivens (2017)	The research identified the Facebook pages and websites of 159 German and UK institutions, and their respective websites. A review into the most recent 20 Facebook postings on these respective Facebook pages. The study concluded that a universities size and reputations will mean that they have bigger online communities. However, this study focused only on the Facebook platform, and fails to consider the different types of stakeholders.	Netnographic based research	3
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that a university's website was a key source of information.	Quantitative research approach	2
Chapleo, Carrillo Duran, and Castillo Diaz (2011)	Web pages of 20 UK universities were investigated by authors. Found that information on teaching and research are well communicated, but social values such as social responsibility were not.	Content and multivariate analysis	3

In total, 27 empirical papers evaluate the role which digital channels can have in the choice process. Included in these 27 papers are references to papers which focus upon how digital channels can be used to build relationships with different stakeholders (e.g. Brech *et al.* 2017; Clark, 2017; Shields, 2016). Though not explicitly focusing upon student recruitment, these papers are still included in the literature review as findings could be pertinent for the purpose of student recruitment. Literature is sourced from the USA (Clark *et al.* 2017; Gai *et al.* 2016; Shields and Peruta, 2018); Australia (Fujita, Harrigain and Soutar, 2017; Fujita, Harrigan and Soutar, 2017; Galan *et al.*2015); Canada (Belanger *et al.* 2014; Pringle and Fritz, 2018); the Netherlands (Constantinides and Zinck Stango, 2012); Spain (del Rocio *et al.* 2019); Norway (Fagerstrom and Ghinea, 2013); Kenya (Simiyu *et al.* 2019); Lebanon (e.g. Vrontis *et al.*2018) Portugal (Simoes and Soares, 2010) and the UK (Briggs, 2006; Rutter *et al.* 2016; Winter and Chapleo, 2017; and Zhu, 2019). The paper by Brech *et al.* (2017) facilitated a comparison between Saudi Arabian and the UK cultures, coupled with only focusing upon the role of female applicants. Prior to dissecting the literature any further, there is clearly a need for further research into the role that digital channels can play in a UK context.

Another way the research can be dissected is according to what specific digital channels the research has explored. Unsurprisingly, some of the earlier research (e.g. Briggs, 2006; Simoes and Soares, 2010) evaluated the role that websites can have on the choice process, though the evaluation into the role of websites has been explored further by Chapleo *et al.* (2011); and Winter and Chapleo, (2017). Predominantly, empirical literature has been dominated by the role that Facebook plays (e.g. Belanger *et al.* 2014; Brech *et al.* 2017; Clark *et al.* 2017; Fagerstrom and Ghinea, 2013; Fujita *et al.*2017; Fujita *et al.*2017; Peruta and Shields, 2017; Lund, 2018). Other social networks explored in empirical literature include chasedream.com (Gai *et al.* 2016); QUORA (Le *et al.* 2019); Weibo and WeChat (Zhu, 2019); Twitter (Palmer, 2013); and Instagram (del Rocio Bonilla, 2019). Comparison between different social media channels is at a minimal level (e.g. Shields and Peruta, 2018; Simiyu *et al.* 2019; Pringle and Fritz; Galan *et al.* 2015) and does not incorporate any comparison of the different social networking sites available in a UK context.

There are clear shortcomings found with the existing body of literature, which fails to account for the development of different social media platforms. This includes platform features – such as the development of Facebook live on the Facebook social media platform – or the introduction and engagement of certain platforms with the university demographic. Research by OfCom (2018) suggests that usage of Instagram and Snapchat by 18–25-year-olds is 51% and 50% respectively;

yet despite this, there is only one empirical paper which explores the role of Instagram. There must be a greater insight into the depth and breadth of social media platforms.

Furthermore, there appears to be a rudimentary approach to carrying out data analysis, with a number of authors (e.g. Peruta and Shields, 2017; and Clark, Fine, and Scheuer, 2017) measuring engagement by simply referring to ‘clicks’. There is a need to ensure that such an investigation is supported by more traditional research approaches (i.e. quantitative/qualitative).

Findings drawn from existing literature includes the relationship between the size and reputation of an institution – and the subsequent level of communications (e.g. Brech *et al.* 2017) and a commonality in literature is found in the greater amount of engagement correlates with increased levels of student recruitment (e.g. Peruta and Shields, 2017; Le *et al.* 2019; Galan *et al.* 2015). There is, however, a need to further dissect the role that digital communications have on the respective intrinsic and extrinsic motivators students face. It is felt that, irrespective of amount of digital media, the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout the role that digital media plays in moderating factors, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H9 Increased digital communications will positively moderate the impact of: (a) employability and (b) lifestyle motivations and (c) familial and (d) digital extrinsic motivations on student choice. employability intrinsic motivation on student choice

Whilst there is an extensive body on the role that digital media plays within student recruitment, this is arguably unsurprising, particularly in relation to the proliferation of digital media as a phenomenon. An increasing number of institutions are harnessing digital media as a tool, and this thesis will add to the literature by exploring the extent to which digital media moderates the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation variables. Nevertheless, there is a need to explore other channels of communication. This begins with a discussion of traditional media. In this context, traditional media refers to channels of communication that would have been used, prior to the advent of digital media.

Table 2.14: Key literature into traditional media channels which influence student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Links to research objective?
Clarke (2007)	In a review of literature, Clarke found that newspapers and magazines are used for the purpose of assessing university ranking positions.	Literature review	-
Wong, Ng, Lee, and Ram (2019)	626 survey responses from eight government subsidised schools were collected and found that traditional media is classified as a credible source.	Quantitative research approach	2

As it stands, only two conceptual papers empirically measure the impact of traditional sources of communication on student choice. These two papers are US based in context. Whilst this is a substantial lower number than investigations into the role of digital media, this is arguably unsurprising as Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006) stated that research into HE marketing was incoherent, with this lack of research supporting that claim. Nevertheless, the role that traditional media sources play should not be discounted, particularly considering the role given to the channels by the institutions. Traditional media has a clear role to play in promoting an institution, and aspects of both employability and lifestyle components can be accentuated by traditional media channels. Furthermore, familial sources are also likely to engage with traditional media sources when forming their own perspective of institutions. It is asserted that traditional media stories will also work in conjunction with digital channels to moderate the impact of digital influencers. It is felt that, irrespective of amount of traditional media, the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout the role that traditional communications plays in moderating factors, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H10 Increased traditional communications will positively moderate the impact of: (a) employability and (b) lifestyle motivations and (c) familial and (d) digital extrinsic motivations on student choice. employability intrinsic motivation on student choice

Another theme picked up on the literature refers to the role that personal sources can have as a source of information. Personal sources can refer to the interpersonal relationships that applicants may have with acquaintances, careers advisors, and teachers. In this context, personal sources refer to informal, ad hoc relationships.

Table 2.15: Key literature into personal communication channels which influence student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Links to research objective?
Chen and Zimitat (2006)	518 completed surveys were subjected to principal component analysis. Found that teachers were a driving factor in students' decisions to study overseas.	Quantitative research approach	2
Moogan (2020)	In determining the 'awareness and influential sources' stage of the CDP, the author found that the most credible source for participants (focus groups with sample size of 35 participants) was word-of-mouth recommendation from family and friends.	Quantitative research approach	2
Winter and Chapleo (2017)	Telephone interviews with 24 participants, asking them to consider how the service environment impacts their choice of university. Found that the opinion of close friends is used as a source of information.	Qualitative research approach	2

As it stands, only three conceptual papers empirically measure the impact of personal sources on student choice. Chen and Zimitat's (2006) paper explores the role of Chinese students wishing to study in the UK, whilst Winter and Chapleo's (2017) offering focuses upon the opinion of close friends. Moogan's (2020) research focuses upon the decision-making process of international students applying to a postgraduate course in the UK. Again, the fact that early offerings into HE marketing were inchoate (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006) provide a reason why this area was unexplored. As with traditional sources of information, though, the role that personal sources plays should not be discounted, particularly considering the credibility that prospective students can place in the views of others. Personal sources will be able to recount experiences specific to the lifestyle experienced at institutions. Furthermore, they will also be in a position to share their experiences in respect to employment opportunities. These personal sources will be shared with familial sources, thus developed the perspective of familial sources. Finally, personal sources may share their opinions and views on their social media channels, thus acting as an extrinsic motivator. It is felt that, irrespective of number of personal sources consulted, the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout the role that personal recommendations plays in moderating factors, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H11 Increased personal recommendation will positively moderate the impact of: (a) employability and (b) lifestyle motivations and (c) familial and (d) digital extrinsic motivations on student choice. employability intrinsic motivation on student choice

The fourth and final main source of information identified referred to university communications. Whilst the aforementioned three sources of information are outside the control of institutions, ‘university communications’ refers to the channels of communications (other than digital) that institutions are able to have direct control over. These are presented below in Table 2.16.

Table 2.16: Key literature into traditional university communication channels which influence student choice (Source: author's own). (Representative sample: full list provided in Table A - 11.)

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Links to research objective?
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that choice is complex, with information provided by university being one of the key factors of student choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009)	Examined applicant's choice with reference to Kotler's 5-stage model. Four focus groups with 22 participants in total from one university. Concluded that open days is used as a key source of information.	Qualitative research approach	2
Durkin, McKenna, and Cummins (2012)	A description of how one UK university uses emotional connections in HE marketing. Paper concludes that open days can be used to build emotional connections.	Case study description	-
Moogan and Baron (2003)	Survey of 674 VIth form and college students found that the prospectus is a key source of information.	Quantitative research approach	2

As Table 2.16 illustrates, eight papers empirically investigate the effectiveness of university communications in student recruitment. Other than papers by Obermeit (2012) – USA and Germany – and Svekeres (2010) – South Africa – the papers presented are set in a UK context (Briggs, 2006; Brown *et al.* 2009; Durkin *et al.* 2012; Moogan and Baron, 2003; Rutter *et al.* 2017; Winter and Chapleo, 2017). Literature investigating university driven communications appears to highlight either the role of the prospectus (e.g. Rutter *et al.* 2017; Moogan and Baron, 2003) or open days (e.g. Durkin *et al.* 2012; Brown *et al.* 2009). Winter and Chapleo (2017), Obermeit (2012) and Briggs (2006) presented a comparison of different types of university communication.

It is striking that – despite the introduction of digital media – literature suggests that some of these more traditional forms of university driven communications still appear play a role in the recruitment of students. This is perhaps unsurprising, considering the nature of the service being consumed. University communications is likely to moderate the emphasis placed upon both intrinsic motivators (i.e. employability and lifestyle) as institutions are able to highlight specific employability and lifestyle components of the institutions offering. Furthermore, familial sources are likely to consult these traditional sources of information (as they may view a prospectus as it is more akin to their own experiences and may accompany their children on campus visit days). Universities are also able to utilise their digital channels to push out communications, with online prospectuses and virtual tours being tools that institutions can employ. It is felt that, irrespective of amount of university communication, the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout the role that university communication plays in moderating factors, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Therefore, the following hypothesis is offered.

H12 Increased traditional university communications will positively moderate the impact of: (a) employability and (b) lifestyle motivations and (c) familial and (d) digital extrinsic motivations on student choice. employability intrinsic motivation on student choice

As Table 2.13, Table 2.14, Table 2.15 and Table 2.16 illustrate, four main themes have been identified across a broad literature search. The four intervening informational influences which student choice are:

- Digital media – including official websites and social media channels. Note this is different to the digital influencers variable previously discussed as an extrinsic motivator, as digital media refers to digital sources consulted once the search process has started.
- Print media – this refers to traditional media sources such as local and national news.
- Personal sources – including parents, teachers, close friends/family members.
- University communications – including clearing, open days, and prospectuses.

Whilst four supra-categories are identified, there are, however, several shortcomings found within this area of literature related to sources of information that prospective students consult (it is worth noting that these limitations mirror the limitations found when discussing socio-demographic and environmental intervening factors).

Firstly, out of the 30 studies presented, only five studies provide a comparison between factors (i.e.Briggs, 2006; Moogan and Baron, 2003; Rutter *et al.* 2017; Simões and Soares, 2010; Winter and Chapleo, 2017). There is a far greater need for comparison amongst the extent to which different sources of information influence choice.

Secondly, there is a lack of research into sources of information that reflects the current sources of information that may be utilised by prospective students. As OfCom (2019) highlight, over 94% of adults use a smartphone. Therefore, for universities that have an app, there would be credence in asking the extent to which the app plays a role in a decision.

Thirdly, the previous research fails to account for the legislative changes introduced in the UK in 2018 in relation to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Sending out prospectuses and inviting potential students along to open days would have to be undertaken following the strict guidelines that govern the processing of personal data. Therefore, it would be interesting to see whether any new research reflects this change.

Fourthly, several studies that examine sources of information are descriptive in nature. There is no real underpinning theoretical model to justify sources extracted for investigation. Therefore, the discussion in current literature lacks theoretical underpinning.

Fifthly, some authors have ambiguity when referring to sources of example. For example, Bonnema and Van der Waldt (2008) refer to both ‘direct sources’ and ‘media sources’. Whilst factor analysis has occurred, these two terminologies are both broad and share commonalities, with minimal explanation provided.

Sixthly, (and again linked to a shortcoming found in the discussion of choice factors) the literature fails to account for the extent to which prospective students engage with social media channels when deciding which university to attend. The majority of research focuses upon what can be termed as ‘traditional channels of communication’.

Finally, there is little awareness of the extent to which these consulted with informational influencers moderate the relationship between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and final choice.

This thesis addresses these limitations firstly by providing a comparison of the relevance of different sources of information. Secondly, within this comparison, the extent to which students utilise technology (e.g. apps/social media channels) as a source of information will be explored. Thirdly, the empirical data collection takes place post-GDPR introductions, meaning that these changes are reflected. Fourthly, the premise for this investigation is based upon testing an empirical model, as presented in section 2.12. Fifthly, there will be a breakdown of sources of information (i.e. direct and media sources) to avoid ambiguity. Finally, the questions posed in both stages of data collection (i.e. the quantitative and qualitative) focuses upon the role that social media channels and apps play as a source of information.

2.13.4 Personal factors

Adjacent to sources of information, prospective students are also able to consult personal factors. These differ from sources of information, as these factors are unique to each student (i.e. other students will not have access to these factors). Based upon a review of the literature, two personal factors were identified.

The first personal factor identified was familial sources. This is different to familial influencers, as familial influencers refer to the role that familial will play in commencing the application process. Familial sources explore the role that familial members play once the search process has commenced.

Table 2.17: Key literature into personal factors in the familial sources category, which influence student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Links to research objectiv
James, Baldwin, and McInnis (1999)	Two surveys carried out in 1998 and 1999, with 937 and 538 respondents respectively. Followed up with 12 telephone interviews with participants. Found that the opinion of parents was as key source of information.	Mixed methods research approach	2
Le, Robinson, and Dobele (2020)	509 completed surveys from Vietnamese students. Found that familial sources played a clear role in final decision.	Quantitative research approach	2
Moogan (2020)	In determining the 'awareness and influential sources' stage of the CDP, the author found that more than two thirds participants (focus groups with sample size of 35 participants) identified parents or partners influenced application	Quantitative research approach	2
Lee and Morrish (2012)	20 interviews (9 parents, and 11 students) in a study that explored different types of personal sources. The research concluded that cultural relationships can influence the role that parents have in the decision of prospective students.	Qualitative research approach	2

As Table 2.17 identifies, only four studies explore the role that familial sources play on influencing the choice process. All four of these studies have the commonality that parents act as a key personal source. Lee and Morrish's (2012) research suggest that the impact of cultural parental relationships can moderate this choice further. It is felt that familial sources will moderate all four initial motivators for students to enter into Higher Education. Familial sources will know their children's personalities, coupled with a stronger awareness of the wider economic picture, and will encourage students to bear employability and lifestyle components in mind. It is felt that, irrespective of the number of familial sources, the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout the role that familial sources plays in moderating factors, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

As a result, the following hypothesis is generated.

H13 Familial sources will positively moderate the impact of: (a) employability and (b) lifestyle motivations and (c) familial and (d) digital extrinsic motivations on student choice.
employability intrinsic motivation on student choice

The second personal factor identified is initial perception. An interchangeable term for this – that is used for the subsequent purpose of data collection – is 'gut feeling'. This refers to the internal feelings that an applicant has when a particular HEI comes to mind. This impression – as demonstrated below – may have been demonstrated from a range of different exposures to the brand (e.g. open days/prospectus/location/digital channels).

Table 2.18: Key literature into personal factors in the initial perception category, which influence student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Links to research objective?
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that choice is complex, with initial perception being one of the key factors of student choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Pampaloni (2010)	Survey of 227 US students. Found that a college's atmosphere was determined by size, housing and knowing someone who attended the school.	Quantitative research approach	2
Veloutsou, Paton, and Lewis (2005)	Using data from 306 pupils across the UK, found that information sources influences the unconscious perceptions of applicants.	Quantitative research approach	2
Winter and Chapleo (2017)	Used the conceptual model of servicescape to provide insights into the emotional factors driving student choice. Interviews concluded that there was a need to provide applicants with a sense of escape and feeling of belonging.	Qualitative research approach	2

As Table 2.18 identifies, only four studies explore the role that initial perception plays on influencing the choice process. Briggs (2006) uses the terminology initial perception, whilst Pampaloni (2010) refers to 'atmosphere'; Veloutsou *et al.* (2005) refers to 'unconscious perceptions' and Winter and Chapleo (2017) refers to a 'feeling of belonging'. This notion links in closely to the premise of experiential marketing (e.g. Schmitt, 1999). When reviewing prospective institutions, applicants are aware of the need to select a course that addresses both their career and lifestyle needs. A logical argument is this is likely to be embedded deep in the consciousness of applicants. Furthermore, initial perception can be used to either seek information from both familial and digital channels that reinforces this initial perception. It is felt that, irrespective of amount of initial perception, the components of EVT will be prevalent throughout the role that initial perception plays in moderating factors, as highlighted in the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

As a result, the following hypothesis is generated.

H14 Gut feeling will positively moderate the impact of: (a) employability and (b) lifestyle motivations and (c) familial and (d) digital extrinsic motivations on student choice. employability intrinsic motivation on student choice

As Table 2.17 and Table 2.18 illustrate, two main themes are identified across a broad literature search. The two intervening personal influences which influences student choice are:

- Familial influencers
- Initial perception

The notion of initial perception is a component that does not really 'fit' into the other intervening variables, nor into the specific supra-categories. The supra-categories focus upon rational factors, whilst initial perception focuses upon the idea of the emotional components that drive a decision. In this context, initial perception refers to the internal feeling felt by the applicant when engaging with the specific institution brand. It is important not to oversimplify the distinction between rational and emotional factors though, hence the development of this moderating variable.

There is, however, one main shortcoming found within this area of literature related to personal sources. That being, there is little awareness of the extent to which these personal sources moderate the relationship between motivation to study and final choice.

This thesis addresses this limitation by ensuring that the questions posed in both stages of data collection will clearly address how personal sources moderate the relationship between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to study and the final choice made.

2.14 What are the main themes that need to be explored in greater depth?

Having presented the different supra-categories that act as moderators in the relationship between a student's motivation and choice, there is a hereby a reiteration of the main limitations found within the existing body of literature:

Firstly, whilst a number of studies are presented, there is a sparse number that provides a comparison between factors (e.g. Veloutsou, Lewis and Paton, 2004; Briggs, 2006; Maringe, 2006). Where a comparison has been made, there has been no attempt for any follow-on research (i.e. using existing frameworks developed to determine how appropriate they are for other contexts). Nearly all the authors have ‘reinvented the wheel’, meaning that comparisons are difficult.

Secondly, there is a lack of research into the choice criteria that investigates the current contextual climate of the global HE sector. Whilst there has been some research undertaken since the dramatic changes in the sector as discussed in section 2.3, these have investigated a sole aspect of the choice process – such as Winter and Chapleo’s (2017) servicescape investigation. There is a clear need for more empirical research into the combination of rational and emotional factors that influence student choice in the HE sector.

Thirdly, notwithstanding the research offered by the likes of Gibbions, Neumayer, and Perkins (2015) and Winter and Chapleo (2017), there is minimal empirical research into student choice that specifically focuses upon the UK HE market. Again, there is a clear need for this investigation considering the changes to the UK HE market (as highlighted in section 2.3).

Fourthly, as supported by Obermeit (2012) and Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2015) there is an overemphasis on rational reasons for choosing a HE institution. Evidence of this is in the dense concentration of authors who have reviewed the impact of league tables into student choice, whilst the minimal number of authors who have reviewed first impressions (i.e. initial perceptions). Whilst research which focuses upon emotional components does draw on rational factors, there is a need to understand how emotional factors link into the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for attending university.

Fifthly, out of all the papers reviewed, there is a lack of mixed methods approaches to research. Results are generally presented from a quantitative and qualitative perspective. As various authors (e.g. Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Briggs, 2006; Obermeit, 2012; Winter and Chapleo, 2017; Scullion and Molseworth, 2011) have highlighted, choice is a complex process. To review such a complex process from a sole perspective of either identifying patterns in a quantitative manner, or underlying concerns in a qualitative manner, suggests that the existing body of research is generally missing a more robust approach to understanding the complex choice process.

Sixthly, the clear majority of studies into HE consumer choice only focus on one institution (sometimes even one department within a particular institution – e.g. Rudd, Djafarova, and Waring's (2012) choice into what drives student choice in UK Business Schools). Notwithstanding the fact that authors cede that this is a limitation of their studies, there is a question of under-representation of the current literature body into the HE environment. There is a need for greater comparison to ensure the transferability of results to other institutions.

Finally, there is a large void in the existing literature into consumer choice in terms of the extent to which technology plays a role in student choice. For example, Maringe (2006) refers to 'technological forces', whilst other authors simply refer to information provided by the university. There is a clear need to consider the extent to which communication mechanisms in the 21st century drive choice. This is supported by Hemsley-Brown (2012) who assert that there are very few articles that look at how developments of the internet impact upon choice factors.

This thesis addresses these limitations by, firstly, providing a comparison of the relevance of the different choice factors. Secondly, this research conducts a present-day investigation into student choice, taking into account changes within both the global and UK HE market. Thirdly, the research combines an investigation into both rational and emotional factors behind student choice. Fourthly, a mixed methods approach takes place. Fifthly, the empirical investigation carries out a comparison of the choice factors of students at two different institutions (i.e. a traditional and a vocational institution). Finally, the questions posed in both stages of data collection (i.e. the quantitative and qualitative) focuses upon the role that digital channels play on student choice.

In tandem with the shortcoming consistently highlighted that there is little comparison within the variable categories (e.g. socio-demographic; environmental; informational) there is also minimal comparison between the variable categories (i.e. investigating if any relationship exists between individual items and also the extent to which these variables moderate motivation). This thesis addresses this further gap.

Now that an overview of intervening variables and relevant hypotheses has been presented, this chapter will go onto present existing conceptual frameworks into HE choice. The aim of doing this is to determine whether a model exists which would sufficiently address the shortcomings highlighted in the existing body of empirical findings.

2.15 Conceptual framework

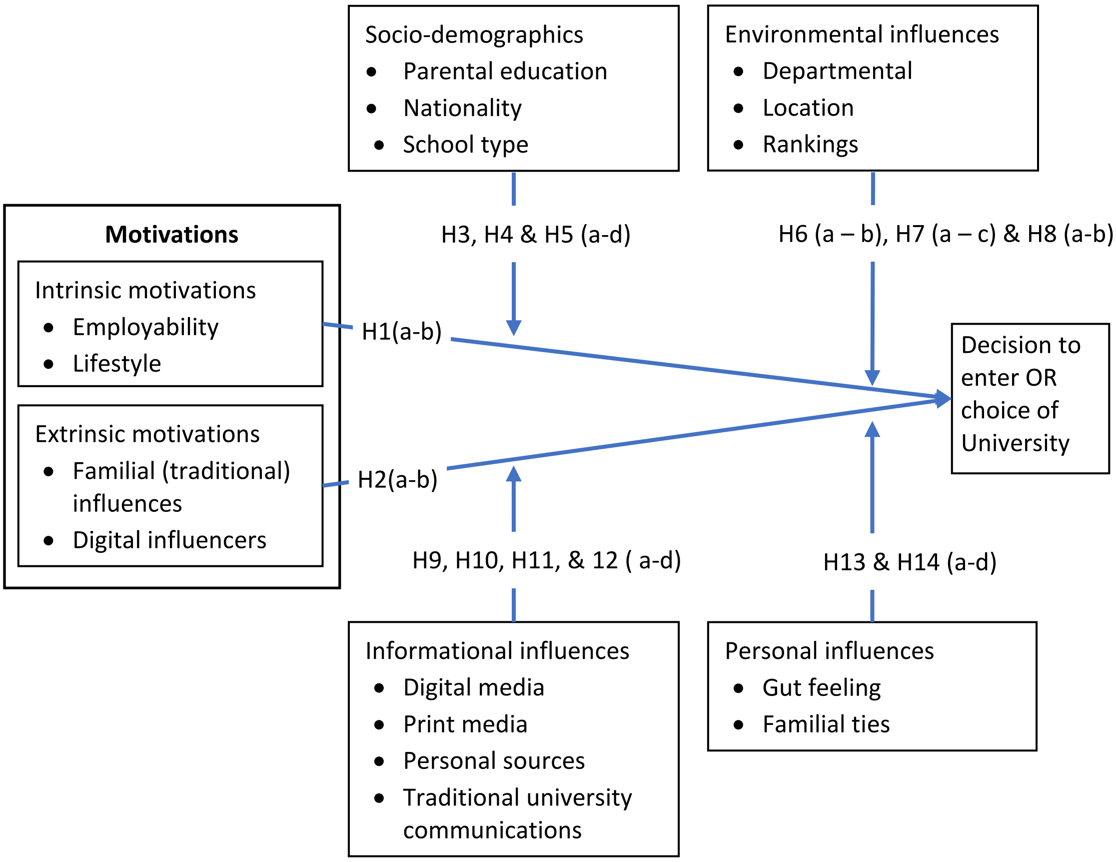

Figure 2.12: Conceptual framework for initial testing in study (Source: author's own).

This framework is derived from the three components that make up expected value theory (i.e. expectancy; instrumentally; and valance). As was emphasied in section 2.8, an EVT model is not tested, but EVT is the driving force behind the development of this model. At the closing of each sub-section, an awareness is provided of how the components of EVT contribute to the development of the proposed hypotheses. This model (Figure 2.12) is constructed based upon the previous extensive review of literature and the limitations previously discussed. It is recognised that at this stage that this model is somewhat 'clunky' and multi-faceted, with a multitude of layers. Therefore, it is proposed that the hypotheses identified in the model are subject to rigorous empirical testing, to ensure that the propositions are valid for a larger qualitative investigation. The key question under investigation is will intervening variables mediate (as demonstrated currently) or moderate the relationships provided?

Key to the development of this model is wishing to address the following research questions:

1. What are the key themes from extant empirical literature into HE motivation and choice?

2. What are they key intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for a UK-based undergraduate student to attend university?
3. To what extent do intervening variables moderate intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of UK-based undergraduate students?
4. To what extent to which intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, and intervening variables, differ based upon the type of institutions?

This thesis will now go onto present the methodology for the thesis.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The overall objective for this chapter is to evaluate the options for addressing the gaps in the literature identified at the end of the previous chapter. This chapter begins by restating the research aim and the research objectives. This is followed by a discussion into the various philosophical approaches that could be utilised, with an awareness and justification of the philosophical perspective adopted (i.e. social constructionism). There is a discussion into the various advantages and disadvantages of different research approaches, with a synthesis providing a rationalisation of a mixed methods approach.

Once these overarching elements (i.e. the research philosophy and the research approach) are presented, the chapter divides into two sub-chapters. Each sub-chapter covers one aspect of the empirical data collection: a quantitative survey; and a range of qualitative face-to-face interviews with both existing undergraduate students and Higher Education marketing staff.

Within these sub-chapters, the following sections are discussed:

- A discussion of the intended research design, including pilot testing, and a justification of the questions posed.
- An evaluation of the sampling approach, the sample size, and how participants were accessed.
- A discussion into how data obtained is analysed.
- An examination into how reliability and validity is ensured.
- An acknowledgement of any ethical considerations.

Finally, each sub-section closes with an identification of the limitations of that stage of the research, thus giving credence to the necessity for further stages of data collection.

3.1 Research philosophy

This discussion of the research philosophy is broken down into three sections. It begins with a discussion of the ontology, followed by an awareness of the phenomenological nature of the research and then a discussion of the epistemological position of the research. This section of the methodology chapter closes with a discussion of the axiological nature of the research.

3.1.1 Ontology

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson (2012: p. 10) state that *'… ontology is the starting point for most of the debates among philosophers*'. There are four ontological approaches: realism; internal realism; relativism; and nominalisation. Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2012: p. 10) highlight that a '…*traditional position of realism emphasizes that the world is concrete and external, and that science can only progress through observations that have a direct correspondence to the phenomena being investigated'.* Alternatively, internal realism assumes that there is a single reality, but asserts that it is never possible for scientists to access that reality directly, and it is only possible to gather indirect evidence of what is going on in fundamental physical processes (Putnam, 1987). Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2012: p. 11) assert that relativism suggests that '*… scientific laws are not simply out there to be discovered, but they are created by people'.* Relativism suggests that there may never be a definitive answer to an approach. Finally, Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2012) suggests that with nominalism there is no truth, and facts are all human creations.

Considering the multi-facetted nature of Higher Education institutions and intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors – coupled with the various stakeholders involved in the student-choice process – a realism approach, suggesting that there is only a 'single truth', is short-sighted as it is unlikely to fit the range of scenarios and perspectives of different stakeholders. The internal realism approach purports that truth exists, but facts cannot be accessed directly, which is implausible considering access to participants is possible. Furthermore, the nominalism approach is inconsistent with the researcher's drive to develop understanding. Therefore, the relativism ontological approach is appropriate. A fair assumption is that the role that motivation drivers, choice criteria, and sources of information consulted will vary between different students. Therefore, it can be assumed that there are many 'truths' in terms of how these elements are addressed within the student-choice process, and the nature of the truth depends on the viewpoint of the observer. The four research questions that are addressed in this research (see section 1.3) are very much open to interpretation, as one respondent may place greater emphasis on certain factors in comparison to others. It is from this ontological perspective that the research takes place.

3.1.2 Phenomenological research

Cresswell (2007: p. 57) describes phenomenological research as providing *'… meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomena*'. A phenomenological approach aims to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to discuss the '*grasp of the very nature* *of the thing*' (van Manen, 1990, p. 117). Phenomenological research involves the *'… collection of data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon and develops a composite description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals*' (Cresswell, 2007; p. 58). There are two main approaches to phenomenological research.

1. Hermeneutic phenomenology as discussed by van Manen (1990). Here, phenomenology is seen as an interpretative process whereby the researcher makes an interpretative.
2. Transcendental or psychological phenomenology as offered by Moustakas (1994). This focuses less on the interpretation of the researcher and more on a description of the experiences of participants (Cresswell, 2007).

Psychological phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) is the phenomenological approach adopted in this research. Credibility for this approach is found in that it is a useful method for relatively new researchers, as focus is placed upon the responses provided by the research participants (Cresswell, 2007), and that is the requirement of this research. Furthermore, the research questions posed very much evaluate the experience of participants who have undertaken the choice of an institution (and the impact of intervening variables along their choice journey).

3.1.3 Epistemology

Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2012: p. 21) state that epistemology is about '*…different ways of inquiring into the nature of the physical and social worlds*'. There are two primary epistemological approaches: positivism and social constructionism.

Positivism suggests that '*… the social world exists externally, and that its properties should be measured through objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection, or intuition'.*

The alternative approach is social constructionism. This '*… focuses on the ways that people make sense of the world especially through sharing their experience with others via the medium of language'* (Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2012: p. 23). This approach suggests that we should attempt to appreciate the different experiences of individuals, as opposed to searching for underlying laws and theories to explain behaviour.

Table 3.1 presents an overview of the two epistemological approaches.

Table 3.1: Contrasting implications of positivism and social constructionism (Source: Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2012: p. 24).

	Positivism	Social constructionism
The observer	Must be independent	Is part of what is being observed
Human interests	Should be irrelevant	Are the main drivers of science
Explanations	Must demonstrate causality	Aim to increase general understanding of the situation
Research progresses through	Hypotheses and deductions	Gathering rich data from which ideas are induced
Concepts	Need to be defined so that they can be measured	Should incorporate stakeholder perspectives
Units of analysis	Should be reduced to simplest terms	May include the complexity of 'whole' situations
Generalisation through	Statistical probability	Theoretical abstraction
Sampling requires	Large numbers selected randomly	Small number of cases chosen for specific reasons

A social constructionism approach is the most appropriate for this research. The researcher's position– both as a PhD candidate and an academic – suggests that he is part of what is being observed. Considering his past and current experience in the HE sector, independence from the research process would be difficult to obtain. The human interest is also quite telling. Indeed, the researcher's role as a course leader is very much driving the research process, meaning any understanding of student-choice process developed will hopefully attract more applicants to his course. An expected outcome from this research is an increase in the level of understanding of the relationship between motivation and student choice. As investigating the role that certain variables such as social media plays in the HE choice process is a new approach, the construction of hypotheses from literature has been difficult, with a great deal of logical thought applied to develop them. This area should incorporate a range of stakeholder perspectives, thus demonstrating the multi-faceted nature of the research topic. Furthermore, a social constructionist approach is consistent with the approach offered by numerous empirical investigations (e.g. Agrey and Lampadan, 2014; James, Baldwin, and McInnis, 1999; Dunnett, Moorehouse, Walsh, and Barry, 2012: Greenacre, Freeman, Cong, and Chapman, 2014; Ahmad, 2015; Trullas *et al.* 2018).

3.1.4 Axiological nature of research

Saunders *et al.* (2019: p. 137) state that '*… Axiology is a branch of philosophy that studies judgements about value…*'. It is the process of social enquiry in which we are concerned here. The role that your own value play in all stages of the research is of great importance if you wish your research results to be credible'. As a researcher, I am 'value bound'. Principally, as a HE educator and student, I am part of the phenomenon under investigation. It would be impossible to untangle myself from the intricacies and complexities of the research, as what motivates students is a consideration that I make every day of my professional life. Indeed, one of job specific objectives is based around increasing enrolment numbers (i.e. choice) at my institution). With this in mind, the original desire to undertake this research is not driven by a need to develop a new framework, nor was it driven by a need to address a burning internal curiosity. Instead, this research is driven by the following four principle values.

1. Whilst institutions appear to place emphasis on understanding the two intrinsic core motivations (lifestyle and employability), it is difficult to determine the extent to which this translates into increased numbers of applications. I want to understand whether this is the case, and what intervening variables moderate these intrinsic motivations.
2. In a sector where budgets are finite and with extensive changes in the macro-environment (i.e. the increased emphasis on digital tools), I am keen to investigate the extent to which extrinsic motivations (i.e. traditional tools and digital tools) impact upon the overall choice, and the respective values placed upon these extrinsic motivations. Akin to the first principle value, I also want to appreciate what intervening variables moderate these extrinsic motivations.
3. As an academic staff member of an undergraduate programme, I want a clearer awareness of the extent to which the intrinsic motivations of lifestyle and employability influence the overall choice of students studying an undergraduate course.
4. As an academic staff member of a robust undergraduate programme, I want a clearer understanding of how I can efficiently utilise traditional and digital tools to boost the number of student applications.

3.2 Different research approaches

A variety of research approaches could be applied to collect empirical data. The main approaches are either include a quantitative approach; a qualitative approach; or a mixed methods approach.

This chapter now defines these approaches and evaluates the respective advantages and disadvantages of these different strategies. This section concludes with a justification of the adopted research approach.

3.2.1 Quantitative approach

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019: p. 166), quantitative research is generally associated with positivism and adopts a deductive approach. Quantitative research is classed as either mono-method (a single method is used) or multi-method (more than one method is used). Quantitative research involves the undertaking of one or more surveys on a topic. Malhorta, Birks, and Wills (2012: p. 327) state that a survey is based upon the use of structured questionnaires administered to a sample of a target population. In a survey, participants are asked questions on aspects such as their behaviour, intentions, attitudes, awareness, motivations, and demographic and lifestyle characteristics. Czaja and Blair (2005) highlight that there are generally four different approaches to conducting a survey. Surveys can either take place online, via mail, via telephone, face-to-face, or using a combination of the methods. (These are explored in greater detail in section 3.5.1.1).

There are four main advantages to quantitative research. Firstly, quantitative research is relatively straightforward to administer – in that questionnaires are designed, distributed, and subsequently collated. Secondly, provided the necessary instructions are included – and the questionnaire is distributed to the appropriate sample – there should be a minimal level of ambiguity in terms of what is expected of participants when completed quantitative research. Thirdly, Malhorta, Birks and Wills (2012) highlight that the use of fixed response questions reduces the variability in the results that may be caused by differences in interviewers and/or responses given in interviews. Finally, provided there is a sufficient level of understanding and application on the part of the researcher, coding, analysis and interpretation of quantitative data is relatively straightforward.

There are, however, three main disadvantages to a quantitative approach. Firstly, participants may be unable or unwilling to provide the necessary information (Malhorta, Birks, and Wills, 2012). For example, if a survey addressed the reasons why participants were motivated to attend university, they may not have consciously considered before what constitutes a motivating factor. Likewise, they may be unwilling to provide personal information, such as their age and/or nationality. Quantitative research does not facilitate the chance for the data collector to provide further explanation. Secondly, whilst fixed responses questions should remove any ambiguity in what is expected, the notion of fixed responses does not allow for the expression of beliefs and/or feelings. Finally, it is essential that questions are worded in a consistent manner to ensure all survey participants understand what is being asked.

3.2.2 Qualitative approach

Malhorta *et al.* (2012: p. 187) assert that qualitative research refers to '*… an unstructured, primarily exploratory design based on small samples, intended to provide depth, insight, and understanding'*. Saunders *et al.* (2019: p. 168) highlight that qualitative research is associated with an interpretive philosophy and an inductive approach. Qualitative research allows for the investigation of a complex phenomenon, which motivation of studying within a HE institution certainly is. The nature of what participants want to convey may be difficult to capture in a structured, quantitative format. In tandem with quantitative studies, qualitative research is classed as either a mono-method qualitative study or a multi-method qualitative study.

There are several approaches to qualitative research. One approach is an in-depth interview. Easterby-Smith *et al*. (2012) highlight that the label 'in-depth interview' is used to denote a range of interviews, including those that are intentionally open through to interviews where the researcher has prepared questions in advance. Burgess (1982: p. 107) highlights that an interview provides '*…an opportunity for the researcher to provide deeply to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of a problem, and to secure vivid, accurate, exclusive accounts that are based on personal experience'.* Interviews can either be face-to-face, conducted online (such as using a video conferencing platform such as Skype or StarLeaf) or over the telephone. Whilst the latter two options would potentially be useful if the context of this research was international students, the fact that data can be collected from participants who are in close proximity means that face-to-face interviews are possible. Carrying out face-to-face interviews also means that the researcher is able to identify visual cues that participants provide. Furthermore, being face-to-face allows the researcher to appear 'friendly' and approachable, thus leading to participants 'opening up' more in discussion.

An alternative to in-depth interviews is focus groups, otherwise known as group interviews. These *'… take the form of loosely structured steered conversations*.*'* (Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2012: p. 133). In focus groups, the researcher acts as the moderator and this moderation generally takes place within a complex situation. Walker (1985) emphasises that focus groups should not be multiple interviews conducted simultaneously but should create a situation where participants feel comfortable expressing their views. Whilst in principle this approach would save time, focus groups are not appropriate for data collection within this research. As discussed in the sampling section, student and staff participants are from an array of schools and departments. Furthermore, Easterby-Smith *et al*. (2012) also highlights that participants may not be willing to air views held in front of others. Therefore, it would be important to give participants the necessary space for them to express themselves, thus allowing for the analysis stage to identify any commonalties or differences between participants. However, focus groups may have a role to play either in the testing and/or development of any measurement tool or in the development of any future research.

Another qualitative research approach that could be used is diaries. This can either be keeping a traditional 'diary' or recording specific events at particular moments in time. In practice, participants could keep a diary during their application process, detailing their initial motivations for deciding to go to university, and detailing how these changed, either as they went through the application procedure and/or came into contact with intervening variables. In conjunction with this, participants could also evaluate the extent to which the actual keeping of a diary influenced their choice process. Whilst this is certainly an interesting approach, the sample parameters (see section 3.5.2) mean that this approach would be difficult to apply. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that participants would maintain a diary, meaning that adopting this approach would be a gamble.

3.2.3 Mixed methods approach

Mixed methods approaches are generally adopted when two philosophical positions are intertwined. When considering a mixed methods approach, the notion of critical realists comes into play. Critical realists believe in an external, objective reality to the world in which we live, the way in which of us interprets and understandings will be affected by our particular social conditioning (Saunders *et al.*2019: p. 169). Saunders *et al.* (2019) assert that one of the reasons that mixed methods are so popular is due to pragmatism. This is where it is impractical and illogical to view a topic solely from two different approaches that – whilst at opposite ends of the spectrum – could be used to complement one another. There are two main approaches to mixed methods research:

1. Concurrent mixed methods research involves the separate use of quantitative and qualitative methods within a single phase of data collection and analysis. This leads to a concurrent triangulation design.
2. Sequential mixed methods research involves more than one phase of data collection. In this design, the researcher follows the use of one method with another. This facilitates an

elaboration on the initial set of findings. Sequential mixed methods designs can either be double-phased, sequential exploratory, sequential explanatory, or multi-phase design.

Due to the nature of this research, a multi-phase design approach is adopted for this data collection. This is an approach championed by Creswell and Clark (2011). Lund (2012) states that a multi-phase design involves a combination of different approaches within and between different phases. Lund (2012) goes onto emphasise that the different phases of data collection depend upon each other. With this in mind, the development of the qualitative data collection is influenced by the findings of the quantitative study (see section 3.5), and the quantitative study itself will be designed in part based upon exploratory qualitative interviews (see section 3.5.1.1).

Bryman (2006) highlights that a mixed methods approach is championed within business and management research. Cresswell and Clark (2011) highlight that mixed methods research may use qualitative research and qualitative research in either an equal or an unequal manner. This facilitates one particular methodology providing support for the other. In this thesis, the qualitative research is the dominant research approach. This is due to the exploratory nature of the research. The researcher is also far more comfortable using qualitative research – both in terms of the conduction of the research and the data analysis. This approach is known as an 'embedded mixed methods research'. Saunders *et al.* (2016: p. 173) presented the following table of benefits behind using a mixed methods approach.

Table 3.2: Reasons for using a mixed methods design (Source: Adapted from Saunders et al., 2019: p. 173).

Reason	Explanation
Initiation	Initial use of a qualitative or quantitative methodology may be used to define the nature and scope of sequential quantitative and qualitative research.
Facilitation	One method may lead to the discovering of new insights which inform and are followed up using another method.
Complementary	Meanings and findings can be elaborated, enhanced, clarified, confirmed, illustrated, or linked.
Interpretation	One method may be used to explain relationships between variables emerging from the other.
Generalisability	Assists in establishing the generalisation of a study.
Diversity	Allows for a greater diversity of views to inform and be reflected in the study.
Problem solving	Alternative methods may help when the initial method provides either unexplainable results or insufficient data.
Focus	One method may be used to focus on one attribute, whilst the other may be used to focus on another attribute.
Triangulation	Allows to combine data to ascertain if the findings from one method corroborate the findings from other methods.
Confidence	Greater confidence in conclusion if more than one method is employed.

Now that a justification of the research approach has been provided, this chapter will now go onto detail the research design in greater detail, the sequential nature of which is encapsulated in Figure 3.1 below.

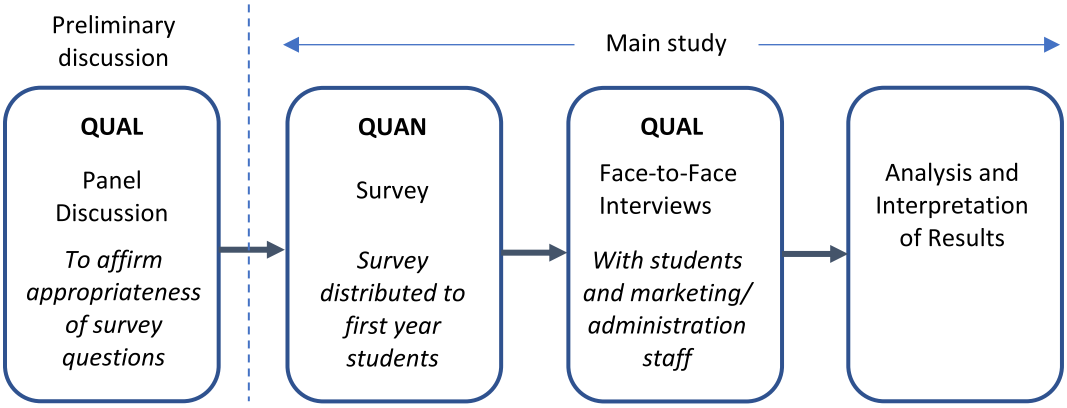

Figure 3.1: Sequential research design.

3.2.4 Case study approach

A method typically associated with a mixed methods approach is a case study. A case study is an in-depth inquiry into a topic of phenomenon within its real-life setting (Yin, 2014). Simons (2009: p. 21) referred to a case study as an '*… in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a 'real-life' context'.* Gummesson (2000: p. 3) highlighted that '*… case study research is becoming increasingly accepted as a scientific tool in management research'.*

Eisenhardt (1989) states that a case study seeks to understand the dynamics of a topic studied within its setting or context. Dubois and Gadde (2002: p. 554) highlight that '*…the interaction between a phenomenon and its context is best understood through in-depth case studies*'. A case study provides insight into evaluating hidden areas within the context under investigation. It provides a micro level analysis of relationships and interactions which take place between individuals and are useful '*…when the purpose of research is hypothesis generating rather than hypothesis testing…'* (Gerring 2007, p. 66) (although hypotheses are presented for the first stage of data collection due to the quantitative nature of this stage).

There are a number of different ways to classify case studies. Stake (1995) highlights that case studies can be either intrinsic or instrumental. The intrinsic approach involves studying a case to appreciate its uniqueness. The instrumental approach provides a more general understanding of a phenomenon. This research is an example of an instrumental case study research. Whilst the empirical investigation will provide an evaluation that is specific to two institutions, the resulting findings will hopefully be able to be applied to a range of institutions.

Saunders *et al.* (2019 p. 187) highlight that the *'… rationale for using multiple cases focuses on whether findings can be replicated across cases*'. Multiple case studies will have either literal replication or theoretical replication. Yin (2014) states that literal replication is where '*cases are chosen on the basis that similar results are predicted*'. Alternatively, theoretical replication is where a contextual factor is deliberately different. In this scenario, it is hypothesized that contextual factors (i.e. the type of institution) would provide different results. Therefore, theoretical replication is applied to this study.

Undertaking case study research is not without criticism. Flyvberg (2011) concludes that case studies can lead to misunderstandings of the ability of a case study to produce generalisable, reliable, and theoretical contributions to knowledge. Saunders *et al.* (2019) found that these misgivings are grounded in using interpretive, qualitative-based research. However, Flyvberg (2011) addressed these criticisms by highlighting that there is increased value in utilising case studies for qualitative and mixed methods research.

Whilst a more generic, 'broad brush' approach could be taken – whereby opinions of students at more institutions could be sought – such an approach would be unlikely to provide the necessary depth in terms of number of respondents and level of detail provided. Furthermore, the objectives of this thesis are to investigate intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, student choice, and the sources of information consulted. Understanding these aspects is a complex process, and time allocated for this task (and the level of detail required) suggests that a more in-depth investigation is appropriate.

The specific case studies investigated are undergraduate student cohorts based at two institutions within the same city (on the UK south coast). One of these institutions is classed as a traditional, Russell Group university, whilst another is a vocational, former polytechnic institution (commonly known as a post-1992 university). This is depicted below in Figure 3.2.

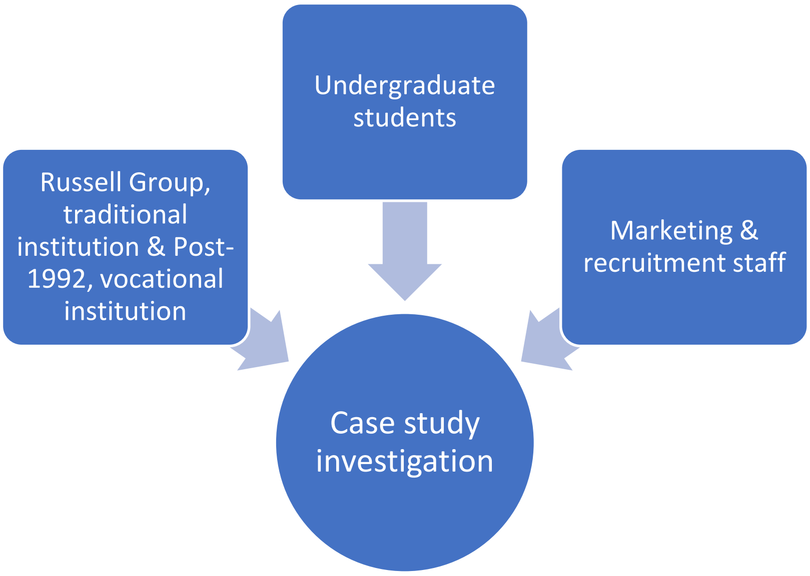

Figure 3.2: Focus of case study investigation.

A range of reasons are given for selecting two institutions. Firstly, choosing two very different universities (in respect of resources, traditional vs. vocational; research vs. teaching focused institutions) provides scope for comparison. An important question is whether motivations differ between students who decide to study at a traditional university, as opposed to those who decide to study at a vocational institutional. Secondly, these universities are selected as they provide a relatively straightforward ease of access to the sample as personal contacts can be used to access participants. Finally, the diverse nature of these institutions, with students from a variety of backgrounds (studying an array of courses) provides an optimal setting to investigate the key motivation drivers behind choice, and the extent to which intervening factors moderate this relationship.

3.2.5 Justification for a mixed methods approach

The selection of the research approach involves considering a range of elements. These include methodological considerations such as the epistemological, ontological and axiological and philosophical perspectives, as well as more practical considerations such as time, resources, contacts, and skills of the researcher. Ultimately, the question needs to be '*what research approach will facilitate the clearest answer to the research aim, objectives, and questions posed…*' and in doing so '*… what research approach addresses the gap in the literature*'. Whilst section 2.15 developed an initial conceptual framework and the empirical data collection will test the appropriateness of this framework, there is a need to provide feasible reason and logic to the findings that is aptly supported by a vigorous data collection process. Whilst this study utilises the expectancy–value theory (as discussed in section 2.8) I am conscious that via the process of investigating student motivation, the area of investigation is not constrained by EVT. In short, the research approach – and philosophy that guides it – needs to adopt an open-minded approach.

Whilst the existing literature into student motivation and choice is predominantly dominated by empirical research carrying out either solely quantitative or qualitative approaches (please see the tables labelled Table 2.3–Table 2.18 for evidence of this) – and this chapter has presented the merits and drawbacks of each approach – in reality, the clear majority of practical research should employ both quantitative and qualitative research (i.e. a mixed methods approach). Questionnaires facilitate an identification of patterns, and the follow-up interviews provide justification for the patterns that have been generated (Saunders et al., 2019). Furthermore, studies that have used EVT as the theoretical basis for investigation have adopted a quantitative approach (e.g., Ghazalia & McPherson, 2009; McPherson & O'Neill, 2010). Therefore, quantitative data collected can be supported by this. Nevertheless, considering the underpinning elements of a high-involvement choice, although existing research into EVT does not adopt a qualitative approach, carrying out the qualitative element of the mixed methods approach will allow for the identification of any underpinning themes that emerge.

Therefore, the most appropriate way to explore this issue is a mixed methods approach. A quantitative approach would provide the raw numbers in terms of understanding the motivating and choice factors, coupled with the sources of information consulted. Notwithstanding this, the qualitative component will facilitate the identification of the underlying reasons behind students' motivation, choice criteria, and sources of information consulted. Adopting either approach independently of the other – i.e. carrying out only quantitative or qualitative research – would remove the possibility of such a robust investigation. Saunders et al. (2019) highlight that a mixed methods approach can be useful for testing existing frameworks, and thus developing a richer theoretical understanding based upon the findings. Quantitative research will be used to test Figure 3.1, whilst qualitative research will be used to affirm any findings.

Saunders *et al.* (2019: p, 166) supports this approach by emphasising that a mixed methods approach provides '*… scope for a richer approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation*'.

3.3 Timeline

This research is linear, meaning that a survey is be followed by interviews. Both approaches sample participants from two institutions. The survey sought participants from first-year undergraduate students (in the first semester of their studies). Interviews took place with both existing undergraduate students and with marketing and communications staff of the respective universities. There was, however, crossover in the interview stage, in that interviews took place with students and staff at the different institutions (sometimes within the same week due to the close proximity of the institutions to one another). This benefited the research as – due to its exploratory nature – it facilitated the expansion of prompts and ideas. For example, a staff member may identify that the provision for existing students at the traditional university is insufficient. This could direct the discussion with student participants – in the sense that the researcher could identify whether students were aware of the existence of this issue. Likewise, whilst this may be a comment made at a traditional institution, this would not prevent this issue being raised with staff and student participants at the vocational institution.

Consideration must be given to the timing of data collection, especially relating to key dates in the academic calendar – such as assessment weeks, examination weeks, and reading weeks – whereby students are either unlikely to be in situ or otherwise engaged on academic activities. This same point is applicable to marketing and administration staff. Staff were be approached in advance of the actual interview date to ensure that they have free space in their diary. Therefore, the survey was distributed during the second teaching week, (i.e. once modules have started in earnest) whilst interviews took place during the subsequent spring term.

This chapter will now present the two stages of empirical data collection that occurred.

3.4 Obtaining ethical approval

Ethical approval for this study was obtained via the University of Southampton's internal ERGO platform. An application was made to the School Research Officer, detailing the research title, aim, and questions, and the intended methodology employed. There was an opportunity on this application for the researcher to illustrate that they have considered and – where necessary – addressed any ethical concerns. A copy of the participants' information form and consent form was presented for review. The ID for this application is 14417. This submission was created on 19th March 2015, submitted on 2nd June 2015, and approved by the supervisor and ethics committee on 9th July 2015 and 24th July 2015 respectively.

3.5 Stage 1 of Research: Surveys

Whilst section 3.1.3 highlights that a social constructionist perspective was used, the first stage of the empirical data collection focused primarily on carrying out a quantitative survey. Prior to delving deeper into the extent to which motivation influences choice – and the impact of intervening variables on the choice process – it was important to identify any patterns in responses so that qualitative questions could be supported with evidence. This section is structured as follows: Firstly, there is an outline of the research design for the first stage of data collection (this includes a justification of why specific questions were posed).Secondly, there is a presentation of the sampling approach; sample size; and access of participants. Thirdly, there is an outline of the specific tests that are carried out for data analysis. Fourthly, there is an evaluation of the reliability and validity of this stage of research. Fifthly, an appreciation of ethical considerations is presented. Finally, there is a recognition of the problems of this stage of the research, and why it was necessary to incorporate a further stage of data collection, thus supporting the research approach adopted.

3.5.1 Research design

A research design is the '*… plan of how you will go about answering your research questions*' (Saunders et al., 2019: p. 163). The research design, however, only presents a 'road map' of how a researcher intends to undertake research. Conducting research itself should be an iterative process, with allowances made for reflections and adjustments where necessary. These reflections and adjustments are highlighted at the pre-testing and pilot stages, and in the qualitative results chapter.

As discussed in the conclusion to the literature review, one of the main shortcomings of existing literature is that existing conceptual frameworks (e.g. Chapman, 1981l Hemsley-Brown, 1999; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2015; Cubillo *et al.*, 2006; Vrontis *et al.* 2007; El Nemar *et al.* 2018) have not been tested, nor do they focus on the direct role that motivation has on the choice process. This gap was emphasised at the outset of this thesis (i.e. in section 1.1) and is borne in mind by the researcher throughout the development of the methodology.

As discussed during section 3.2.3, a mixed methods approach was used as the overall research strategy for this study. The first stage of the empirical data collection was in the form of a survey. This was to facilitate the identification of any patterns that were present in the results, prior to a more in-depth qualitative analysis.

Saunders *et al.* (2019: p. 181) state that a survey strategy is usually associated with a deductive research approach. Saunders *et al.* (2019) asserts that surveys are useful for answering 'what', 'who', 'where', 'how much', and 'how many' questions. As section 3.5.1.1 demonstrates, a number of these prerequisites made up the questions posed in the survey for this research. Czaja and Blair (2005) highlights four different types of surveys that can take place: mail surveys; internet surveys; telephone surveys; and face-to-face surveys. An array of considerations were taken into account when determining the most appropriate method. Mail and telephone surveys were discounted as an option. Utilising either method would have raised questions in terms of the access to participants due to Data Protection issues (i.e. accessing respondents' contact details as the empirical data is carried out independent of the two institutions). The two main options that were explored were internet surveys and face-to-face surveys.

Online surveys are where participants provide their responses to questions via a website platform, such as SurveyMonkey.com or Google Forms. A platform such as SurveyMonkey.com attracts a subscription for the level of respondents that were expected in this research, but this is offset with a user-friendly interface. Using these platforms may facilitate a wider reach to the sample, and surveys can be completed at a time convenient to the participant. However, this approach does not guarantee response rates as potential participants may either ignore and/or delete survey invitations, and personal persuasive skills cannot be used to encourage participation (Saunders *et al.*2019). Participants are also more likely to rush through the survey on an online platform, and not provide the necessary due care and attention (McDaniel and Gates, 2018) Furthermore, there are a number of problems with asking participants to complete an online based survey. Participants would either have to follow a link (which they may be wary of due to the risk of viruses) or be asked to fill in a survey via an email attachment. – causing an undue time pressure on participants (participants would have to download, save, and fill in a survey, prior to re-saving the file, and subsequently responding). Such a process is time consuming and is not conducive towards obtaining a high response rate (McDaniel and Gates, 2018).

The alternative approach is to carry out a face-to-face survey (i.e. paper copy). Whilst Malhorta *et al.* (2012) and Sax, Gilmartin, and Bryant (2003) state that this is likely to involve increased printing costs and researcher time, this was offset by the increase in confidence that the number of participants who completed the survey were of the required sample size, as the surveys were distributed on a face-to-face basis (e.g. Liao and Hsieh, 2017). Furthermore, entering responses into the necessary Excel file allowed the researcher to carry out a preliminary analysis of the key findings (Kent, 2001). The benefits of this approach – coupled with removal of some of the challenges of an online survey – meant that a face-to-face survey was used. In reaching this decision, a consideration of the sample size was made (see section 3.6.4 for an in-depth discussion on this).

Whilst this first stage of data collection was ostensibly a quantitative data collection stage, there was still a need to carry out preliminary panel discussion. This was to ensure that the contextual setting of this study (i.e. the university and year in which the data was collected) was consistent with the variables identified in the literature search. Participants for this preliminary stage of data collection were contacted via a convenience sampling technique (see section 3.5.2 for more details).

Details of the results of the exposure to a panel of experts is found below in section 3.5.1.1. There was also a need to present a slight amendment to the conceptual model that was presented in Figure 2.12 as the initial model did not account for the 'clearing' variable. Within initial interviews, it became apparent that this was a prevailing factor amongst participants, and the clearing process was used as an informational influencer. When referring to 'clearing', it is important to note that the majority of relevant communications related to clearing are carried out using traditional and digital channels. However, the panel of experts highlighted the role that the clearing hotline played. Therefore, Figure 3.3 presents an amended conceptual framework that accounts for this.

3.5.1.1 Development of questions

Although the survey questions were separated into three parts, the questions for each part were not 'grouped' together. One set of questions was concerned with demographic variables. These variables the independent factors that the selection values were measured against to determine any relationship. The second set of variables represented scales relating to motivation, choice criteria, and the sources of information consulted, which participants used to rate their responses using a Likert scale to indicate the extent to which they agreed with certain statements. A Likert scale is a '*itemised rating scale… with categories ordered in terms of scale position, and the respondents are required to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements about the stimulus objects'*. (Malhotra and Birks, 2007: 348). A Likert scale was appropriate as the questions are too complex to provide either a 'yes' or 'no' answer. The extent to which factors motivated students or influenced their choice, and which sources of information were prevalent were, therefore, measured along a continuum.

Something that was apparent from the questionnaire posed to students was the prevalence of single-item measures. Indeed, scholars such as Churchill (1979: p. 66) state that '*… marketers are much better served with multi-item than single-item measures of their constructs, and they should take the time to develop them'.* However, Berkvist and Rossiter (2007) state that practitioners are more likely to favour single items measures as they are unaware of the theoretical underpinning and single-item measures minimise respondent refusal. Chitturi, Raghunathan and Mahajan (2008) state that single-item measures are particularly prevalent in emotional literature. Rossiter (2002) purports in his C-OAR-SE paper that single-item measures are sufficient if the construct in the mind of the respondents is sufficiently explored within a single-item measure. Furthermore, single-item measures avoid common methods bias. This can occur when the relationship between two or more constructs is distorted as they were distorted in the same way (Berkvist and Rossiter, 2007).

When the first draft of the questionnaire was developed, it was shown to a panel consisting of academics responsible for student recruitment, university administrators and marketing staff, existing students, and parents. The purpose of this exposure was for face and content validity. The following aspects emerged from showcasing the proposed survey to the panel, and facilitated the development of the questionnaire:

1. Wanting to attend university to develop new skills (motivation question).
2. Wanting to attend university to enjoy the nightlife (this was a specific aspect of university life that was explored).
3. Wanting to attend university to obtain a permanent job (as opposed to obtaining any type of employment).
4. Clear distinction between academic league table for the course, as opposed to for the institution.
5. Professional accreditation as a reason for selecting an institution.
6. Administration efficiency in respect to responding to queries regarding applications.
7. Provisions for student with disabilities.
8. The opportunity to live with parents.
9. Part-time employment opportunities.
10. Friends and family currently studying at university (as opposed to have previously studied).
11. Taster events, as an additional university-based communication.
12. App – specific only to the traditional institution.
13. Live chat facilities as a channel of communication.
14. Specific social media platforms – both institution-led and community-led.

15. Specific sources of information that students may consult (e.g. www.studentroom.co.uk, Prospects, UCAS).
16. A distinction was made between national media and local media.

A presentation of the questions posed is given below in Table 3.3. Please see Appendix A and Appendix B for the full copy of the survey used, for students at the vocational and traditional institutions, respectively.

Table 3.3: Survey questions posed. (Key to Type: D = Demographic; L = Likert; .M = Multiple option selection; S = Single option selection; W = Written answer.)

Question		Type	Literature source	Notes
1	Are you studying full-time or part-time?	D		Facilitates a comparison
2	What school/faculty are you based in?	D		Facilitates a comparison
3	Was this your first choice of university?	D		Facilitates a comparison
4	***Motivation question:*** Thinking about your decision to enter into Higher Education, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?			
	I wanted to attend university to develop my career	L	Cao, Zhu, and Meng (2016); Garver, Spralls, and Divine (2009); Perna and Titus (2005); Sabir, Ahmad, Ashraf, and Ahmad (2013)	
	I wanted to attend university to become more employable	L	Carter and Yeo (2009); Greenacre, Freeman, Cong, and Chapman (2014); Tomlinson (2008); Trullas, Simo, Fusalba, Fito, and Sallan (2018)	
	I wanted to attend university to increase my earning potential	L	Han (2014); Wilkins, Shams, and Huisman (2013)	

Question	Type	Literature source	Notes
I wanted to attend university to develop new skills	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
I wanted to attend university to make professional contacts	L	Branco Oliveira and Soares (2016); Dunnet, Moorhouse, Walsh, and Barry (2012); Walsh, Woohouse, Dunnet, and Barry (2015);	
I wanted to attend university to make friends	L	Othman, Mohamed, and Barom (2019); Townsend and Wilson (2006); Wilcox, Winn, and Fyview-Gauld (2005)	
I wanted to attend university to join sport clubs and societies	L	Agrey and Lampadan (2014); Ahmad (2015); Ali-Choudhury, Bennett, and Savani (2009); Gatfield (1999);	
I wanted to attend university to have a flexible lifestyle	L	Bailey, Gosper, Ifenhaler, Ware, and Kretzschema (2018); Greenacre, Freeman, Cong, and Chapman (2014)	
I wanted to attend university to enjoy the nightlife	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
I chose to attend university as I can’t find a permanent job without a degree	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion

Question		Type	Literature source	Notes
5	***Selection criteria question:*** Thinking about your decision to come to this university, to what extent did the following impact your decision to attend this university?			
	Position in academic league tables of university	L	Assad, Melewar, Cohen and Balmer (2013); Bowden (2000); Briggs (2006); Chapleo (2010); Dao and Thorpe (2015); Gibbons, Neumayer and Perkins (2015); Gunn and Hill (2008); Han (2014); Hazelkorn (2008); Henriques, Matos, Jerónimo, Mosquera, da Silva, and Bacalhau (2018); Khanna, Jacob, and Yadav (2014); Martensson and Richtner (2015); Poole, Levin, and Elam (2018); Roszkowski and Spreat (2010); Tapper and Filppakou (2009); Veloutsou, Lewis, and Paton (2004).	
	Position in academic league tables of course	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	Appeal of city	L	Abubakar, Shanka, and Muuka (2010); Agrey and Lampadan (2014); Ahn and Davis (2019); Briggs (2006); Brown, Varley and Pal (2009); Chapleo (2008); Gottschall and Saltmarsh (2017); Hemsley-Brown	

Question		Type	Literature source	Notes
			(2012); Henriques, Matos, Jerónimo, Mosquera, da Silva, and Bacalhau (2018); Moogan, Baron, and Bainbridge (2001); Obermeit (2012); Pampaloni (2010); Rekettye and Pozsgai (2015); Roszkowski and Spreat (2010); Rudd, Djafarova, and Waring (2012); Sia (2013); Singh (2016); Winter and Chapleo (2017); Winter and Thompson-Whiteside (2017).	
	Personal safety	L	Agrey and Lampadan (2014); Rudd, Djafarova, and Waring (2012); Singh (2016).	
	Course content	L	Bonnema and van der Weldt (2008); Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009); Dao and Thorpe (2015); Price, Matzdorf, Smith, and Agahi (2003); Schofield, Cotton, Gresty, Kneale, and Winter (2013); Veloutsou, Lewis, and Paton (2004);	
	Opportunity to network with industry	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	Professional accreditation associated with course	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion

Question		Type	Literature source	Notes
	Graduate employability figures	L	Agrey and Lampadan (2014); Bonnema and van der Weldt (2008); Briggs (2006); Djafarova, and Waring (2012); James, Baldwin, and McInnis (1999); Henriques, Matos, Jerónimo, Mosquera, da Silva, and Bacalhau (2018); Khanna, Jacob, and Yadav (2014); Rudd,	
	Reputation of research quality	L	Drewes and Michael (2006); Oplatka and Hemsley-Brown (2010)	
	Reputation of teaching quality	L	Hemsley-Brown, Lowrie, Gruber, Fuß Voss, and Gläser-Zikuda (2010); Khanna, Jacob, and Yadav (2014); Rudd, Djafarova, and Waring (2012);	
	Stories within media	L	Clarke (2007); Wong, Ng, Lee, and Ram (2019).	
	Administration efficiency	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	Information provided by university	L	Briggs (2006); Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009); Durkin, McKenna, and Cummins (2012); Moogan and Baron (2003); Obermeit (2012); Rutter, Lettice and Nadeau	

Question		Type	Literature source	Notes
			(2017); Svekeres (2010); Winter and Chapleo (2017).	
	Quick response to application	L	Imeda, Kongolo and Grewal (2004)	
	Entrance requirements for course	L	Briggs (2006); Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009); Dunnett, Moorhouse, Walsh, and Barry (2012); James, Baldwin, and McInnis (1999); Pasternak (2005)	
	Halls of residence (i.e. university accommodation)	L	Briggs (2006); Dunnett, Moorhouse, Walsh, and Barry (2012); Price, Matzdorf, Smith, and Agahi(2003); Roszkowski and Spreat (2010); Veloutsou, Lewis, and Paton(2004),	
	The opportunity to live with parents	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	Part-time employment prospects	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	Provision for students with disabilities	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	Visual appearance of campus	L	Veloutsou, Lewis, and Paton (2004); Winter and Chapleo (2017); Guibault (2018); Agrey and Lampadan (2014)	

Question		Type	Literature source	Notes
	Tuition fees	L	Callendar and Jackson (2008); Imeda, Kongolo and Grewal (2004); Bonnema and van der Weldt (2008); James, Baldwin and McInnis (1999); Khanna, Jacob, and Yadav (2014); Moogan and Baron (2003); Chen and Zimitat (2006); Briggs and Wilson (2007); Han (2014)	
	Availability of financial support	L	Imeda, Kongolo, and Grewal (2004); Khanna, Jacob, and Yadav (2014); Mazzarol and Soutar (2002)	
	Friends and family currently studying at university	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	Friends and family previously studied at university	L	Mazzarol and Soutar (2002); Bonnema and van der Weldt (2008); James, Baldwin, and McInnis (1999); Chen and Zimitat (2006)	
	Guidance from parents	L	Cho, Hudley, Lee, Barry, and Kelly (2008); Mazzarol and Soutar (2002); Dao and Thorpe (2015)	
	Guidance from close friends/family members	L	Chen and Zimitat (2006); James, Baldwin, and McInnis (1999); Le, Robinson, and Dobele (2020); Lee and	

Question		Type	Literature source	Notes
			Morrish (2012); Winter and Chapleo (2017).	
	'Gut' feeling	L	Briggs (2006); Pampaloni (2010); Veloutsou, Paton and Lewis (2005); Winter and Chapleo (2017).	
6	***Sources of information question:*** To what extent did the following sources of information influence your decision to apply to XXX?			
	Clearing hotline	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	University prospectus	L	Moogan and Baron (2003); Rutter, Lettice, and Nadeau (2017);	
	Open days	L	Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009); Durkin, McKenna, and Cummins (2012)	
	Taster event	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	Official website	L	Briggs (2006); Chapleo, Carrillo, Duran, and Castillo Diaz (2011); Simoeas and Soares (2010)Winter and Chapleo (2017).	
	Live chat function (on university website)	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	Official Facebook page	L	Whilst research on digital media exists, minimal research explores the role that digital	
	Official LinkedIn page	L		

Question		Type	Literature source	Notes
	Official Twitter Account	L	media plays on the choice process. Therefore, a decision is made to ask participants about all the available channels of the institutions.	
	Official YouTube channel	L		
	Official University blog	L		
	Official school-specific blog	L		
	Unofficial Facebook pages	L	During the panel discussion, participants identified that they had consulted non-official digital media sites as a source of information. Therefore, the broad term 'unofficial' is used to distinguish between these and the official accounts.	
	Unofficial LinkedIn pages	L		
	Unofficial Twitter accounts	L		
	Unofficial YouTube channels	L		
	National media	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	Local media	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	www.thestudentroom.co.uk	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	Prospects website	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	UCAS website	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion
	University rankings website	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion

Question		Type	Literature source	Notes
	Close friends/family members	L	Chen and Zimitat (2006); James, Baldwin, and McInnis (1999); Le, Robinson, and Dobele (2020); Lee and Morrish (2012); Winter and Chapleo (2017).	
	Parents	L	Chen and Zimitat (2006); James, Baldwin, and McInnis (1999); Lee and Morrish (2012)	
	Teachers	L	Chen and Zimitat (2006); James, Baldwin, and McInnis (1999)	
	App	L	N/A	Identified in panel discussion. NB This item is only included in the survey with the 'traditional' university as the 'vocational' institutional does not have an app.
7	Which of the following ranking/information sites have you consulted?	M		Based upon own knowledge, there are a

Question		Type	Literature source	Notes
				range of ranking sites that students may have consulted
8	Have you been in touch with any specific university departments or staff members prior to commencing your course?	W		
9	Which of the following social media accounts do you have?	M		Facilitates a comparison
10	Thinking about your use of social media, why do you use social media?	M		Facilitates a comparison
11	How long per day do you spend on social media?	S		Facilitates a comparison
12	What is your gender?	D		Facilitates a comparison
13	Are you a UK-based, or international student?	D		Facilitates a comparison
14	If you are an international student, what country are you from?	W	Alfattal (2017); Cho, Hudley, Lee, Barry, and Kelly (2008); Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2016); Ivy (2010); Moogan (2020); Pippert, Essenbury, and Matchett (2013).	Due to the multitude of nationalities in the 2 HE establishment, a decision was taken to allow participants to state their nationality (as opposed to

Question		Type	Literature source	Notes
				omitting a nationality from an extensive list).
15	Did you go to a fee-paying or state school?	D, S	Hemsley-Brown (2014); Moogan and Baron (2003); O'Sullivan, Robson, and Winters (2019).	Facilitates a comparison
16	Did your parents attend university?	D, S	Al-Yousef (2009); Boudarbat and Montmarquette (2009); Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009); Cho, Hudley, Lee, Barry, and Kelly (2008); Lubbe and Petzer (2013); O'Shea, Stone, Delahunty, and May (2016); Pugeley and Coffey (2002); Rowan-Kenyon, Bell, and Perna (2008).	Facilitates a comparison
17	Would you be willing to take part in future research?	S		
18	What is your date of birth?	W		To identify participants in qualitative stage of data collection
19	If you are interested in taking part in future research, please provide your email address herewith so we can be in touch with you.	W		To identify participants in qualitative stage of data collection

3.5.1.1.1 Demographic questions (Q1–Q3, Q12–Q16)

Whilst these questions were intended to be non-intrusive, the results from them formed the independent variables used when measuring the extent to which differentiation were found within the sample. For the majority of these questions, participants were given a range of options to select from, where they could choose one (or more) responses (dependent upon the question).

3.5.1.1.2 Measurement scales (Q4–Q6)

These questions were determined based upon the literature review and developed via a panel for content validity (as discussed previously). This second set of questions asked participants to rank the extent to which they agreed with statements (on a Likert scale from 1 – 7). Responses were measured against the answers given from the independent variables.

3.5.1.1.3 Clarification questions (Q7–Q8)

Based upon the responses given to aspects of question 6, these questions sought to clarify what rankings websites/departmental contacts applicants contacted when making their selection.

3.5.1.1.4 Social media questions (Q9–Q11)

These questions sought to explore the extent to which the usage of social media influenced the motivation, selection, and sources of information used when applying to university. These questions focused on the type of account; the type of activity; and the time spent on social media.

3.5.1.1.5 Further research questions (Q17–Q19)

Question 17 looked to identify whether participants were willing to take part in any future research. The following questions sought to ensure that participants interviewed in second stage had taken part in the survey.

Based upon the questionnaire, it was necessary to present an amended conceptual framework (incorporating the stand-alone component of ‘clearing’ as an informational influence).

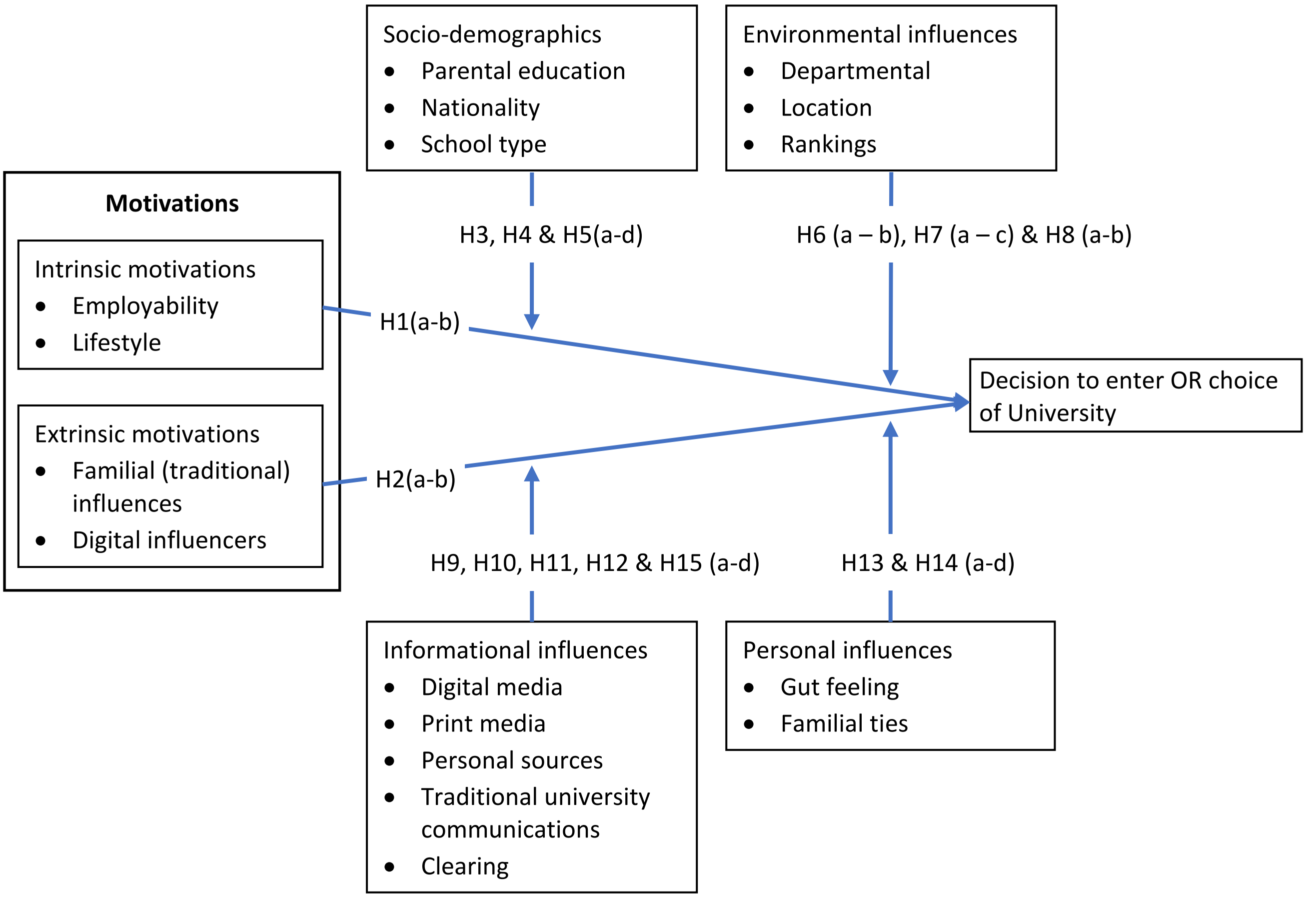

Figure 3.3: Conceptual framework for testing in the study (Source: author's own).

Furthermore, because of the amended conceptual model in Figure 3.3, the following hypotheses are also presented:

H15a The informational influence clearing will moderate the extent to which the intrinsic motivation of employability contributes to the decision to apply to a university.

H15b The informational influence clearing will moderate the extent to which the intrinsic motivation of lifestyle contributes to the decision to apply to a university.

H15c The informational influence clearing will moderate the extent to which the extrinsic motivation of digital influencers contributes to the decision to apply to a university.

H15d The informational influence clearing will moderate the extent to which the extrinsic motivation of familial influencers contributes to the decision to apply to a university.

3.5.1.2 Pre-testing/pilot

Prior to launching the survey, a pre-test took place. This involved distributing copies of the survey to friends and family of the researcher, who work as academics at a range of UK-based institutions. This was acceptable as the purpose of this pre-test was not to check the accuracy of the developed scales. Moreover, the pre-test aimed to highlight any deficiencies in the design of the survey. Namely, was the test formatted correctly? Were there any spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation errors? And did the ordering of questions make logical sense? This pre-test also provided an indication (shared with participants) of how long the survey would take to complete.

Once this pre-test had concluded, a pilot study was undertaken. Saunders *et al.* (2016: p. 473) state that the purpose of a pilot test is '*… to refine the questionnaire so that respondents will have no problems in answering the questions and there will be no problems in recording the data. In addition, it will enable you to obtain some assessment of the questions' validity and the likely reliability of the data…'.* As the purpose of this pilot study was to refine the data collection tool and not carry out any significant statistical analysis, it was appropriate to use a single undergraduate cohort as a sample for this stage. This was a class with a roll of 32 students, 24 of whom completed the survey.

3.5.1.3 Limitation of approach

There was one major limitation of the methodology, relating to the sample used. Specifically, no traditional sampling method (other than convenience sampling) was used in recruiting participants. There was no threshold that must be met for a proportional representation of participants from the respective faculties and schools within the institutions. Adopting this sampling approach may have meant that there were school- and faculty-specific issues that were not highlighted by the respondents. However, this limitation was addressed in two ways. Firstly, the data analysis employed explored whether a relationship existed between the faculty/school type of motivation variables, and if no significant relationship was identified then this concern could be discounted. Secondly, this concern is minimised, even not discounted, as the first stage of research was responsible for supporting findings from the literature review prior to the main, qualitative interviews, which sought to establish whether patterns developed are faculty/school-specific.

3.5.2 Sampling approach

Malhorta *et al.* (2012: p. 495) define a sample as being '…*a subgroup of the elements of the populations selected for participation in* the study'.

There are two main types of sampling techniques – probability and non-probability. Bradley (2010) emphasises that probability sampling deals with 'random sampling'. Malhorta *et al.* (2012: p. 501) define probability sampling as *'…a sampling procedure in which each element of the* *population has a fixed probabilistic chance of being selected for the sample'*, and non-probability sampling as '*… not using chance selection procedures but rather rely on the personal judgement of the researcher'*. As willing participants were required for the empirical data collection, then probability sampling was discounted as an option. The notion of a 'random' sampling approach suggested that every undergraduate student/UCAS applicant would be equally as willing – and accessible – to take part in the research process, and commonsense dictates that this is not the case. Therefore, the different approaches of non-probability (i.e. non-random) sampling are subsequently dissected below.

In total there are four main types of non-probability sampling techniques: convenience, judgemental, quota, and snowball sampling.

Malhorta et al. (2012: p. 502) state that convenience sampling is '… a non-probability sampling technique that attempts to obtain a sample of convenient elements. The selection of sampling units is left primarily to the interviewer'. Malhorta et al. (2012: p. 503) define judgemental sampling as '… a form of convenience sampling in which the population elements are purposely selected based on the judgement of the researcher'. Judgemental sampling differs to convenience sampling, as convenience sampling primarily selects participants as they are simply in the 'right place, at the right time', whilst judgemental sampling involves the researcher selecting participants as the researcher believes they would be useful for data collection. Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (2000: p. 14) defines quota samplings as sample members being '… chosen based upon satisfying some pre-specified criteria thought to apply for the population; the researcher is free to choose which elements to include in the sample as long as they qualify on the pre-defined characteristics'. Quota sampling was discounted as – due to the nature of the empirical data collection – a pre-determined quota of participants was not needed from each institution and/or faculty/school within those institutions. Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (2000) define snowball sampling as being participants initially identified through either judgemental or probability sampling, and these initial participants are subsequently asked to identify other participants with desired characteristics who would fit the sample frame. Snowball sampling was discounted for collecting quantitative research, as it would be impossible for willing participants to give consent to share contact details to facilitate the completion of the survey on behalf of fellow students. Furthermore, the method of data collection (see section 3.6) would have rendered such a process impractical. Based on the resource and time constraints for data collection, the researcher chose judgemental sampling to be the most fitting for data collection. Judgement on the part of the researcher was used to determine which cohorts of students were approached to ensure that a relatively equal balance across both institutions was provided. In other words, if the number of participants was not split evenly between the two institutions, the researcher would have actively targeted partipants from the underrepresented institution. Judgement was also used when determining whether prospective participants were in the desired sample (were first-year students and had recently passed through the UCAS application process), so their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations would have been fresh in their minds.

3.5.3 Sample size

Saunders *et al.* (2016: p. 279) state that the larger the sample size, '*… the lower the likely error in generalising to the target population*'. According to Saunders, *et al.* (2016), when determining a sample size, the following four factors should play a role in the sample size selection:

1. The confidence a researcher has in the data – this is the level of certainly that the data findings would represent the opinion of the entire population.
2. The margin of error that can be tolerated – this refers to the accuracy required from any estimates made in the sample.
3. The type of analysis that will be undertaken – this refers to the specific statistical tests that will be made.
4. The size of the target population from which the sample will be drawn.

Although determining an appropriate sample size can be a judgement made by the researcher, there is a calculation that can be used. This is presented below.

Na is the actual sample size required

N is the minimum (or adjusted minimum) sample size

Re% is the estimated response rate expressed as a percentage

Estimating the likely response rate is tricky. One way this can be determined is by assessing the response rates for similar studies. The number of participants for existing studies into student choice generally varies between 200 and 500 participants (e.g. Gatfield, 1999; Briggs, 2006; Dunnett *et al.* 2012; Veloutsou *et al.* 2004; Maringe, 2006; Constantinides and Zinck Stango, 2012) with outliers at both the lower (e.g. Pampaloni, 2010) and upper (e.g. Perna and Titus, 2005; Dao and Thorpe, 2015; Wilkins *et al.* 2013; Briggs and Wilson, 2007) limits. Malhorta *et al.* (2012) suggest that – as a rule of thumb – around 300 participants is an appropriate number.

Several factors can have a detrimental impact on intended sample sizes. These include access to participants, or simply their unwillingness to complete a survey. This is a particular problem with sampling HE students, as they are likely to be faced with a multitude of surveys to complete in the early days following matriculation. To combat this, a personal approach was used, approaching both lecturers and students, to highlight the benefits of the study.

Baruch and Holton (2008) suggest that, for academic studies involving individuals, a 50 percent response rate is appropriate. However, Saunders *et al.* (2016) advise caution on this matter, stating that response rates for face-to-face surveys can be as low as 10–20 percent.

3.5.4 Access to participants

This section describes how participants of the preliminary panel discussion (for the development of the survey) and the subsequent survey were accessed.

As previously stated, a convenience sampling method was used to recruit participants for the panel discussion. The main purpose of this preliminary stage was to act as a 'checks and balances' process for the quantitative data collection tool. Therefore, personal contacts – who were deemed convenient to the researcher considering the timescales and access issues involved – were utilised to encourage participation. Specifically, students who the researcher knew personally in his capacity as a HE lecturer were approached to see if they would be willing to take part in the research to develop the survey instrument. Whilst it was still important to ensure that participants had recently been involved in the choice process, there was less concern in terms of the faculty/school, or even the time since the choice was made because of the purpose of this stage. Specifically, as the development of the tool took place during the spring/summer semester, prior to launching the survey in the subsequent autumn term for new first-year students. The time considerations needed to complete the research in a timely manner did not allow for accessing participants in the same autumn term, as if major iterations to the survey had been needed, there would have been insufficient time to access participants for the main data collection (i.e. survey).

There are more considerations, however, when determining how to access participants to complete a survey. Participants could have been accessed during their induction/freshers week, with a paper copy of the survey included in their welcome pack. However, this approach may not have led to a strong enough response rate, as:

1. Potential participants are bombarded with a multitude of requests/initiatives during freshers week. Asking a new student to complete a survey is unlikely to be top of their priority list.
2. It would have placed an additional strain on support departments, who are likely to be overstretched during induction week.
3. There was no way to ensure that participants fitted the relevant criteria for completion of a survey (i.e. there is a chance that the paper copy could be filled in by someone who is not a first-year student, and there would be no way for the researcher to check whether this was the case).

Alternatively, participants could have been accessed via social media channels, with an advertisement placed on the accounts of participants who fitted the profile of first-year, undergraduate students (based up employment status, age, university enrolled at, etc.). Nevertheless, coupled with the cost elements of such an approach, there would have been no guarantee of participants even seeing the advert in the avalanche of social media marketing messages.

The best way to access participants (at both institutions) was to speak to academic colleagues (gatekeepers) who were willing to allow access to classes during the first week of the academic term. Relevant gatekeepers were identified by those who had an online 'digital presence' with a clear focus towards the student experience prevalent within their digital profiles; for example, in the form of an active Twitter account, Instagram page, or blog. Having a focus on the student experience indicated a potential willingness to give access to cohorts of students, who in turn were willing to participate and complete the survey.

Sampling participants so early in their student journey meant their intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, coupled with the extent to which intervening variables moderated their choice of institution, was relatively fresh in their minds. Furthermore, as classes in week 1 are generally introductory classes, accessing classes during week 1 of the academic term was not too disruptive to academic colleagues.

3.5.5 Data analysis

Saunders *et al.* (2016: p. 182) state that '*… preparing and analysing surveys can be time consuming*'. Data was collected using a paper-based survey and responses were transferred into an Excel spreadsheet to facilitate quantitative analysis. Whilst Microsoft Excel can be used for basic statistical analysis (i.e. the presentation of demographic data) for higher level data analysis SPSS Version 22 was used. The following steps were taken:

1. Data cleaning.
2. Descriptive information – whereby a presentation of gender, age, nationality, faculty/school, was made.
3. Reliability and validity checks (see section 3.5.6 for more information).
4. Actual analysis –the following tests were employed:
   a) Factor analysis
   b) Merging of components
   c) Multiple regression
   d) T-tests
   e) One-way ANNOVA
   f) Slope analysis

These data analysis techniques were chosen as they provided the clearest answer to the research questions posed.

3.5.6 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are integral to underscoring the quality of quantitative research. Saunders *et al.* (2016: p. 202) state that '*reliability refers to replication and consistency*'. If the researcher can replicate the same research design and achieve the same results, then research is classed as being reliable. They go onto highlight that '*validity refers to the appropriateness of the measures used, accuracy of the analysis of the results and generalisation of the findings*'. In total there are three different types of validity:

1. Measurement validity
2. Internal validity
3. External validity

A key aspect of internal validity is content validity. This refers to the extent to which the measurement device provides appropriate coverage of the investigative questions (Saunders *et al.* 2016). Appropriate coverage can be determined by carefully defining the issues through the literature review and during discussion with others. These both happened, as discussed in the literature review and section 3.5.1 of this chapter.

Reliability may be either internal reliability or external reliability. Internal reliability means ensuring that the data gathered is reliable as we go through the research process (Malhorta *et al.* 2012). Bradley (2010) asserts that this could be achieved by writing notes or setting reminders. External reliability refers to the fact that research could be conducted at different times – either by the initial researcher or another – but still achieving consistent results (e.g. Saunders *et al.* 2016; Collis and Hussey, 2009). Reliability was ensured during this research by carrying out a Cronbach Alpha test. Kent (2001: p. 209) states that '*…this takes the average correlation amongst items in a summated ratings scale and adjusts for the number of items*'. Nunnally (1978) recommends that a value of 0.7 should be achieved.

There are, however, threats to reliability. These are presented below in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Threats to reliability (adapted from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016: p. 203).

Threat	Definition and explanation	How is it addressed in this research
Participant error	Any factor which adversely alters the way in which a participant performs. This could include asking participants to complete a questionnaire prior to an important examination.	Participants will be accessed at the beginning of an academic term, thus away from deadlines.
Participant bias	Any factor which induces a false response. For example, conducting interviews in an open space, or not eliciting trust from an interviewee, may mean that participants may not be as willing to speak freely about their opinion.	Standing away from participants whilst they complete the survey, and stressing that results are completely anonymised.
Researcher error	Any factor which alters the researcher's interpretation. For example, the researcher may be tired and not sufficiently prepared.	Ensure that the instructions presented on the survey are clear and concise.
Researcher bias	Any factor which induces bias in the researcher's recording of responses. For example, a researcher may allow their subjective view to interfere with an accurate reflection of participants responses.	Ensure that responses offered by participants are accurately reflected in the statistical analysis.

3.5.7 Ethical concerns

Saunders *et al.* (2016: p 201) state that '*research ethics are a critical part of formulating your research design*'. Czaja and Blair (2005) highlighted two main types of ethical concerns in relation to surveys: informed consent and the confidentially of participants.

Informed consent means that participants gave their explicit consent for using responses in subsequent reports. To enable this, information was given to participants prior to commencing the survey. Participants were asked to tick a box, indicating that they understood the purpose of the research and giving their consent for their (anonymous) responses to be used for data analysis. Confidentially of participants relates to participants' identities not being exposed when writing a report. Whilst reference is made to participants' institutions (and if relevant, their schools and faculties) it is impossible for this information to be used to identify individual participants, as survey responses are grouped together for the data analysis. Prior to data analysis, participants can only be identified by referring to their institution and a numeric ID known only to the researcher, and the sole purpose of this was to facilitate data analysis.

These ethical concerns were addressed by providing an informed consent form. This detailed the purpose of the research and what the data would be used for. The consent form clearly offered anonymity and confidentiality to survey participants. The consent form included the researcher's contact details, if any questions arose post completion of the survey.

As discussed in section 3.4, ethical approval was obtained with the University of Southampton's ethical approval process.

3.6 Stage 2 of Research: Face-to-face Interviews

3.6.1 Research design

Malhotra *et al.* (2012: p. 255) define an in-depth interview as being '*… an unstructured, direct personal interview in which a single participant is probed by an experienced interviewer to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings on a topic'.*

Malhorta *et al.* (2012: p. 260) highlight the following advantages to in-depth interviews:

1. They uncover a greater depth of insight than focus groups. Within an interview environment, the interviewer can put the interviewee at ease, enabling the researcher to probe the responses provided. In the context of this research, the researcher was able to speak confidently about the subject matter, with an awareness of key events within the recruitment calendar which could influence motivations.
2. The researcher can attribute the responses directly to the participant. This is particularly useful in collected data as the researcher will be able to identify the faculty in which respondents are based, as well as any key themes that emerge from the discussions. As well as recording responses via a Dictaphone, the researcher also made brief (yet vital) notes whilst the interview was in progress.
3. They result in a free exchange of information that may not be possible in focus groups. Responses obtained are likely to be more specific to the student's specific circumstances as there is no need to conform to the opinions of others. Potentially, any underlying factors may be raised that could be explored in greater detail in subsequent interviews.

4. They are easier to arrange than focus groups. The interviewer was able to contact students on a one-to-one basis, fitting interviews around their academic timetable and room availability.

Saunders *et al.* (2016) assert that to make the interview process work, the interviewer should strive to do the following:

1. Do their utmost to develop an empathy with the participant. This was done by recognising the high-involvement nature of selecting a HE course, and the challenging time that students and various stakeholders have in making an informed decision.
2. Make sure the participant is relaxed and comfortable. This was done in a number of ways: the temperature of the room was appropriate; participants were offered a drink of water; and participants were reminded of their right to end the interview at any time if they do not feel comfortable.
3. Be personable to encourage and motivate participants. The interviewer is passionate about this topic and is keen to explore the underlying themes. This was conveyed to the prospective participants.
4. Note issues that interest the participant and develop questions around these issues. For example, preliminary questions were asked around intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and willingness to engage with digital and traditional sources of information on a macro scale (i.e. not specific to the HE sector). This enabled participants to speak freely about these ideas.
5. Not be happy to accept brief ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers. If participants provide such brief answers, they were asked to justify their response.
6. Note when participants have not explained clearly enough issues that need probing. This links into the above point. For example, participants were asked to describe a typical scenario which drove a motivation, thus removing ambiguity.

The choice between either face-to-face interviews or focus groups was explored. Whilst focus groups would have provided the opportunity for discussion and facilitate the exchange of ideas (Proctor, 2006; Bryman and Bell, 2007), participants may not have expanded on points made due to nervousness or over-domination by some group members (Trier-Bieniek, 2012). In contrast, face-to-face interviews allowed for engagement with the participant (Bradley, 2007), and facilitated a relaxing environment for participants to freely express their views and reasons behind their selection criteria (Malhotra, 2004). Furthermore, it was ensured that the time allocated is enough to conduct an appropriate number of interviews.

3.6.1.1 Proof reading of interview design/pilot test

Prior to carrying out face-to-face interviews, there was a pre-test. This involved distributing copies of the interview transcript (the questions) to friends and family of the researcher. This is acceptable as the purpose of this pre-test was to not check the accuracy of the developed scales but to highlight any deficiencies in the design of the interview. Namely, was the interview formatted correctly? Did the ordering of questions make logical sense? Was the reviewer comfortable with how the questions are phrased? This pre-test was also used to provide an indication to participants how long the survey took to complete.

Prior to carrying out the face-to-face interviews, pilot interviews took place. According to Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight. (2010: 137) '*… piloting is the process whereby you try out the research techniques and methods which you have in mind, see how well they work in practice, and, if necessary, modify your plans accordingly*'. In total, two pilot interviews took place. Two existing undergraduate students were interviewed in the pilot stage of the interview process (the same participants as used in the data collection stage). Upon completion of the interviews, the two participants were (separately) asked their thoughts regarding the interview process. They said they felt that the questions were fair and gave opportunity for them to express their thoughts on the topic. Considering the sample size of participants interviewed for data collection, it was decided that this was enough evidence to proceed with the data collection stage.

3.6.2 Development of questions

This stage of data collection was of an exploratory nature. Saunders *et al.* (2019: p. 174) define exploratory research as a *'… valuable means to ask open questions to discover what is happening and gain insights about a topic of interest'.* Due to the nature of exploratory research, interview scripts are likely to be unstructured.

Keeping this in mind, the questions used for face-to-face interviews were intentionally broad, intended to open as many areas as could be relevant. As data was gathered – and coded – the interview script (see Table 3.5 and Table 3.6) could be amended to reflect the initial findings. The main face-to-face interview questions were separated into two parts. The first stage consisted of demographic questions, whilst the second stage incorporated open-ended questions.

Table 3.5: Questions posed in face-to-face interviews with students.

Question number	Question	Notes
1	Name of participant	Used purely for the interview
2 Recording	Permission to record (a) Permission to record (b) Confirmation that results are anonymised (c) Confirmation of action if respondent can be identified	Adhering to ethical guidelines
3 Records	Does participant want a copy of? (a) Transcript? (b) 2-page summary? (c) Transfer report? (d) Final PhD document?	Adhering to ethical guidelines
4 Introductory questions	(a) What course are you studying? (b) What social media sites do you have accounts on? (c) How active are you on these accounts? (d) What makes you like/forward a story?	
5 Main questions	(a) What motivated you to attend university? (b) What were the main influencers behind your decision? (c) What different sources of information did you consult? (d) Did you follow any university social media accounts?	
6 Closing questions	(a) Do you have any questions/closing comments? (b) Do you know anyone else that may be interested in this research?	

Table 3.6: Questions posed in face-to-face interviews with marketing and administration staff.

Question number	Question	Notes
1	Name of participant	Used purely for the purpose of the interview
2 Recording	(a) Permission to record (b) Permission to record (c) Confirmation that results are anonymised (d) Confirmation of action if respondent can be identified	Adhering to ethical guidelines
3 Records	Does participant want a copy of? (a) Transcript? (b) 2-page summary? (c) Transfer report? (d) Final PhD document?	Adhering to ethical guidelines
4 Introductory questions	(a) What is your current job title? How long have you been in that role? What does the job involve? (b) How do you engage prospective and current students in your day-to-day work? What are the benefits to this? What are the drawbacks?	
5 Main questions	(a) What motivates students to attend university? (b) What are the main influencers behind a student's decision? (c) What are the main sources of information that students consult? (d) How are your social media efforts measured? (e) Do you believe that students engage with the university via social media? Why/why not?	

Question number	Question	Notes
	(f) What are the main socio-demographic driving factors influencing the relationship between motivations and choice?	
6 Closing questions	(a) Do you have any questions/closing comments? (b) Do you know anyone else that may be interested in this research?	

Although there are two separate interview scripts, the scripts mirror each other as the marketing and administration staff were asked for their perception of the major influencers and motivators for students.

3.6.2.1 Stage 1: Ethical/housekeeping/introductory questions (Q1–Q4)

This first set of questions was concerned with ensuring that the ethical guidelines of the research were met, coupled with identifying the demographics of participants. Whilst the questions were intended to be non-intrusive, results from these questions were evaluated, with significant relationships highlighted. If participants were nervous about being interviewed, these questions should place them at ease. Saunders *et al.* (2019) state that these questions should demonstrate the interviewer's credibility and friendliness, whilst at the same time being kept to a minimum to diminish the risk of the participant becoming disengaged at an early stage. Gorden (1980) states that it is helpful to begin an interview with a sub-topic that provides a degree of recognition, such as asking a participant what their course of study, or job role is.

3.6.2.2 Stage 2: Open-ended questions (Q5 (a)–(f))

The second set of questions was concerned with exploring the student's opinion of what motivated them to attend university; and what moderated the impact of the relationship between motivations and the subsequent choice (i.e. sources of information; choice criteria; demographic criteria). This set of questions was open-ended, as it allowed participants to express their opinions freely, without the constraints of a formalised survey with pre-determined answers. For example, reference was generally *not* be made to intrinsic or extrinsic motivating factors, to specific types or sources of information, or choice criteria. To make this reference could have resulted in bias in the participant's responses. King (1994) states that the way questions are asked has a major bearing on how useful the responses are likely to be. Furthermore, Bryman (2004) states that language relevant to participants should be adopted. For this reason, questions were rephrased if necessary, to give interviewees the opportunity of understanding what was being asked. Once their understanding is determined, participants had the chance of detailing what they considered to be primary motivating factors, as well as the intervening variables. Question 6 (a)–(b) allowed participants to add anything else that had not been mentioned during the interview.

3.6.3 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are appropriate terminology when assessing quantitative research as the areas discussed are based around positivist elements. Saunders *et al.* (2019) highlight that this terminology may be inappropriate when conducting qualitative research. An alternative school of thought is that the notions of reliability are still relevant in a qualitative context, due to the depth, detail, and rigour that qualitative studies generally apply. To address the concerns expressed, Guban and Lincoln (1994) propose the terminology 'dependability' as opposed to 'reliability', 'credibility' as opposed to internal validity', and 'transferability' for external validity'.

Malhorta, Birks and Wills (2012: p. 304) suggest that qualitative data can be verified using triangulation. This is '*… a process that facilitates the validation of data through cross-verification from more than two sources*'. In the context of this research, this included asking interviewees to show the interviewer specific examples of social media content, as opposed to simply describing it.

Seeking validation of the findings was not simply a question of undertaking a triangulation process. As discussed in section 3.6.1, copious notes, transcriptions, and an iterative approach all contributed to data analysis. Initial data analysis 'fedback' into the research process, thus providing the scope and opportunity to amend questions posed.

3.6.3.1 Limitations of approach

When designing qualitative research, it is important to ensure that response errors either do not occur, or are minimised. Malhotra *et al.* (2012: p. 103) highlight the following response errors in interviews:

- Participant selection error, where participants other than those specified are used for data collection. To minimise this risk, questions were posed from the outset of the interview to ensure that participants taking part met the necessary criteria (were current, undergraduate students who have recently gone through the student-choice process).

- Questioning error, where errors are made in the asking of questions. To minimise this, the interview was pre-tested (see section 3.6.1.1 for more details).
- Recording errors, where errors arise due to issues concerning hearing, interpreting and recording answers. To eradicate this, interviews were recording on a Dictaphone and subsequently transcribed. As well as taking a voice recording, with the permission of participants, handwritten notes were made throughout the interview, thus enabling the swift identification of any follow-up questions that need to be asked.

There were practical constraints that could have had an impact upon the effectiveness of the data obtained. These included:

1. Participant availability. Whilst potential participants may have indicated a willingness to take part in the research, they may have been unavailable when contacted. To minimise this risk, students were contacted away from assessment deadlines and the examination season.
2. Academic staff may not have realised the value and purpose of the research, leading to an unwillingness to post the message on their VLE. To minimise this, the value of the research to academic staff was highlighted. Academic staff members were offered a two-page, anonymised, practical (jargon free) summary of the findings in relation to their own students.
3. Problems with self-reporting data (i.e. asking participants to provide their own memory and/or justification of the extent to which intrinsic and extrinsic motivations influenced the choice process). Problems could have included selective memory, telescoping, attribution, and exaggeration. To counter this, there was a need to ensure that the data analysis (i.e. coding exercise) was meticulous, and – if required – participants were encouraged to expand on their responses by the interviewer.

There were two streams of participants for this stage of research – students and marketing/administration staff. Students who expressed a willingness to take part in a further stage of data collection (on question 17 of the survey) were contacted. Students were emailed from the researcher's university email account (using the Bcc feature) briefly detailing the next stage of data collection, and encouraging them to respond directly to the email if there was an interest in taking part.

The head of marketing at each institution was contacted. Whilst time pressures may mean that it was difficult to interview the heads of large, administrative departments, it was hoped that the heads of marketing and/or their PA would be able to direct me to appropriate team members who would be interested in taking part in this research. The benefit of taking part in this research was stressed to each team member (as it was hoped that any report generated will be useful to the department to develop their own marketing offering).

As emphasised, consumer choice in HE – and understanding the role that motivations play – is an under-developed area in literature – from both a theoretical/conceptual, and empirical perspective. Therefore, there was a need to ensure that the framework developed at the end of chapter Chapter 2: – and tested in the first stage of data collection – stood up to the necessary rigorous testing. Whilst the matchup between literature and the two institutions was tested in the first stage of data collection (the survey), the purpose of this second stage of research was to delve deeper, thus understanding the reasons behind the emergence of any patterns.

3.6.4 Sampling approach

Malhorta *et al.* (2012: p. 491) state that *'… there is no hope of making scientific statements about a population based on the knowledge obtained from a sample, unless we are circumspect in choosing a sampling method*'. Burns (2000) highlights that sampling strategies involves choosing a particular part of the population, carrying out research into this group, and then generalising findings to a larger body.

The potential participants for interviews were first-year undergraduate students at two UK-based undergraduate university, and university (marketing and recruitment) staff. However, due to the sheer number of first-year undergraduate students, there was not the budget, time, or access to interview all of them. Therefore, a sample of this population was taken.

Sample techniques can either be probability or non-probability sampling. Based upon the earlier discussion in section 3.5.2, the choice for sampling student participants was quota sampling. Malhorta *et al.* (2012: p. 504) refer to quota sampling as *'… a non-probability sampling technique that is a two-stage restricted judgemental sampling. The first stage consists of developing control categories or quotas of populations elements. In the second stage, sample elements are selected based on convenience or judgement*'. Whilst this research was case study comprising two specific institutions, it was important that results generated were representative of the respective university.

Data obtained from university marketing and administration staff used the judgemental and snowball sampling techniques. Judgemental sampling (which is defined in section 3.5.2) was appropriate, and the researcher selected participants using his knowledge and understanding of the internal mechanics of a HE marketing, recruitment, and administration team. Malhorta *et al.* (2012: p. 506) state that snowball sampling involves '*… selecting subsequent participants based on the referrals or information provided by the initial participants'.* Sampling would, therefore, occur in two 'waves'. The first wave would be a judgement on the part of the researcher, consideringwhich participants would be appropriate to be interviewed, whilst the second wave is identified based upon the snowball sampling technique carried out in the initial interviews.

3.6.5 Approaching potential participants

In the first stage of the research (the survey), participants were asked for their email address. As previously discussed in section 3.5.1.1, the sole reason for this request was so that participants could be recruited for this second research stage. Participants were emailed directly from the researcher's official university email account. The researcher sought to obtain an equal representation from each institution to ensure that a reasonable balance was reached. However, the balance between participants interviewed was also partly determined by the level of interest from the participants who were contacted.

The researcher used his own initiative and judgement (judgemental sampling) to contact initial participants who worked for the marketing and administration teams of the respective institutions. From here, a development of interested parties was made, based upon questions posed.

3.6.6 Data analysis

Spiggle (1994) highlights that a major issue with qualitative research in that authors and readers can supplant an appropriate level of faith in conclusions and results. This is minimised by understanding what controls have been employed when gathering and analysing results, and how investigators can effectively convey the key findings of interviews to others. Wallendorf and Belk (1989) emphasise that both the procedures for data collection and post inferential processes are needed to establish trustworthiness. Therefore, this sub-section now presents an overview of both the data collection and data analysis procedures.

Responses were recorded and transcribed. Recording the interview removed the necessity for an interviewer to be constantly writing notes and allowed due care and attention to be given to the participant (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Transcribing interviews facilitated a clearer identification of the key factors from discussions. These transcriptions, coupled with notes made whilst interviews took place, provided a reminder of the research study (Glaser, 1978). Following initial familiarisation with the data, a reflective review of the data took place. Having an awareness of key literature themes facilitated this process. In this reflection stage, an initial observation of the extent to which the findings supported or challenged existing knowledge was made. Transcribing results allowed copies of the transcriptions to be sent to participants who had requested them. From this point, data was analysed in greater depth, leading to conceptualisation.

Whilst there are a range of ways that qualitative data can be analysed (Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2012), Bryman (2012) highlights that it is not a straightforward process. The consensus (e.g. Bryman, 2012; Dey, 1993; Saunders *et al.* 2019) is that the approach used to analyse qualitative data is via coding. This is the primary way of seeing how the interrelated concepts interconnect with each other – thus funnelling the data into relevant categories for analysis (Dey, 1993). Codes can either be 'focused' or 'axial'. Various authors (e.g. Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2012; Gummesson, 2000) discuss whether codes used should be the terminology used by respondents or the researcher's own codes.

There are two main ways in which coding can take place. One way is content analysis. This is where'*… the researcher interrogates the data for constructs and ideas that have been decided in advance'* (Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2012, p. 163). Spiggle (1994) states that content analyses can either be traditional (e.g. Spiggle, 1986); or a template-based approach (e.g. Crabtree and Miller, 1992; Rook, 1987) in which text is analysed by a predefined template or scheme. For the purpose of this study, the researcher's own codes were developed based upon respondents' views and opinions, meaning that codes were not developed based upon either the existing literature or the previous stage of research (the quantitative survey). Having codes that impose a strict, rigorous structure does not allow for themes to emerge from the data; therefore, having predefined codes would have been dangerous as it could have meant that vital data and responses were lost. Nevertheless, this is not to say that the codes developed did not link back to the commonalities found within the literature review.

The second way that coding can take place is through grounded analysis. This is where the '*…researcher would let the data speak for itself and although they are still employing a process, they allow for more institution to guide them in the development of their understanding of the data' (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012: p. 163).* This research used both methods of coding. Initially, a set of generic codes was applied, simply to gain a general understanding of the findings (i.e. content analysis). These codes were intentionally short and precise (Charmaz, 2006). Broad codes included 'consumer behaviour'; 'digital communications'; and 'lecturers', for example. This initial content analysis facilitated a greater understanding of the data, and provided a basic awareness of whether the data obtained was usable. These broad codes – and the content – was subsequently transferred into an NVIVO database. From there, a more thorough, in-depth, grounded analysis took place. The data was reassessed, with more precise codes attached to the responses provided. Grounded analysis was appropriate for the data analysis of this research, primarily as the questions were open-ended, and participants spoke freely about their extrinsic and intrinsic motivation processes, and the impact of intervening variables. Having 'predefined constructs' would have been inappropriate, as these were not compatible with the responses provided. Furthermore, the extent to which intervening variables impact upon intrinsic and extrinsic motivations is an under-developed area of research, and allowing themes to emerge was more appropriate.

Considering the number of interviews that the researcher undertook, it would have been foolhardy to attempt to code all interviews in one go. Instead, a 'coding diary' was kept in NVIVO, where key labels were provided to the key themes that emerge from the data. Maintaining this coding diary was an iterative process. Each coding exercise that took place meant that the codes attributed could change. The intention was to code two interviews (initially via content analysis, followed by grounded analysis as discussed above). The researcher had to review the coding of interviews as subsequent coding exercises took place. Spiggle (1994) states that this thorough coding process involves the following seven steps:

1. Categorisation: The process of classifying or labelling units of data. Spiggle (1994: p. 493) states that *'… the essence of categorisation is identify a chunk of unit of data… as belonging to, representing, or being an example of some more general phenomenon'*.
2. Abstraction: Groups previously identified categories into more general, conceptual classes.
3. Comparison: Evaluates differences and similarities occurring within the data and provides guidance for collecting further data.
4. Dimensionalisation: Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) state that this involves identifying properties of categories and constructs.
5. Integration: Spiggle (1994) states that this involves the mapping of relationships between conceptual elements. This mapping can either be presented in the form of gestalt connections, causal linkages, circular connections, or other explicit associations.
6. Iteration: Spiggle (1994: p. 495) states that iteration *'… involves moving through data collection and analysis in such a way that proceeding operations shape subsequent ones'*.

Inferences obtained from the data can be made based upon individual interviews, or the entire data set.

7. Refutation: This involves subjecting any emerging inferences – to empirical scrutiny. Strauss and Corbin (1990) advise a sceptic approach is appropriate when developing ideas. Throughout the process of data collection, the researcher should consistently expose the emerging themes to tests of data.

With the aforementioned seven steps in mind, the process of data analysis was time consuming, complex, and – at times – arduous. This was kept in mind when analysing any qualitative findings obtained.

3.6.7 Ethical concerns

The discussion of ethical concerns of interviews is applicable to both this stage of data collection, and the panel discussion carried out in the first stage of data collection (reference to which is given in section 3.5.1). The ethical concerns discussed below are pertinent to both student and student participants.

The first ethical concern was the access to participants. To ensure continuity with the first stage of the research, participants had to indicate a degree of willingness to take part in a further stage of data collection (by answering 'Yes' or 'Maybe' when participants were asked if they were willing to take part in a further stage of research in question 19 of the survey). Participants were only contacted if they had indicated that they may be willing to take part in a further stage of data collection. Participants were contacted via the email address they provided on the survey. Correspondence was from the researcher's student email address (dwp1g12@soton.ac.uk). So as not over-burden students with requests for participation, only one email was sent. When students indicated a willingness to take part in the research, the researcher responded in a timely manner.

The second ethical concern was the appropriateness of offering an incentive to take part in the research. Whilst the Market Research Society (MRS) highlights that incentives can be offered – provided they are commensurate with the expectation of the potential sample – I was keen to recruit participants who had an interest for exploring and evaluating the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors that influenced their choice of university. I strongly believed that offering an incentive (such as cash and/or vouchers) would have provided misguided motivation for participants, and potentially provide participants who perhaps do not have the appropriate enthusiasm for the topic. Furthermore, offering a monetary incentive for completing interviews presented an ethical 'minefield' – something that I was keen to avoid.

Thirdly, obtaining consent for an interview is not a simple matter (e.g. Bryman, 2012). Participants were asked for permission for the interview to be recorded (and subsequently transcribed) for research purposes. If respondents indicated any negativity towards this suggestion then the interview would have been terminated, as it would have been difficult to validate any information. Furthermore, participants were made aware of their right to terminate the interview at any point and/or decide not to answer a particular question. Nevertheless, these scenarios did not arise.

Fourthly, there was a need to avoid over-familiarity with the participants, or to influence responses in any way. Whilst section 3.1 highlights that the researcher was part of the research process, it was important to provide scope for the participants to speak freely about their experiences. Any pre-conceptions that the researcher had about student motivation were put aside, so as to not unduly influence the respondents, and to allow the themes to emerge from the discussion.

Fifthly, the researcher was careful not to use prompts during the interviews (Malhotra, Birks, and Wills, 2012).Prompting participants can lead to either them losing their train of thought or encouraging them to list factors that they do not consider to be pertinent (Bradley, 2010). For example, when asking participants to discuss their motivations for choosing a university, if the question is coupled with prompts (such as opportunity to make new friends or the chance to gain employability skills) then participants may simply repeat prompts within their responses, as opposed to developing their own answer. For this reason, instead of offering prompts, a preliminary question was integrated into the earlier discussion, so that the participants began thinking about their motivation for attending university, whilst at the same time were not inadvertently led to give an inaccurate response.

Sixthly, a problem with some of the participants could have been that their responses drew on experiences that they had with the researcher in the context of the lecturer-student relationship, where the researcher discusses motivation and how these influence consumer behaviour. To address this point, the researcher asked open-ended questions (see section 3.6.2) regarding which participants used extrinsic motivations (i.e. digital and familial influences); and intrinsic motivations (i.e. employability and lifestyle influences) for a range of products and services.

Seventhly, Jackson and Bazeley (2019) highlight that participants may not speak freely for fear of their responses being shared with individuals outside of the research remit. This is particularly true for both students, speaking about how their matriculation experiences met their motivations, and staff participants who were interviewed. As part of the introduction to the interview, it was emphasised that responses would be anonymised. If there was any chance that responses could be traced back to the participant, the participant would have been approached with the options of leaving the quote in place, adjusting the quote to vastly reduce the chance that they could be identified or removing the quote completely.

Eighthly, Collis and Hussey (2009) emphasise that it is important to ensure that responses recorded are a fair and accurate reflection of the conversation. Whilst notes were taken (to be used as follow-on questions when respondents said something that was worthy of further investigation) a Dictaphone was used to record participants' responses. This was used for two reasons: firstly, it removed ambiguity into what was said by participants; secondly, it allowed the researcher to pay greater heed to what information the participant provided whilst in an interview setting.

Finally, Cresswell (2007) emphasises the need to ensure that any interview takes place in an appropriate environment. The environment should be clutter-free, quiet, with an appropriate amount of privacy. At both institutions, the researcher 'booked' meeting rooms. In advance of the interviews, the researcher visited the meeting rooms to ensure that they met the necessary requirements.

In addressing these ethical concerns, approaches akin to that for the first stage of research (the survey) were used. Specifically, this involved distributing a consent form to participants – guaranteeing anonymity and confidentially- and obtaining ethical approval form the University of Southampton's ERGO platform.

3.6.8 Limitations

A major limitation of this stage of data collection is the folly of self-report (e.g. Garcia and Gustavon, 1997). This is where answers given by participants may be exaggerated. For example, student participants may state that employability factors influenced their decision to come to university, when in fact they were predominantly interested in the lifestyle factors. To counteract this, participants were asked to delve into their initial answers, so that any underlying themes can be identified. Furthermore, some participants may not understand the question. For example, when talking about the role that digital communications played as an intervening variable between motivation and choice, both staff and students were asked to give an overview of what is meant by digital communications.

Another limitation is that participants may forget pertinent details (Easterby-Smith *t al.* 2012). For example, the research was asking students to consider what motivated them to choose a specific university, which was a process that they may have started years before. To counterbalance this, questions were worded in such a way that participants were encouraged to delve into their long-term memory to think about the long-term motivations of attending university. Furthermore, an extensive range of interviews took place to ensure that there was a clear pattern amongst respondents, and that all relevant factors were addressed by a combination of student, staff, and industry expert participants.

A final limitation is that this study relied on voluntary participation (e.g. Bell, Bryman, and Harley, 2018). Results may be biased due to a lack of responses. To counteract this, the researcher strove to ensure that there was an extensive body of responses.

CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The primary data obtained for this first stage of empirical research was collated through an extensive survey, completed by 392 participants at two different institutions. In this chapter, the findings from statistical tests deployed on the survey findings are presented, with reference to the specific tests that were carried out.

The chapter is structured as follows. Firstly, the profile of respondents is presented. There are a number of different ways in that respondents are segmented, and this is presented in section 4.2. Secondly, a presentation of the factor analysis carried out on the data was made, thus highlighting whether the survey findings are consistent with the literature. Thirdly, there is a discussion of the reliability tests that have taken place on these factors. Fourthly, there is a presentation of the hypothesis testing as set out in Figure 3.3. Sixthly, there is an awareness of the regressions presented. Finally, based upon the moderations that exist, a presentation of ANOVA factors, to identify where interactions take place is made.

4.2 Profile of respondents

Participants answered a series of question about their demographic variables. This is detailed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Profile of respondents (based upon institution type).

Institution type	Frequency	Percentage
Vocational university	135	34.4%
Traditional university	257	65.6%

In total, 34.4% of respondents were from the vocational institution, whilst 65.6% of respondents were from the traditional institution. Though this is almost double, the number of respondents from the vocational institution are suffienct to fairly represent any differences which may exist in responses.

The survey also identified several socio-demographic variables that were also used for comparison purposes for subsequent statistical analysis. Namely, these refer to:

- Status (whether a student is a UK or international student).
- Type of school attended (public or private).
- Whether or not parents had previously attended university.

These results are presented below in Table 4.2–Table 4.5.

Table 4.2: Profile of respondents (based on gender).

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	220	58.0%
Female	156	41.2%
Would rather not say	3	0.8%
Question not answered	13	

Table 4.3: Profile of respondents (based on status).

Origin of student	Frequency	Percentage
UK	261	68.7%
International	119	31.3%
Question not answered	12	

Table 4.4: Profile of respondents (based on school type).

Type of school	Frequency	Percentage
Fee-paying	82	21.6%
State school	262	69.1%
Would rather not say	35	9.2%
Question not answered	13	

Table 4.5: Profile of respondents (based on parental education).

Did parents attend university	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, both parents	108	28.4%
Yes, only father	77	20.3%
Yes, only mother	24	6.3%
No	112	29.5%
Would rather not say	59	15.5%
Question not answered	12	

Now that an overview of the profile of respondents has been provided, this chapter presents the results of the factor analysis tests that were carried out.

4.3 Factor analysis

There was a need to run a factor analysis of three of the questions provided in the questionnaire. These questions focused upon motivations for attending university; reasons for selecting an institution; and sources of information consulted. These factor analyses are hereby presented.

4.3.1 Intrinsic motivations for attending university

A rotated component analysis (RCA) was run on a 10-item question that measured the motivations for students attending university. Results obtained from the RCA indicated that results were not orthogonal, so the researcher proceeded with a principal component analysis (PCA). This was again run on the 10-item question that measured the motivations for students attending university amongst 392 participants. The suitability of PCA was assessed prior to analysis. Inspection of the correlation matrix showed that all variables had at least one correlation coefficient greater than 0.3. The overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was .771 with individual KMO measures all greater than 0.7, classifications of 'middling' to 'meritorious' according to Kaiser (1974). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($p < .0005$) indicating that the data was likely factorizable.

PCA revealed three components that had eigenvalues greater than one and which explained 36.5%, 26.3%, and 10.1% of the total variance respectively. Visual inspection of the scree plot, however, indicated that only two components should be retained (Cattell, 1966). This is supported with the third component having an initial Eigen Value of 1.0, thus being right on the border of acceptability. Nevertheless, a two-component solution met the interpretability criterion. As such, two components were retained.

The two-component solution explained 62.8% of the total variance. A Varimax orthogonal rotation was employed to aid interpretability. The rotated solution exhibited 'simple structure' (Thurstone, 1947). The interpretation of the data was consistent with the intrinsic motivation attributes the questionnaire was designed to measure with strong loadings of employability items on Component 1, and lifestyle items on Component 2. Component loadings and communalities of the rotated solution are presented in Table 4.6, and the scree plot is presented in Figure 4.1.

Table 4.6: Rotated Component Analysis of intrinsic motivations for attending university.

Intrinsic Motivation	Component		
	1	2	3 (not retained)
Develop career	.875		
Employable	.863		
Earning potential	.831		
Develop skills	.743		
Contacts	.589		
Friends		.786	
Sports and Societies		.835	
Lifestyle		.907	
Nightlife		.797	
Finding a Job			.961

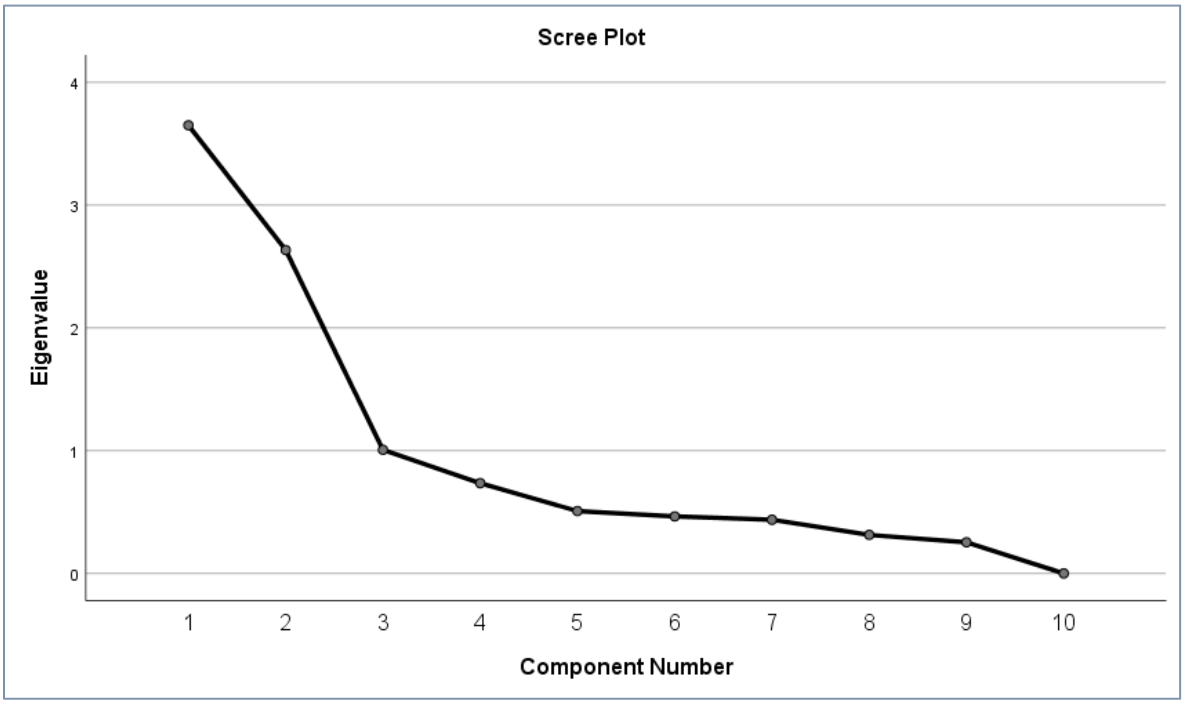

Figure 4.1 Scree plot of intrinsic motivations for attending university.

The first five items all load onto component 1 (employability) and have a connection to the idea of obtaining employment upon graduation. It is interesting to note that the 10th item (i.e. finding a job) loaded onto component 3. An explanation for this is that the notion of finding a job is explicitly linked to employability, whilst the first five items are linked to the ongoing process of finding a job. The second four items all loaded onto component 2 (lifestyle) and have a connection to the student life that students enjoy. Whilst lifestyle itself is one of the items found within this component, the label has been used as the other items refer to different components of the lifestyle enjoyed by students.

4.3.2 Extrinsic motivation for selecting a university

A rotated component analysis (RCA) was run on a 9-item question that measured extrinsic motivations for students attending university. Results obtained from the RCA indicated that results were not orthogonal, so the researcher proceeded with a principal component analysis (PCA). This was again run on the 9-item question that measured the motivations for students attending university amongst 392 participants. The suitability of PCA was assessed prior to analysis. Inspection of the correlation matrix showed that all variables had at least one correlation coefficient greater than 0.3. The overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was .837 with individual KMO measures all greater than 0.7, classifications of ‘middling’ to ‘meritorious’ according to Kaiser (1974). Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($p < .0005$) indicating that the data was likely factorizable.

PCA revealed two components that had eigenvalues greater than one and which explained 45.5%, and 19.8% of the total variance respectively. Visual inspection of the scree plot indicated that these two components should be retained (Cattell, 1966). As such, two components were retained.

The two-component solution explained 65.3% of the total variance. A Varimax orthogonal rotation was employed to aid interpretability. The rotated solution exhibited 'simple structure' (Thurstone, 1947). The interpretation of the data was consistent with the extrinsic motivation attributes the questionnaire was designed to measure with strong loadings of familial items on Component 1, and digital items on Component 2. Component loadings and communalities of the rotated solution are presented in Table 4.7, and the scree plot is presented in Figure 4.2.

Table 4.7: Rotated Component Analysis of intrinsic motivations for attending university.

Intrinsic Motivation	Component		
	1	2	
Close friends & family		.856	
Parents		.875	
Teachers		.765	
Live chat	.645		
Facebook information	.793		
LinkedIn information	.910		
Twitter information	.894		
YouTube information	.841		
The Student Room	.447		

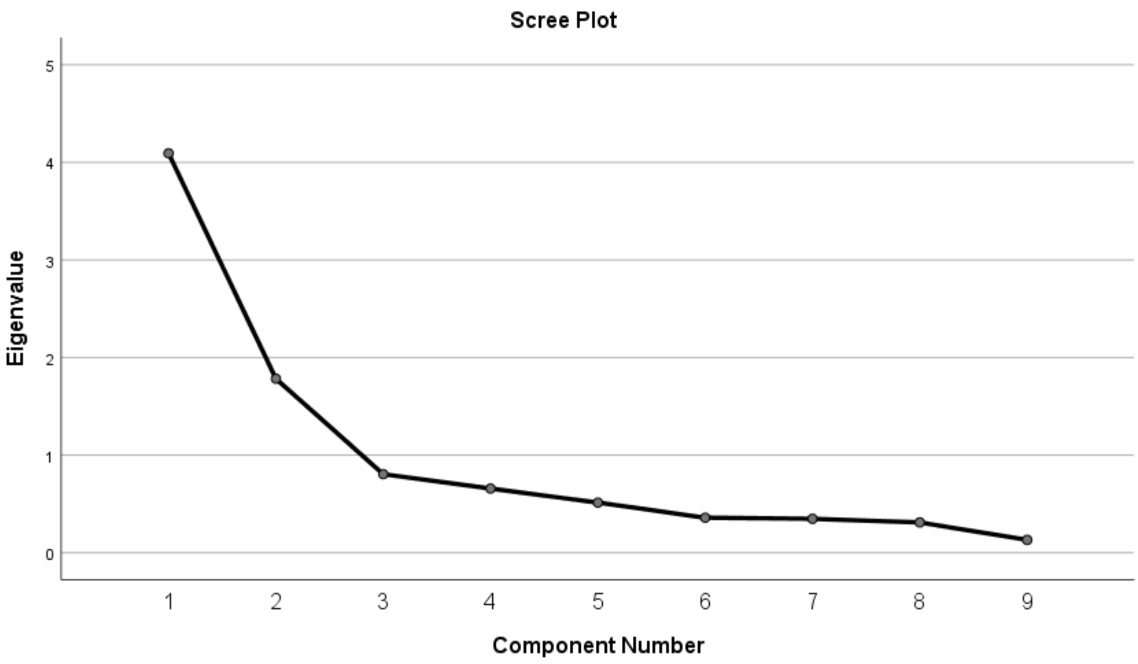

Figure 4.2: Scree plot of intrinsic motivations for attending university.

The first three items all load onto component 1 (familial) and have a connection to being motivated to attend university by familial influencers. The second six items all loaded onto component 2 (digital) and have a connection to the digital influencers that may motivate individuals to apply to university.

4.3.3 Reasons for selecting a university

A rotated component analysis (RCA) was run on a 16-item question that measured the motivations for students attending university. Results obtained from the RCA indicated that results were not orthogonal, so the researcher proceeded with a principal component analysis (PCA). This was again run on the 16-item question that measured the reasons for applying to university amongst 392 participants. The suitability of PCA was assessed prior to analysis. Inspection of the correlation matrix showed that all variables had at least one correlation coefficient greater than 0.3. The overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was .847 with individual KMO measures all greater than 0.7, classifications of ‘middling’ to ‘meritorious’ according to Kaiser (1974). Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($p < .0005$) indicating that the data was likely factorizable.

PCA revealed six components that had eigenvalues greater than one and which explained 26.6%, 11.6%, 7.1%, 5.5%, 4.6%, and 4.1% of the total variance respectively. Visual inspection of the scree plot indicated that all six components should be retained (Cattell, 1966). Furthermore, a six-component solution met the interpretability criterion. As such, six components were retained.

The six-component solution explained 59.5% of the total variance. A Varimax orthogonal rotation was employed to aid interpretability. The rotated solution exhibited 'simple structure' (Thurstone, 1947). The interpretation of the data was consistent with the intrinsic motivation attributes the questionnaire was designed to measure with strong loadings of personal items on Component 1, departmental items on Component 2, media items on component 3, city items on component 4, ranking items on component 5, and gut feeling items on component 6. Component loadings and communalities of the rotated solution are presented in Table 4.8, and the scree plot is presented in Figure 4.3.

Table 4.8: Rotated Component Analysis of reasons for selecting a university.

Reason for selecting a university	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
League position of institution					.913	
League position of course					.894	
City				.687		
Safety			.492			
Course content		.695				
Industry contacts		.808				
Professional accreditations		.793				
Graduate employability		.721				
Teaching quality		.537				
Research quality		.459				
Media stories			.616			
Administration efficiency			.750			
University information			.526			
Application response			.736			
Entrance criteria				.502		
University accommodation				.664		
Living with parents	.589					

Reason for selecting a university	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Part-time jobs				.430		
Disability provision	.587					
Campus environment				.588		
Tuition fees	.543					
Financial support	.378					
Friends and family at university	.767					
Friends and family previously at university	.776					
Parental guidance	.683					
Close friends and family members guidance	.702					
Gut feeling						.666

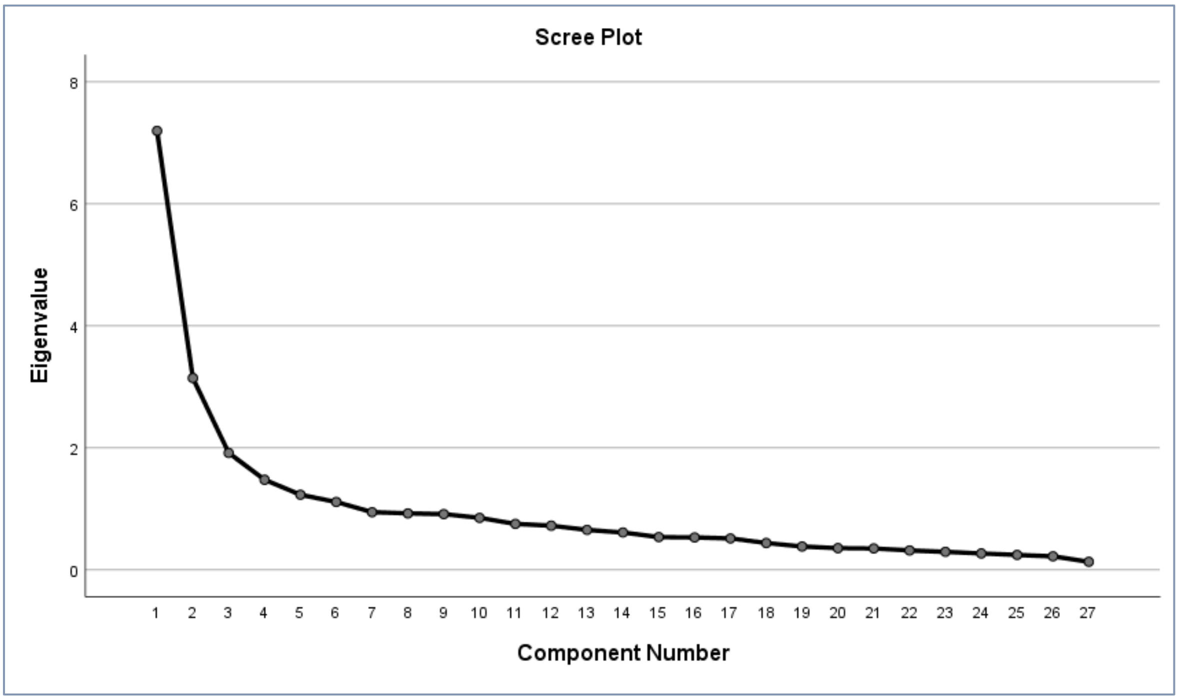

Figure 4.3: Scree plot of reasons for selecting university.

It is interesting to note that both tuition fees and financial support were two of the eight components linked to component 1 (i.e. personal factors). Whilst other items within this component were closer related to the individual – such as parental guidance and close friends and family guidance – these financially related items could have grouped into this component as financial support can be one component of support from parents and members of a wider family unit. It was also interesting to note that the items of ‘city’ and ‘safety’ were attributed to different components (4 and 3 respectively). Upon closer inspection, it is apparent that ‘safety’ is grouped to items such as ‘media stories’ and ‘application’ information. This proffers that safety being component 3 (labelled as media items) suggests that safety is an aspect that is communicated via university and mainstream media channels. On the other hand, ‘city’ is grouped with items such as university accommodation, part-time jobs, and campus environment. With these items grouped together in component 4 (labelled as city items) suggests that the city is more concerned with the lifestyle benefits of being in a city centre. Another anomaly worth highlighting is that the item ‘gut feeling’ appears to stand alone (as component 6). This suggests that this psychological element of choosing an institution does not fit neatly in with any of the other items given in the questionnaire.

4.3.4 Sources of information

A rotated component analysis (RCA) was run on a 26-item question that measured the different sources of information that students consult when deciding what university to attend. Results obtained from the RCA indicated that results were not orthogonal, so the researcher proceeded with a principal component analysis (PCA). This was again run on the 26-item question that measured the reasons for applying to university amongst 392 participants. The suitability of PCA was assessed prior to analysis. Inspection of the correlation matrix showed that all variables had at least one correlation coefficient greater than 0.3. The overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was .893 with individual KMO measures all greater than 0.7, classifications of ‘middling’ to ‘meritorious’ according to Kaiser (1974). Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($p < .0005$) indicating that the data was likely factorizable.

PCA revealed six components that had eigenvalues greater than one and which explained 36.6%, 9.9%, 6.6%, 6.1%, 4.5%, and 4.0% of the total variance respectively. Visual inspection of the scree plot indicated that all six components should be retained (Cattell, 1966). Furthermore, a six solution met the interpretability criterion. As such, six components were retained.

The six-component solution explained 67.7% of the total variance. A Varimax orthogonal rotation was employed to aid interpretability. The rotated solution exhibited 'simple structure' (Thurstone, 1947). The interpretation of the data was consistent with the intrinsic motivation attributes the questionnaire was designed to measure with strong loadings of digital items on Component 1, external channels items on Component 2, personal items on component 3, traditional items on component 4, face-to-face items on component 5, and clearing items on component 6. Component loadings and communalities of the rotated solution are presented in Table 4.9, and the scree plot is presented in Figure 4.4.

Table 4.9: Rotated Component Analysis of sources of information utilised when making university choice.

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clearing						.775
Prospectus				.556		
Open days					.890	
Taster events					.734	
Official websites				.578		
Live chat	.676					
Facebook	.651					
LinkedIn	.855					
Twitter	.829					
YouTube	.738					
University blog	.840					
School bog	.842					
Facebook information	.700					
LinkedIn information	.779					
Twitter information	.796					
YouTube information	.700					
National media		.760				
Local media		.715				
The Student Room		.616				

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prospects				.657		
UCAS				.647		
University rankings				.420		
Close friends and family			.866			
Parents			.856			
Teachers			.753			

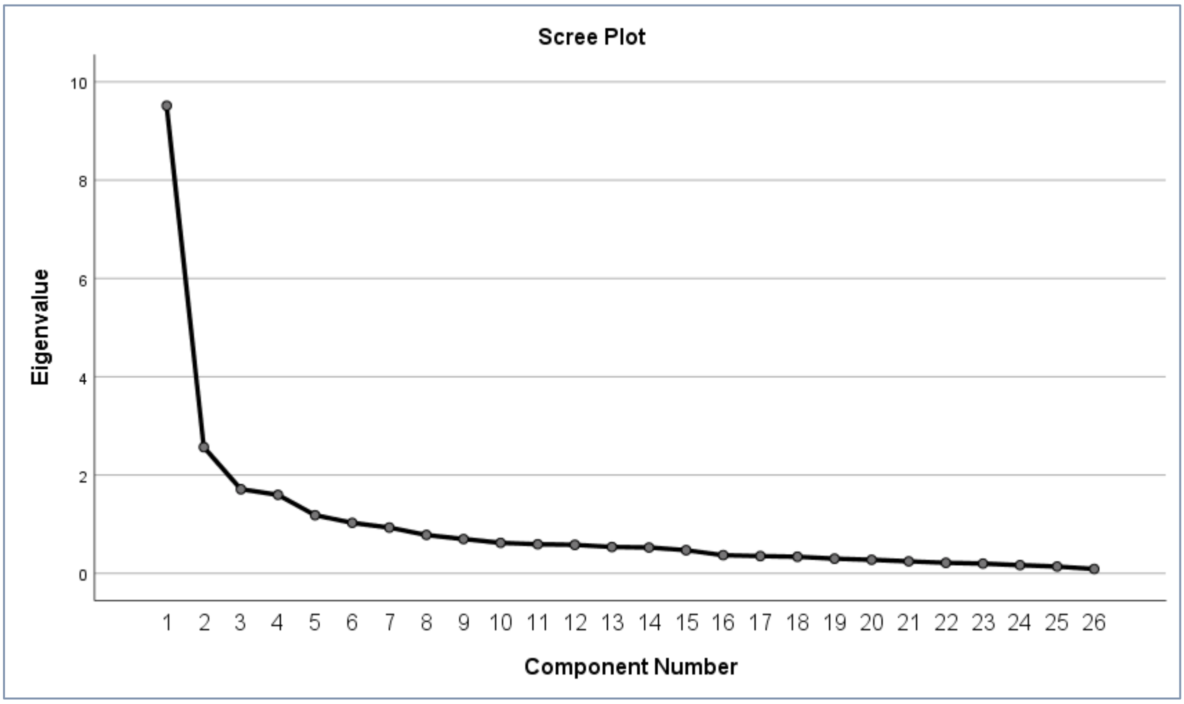

Figure 4.4: Scree plot of sources of information consulted when selecting university.

There are several interesting observations to make. It is noted that the items 'prospectus' and 'official website' (two forms of communication that may be viewed as differing due to their printed and digital nature) were grouped together in the same component (component 4). An explanation for this is that these items may have been viewed as having a source of authority, albeit in different (printed and digital) formats. It was apparent that all of the social networking items (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, blogs) were grouped together under the 'digital' component. Live Chat was also included here, but on reflection, a distinction was not made between the live chat function on the official website in comparison to live chat functions via social media channels. The items 'national media'; 'local media' and 'the student room' were linked together under component 2. A reason for this is there is an array of discussion in 'The Student Room' that focuses upon news (both in relation to institutions and their communities). The items 'Prospects', 'UCAS' and 'University Rankings' were included together. Again, this is unsurprising as students would move between the three different sources of information when making an application process. Finally, the item 'clearing' was attributed to its own component (i.e. component 6). This suggests that the process of clearing does not fit neatly in with any of the other items given in this particular question. This would be true, as if a student has come through clearing it can often be a relatively quick decision, often attending an institution that was not necessarily their first choice.

Now that a presentation of the factor analysis results has been made, this chapter will now go onto present the reliability analysis of factors.

4.4 Reliability analysis

Section 4.3 highlighted that, in total, 16 factors have been retained for subsequent analysis (two intrinsic motivations; two extrinsic motivations; six choice criteria; and six sources of information). Linked to the development of these factors, an overview of the reliability of these factors is presented below in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Reliability analysis of factors generated.

	Component number	Name of factor	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha	Internal consistency
Intrinsic motivation	1	Employability	5	.845	Good
	2	Lifestyle	4	.849	Good
Extrinsic motivation	1	Familial influencers	3	.801	Good
	2	Digital influencers	6	.838	Good
Reasons for selecting university	1	Personal	9	.837	Good
	2	Departmental	6	.837	Good
	3	Media	3	.725	Acceptable

	Component number	Name of factor	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha	Internal consistency
	4	Location	5	.721	Acceptable
	5	Ranking	2	.917	Excellent
	6	Gut feeling	1	N/A – only one item	N/A
Informational influencers	1	Digital media	11	.944	Excellent
	2	Print media	2	.764	Acceptable
	3	Personal sources	3	.798	Acceptable
	4	Traditional university communications	5	.680	Questionable
	5	Familial ties	2	.694	Questionable
	6	Clearing	1	N/A – only one item	N/A

As discussed, the survey sought to measure different, underlying constructs. Table 6.11 provides a breakdown of the Cronbach item score of the underlying constructs. Generally speaking, a score of at least 0.7 is considered to be acceptable (e.g. Cronbach, 1951; DeVellis, 2003; Kline, 2005; George and Mallery, 2003; Nunnally, 1978). 12 out of 14 of the factors are eligible for reliability testing (the two components that are not have only one item in each factor). Four of these factors are classified as 'acceptable'; three are classed as 'good'; and two are classed as 'excellent'. There are, however, two components which have 'questionable' classifications. A decision is taken to retain these components based upon the following: firstly, the classifications are in the upper range limits of the questionable range, meaning they are not far away from an 'acceptable' level of internal consistency. Secondly, upon inspection, it is apparent that the items within these components have a clear relationship to the grouping awarded to the component.

Having carried out the reliability analysis, this chapter now presents the process of creating interactional variables by multiplying the independent variables with moderator variables. The purpose of this is to generate variables that will be tested in the subsequent binary logistics regression and slope analysis. Coupled with identifying the relationships between the intrinsic motivations (i.e. lifestyle and employability) a decision is also taken to create interactional variables for extrinsic motivations (i.e. traditional sources of information and digital sources of information to determine what relationships exist).

4.5 Merging components prior to binominal logistical regression

To facilitate a binominal logistical regression analysis, independent and moderator variables are hereby merged together to offer interaction variables. These are presented below in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Merged components.

Independent variables	Moderator variable	Name of new variable
Employability	Personal	EMPE
Employability	Departmental	EMDE
Employability	Media	EMME
Employability	Location	EMLO
Employability	Ranking	EMRA
Employability	Gut	EMGU
Employability	Digital	EMDI
Employability	Print media	EMPR
Employability	Personal	EMPE
Employability	Traditional	EMTR
Employability	Face-to-face	EMFA
Employability	Clearing	EMCL
Lifestyle	Personal	LIPE
Lifestyle	Departmental	LIDE
Lifestyle	Media	LIME
Lifestyle	Location	LILO
Lifestyle	Ranking	LIRA
Lifestyle	Gut	LIGU

Independent variables	Moderator variable	Name of new variable
Lifestyle	Digital	LIDI
Lifestyle	Print media	LIPR
Lifestyle	Personal	LIPE
Lifestyle	Traditional	LITR
Lifestyle	Face-to-face	LIFA
Lifestyle	Clearing	LICL
Familial	Personal	FAPE
Familial	Departmental	FADE
Familial	Media	FAME
Familial	Location	FALO
Familial	Ranking	FARA
Familial	Gut	FAGU
Familial	Digital	FADI
Familial	Print media	FAPR
Familial	Personal	FAPE
Familial	Traditional	FATR
Familial	Face-to-face	FAFA
Familial	Clearing	FACL
Digital	Personal	DIPE
Digital	Departmental	DIDE
Digital	Media	DIME
Digital	Location	DILO
Digital	Ranking	DIRA
Digital	Gut	DIGU
Digital	Digital	DIDI

Independent variables	Moderator variable	Name of new variable
Digital	Print Media	DIPM
Digital	Personal	DIPE
Digital	Traditional	DITR
Digital	Face-to-face	DIFA
Digital	Clearing	DICL

4.6 Binominal logistical regression

Once interaction variables were created, a binominal logistical regression was conducted to examine all the direct and interactional relationships. Based on extant research (e.g Robinson and Schumacker, 2009; Enders and Tofighi, 2007), interactional variables were mean centred. First, the mean of each interaction variable was identified, followed by the centring of each syntax score. Following this, the following binominal logistical regression results were obtained. The control variables used for this binominal logistical regression were ‘gender’ and ‘UK/International’.

Table 4.12: Binominal logistical regression.

	Model 1: Control only model			Model 2: Direct effects model			Model 3: Moderation model (personal influences)			Model 4: Moderation model (informational influences)			Model 5: Moderation model (environmental influences)			Model 6: Moderation model (socio-demographic)			Model 7: Moderation model		
	Beta	**Std. Err.**	**Sig.**	**Beta**	**Std. Err.**	**Sig.**	**Beta**	**Std. Err.**	**Sig**	**Beta**	**Std. Err.**	**Sig**	**Beta**	**Std. Err.**	**Sig**	**Beta**	**Std. Err.**	**Sig**	**Beta**	**Std. Err.**	**Sig**
Intercept	0.845	0.438	0.054	-1.499	0.943	0.112	4.469	4.992	0.371	9.179	5.562	0.099	2.616	9.692	0.787	15.899	1.464	0.129	14.827	10.567	0.161
Controls																					
Gender	0.03198	0.212567	0.88	-0.039	0.176	0.861	0.03	0.231	0.898	0.049	0.254	0.846	0.153	0.339	0.652	0.079	0.24	0.742	-0.53406	1.972003	0.78653
UK or International	-0.19674	0.230706	0.394	0.119	0.149	0.65	0.244	0.277	0.377	0.01	0.318	0.975	-0.597	0.378	0.114	-1.241	2.171	0.568	-4.57299	2.507695	0.068215
Direct effects																					
Employability				-0.168	0.16566	0.31	-1.53298	0.560629	0.006***	-0.9982	0.536152	0.062635	-1.325	0.981	0.117	-0.56511	1.056302	0.5927	5.697835	4.763718	0.231661
Lifestyle				0.484694	0.141949	0.001**	1.105218	0.486839	0.02**	-0.76216	0.527813	0.148738	0.771	0.945	0.415	-0.68387	0.830052	0.41	3.290764	5.652411	0.56044
Familial Influences				0.661623	0.193613	0.001**	1.550391	0.632985	0.014**	4.978184	1.34445	0.000***	1.4	1.502	0.351	-0.18151	1.18204	0.878	-14.4585	5.499961	0.009**
Digital Influences				-0.1817	0.184307	0.324	-0.21307	0.644622	0.740997	0.296246	1.902111	0.876233	-0.367	1.205	0.761	-0.119	1.023958	0.9075	3.026057	3.728563	0.417028
Moderating effects																					
EMP x PER = EMPE							0.264	0.127	0.037*										0.036803	0.289576	0.898867
EMP x GUT = EMGU							0.211	0.132	0.11										0.719873	0.728596	0.323139
LIF x PER = LIFE							0.066	0.116	0.57										-0.01381	0.487348	0.977398
LIF x GUT = LIGU							0.228	0.113	0.044*										0.192356	0.188932	0.30862
FAM x PER = FAME							-0.019	0.16	0.907										0.038384	0.251627	0.878759
FAM x GUT = FAGU							-0.142	0.15	0.345										-0.31971	0.188359	0.089628
DIG x PER = DIGE							-0.01	0.15	0.947										0.060931	0.361202	0.86604
DIG x GUT = DIGU							0.014	0.14	0.919										-0.16885	0.679745	0.803825
EMP x DIGME = LIDI										-0.104	0.244	0.668							0.493716	0.31398	0.115847
EMP x PRI =EMPR										0.335	0.309	0.278							-1.26528	0.455727	0.005**
EMP x PER = EMPE										0.253	0.174	0.146							0.132247	0.594424	0.823941
EMP x UCO = EMUC										-0.164	0.22	0.457							0.198179	0.481803	0.680832
LIF x DIGME = LIDI										0.82	0.331	0.013*							0.129287	0.503797	0.797468
LIF x PRI =LIFR										-0.349	0.11	0.187							1.760304	0.642806	0.0061**
LIF x PER = LIFE										-0.066	0.265	0.649							0.018626	0.57536	0.974175
LIF x UCO = LIUC										0.353	0.187	0.058							-0.49947	0.25909	0.053881
FAM x DIGME = LIDI										-0.452	0.692	0.513							-0.24418	0.34866	0.483719
FAM x PRI =FAMR										0.267	0.363	0.462							0.416645	0.215357	0.053031
FAM x PER = FAME										0.247	0.213	0.246							-0.07398	0.270166	0.784224
FAM x UCO = FAUC										-0.654	0.276	0.018*							-0.57477	0.51876	0.267876
DIG x DIGME = LIDI										0.871	0.304	0.004**							0.500312	0.4375	0.252802
DIG x PRI =DIGR										0.007	0.386	0.985							1.23256	0.553871	0.026*
DIG x PER = DIGE										-0.231	0.304	0.448							-0.64048	0.796945	0.421585
DIG x UCO = DIUC										-0.142	0.313	0.65							0.37502	0.375521	0.317957

	Model 1: Control only model			Model 2: Direct effects model			Model 3: Moderation model			Model 4: Moderation model			Model 5: Moderation model			Model 6: Moderation model			Model 7: Moderation model		
	Beta	Std. Err.	Sig.	Beta	Std. Err.	Sig.	Beta	Std. Err.	Sig	Beta	Std. Err.	Sig	Beta	Std. Err.	Sig	Beta	Std. Err.	Sig	Beta	Std. Err.	Sig
EMP x DIGME = LIDI										-0.104	0.244	0.668							0.493716	0.31398	0.115847
EMP x PRI =EMPR										0.335	0.309	0.278							-1.26528	0.455727	0.005**
EMP x PER = EMPE										0.253	0.174	0.146							0.132247	0.594424	0.823941
EMP x UCO = EMUC										-0.164	0.22	0.457							0.198179	0.481803	0.680832
LIF x DIGME = LIDI										0.82	0.331	0.013*							0.129287	0.503797	0.797468
LIF x PRI =LIFR										-0.349	0.11	0.187							1.760304	0.642806	0.0061**
LIF x PER = LIFE										-0.066	0.265	0.649							0.018626	0.57536	0.974175
LIF x UCO = LIUC										0.353	0.187	0.058							-0.49947	0.25909	0.053881
FAM x DIGME = LIDI										-0.452	0.692	0.513							-0.24418	0.34866	0.483719
FAM x PRI =FAMR										0.267	0.363	0.462							0.416645	0.215357	0.053031
FAM x PER = FAME										0.247	0.213	0.246							-0.07398	0.270166	0.784224
FAM x UCO = FAUC										-0.654	0.276	0.018*							-0.57477	0.51876	0.267876
DIG x DIGME = LIDI										0.871	0.304	0.004**							0.500312	0.4375	0.252802
DIG x PRI =DIGR										0.007	0.386	0.985							1.23256	0.553871	0.026*
DIG x PER = DIGE										-0.231	0.304	0.448							-0.64048	0.796945	0.421585
DIG x UCO = DIUC										-0.142	0.313	0.65							0.37502	0.375521	0.317957
EMP x DEP = EMDE													-0.054	0.228	0.812				-1.17257	0.784453	0.134976
EMP x LOC = EMLO													0.516	0.236	0.029*				0.653451	1.287936	0.6119
EMP x RAN = EMRA													-0.256	0.34	0.452				-0.77956	0.771487	0.312274
LIF x DEP = LIDE													-0.25571	0.340344	0.452452				0.132504	0.30771	0.666749
LIF x LOC = LILO													-0.2856	0.270384	0.290842				-0.03262	0.47283	0.945004
LIF x RAN = LIRA													0.410488	0.292204	0.160081				-0.00568	0.272116	0.98334
FAM x DEP = FADE													-0.48977	0.457882	0.284784				-0.07743	0.420283	0.853828
FAM x LOC = FALO													0.042461	0.350936	0.903696				0.206506	0.690128	0.764765
FAM x RAN = FARA													0.118904	0.413798	0.773846				0.633296	0.627758	0.31306
DIG x DEP = DIDE													0.215266	0.474498	0.650066				-0.40032	0.808588	0.620539
DIG x LOC = DILO													0.172885	0.323004	0.592484				0.869123	1.271027	0.494104
DIG x RAN = DIRA													-0.30284	0.37771	0.422677				-0.64971	0.523325	0.214422
EMP x PAR = EMPA																0.030227	0.126271	0.8108	0.439045	0.944231	0.641948
EMP x SCH = EMSCH																0.021802	0.294136	0.9409	1.289933	0.591715	0.029*
EMP x STA = EMST																0.31969	0.432127	0.4594	1.362882	0.87328	0.118607
LIF x PAR = LIFA																0.256123	0.11014	0.020*	0.047512	0.305121	0.876258
LIF x SCH = LISCH																-0.37543	0.336161	0.2641	-0.16389	0.616265	0.790282
LIF x STA = LIST																0.471931	0.280632	0.0926	-0.03227	0.279377	0.908045
FAM x PAR = FAMA																-0.00274	0.140455	0.9844	-0.33392	0.525276	0.524972
FAM x SCH = FASCH																0.114912	0.53251	0.8291	-0.75097	0.635413	0.237263
FAM x STA = FAST																0.373897	0.435441	0.3905	-1.15493	0.65547	0.078071
DIG x PAR = DIGA																-0.09867	0.131117	0.4517	0.888205	0.870941	0.307813
DIG x SCH = DISCH																0.286129	0.474003	0.5461	-0.83432	1.337061	0.53263
DIG x STA = DIST																-0.08855	0.384673	0.8179	-0.49069	0.58953	0.405218

Quantitative Results

A binomial logistic regression was performed to ascertain the direct effects intrinsic motivations of employability and lifestyle, and the extrinsic motivations on personal influencers and digital influences and the moderating influence of personal sources, gut feeling, digital media, traditional university communications, face-to-face communications, department, location, rankings, parental education, type of school, and type of student, on the choice of the university (traditional vs vocational).

The modelling was carried out progressively. Model 1 was a control model, evaluating the effect of the two control variables (i.e. gender, and status of student). Model 2 was a direct effects model, which evaluated the direct impact of the respective intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Models 3–6 were moderation models, which evaluated the extent to which each grouping of moderating variables impacted upon the extent to which motivators influenced choice. Finally, model 7 incorporates the overall effect on all the four categories of moderating variables.

As observed in Table 4.12, model 1 (the direct effects model), supports the following hypothesis:

- Hypothesis 1b – which hypothesized that lifestyle factors would have a significant influence choice ($\beta = 0.485$; $p<0.001$).

The moderating effects of intervening variables was examined next. The hypotheses that were supported were:

- Hypothesis 5a – which hypothesized that the type of school attended would have a significant influence on the employability variable ($\beta = 1.29$; $p<0.029$).;
- Hypotheses 10a – which hypothesized that print media would have a significant influence on the employability variable ($\beta = -1.27$; $p<0.005$).;
- Hypothesis 10b – which hypothesized that print media would have a significant influence on the employability variable ($\beta = -1.76$; $p<0.006$).;
- Hypothesis 10d - which hypothesized that print media would have a significant influence on the employability variable ($\beta = 1.23$; $p<0.026$).;

Model 3 supported four sub-hypotheses. These were:

- Hypothesis 1a – which hypothesized that employability factors would have a significant influence choice ($\beta = -1.533$; $p<0.006$).
- Hypothesis 1b – which hypothesized that lifestyle factors would have a significant influence choice ($\beta = 1.105$; $p<0.02$).

- Hypothesis 2a – which hypothesized that familial influencers would have a significant influence choice (β = 1.550; p<0.014).
- Hypothesis 11a – which hypothesized that personal sources would have a significant influence on the employability variable (β = 0.264; p<0.037).;
- Hypothesis 1b – which hypothesized that familial influencers would be a significant motivator for attending university (β = 0.667; p<0.001).

Model 4 supported 4 sub-hypotheses. These were:

- Hypothesis 2a – which hypothesized that familial influencers would have a significant influence choice (β = 4.978; p<0.000).;
- Hypothesis 9b – which hypothesized that digital media would have a significant influence on the lifestyle variable (β = 0.82; p<0.013).;
- Hypothesis 9d – which hypothesized that digital media would have a significant influence on the digital influencers variable (β = 0.817; p<0.004).;
- Hypothesis 12c – which hypothesized that university communications would have a significant influence on the familial influencers variable (β = 0.654; p<0.018).

Model 5 only supported one sub-hypothesis. This was:

- Hypothesis 7b – which hypothesized that the location would have a significant influence on the employability variable (β = 0.516; p<0.029).;

Model 6 only supported one sub-hypothesis. This was:

- Hypothesis 3b – which hypothesized that the level of parental education would have a significant influence on the lifestyle variable (β = 0.26; p<0.020).;

Finally, model 7 explained significantly more variation than the preceding six models, supporting the theorising further. This model demonstrates more direct relationships. Hypotheses H1a and H1b, that examined the direct effects of intrinsic motivations of employability and lifestyle, were not supported. Similarly, hypotheses H2a – that examined the role that the extrinsic motivation digital influencers had was not supported. However, H2b, the extrinsic motivation of familial influencers was found to have a significant influence (β = -14.46; p<0.009), so H2b was supported.

4.7 T-tests

A range of independent samples t-tests were run to determine if there were differences in intrinsic motivations (i.e. employability and lifestyle) between two variables. Specifically, initial t-tests carried out investigated whether any differences existed between gender, nationality of students, and type of university attended. The results of these are presented below.

4.7.1 Lifestyle between gender

Whilst the intrinsic motivation of employability was more prevalent to male students (M = 3.04, SD = 0.89) than female students (M = 3.00, SD = 0.85), this difference was not statistically significant -, M = 0.38, 95% CI [-.143, 218], $t(30)$ = .410, p = .682.

4.7.2 Employability between nationality

Whilst the intrinsic motivation of employability was more prevalent to international students (M = 4.38, SD = 0.68) than UK students (M = 4.35, SD = 0.75), this difference was not statistically significant - M = -0.17, 95% CI [-.177, .141], $t(30)$ = -.218, p = .828.

4.7.3 Lifestyle between nationality

Whilst the intrinsic motivation of lifestyle was more prevalent to UK students (M = 3.05, SD = 0.85) than international students (M = 2.97, SD = 0.92), this difference was not statistically significant - M = -0.084, 95% CI [-.106, .273], $t(30)$ = .869, p = .385.

4.7.4 Employability between type of university

Whilst the intrinsic motivation of employability was more prevalent to the vocational institution (M = 4.36, SD = 0.76) than the traditional institution (M = 4.36, SD = 0.71), this difference was not statistically significant - M = 0.01, 95% CI [-.149, -.161], $t(30)$ = .081, p = .936.

4.7.5 Lifestyle between type of university

The intrinsic motivation of lifestyle was more prevalent to the traditional institution (M = 3.17, SD = 0.53) than the vocational institution (M = 2.75, SD = 0.87). Furthermore, this difference was statistically significant -, M = -4.13, 95% CI [-.594, -233], $t(30)$ = -4.503, p = .000.

This is a somewhat surprising result initiallyb as it suggests that there are lifestyle components that are more prevalent to the traditional institution than the vocational institution. With a clearer understanding of the respective institutions, it is apparent that the traditional institution potentially has a more 'true' undergraduate social experience, in the sense that students come from all over the UK (and internationally) to attend the institution, whereas students of the vocational institution tend to attend the university from a closer proximity.

Having identified whether relationships exist between gender and type of institution, a range of t-tests took place to assess whether there was statistical significance between these independent variables (gender and type of institution) and the intervening variables. For clarity, only results where statistical significance occurred are hereby presented. (No statistical difference was found between gender in relation to any of the intervening variables. Therefore, for this stage of the research this hypothesis was rejected.)

4.7.6 Significant differences found between intervening variables and nationality

The t-tests demonstrated that there were two significant relationships found between the nationality of a student and intervening variables. These were:

The intervening variable of personal choice factor was more prevalent to UK students (M = 2.20, SD = 0.90) than international students (M = 2.93, SD = 0.78). Furthermore, this difference was statistically significant -, M = -0.166, 95% CI [-.345, .014], $t(30)$ = -1.814, p = .050.

The intervening variable of living choice factor was more prevalent to UK students (M = 3.22, SD = 0.52) than international students (M = 2.48, SD = 1.20). Furthermore, this difference was statistically significant -, M = -0.28, 95% CI [.107, 0.470], $t(30)$ = --3.093 p = .002.

The intervening variable of gut feeling factor was more prevalent to UK students (M = 3.30, SD = 1.34) than international students (M = 2.96, SD = 1.45). Furthermore, this difference was statistically significant -, M = -0.34, 95% CI [.391, 0.640], $t(30)$ = --2.222 p = .027.

The intervening variable of digital sources of information was more prevalent for international students (M = 1.86, SD = 0.83) than UK students (M = 1.52, SD = 0.94). Furthermore, this difference was statistically significant -, M = -0.34, 95% CI [-.528, -.150], $t(30)$ = --3.531 p = .000.

The intervening variable of university traditional communications was more prevalent for UK students (M = 2.93, SD = 1.36) than international students (M = 1.79, SD = 0.99). Furthermore, this difference was statistically significant -, M = 1.14, 95% CI [.866, 1.423], $t(30)$ = --8.089 p = .000.

4.7.7 Significant differences found between intervening variables and type of university

The t-tests demonstrated that there were six significant relationships found between types of university and intervening variables. These were:

The intervening variable of location was more prevalent to the traditional institution (*M* = 3.19, *SD* = 0.82) than the vocational institution (*M* = 3.02, *SD* = 0.89). Furthermore, this difference was statistically significant -, *M* = -0.166, 95% CI [-.345, .014], *t*(30) = -1.814, *p* = .050.

The intervening variable of ranking factors was more prevalent to the traditional institution (*M* = 4.12, *SD* = 0.77) than the vocational institution (*M* = 2.48, *SD* = 1.20). Furthermore, this difference was statistically significant -, *M* = -1.70, 95% CI [-1.90, .-1.50], *t*(30) = --16.716, *p* = .000.

The intervening variable of traditional channels of communication was more prevalent to the traditional institution (*M* = 2.16, *SD* = 1.17) than the vocational institution (*M* = 1.76, *SD* = 0.92). Furthermore, this difference was statistically significant -, *M* = -.401, 95% CI [-.633, .-.168], *t*(30) = --3.391, *p* = .001.

The intervening variable of word-of-mouth channels of communication was more prevalent to the traditional institution (*M* = 2.69, *SD* = 0.80) than the vocational institution (*M* = 2.33, *SD* = 0.11). Furthermore, this difference was statistically significant -, *M* = -.356, 95% CI [-.622, .-.091], *t*(30) = --2.640, *p* = .009.

The intervening variable of print media channels of communication was more prevalent to the traditional institution (*M* = 3.24, *SD* = 0.88) than the vocational institution (*M* = 2.73, *SD* = 1.06). Furthermore, this difference was statistically significant -, *M* = -.509, 95% CI [-.710, .-.308], *t*(30) = --4.978, *p* = .000.

Having identified one intrinsic motivating factor and five intervening variables which have statistically significant changes based upon the type of university, an overview of statistically significant results from ANOVA testing is hereby presented.

4.8 One-way ANOVA tests

Having carried out an array of t-tests, ANOVA tests were carried out to determine whether statistical significance occurred between independent variables with more than two options and the intrinsic motivations and the intervening variables. For clarity – as per the presentation of the t-test results, only results where statistical significance occurred are hereby presented.

4.8.1 Lifestyle and parental education

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if focus on the extrinsic motivating variable of lifestyle was different for groups based upon parental level of education. Whilst some participants ($n = 59$), took the option of not answering the question based around their parents level of education, the majority of participants ($n = 321$), gave one of four responses: Yes, both parents ($n = 108$), yes, only father ($n = 77$); yes, only mother ($n = 24$), and none of the parents ($n = 112$). Data is presented as mean ± standard deviation. The lifestyle variable was statistically significantly different between different levels of parental education, $F(3, 318) = 3.926$, $p < .004$. CWWS score increased from 'yes, only father' ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.86$) 'yes, both parents' ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.86$), 'yes, only mother' ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.96$) 'no' ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 0.85$) whether parents went to university in that order. Tukey post hoc analysis revealed that the mean increase from 'yes, only father' to 'no' (0.42, 95% CI [0.07, 0.77]) was statistically significant ($p = .010$), but no other group differences were statistically significant.

4.8.2 Rankings and parental education

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if focus on the intervening variable of rankings was different for groups based upon parental level of education. Data is presented as mean ± standard deviation. The rankings variable was statistically significantly different between different levels of parental education, $F(3, 318) = 3.763$, $p < .005$. CWWS score increased from 'yes, both parents' ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 1.04$) 'yes, only father' ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.25$), 'yes, only mother' ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.31$) 'no' ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.32$) whether parents went to university in that order. Tukey post hoc analysis revealed that the mean increase from 'yes, both parents' to 'no' (0.61, 95% CI [0.16, 1.07]) was statistically significant ($p = .002$), but no other group differences were statistically significant.

4.8.3 Face-to-face channels and parental education

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if focus on the intervening variable of face-to-face channels was different for groups based upon parental level of education. Data is presented as mean ± standard deviation. The face-to-face variable was statistically significantly different between different levels of parental education, $F(3, 318) = 6.088$, $p < .000$. CWWS score increased from 'no' ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 1.38$) 'yes, only father' ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.38$), 'yes, only mother' (M =

2.67, SD = 1.32) to 'yes, both parents' (M = 2.19, SD = 1.29) whether parents went to university in that order. Tukey post hoc analysis revealed that the mean increase from 'yes, both parents' to 'no' (-0.80, 95% CI [- 1,29, 0.30]) and 'yes, both parents' to 'yes, only father' (- 0.55, 95% CI [-1.11, - 0.00]) were statistically significant (p = .000) and (p = .049) respectively, but no other group differences were statistically significant.

4.8.4 Face-to-face channels and type of school attended

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if focus on the intervening variable of face-to-face channels was different for groups based upon type of school attended. Whilst some participants (n = 35), took the option of not answering the question based around their school type, many participants (n = 344), gave one of two responses: either fee-paying (n = 82, or state school (n = 262). Data is presented as mean ± standard deviation. The face-to-face variable was statistically significantly different between different school types, F(3, 341) = 2.23, p < .001. CWWS score increased from 'state school' (M = 2.75, SD = 1.38) to 'fee-paying school' (M = 2.24, SD = 1.39), school types in that order. Tukey post hoc analysis revealed that the mean increase from 'state school' to 'fee-paying' (0.51, 95% CI [0.10, 0.91]) was statistically significant (p = .009).

4.8.5 Digital channels and type of school attended

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if focus on the intervening variable of face-to-face channels was different for groups based upon type of school attended. Data is presented as mean ± standard deviation. The face-to-face variable was statistically significantly different between different school types, F(3, 341) = 5.62, p < .004. CWWS score increased from 'fee-paying school' (M = 1.90, SD = 1.07) to 'state school' (M = 1.54, SD = 0.82), school types in that order. Tukey post hoc analysis revealed that the mean increase from 'fee-paying school' to 'state school' (0.36, 95% CI [0.11, 0.62]) was statistically significant (p = .003).

Now that a presentation of ANOVA findings has taken place, this chapter will now present the merged components, prior to the presentation of the binominal logistical regression.

4.9 Slope analysis

To further understand the moderation effects that either support or oppose the conceptualisation based upon extant research, simple slope analysis was conducted (Aiken and West, 1991) on the significant results found in the regression analysis. These effect differences are observed in Figure 4.5 to Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.5 clearly demonstrates that when utilising digital media as a source of information, students who are extrinsically motivated by digital influencers are more likely to apply for a university. This effect is more pronounced with students who heavily rely on digital media as a source of information.

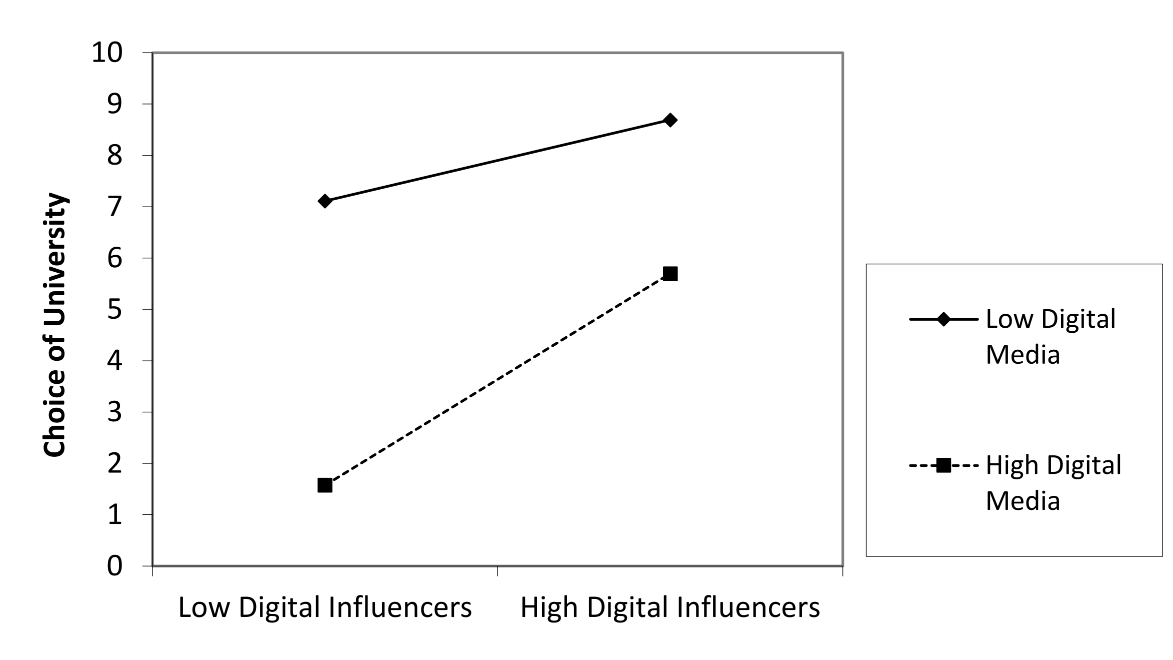

Figure 4.5: Slope analysis of significance between digital influencer (extrinsic motivation) as the independent variable and digital media (source of information) as the moderating variable.

Figure 4.6 demonstrates that when location plays a prominent role as an environmental influence, students who are intrinsically motivated by employability are more likely to apply for a university. This effect is more pronounced with students who place a greater emphasis on location as a reason for selecting university.

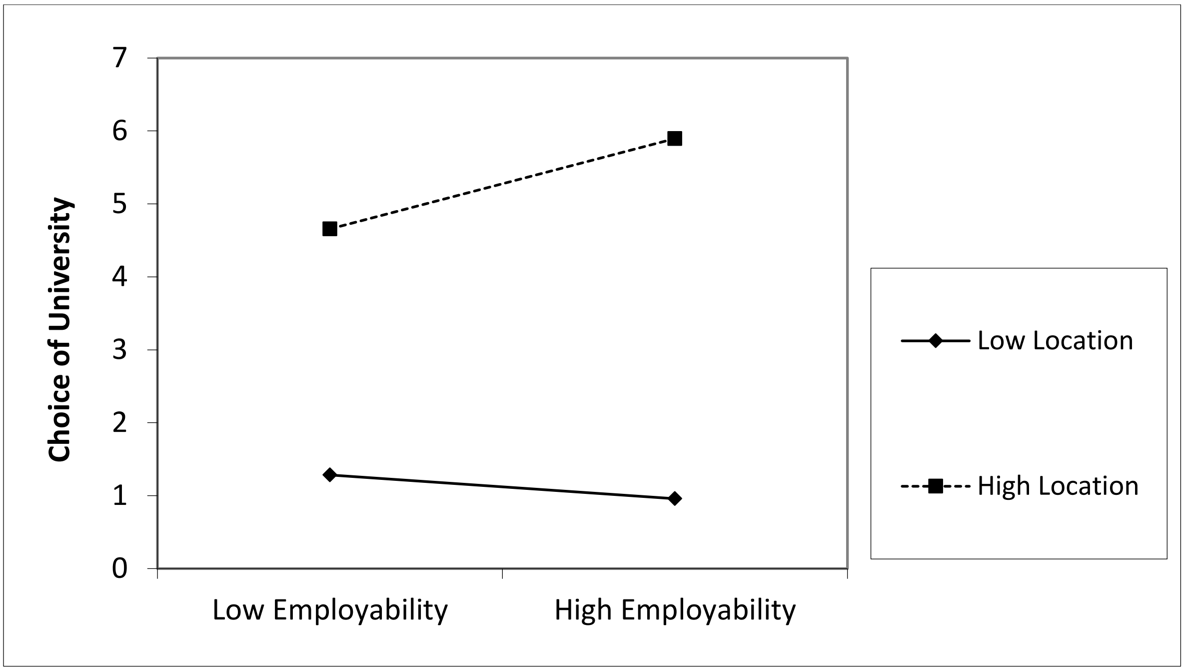

Figure 4.6: Slope analysis of significance between employability (intrinsic motivation) as the independent variable and location (informational influence) as the moderating variable.

Figure 4.7 shows that when familial ties plays a prominent role as a personal influence, students who are intrinsically motivated by employability are more likely to apply for a university. This effect is more pronounced with students who place a lower emphasis on familial ties when deciding what university to attend.

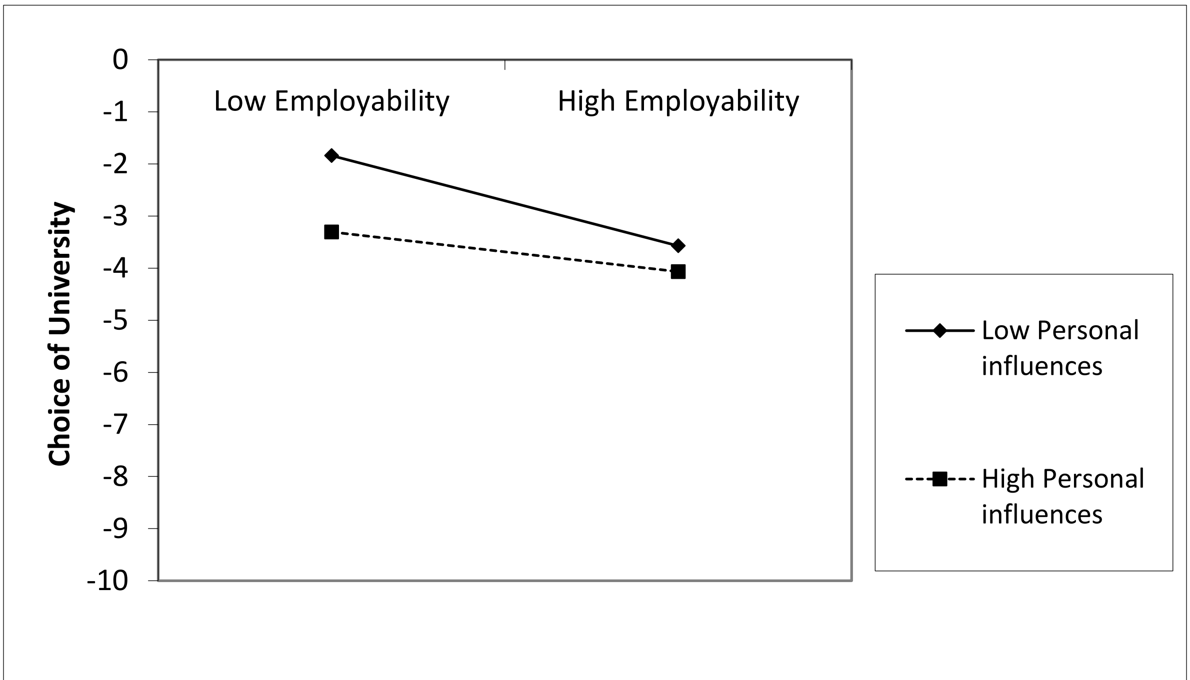

Figure 4.7: Slope analysis of significance between employability (intrinsic motivation) as the independent variable and personal influences (source of information) as the moderating variable.

Figure 4.8 shows that when utilising university communication as a source of information, students who are intrinsically extrinsically motivated by familial are more likely to apply for a university. This effect is more pronounced with students who rely heavily on university communications as a source of information.

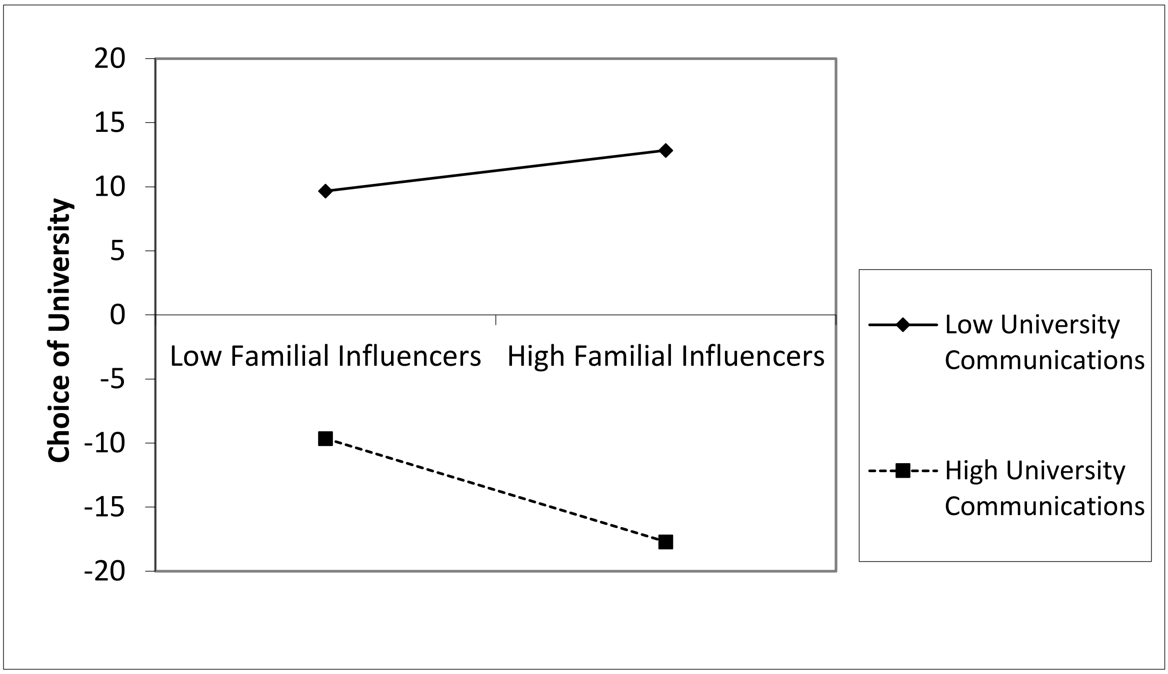

Figure 4.8: Slope analysis of significance between familial influencer (extrinsic motivation) as the independent variable and university communications (source of information) as the moderating variable.

Figure 4.9 clearly demonstrates that when utilising digital media as a source of information, students who are intrinsically motivated by lifestyle are more likely to apply for a university. This effect is more pronounced with students who heavily rely on digital media as a source of information.

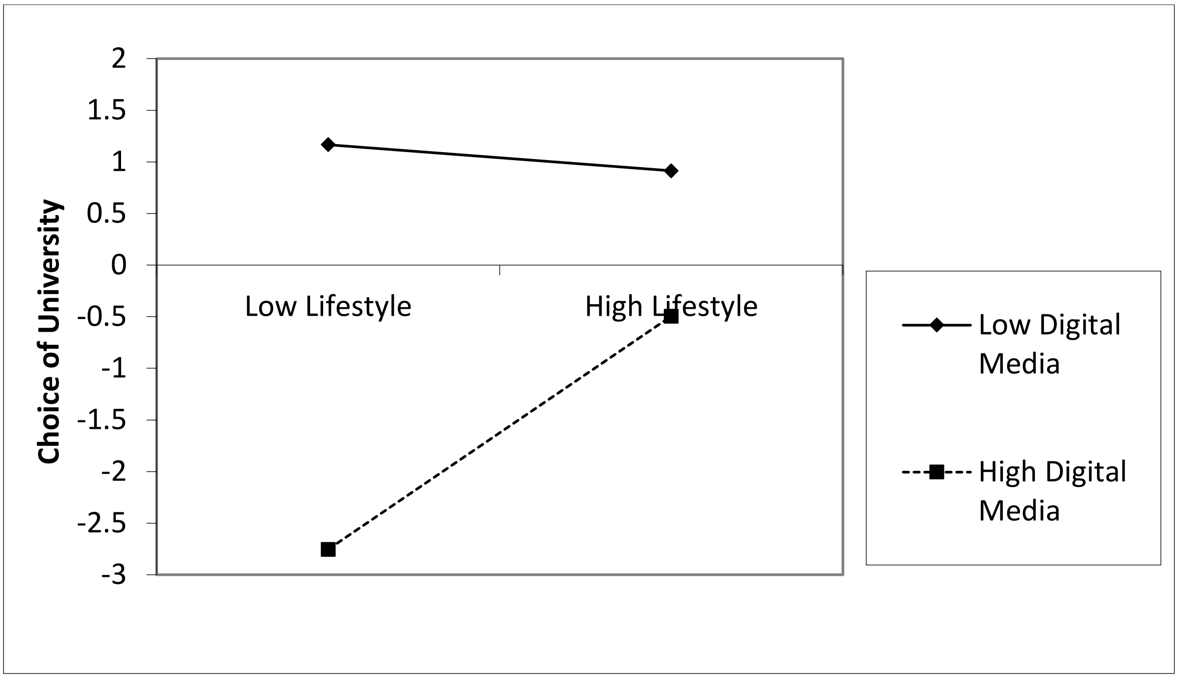

Figure 4.9: Slope analysis of significance between lifestyle (intrinsic motivation) as the independent variable and digital media (source of information) as the moderating variable.

Figure 4.10 clearly demonstrates that when utilising gut feeling as a personal source for selection, students who are intrinsically motivated by lifestyle are more likely to apply for a university. This effect is more pronounced with students who do not rely as heavily on 'gut feeling' as a personal source for selection.

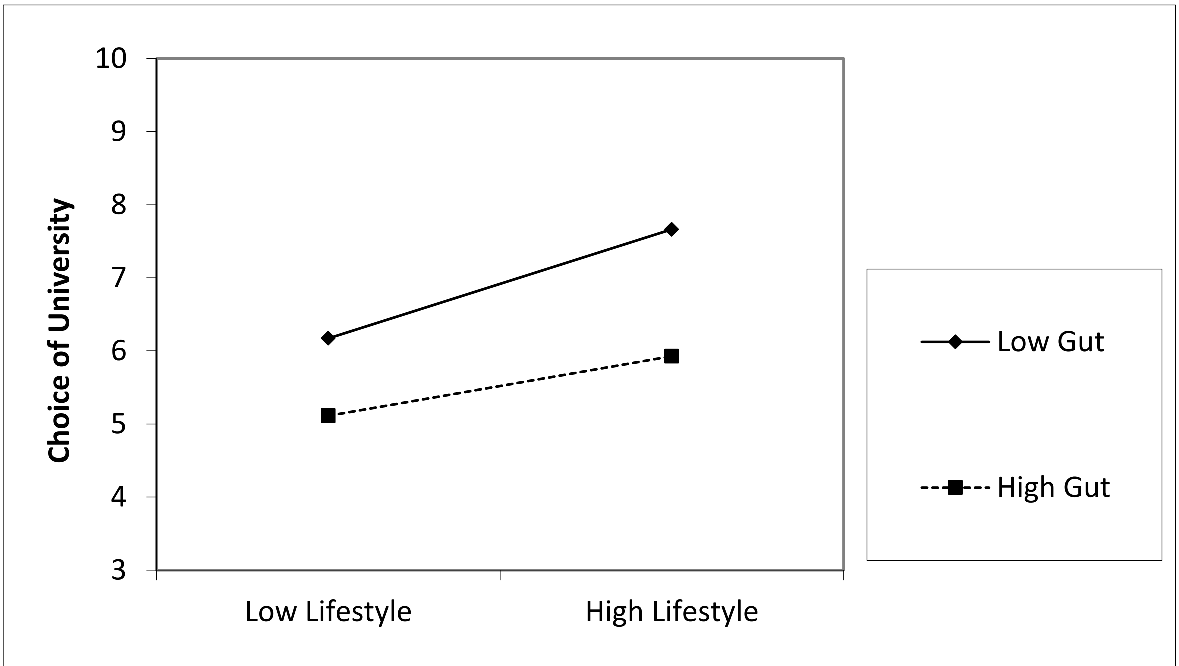

Figure 4.10: Slope analysis of significance between lifestyle (intrinsic motivation) as the independent variable and gut feeling (personal influencers) as the moderating variable.

Figure 4.11 clearly demonstrates that when utilising parental education as a socio-demographic factor, students who are intrinsically motivated by lifestyle are more likely to apply for a university, if they have parents who have previously attended university. This effect is reversed for students who have parents who have not been to university (i.e. there is likely to be a lesser emphasis on the intrinsic motivation of lifestyle).

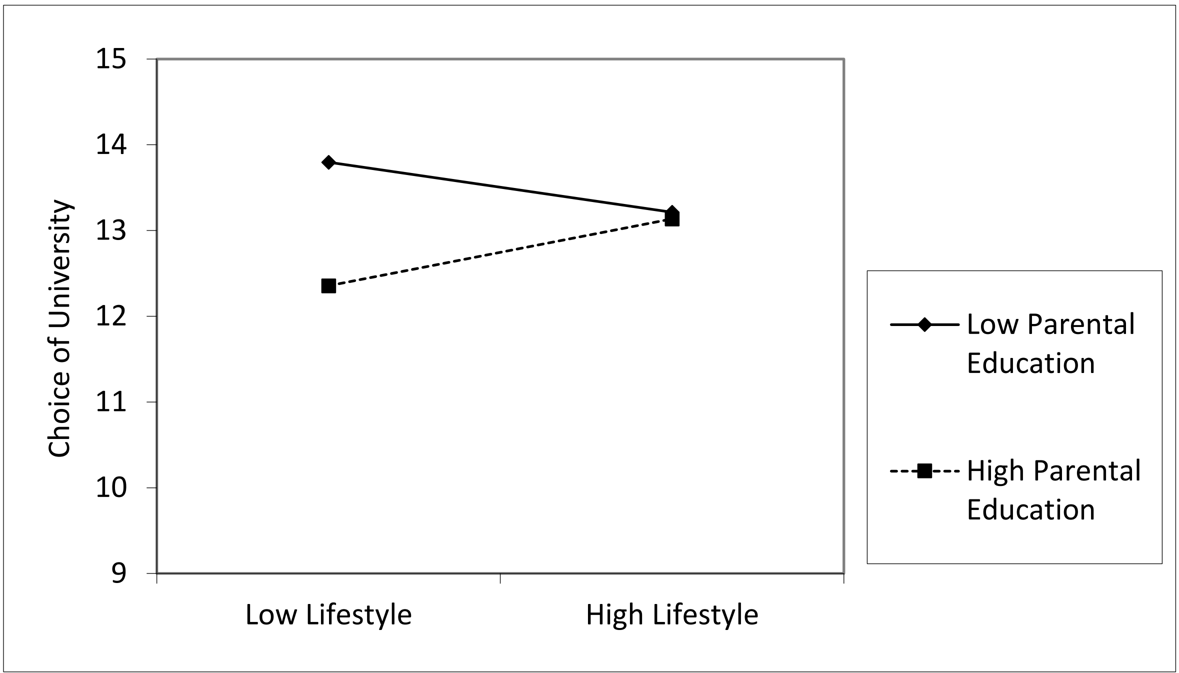

Figure 4.11: Slope analysis of significance between lifestyle (intrinsic motivation) as the independent variable and parental education (socio-demographic influencers) as the moderating variable.

4.10 Conclusion

There has been a presentation of range of statistical tests that have been carried out. Namely, there is a presentation of factor analysis; reliability tests; t-tests; one-way ANOVA test; binominal logistical test; and slope analysis. Findings that have been generated from these results are consistent with the extant literature, albeit there are conflicting responses based upon the tests carried out. For example, the t-tests Whilst there have been a range of relationships identified within the findings, from a stand-alone perspective these results give a good overview of some of the driving factors behind motivation, and the impact that intervening variables can have between a decision and choice.

A summary of the tests carried out, and how they address the research questions, is presented in Table 4.13 below. Note, within these statistical tests, research questions 2 and 3 have been assessed.

Table 4.13: Summary of tests.

Research question	Statistical tests
2. What are the key intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for a UK-based undergraduate student to attend university?	Factor analysis; reliability analysis
3. To what extent do intervening variables moderate intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of UK-based undergraduate students?	Binominal logistical regression; T-tests; One-way ANOVA tests; Slope Analysis

However, to further enhance this understanding, a further stage of data collection is proposed. The following chapter provides an overview of qualitative research into this area.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative research that took place. This qualitative research took the form of face-to-face interviews with two stakeholder groups at two institutions, and HE marketing consultants. The chapter starts with an overview of the different participants in the face-to-face interviews. The results were analysed in three stages. Firstly, a comparison of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations; demographic; environmental; sources of information and personal sources; and the main choice criteria of students at both a vocational and traditional institution was made. The second stage of the analysis evaluated the views of staff members at the two institutions (hereby referred to as marketing and administration staff). Finally, an evaluation of the views of 'Higher Education Marketing Experts' (i.e. independent educational marketing consultants that are not affiliated with a particularly institution) was made. Highlighting both comparisons and contrasting views of the different stakeholders interviewed, this chapter presents findings of what drives motivation and the extent to which intervening variables (i.e. demographic; environmental; sources of information and personal sources) influence the choice made by prospective students. In doing so, the findings presented help to address the research objectives of this thesis. Where appropriate, comparisons are made between the vocational and the traditional institution under investigation. Coupled with the findings presented in the previous chapter (quantitative findings), the results are further explored within the discussions chapter, with a presentation of an amended conceptual framework based upon the findings. This chapter concludes with a presentation of how findings obtained shaped the subsequent discussion.

5.2 Overview of participants

In total, 52 interviews were conducted. Table 3.5 provides an overview of participants in the research. As is identified from Table 3.5, all students interviewed were first-year undergraduate students, and would have made their HE selection within the previous 12 months. The interviewees represented a range of current undergraduate students (32 participants in total: 17 at the traditional institution and 15 at the vocational institution); marketing and administration staff (17 in total: 7 at the traditional institution and 10 at the vocational institution) and marketing experts (3 in total: 2 at one firm, and one at another). Whilst the figures for student and staff participation are not equal across institutions, they are deemed appropriate as the issues for sufficiently explained by both students and staff, with a clear pattern emerging both between and in differentiating the two institutions. Furthermore, there was also a mismatch in favour of the vocational institution in respect of the number of staff participants. This may initially be viewed as surprising as, ostensibly, there is a larger number of employees at a traditional institution as opposed to a vocational one. Traditional institutions are more established and are likely to have greater amounts of support (i.e. marketing and administration staff). Reasons for the balance being in favour of the vocational institution are two-fold. Firstly, the researcher worked at the vocational institution, meaning that existing professional networks could be utilised greatly. Of greater importance, in the traditional institution, staff members worked in different departments, often independent of one another, whereas at the vocational institutions, staff often shared the same office. Nevertheless, responses obtained from participants at both the vocational and traditional institution constituted enough information to provide findings into the complex issue. Most of the marketing and administration staff participated on the provision that their identities would be concealed in any final report. Therefore, the profiles given in Table 3.5 are intentionally broad.

The total of 52 participants is substantially larger than the majority of existing qualitative research into motivation and choice within the HE sector (e.g. Branco, Oliveira, and Soares, 2016; Garver, Spralls, and Divine, 2009; Wilcox *et al.* 2005; Townsend and Wilson, 2006; Ali-Choudhury *et al.* 2009; Lee and Morrish, 2012; Winter and Chapleo, 2017; Brown *et al.* 2009; Chapleo, 2008; Assad *et al.* 2013; Winter and Thompson-Whiteside, 2019; Galan *et al.* 2015; Fujita *et al.* 2017). Tomlinson (2008) and Rudd *et al.* (2012) interviewed 53 and 51 participants respectively, so comparative numbers to this study are reached. Of greater importance than the actual number of participants, it is felt that the complex, diverse nature of the issues under investigation were sufficiently explored by the array of participants in the research.

Table 5.1: Respondent profile.

Participant number	Organisation	Status (Gender, age)
1	Traditional Institution	Student – F, 18
2	Traditional Institution	Student – F, 19
3	Traditional Institution	Student – F, 18
4	Traditional Institution	Student – M, 20
5	Traditional Institution	Student – M, 18

Participant number	Organisation	Status (Gender, age)
6	Traditional Institution	Student – F, 18
7	Traditional Institution	Student – M, 18
8	Traditional Institution	Student – M, 18
9	Traditional Institution	Student – M, 19
10	Traditional Institution	Student – F – 20
11	Traditional Institution	Student – F, 18
12	Traditional Institution	Student – F, 18
13	Traditional Institution	Student – F, 19
14	Traditional Institution	Student – M, 19
15	Traditional Institution	Student – M, 18
16	Traditional Institution	Student – M, 18
17	Traditional Institution	Student/Editor of Soton Tab – M, 20
18	Traditional Institution	Client Services Advisor in Career Development/Chair of Social Media Working Group
19	Traditional Institution	Digital Marketing Coordinator
20	Traditional Institution	Education and Student Experience Advisor
21	Traditional Institution	Marketing Assistant in Faculty of Business, Law & Arts
22	Traditional Institution	OPUS/Student Recruitment and Outreach
23	Traditional Institution	Student Communications Officer
24	Traditional Institution	Widening Participation Officer
25	Vocational Institution	Student – M, 18
26	Vocational Institution	Student – M, 18
27	Vocational Institution	Student – F, 19

Participant number	Organisation	Status (Gender, age)
28	Vocational Institution	Student – F, 19
29	Vocational Institution	Student – F, 18
30	Vocational Institution	Student – F, 20
31	Vocational Institution	Student – F, 18
32	Vocational Institution	Student – F, 18
33	Vocational Institution	Student – M, 18
34	Vocational Institution	Student – M, 20
35	Vocational Institution	Student– M, 19
36	Vocational Institution	Student– M, 18
37	Vocational Institution	Student– M, 20
38	Vocational Institution	Student– M, 18
39	Vocational Institution	Student– M, 18
40	Vocational Institution	Communications & Engagement Manager
41	Vocational Institution	Digital Marketing Manager for External Relations
42	Vocational Institution	Head of PR & Communications
43	Vocational Institution	Marketing manager
44	Vocational Institution	Marketing Officer - Relationship Marketing
45	Vocational Institution	PR and Media Relations Manager
46	Vocational Institution	Social Media Marketing Assistant
47	Vocational Institution	Student Experience Manager
48	Vocational Institution	Student recruitment officer
49	Vocational Institution	Web assistant
50	HE Marketing Specialist	CEO & Owner
51	HE Marketing Specialist	CEO & Owner

Participant number	Organisation	Status (Gender, age)
52	HE Marketing Specialist	Head of Content Strategy

A consistent theme amongst student participants was that this was the first time since their matriculation that they had explicitly been asked what motivated them to attend university. The consensus was that it was surprising – though not unexpected - that their views had not previously been sought by the institutions. This was particularly the case of participants who were undertaking ‘business’ related courses. Upon probing, it was apparent that marketing research was embedded across the curriculum in these students’ modules. Nevertheless, disparity was found in the views held by student participants and those held by marketing and administration staff. (i.e. who could likely see the value of marketing research). This also presented the first disparity amongst participants though, as the ‘marketing and administration staff’ generally felt that there was a ‘good handle’ on the student decision process and what drove motivation. The majority of the marketing and administration staff took part in activities such as student journey mapping (e.g. Harrigan and Hulbert, 2011), to understand the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of students. This was a thought exemplified by participant 19, who stated that…

> *‘… There has been that shift in attitude in terms of understanding students as customers now because they pay a lot more money to be here now, and they’re paying in full for that service as well… So there was a recognition that we needed to understand precisely why students wanted to study here…’*

5.3 Themes arising from interviews

As previously discussed in section 3.6.2, questions posed to participants were intentionally ‘open-ended’, thus allowing for independent exploration by participants. After carrying out extensive thematic analysis, the following themes were identified in participant’s responses:

- Motivations for attending university
- Intervening variables that moderate relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors and choice
- Reasons for selecting a university

These themes are hereby discussed in detail.

5.4 Theme 1: Motivation for attending university

Understanding what motivates a student to attend university is paramount to presenting the offering (e.g. Maringe, 2006). If institutions can understand the motivation behind wanting to attend university, then institutions are able to position their brand accordingly (Chapleo, 2011). This section identifies the different intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors that participants had for attending university. Whilst it is acknowledged that the weighting placed upon the individual factors differed between students, there were eight sub-themes that acted as motivators behind students wanting to attend university. These were as follows: career prospects; employability; flexible lifestyle; making friends; night life; professional contacts; develop skills; sports and societies; familial influencers; digital influencers. These are explored in greater depth below.

It is interesting to note that despite there being eight motivating factors driving a student's decision to attend university, attaining a degree/qualification did not emerge as one of these themes. It may be that this motivation – of obtaining a degree – becomes more prominent towards the end of a course, as students target either postgraduate study and/or graduate level jobs, where a degree is often a prerequisite when applying for particular (graduate) roles. The notion of obtaining a qualification may be abstract to first-year undergraduate participants, and, therefore, participants overwhelmingly focused upon either the outcomes of obtaining a degree (e.g. career prospects and employability) and/or the process that they will go through during their student experience (e.g. developing skills or student life).

5.4.1 Careers prospects

Both Ruggeri (2019) and Belfield (2018) suggest that attending university will enhance career prospects of graduates. Generally, prospective employers will place value on the study skills, subject knowledge, data analysis, and independence gained when recruiting graduates (e.g. Williams *et al.* 2015). Career prospects were recognised by 29 of the 31 student participants, all (i.e. 16 out of 16) marketing and administration staff and all the industry experts as an intrinsic motivation for wishing to attend university Examples of these are included below:

> *The main reason that I came to university is because I know without a degree I am going to struggle to climb the career ladder… My parents are particularly keen on me 'standing out from the crowd'…* (Participant 25, Vocational Institution).

> *'It's so difficult to find a job in today's marketplace. I was reading a report on the BBC and it's quite scary to think what my prospects would be if I didn't have a degree…'.* (Participant 15, Traditional Institution).

> *'I was going to join the armed forces, but with I was advised if I attend university first, I am likely to be able to progress through the ranks a lot quicker than without one'…* (Participant 31, Vocational Institution).

> *'Career is a major focus at open days, particularly from parents… Since the fees went up in 2012, parents want far 'more for their buck' as it were… They really want to know what they are getting. What's the point in them sending their children to university if their career is not going to be enhanced? Therefore, we must ensure that we position our university accordingly…'* (Participant 43, Vocational Institution).

> *'Our widening participation team places a lot of emphasis on the long-term career prospects of obtaining a degree. We go out to local schools and colleges, where maybe the prospective students are the first members of their family who has ever been to university… We use examples of previous students and what they have achieved… These students are particularly impressed with the earning potential if you've attended a Higher Education course'* (Participant 24, Vocational Institution).

Whilst most responses were positive in terms of career prospects, some participants played down the role that a career played in motivating someone to go to university.

> *'From a career perspective, I think university is a waste of time. My dad works in marketing too, and he would have been able to have gotten me an entry level position on an apprenticeship, and I would have been on good money in 3 years… However, if I didn't go to university I feel as if I would be missing out as all my friends went to university and the lifestyle seemed great… I'm still happy with my decision'*. (Participant 37, Vocational Institution).

> *'I think that – as institutions – we're sometimes guilty of overinflating the enhancement to a career that comes from attending university. It's great if it happens for students, but sometimes, I don't know… We give the impression that simply turning up is all you need to do… There's far more to it than that…'* (Participant 44, Vocational Institution).

These quotes illustrate the emphasis that participants placed upon their career prospects as a motivating factor behind attending university. It is interesting that – even when discussing participants' own motivations behind attending a HE course – participants generally placed the motivation of needing to focus on their career at the feet of others. In these three examples of student responses, 'parents', 'the media', and 'prospective employers' are all given as driving factors behind focusing on career prospects as a motivating reason for attending Higher Education, as opposed to career prospects being something that is internally driven.

5.4.2 Employability

With a clear linkage with career prospects, employability is a key factor that determines at institutions success (e.g. Makortoff, 2020; Dandridge, 2018). Employability is distinguishable from the factor of 'career prospects' in that the students who discussed 'employability' focused upon being employed – either in a graduate role of general employment position. Alternatively, career prospects referred to developing the necessary knowledge, skills, and training to provide the opportunity to obtain those roles. According to a report by the Global University Employability Ranking (2019), employability is a key success factor of institutions. Employability was defined by The Confederation of British Industry (1999: p. 1) as being '*the possession by the individual of the qualities and competencies required to meet the changing needs of employers and customers*', whereas graduate employability focuses more on a graduate specific role – i.e. where there is a prerequisite for a degree.

The value of employability was recognised by 4 of the 31 student participants; 14 of the 16 marketing and administration staff members, and all the industry experts as an intrinsic motivation for wishing to attend university to enhance their career prospects. Examples of these are included below:

> *'We've got a mission to get students leaving us an employable as possible and have ideas about how to get them there'* (Participant 18, Traditional Institution).
>
> *'So we had an employability page using the Virtual Learning Environment 'Blackboard' here… Students weren't engaging with it and so when I first started here, being very kind of passionate about employability, recalling my situation after I graduated, I said 'Well what's the point of those services being on a platform that at the end of the day just because of the nature of our project and the fact that we're talking about employability and all these things we probably wouldn't have used Snapchat as a tool'*. (Participant 23, Traditional Institution).

> *'I'm from the Isle of Wight. Unless you work in a successful family business – which: I wouldn't' want to do anyway as I don't get on with my parents – or if you are keen on the idea of tourism, there's not that many skilled jobs… Coming to university allows me to be multiskilled, and hopefully – I'll be more employable in the future…'* (Participant 39, Vocational Institution).

As exemplified above, the theme of employability was particularly emphasised by marketing/administration staff and HE experts, as opposed to students. This is not to say that employability is not a feature for students to consider, albeit it is a factor that will likely to be considered much later within the student journey (in the student's final year). Employability is very much a 'buzz word' within the HE environment in respect of measures and metrics placed upon institutions that 1st year undergraduate students may not be aware of. The lack of recognition by the student body is offset with reference to the career prospects.

5.4.3 Flexible lifestyle

O'Loughlin and Szmigin (2006) emphasise the flexible lifestyle that can be provided by being a student in the UK HE sector. Whilst this may have a detrimental impact on certain aspects of a student's life (be it excessive alcohol consumption or a mental health ailment), the UK student lifestyle – be it the opportunity to work part-time or the chance to enjoy the nightlife environment – is certainly attractive to university applicants Sashittal, Sriramachandramurthy, and Hodis (2012) assert that various brands are particularly geared towards students, with how students are portrayed in national media – and international movies – could encourage more and more students to attend university for the campus-based lifestyle.

A theme that was picked up on by 30 of the 31 student participants; 12 of the 16 marketing and administration staff members, and 3 out of the 3 industry experts were wanting to attend university to take advantage of the flexible lifestyle. Participants who referred to the flexible lifestyle spoke about a range of factors including living arrangements; long winter, spring, and summer breaks, and the ability to balance studying with other activities (including part-time work; attending music festivals; travelling; and caring for relatives). Examples of participants who referred to the flexible lifestyle theme are presented below:

> *'Going to university has changed… It's less about the intellectual curiosity of the course that they're doing and more about the lifestyle… So, I think they identify more with the people that they live with… The people they go on nights out with and whatever and less with perhaps their colleagues on their courses and people that they're studying with… So, I guess*

> *they get more drawn into the 'lifestyle' side of things…'* (Participant 18, Traditional Institution).
>
> *'…When I first looked at the idea of university I felt it was quite 'corporate'… Sort of getting a lecturer to sit there and just tell their opinion or advertise and review their course and it wasn't so kind of that fun - sort of university atmosphere that you really want to see as a student… I think just seeing a lecturer sitting there is great if you're looking at a course, but you want to see the university lifestyle a bit more…'* (Participant 39, Vocational Institution).
>
> *'Long term, I'm not sure what the value of my degree could be… A degree in Football Studies – whilst interesting, doesn't necessarily lend itself to working back home in Gloucestershire – there's not even a local football team within the vicinity! However, there are some transferable skills I suppose, and already my self-confidence has increased no end. I've never told my parents this as I think that they would kill me (!), but the main reason I wanted to go to university was to experience the lifestyle… Cheap drinks, club nights, and long lie ins… Both my sister and brother went to university, but just because I'm not into an academic subject, doesn't mean that I should miss out on the experience. If anything, compared to my brother who's studying Physics in London, I'm getting more out of being a student than he ever would…'* (Participant 31, Vocational Institution).
>
> *'On the open day I was struck by the vast open green spaces on campus… All around you could see students enjoying the sun and relaxing… Everyone seemed to have quite a laid back attitude and this is what I wanted to buy into…'*… (Participant 8, traditional institution).

As is illustrated above, the notion of lifestyle certainly stands out as a prominent factor, particularly amongst students attending the vocational institution. Indeed, participant 31 even dismisses the academic value (and other factors previously identified) when championing the lifestyle as a reason to come to university.

To reiterate, the notion of lifestyle incorporates several factors. Certain elements that could be associated with lifestyle – such as 'making friends' and the 'night life' – were delved into greater detail by participants. Therefore, these are discussed below as stand-alone factors.

5.4.4 Make friends

The living arrangements for students – particularly 1st year undergraduate students who will often stay in halls of residence – is conducive to making friends/ social contacts (e.g. Wilcox, Winn, and

Fyvie-Gauld, 2005). Embarking upon a HE course allows students to psychologically make a 'fresh start' as they proceed into young adulthood, and various sports and social groups means that students are able to zone in on niches in terms of having shared interest groups (e.g. Haines, 2001).

A theme that was picked up on by 23 of the 31 student participants; 10 of the 16 marketing and administration staff members, and 1 out of the 3 industry experts was wanting to attend university make friends. Making friends was prevalent within a range of settings. This included in halls of residence; on courses; in sports clubs and societies; and wider contacts made within the city where students could be studying.

Again, there is crossover here. 'Making friends' can also be an extension of the 'lifestyle' that prospective students are looking to enjoy.

> '*Yeah because it kind of gave me an idea of what like places I would go to and societies; friends I would make… I found out they had an Arab Society which was exciting, that was cool…*' (Participant 7, Traditional Institution).

> '*A big reason of why I was keen to come to university was to 'come out of my shell'. I had been to the same school and sixth form for 7 years, and it was time to branch out and meet some new people, that perhaps I shared similarities with…*' (Participant 39, Vocational Institution).

> *'I was motivated to go to university due to where my friends were going, what sort of areas… I sort of thought about the Hampshire area as the main thing as it would mean I could stay at home whilst keeping in touch with friends… As well as making friends on the course…'* (Participant 25, Vocational Institution).

> *'This is a way of thinking that I know isn't shared by a lot of my peers, but I came to university to get away from it all… None of my school and college friends came to this city. Don't get me wrong, I had a great time at college, but I will only get one shot at uni, and I didn't want to be hanging out with friends I've already known for years. Coming to this city – no one knows me, and It gave me a chance to make a complete fresh start. I can be who I want to be with none of the baggage from other people…'* (Participant 30, Vocational institution).

> *'We recognise that this is a daunting time for students when they first come away from home. Freshers Week was one of the main ways in which we put on events for students to get to know one another… Now though, we have events running all year around and it doesn't just involve alcohol… It's important to recognise the diverse nature of our campus and how we are able to meet these needs'* (Participant 47, Vocational Institution).

> *'When we spoke to prospective students as part of our consultancy work, we found the biggest fear they had of going to university wasn't around the necessary grades or cost of living… To a certain extent these are facts that are already known by the applicant and they're able to control… The biggest worry was whether they would fit into a social group'* (Participant 50, HE Marketing Specialist).

As well as making new friends, there was also the notion of extending existing social contacts that prospective students had developed in their home town. This occurred whereby students from the same college had previously come to university, and/or students had a 'gap year' prior to the commencement of their university course.

> *'I came to (name of university) to study Sports Journalism, and my best friend decided to study Business Management here too… Was it a factor in my decision? To be honest, yes it was… We've been friends all of the way through school and we were worried about losing touch with one another'* (Participant 31, Vocational Institution).

5.4.5 Night life

There has been a shift though is what constitutes night life. Traditionally, night life revolved around the pub and club scene that students frequented. However, as Featherstone (2017) asserted, students spend more on keeping fit than alcohol. There is an increased emphasis on the 'coffee shop' culture within the student market (e.g. Mintel, 2017; Morgan, 2012; Nadiri and Gunay, 2013). This was reflected in some of the responses of participants.

A theme that was picked up on by 23 of the 31 student participants; and 10 of the 16 marketing and administration staff members, was wanting to attend university to experience different aspects of the night life. Coupled with being motivated at the prospect of enjoying the local clubs and bars, there was also a sense that students would enjoy the freedom that being away from parents would provide, in terms of being able to 'break free' (for want of a better term) from their parents rituals, routines, and household regulations.

In a recurrent theme, there was crossover here. 'Night life' can also be seen as an extension of 'making friends' and the 'lifestyle' elements previously discussed.

> *'A big pull of coming to university after a gap year is being able to enjoy a night out in the week. Prior to coming to university, I often saw various food and drinks offers aimed at students… Going out in mid-week saves me money, and I enjoy drinking…'* (Participant 27, vocational institution).

> *'A lot of students speak about wanting to go out and get drunk or do pub crawls… For me, the night life isn't about that. I don't drink… For me, it's more enjoying the vibe of a night – the town comes to life, and I would not see that if I did not come to university*. (Participant 12, vocational institution).

> *'When I talk about night life, I am certainly not speaking about going to bars and clubs… I see them queuing up outside of a club on a Tuesday night, and I think 'how sad'… I enjoy going along to specific events aimed at students. Over the past 3 months I have been to a discount 'student lock in' at Topshop; been to the student run cinema; and enjoyed discounts at the local chicken outlet on Tuesday night… There's some great deals aimed at students, particularly in the weeks… My cousin previously came to the university and advised me of these different opportunities. Therefore, I was looking to take advantage of these different deals'* (Participant 10, traditional institution).

These responses demonstrate an acute awareness of wanting to explore the nightlife of the city. It should be noted, however, as demonstrated by participant 10, that nightlife does not necessarily refer to the pubs and club scene, though this was a theme that was echoed by staff members.

> *'A typical type of questions that the applicants have it's not about the course - it's more about what's Southampton like? What's the nightlife like?'* (Participant 44; Staff member, vocational institution).

> *'Students weren't as concerned with the intellectual curiosity of the course that they're doing and more about the lifestyle… So, I think they identify more with the people that they live with… The people they go on nights out with and whatever and less with perhaps their colleagues on their courses and people that they're studying'* (Participant 20, Staff member at traditional institution).

As detailed above, there is an awareness of university staff and students alike of the desire to enjoy and experience the night life opportunities that students provide. It was surprising that night life focused on a range of different activities, and not solely the consumption of alcohol. Nevertheless, this reflects the diverse environments of campus, coupled with the increased amount of health awareness amongst young adults.

5.4.6 Professional contacts

According to Hall, Jackson, Tandon, and Fontan (2016), there is a need for institutions to engage with their local business community. This is exemplified by Holmes and Mayhew (2015) who emphasised a mismatch between the requirements of employers and the skills set that students are coming out with at the end of university. Whilst institutions have honorary doctorates/graduates, it is unlikely that vast student bodies will benefit from these honours bestowed due to the time pressures on said holders (e.g. Heffernan and Jons, 2007; Borrows. 2015). As a result, there has been a rise in various 'buddy' related schemes between universities and local employees (e.g. Devereux, 2004). Laing (2016) highlights that all institutions have either a business outreach or business engagement department, who seek to engage the local business community as working partners in the day-to-day activities and long-term prosperity of institutions. Breaking this down further, certain schools – namely Business and Medical – schools will have their own independent engagement teams (e.g. Jack, 2019).

A theme that was highlighted by 22 of the 31 student participants, 9 of the 16 marketing and administration staff members, and 1 out of the 3 industry experts was wanting to attend university to develop professional contacts. Examples of some of the responses are presented below.

> '*The year before I applied, I saw that (local prominent business figure) was speaking at the first-year students Welcome Event. He's the CEO of the local football club and started the app.… There's next to no way to contact him online – he doesn't have a Twitter, nor a LinkedIn… To hear of all of the different things he did with the university motivated me to get involved'* (Participant 38, vocational institution).

> *'I know that's it's not in my department, but the School of Sport and Business is one of the most prominent in the university… I believe they've won various awards and work closely with Southampton FC. More importantly, they have almost a who's who of ex-footballers and administrators from this neck of the woods… Matt Le Tisser; David Elleray; Clive Tyldesley; and Les Reed all gave guest lectures that were packed. If I could rub shoulders with some of*

> *these, it could open up the chance of a HR role for that club in the future'* (Participant 26, vocational institution).

> *'Something that my dad was impressed at during the open day was the amount of organisations that work with the university… They're not necessarily the Apple's and Coca-Cola's of the world – you know your real big players. But they're local, honest companies who have a good track record of imparting knowledge to students… Companies such as Carswell Gould who have worked on some amazing marketing projects… Making these contacts has given me the chance to gain some real-world experience'* (Participant 33, vocational institution).

Indeed, the point made above can be reversed as a reason why a student did not choose a competing university…

> *'The reason I choose this university is because Sir Tim Berners-Lee is an honory professor. I mean for a Computer Science student, you can't get a bigger acclaim than that… I'm not sure how much he teaches, but the university certainly gives the impression that he keeps in regular contact with the university. There's then the likes of Dame Wendy Hall who has also done a great deal in the development of the internet… It was a no-brainer really. On the other hand, the other universities simply didn't have this 'wow' clout that we previously spoke about'*… (Participant 16, traditional institution).

What is important to note is that as developing industry contacts is a reason why a prospective student would want to go to a university, these contacts could either work with or for an institution, or indeed work in an institution. What was apparent (and has been demonstrated in the spread of responses) is that the vast majority of participants who placed emphasis on the role of industry contacts were students who had attended the vocational institution.

5.4.7 Develop skills

Linked to components such as developing contacts, there is a recognition that students attend university to develop skills. These could be course-specific skills, such as being able to use a particular type of software; generic university skills, such as developing presentation skills; or life skills, such as learning to live away from home and be independent. In total 15 out of 31 out of the student participants, and 7 out of 16 of the administration and marketing staff expressed the idea that students were motivated to attend university to develop skills.

> *'It's funny, whenever I speak to employers with my engagement hat on, do you want to know the biggest skill they wish graduates had? Have a guess… No, it's not that, Excel. Being able to use a spreadsheet and interpret data is absolutely vital for organisations. Employers spend so long doing the jobs that universities are supposed to do, but this is a big reason why students come to us… We should be teaching them these skills…'* (Participant 23, traditional institution).

> *'When I studied at Sixth Form, I didn't do any presentations… Standing up in front of other people, I was a 'bag of nerves'… I hoped that coming to university would allow me to break down these barriers'* (Participant 14, traditional institution).

> *'Growing up – my dad was great for me… But he did everything! Cooking, ironing, cleaning… I needed to come to university to 'break away from this mould' and forge my own personality'* (Participant 30, vocational institution).

It is worth noting that, based upon responses, this motivation for coming to university may not necessarily be achieved whilst being at university. This is illustrated with the response given by participant 30. In this case, whilst students may be motivated to come to university to develop this skill, it does not necessarily mean that this skill would be achieved whilst at university. The extent to which this motivation for attending university would be realised would be determined by the level of application.

5.4.8 Sports and societies

Sports and societies clubs provide students with the opportunity to engage with like-minded individuals across a range of topics – ranging from a specific sport, religion, political interest, food taste, or subject-specific group. Often the sports and societies provide students with an outlet from their day-to-day university life. In total 11 out of 31 out of the student participants, and 4 out of 16 of the administration and marketing staff expressed the idea that students were motivated to attend university to develop skills.

> *'For the past 10 years, there's been a member of my family that's gone to university. Regardless of the university they've gone to, they've all been able to join an 'Islam Society'… Sometimes, I feel as if Muslims are given a bad rep in large cities… Being able to join a society gives me some like-minded individuals…'* (Participant 2, traditional institution).

> *'From the age of 9, I played for primary, secondary school, and college football teams… I also played for a Saturday morning team for a few years in my teens… I know now that I'm an adult it's time to grow up, but being able to represent the university at football does give me this sense of comradeship…'* (Participant 25, vocational institution).

> *'We often find that enquires to our main social media accounts relate to the opportunities to join sports and societies. All of our sports and society groups have their own social media page, and – particularly around UCAS deadline day, the administrators tell us they are very busy with tentative enquires. Prospective students just want to know a bit more about being in a society and what that involves.'*… (Participant 19, traditional institution).

Coupled with the aforementioned intrinsic motivations for attending university, there was also a range of extrinsic motivations for attending university. These are presented below in the second part of this chapter.

When speaking to participants, there were two main extrinsic motivations for attending university – familial and digital influences.

5.4.9 Familial influences

Extensive research has looked at the role of familial recommendations when attending university (e.g. Carter and Yeo, 2009; Cao *et al.* 2016; James *et al. 1999*). This was a theme that was acknowledged by all (i.e. all student, staff, and industry expert) participants. This was particularly the case if the student participant had an older sibling who had already attended university, even if it was a different university and/or a different course.

When speaking to participants, it was apparent that a consistent theme is the work of familial recommendations of attending university. This was particularly true if participants had had an older sibling who had already attended university. This was consistent even if – on many occasions – the older sibling had attended a different institution on a different course. Examples of these responses are presented below.

> *'My brother Leo, he's really encouraged me to go to university. He's a lot older than me – but speaking to him, he highlights the great time that he had. He was president of some sort of society – that's opened doors for him in the wider world'* (Participant 37, vocational institution).

> *'My sisters all went to study in Sheffield – either the University of Sheffield or Sheffield Hallam. They're a lot older than me… Whenever they used to come home they spoke about their experience of studying at university and the opportunity it brought… I didn't get the grades to get into either Sheffield or Sheffield Hallam but I am still happy here'* (Participant 28, Vocational institution).

> *'My sixth form college had a really big push for us to come to university – it was almost the natural process. The form tutor helped us with the UCAS applications and the personal statements… It's strange really – it almost felt as if it was next natural step… I've been in education since I was 4 years old and this is certainly a factor that motivated me – the idea that this is a natural step'* (Participant 9, traditional institution).

Here we encounter the idea that both intrinsic motivation and the wider societal issues are combined to act as a motivator for students. This was a theme that was also exemplified by participant 36.

> *'It's funny, I am the first member of my family to go to university… Before the government raised fees to £9,000, I wasn't even sure that I was clever enough to go to university. Since they did that though, this information and how it was framed showed me that I didn't need to money up front – I am really glad that I made this decision'* (Participant 36, vocational institution).

Overwhelmingly, the main driving factor behind attending university in terms of a familial nature was parents. Whilst this was prominent across both the traditional and vocational institution, the parental familial influence was embedded in prior experience of attending university for students at the traditional university, whilst was more of a parental pride for students studying at the vocational university. This is exemplified with the two quotes below.

> *'My dad has always spoken about needing a degree – it allowed him to travel the world and do everything that he has done. I'm financial supported by my parents – they pay for my halls and give me a weekly living allowance. If I'm honest, working towards a degree also means that I'm able to enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle'* (Participant 10, traditional university).

> *'My mum had children when she was young, so she wasn't able to go to university. She was always keen for us to continue down this route and has supported us always'.* (Participant 29, vocational institution).

> *'My motivation for attending university was really driven by my parents… Both (i.e. parents) were on social media channels – UCAS; all the local uni's and colleges; message boards… They were asking questions to the accounts and were even surprised when they got quick responses…'* (Participant 35, Vocational Institution).

As previously mentioned, the influence of familial influencers was recognised by both the marketing and administration staff and the industry experts.

> *'At open days we are conscious that students have often made the decision in advance… The people that we really have to convince are the parents… There's a completely separate cusatomer journey map for the parents… If we can win over the parents and convince them, then we stand a fighting chance'* (Participant 18, traditional institution).

> *'We always encourage students to tweet their experiences after an open day… What we find though it's often parents who are tweeting their experience or sharing where they've been on Facebook… As well as influencing their own children, they're also able to influence the wider community'* (Participant 48, vocational institution).

> *'Our content has two main target audiences: applicants and their parents. When we work with clients, we really try to sell the benefit of going to university to the parents… We'll highlight the long-term financial advantages, and that's often the hook we need to get the parents on board…'* (Participant 52, industry expert).

5.4.10 Digital influences

Whilst the emphasis in interviews was on the familial intrinsic motivations, some participants accentuated the role that digital influences have played in recruitment. In total, this was 9 out of the 31 student participants, and 4 out of the 16 administration and marketing staff.

Within respondents, there was a clear awareness of digital channels providing some motivation for attending university.

> *'When I was thinking about going to university I visited some universities websites – Hull, Newcastle, Liverpool – just to see what they could offer. Whilst I never took this interest any further, the adverts followed me everywhere, irrespective of the websites I went onto…'* (Participant 1, Traditional Institution).

'Our YouTube channel is very much about telling a story… You know it provides the history of our brand, the heritage… Where we've come from and where we want to go to in the future… It's about planting the seed in applicants mind that university life may just possibly be for them' (Participant 23, traditional institution).

Nevertheless, out of the nine students who identified digital influencers as being an extrinsic motivator, only two highlighted the role that university led social media played in motivating them to go to university. Both of these participants were at the traditional university. Participant 11 stated:

'Universities would upload video content onto their Facebook account… It often focused on stories of people who had gone to the university, and some of the challenges that they had faced to have gone there… One person had gone through a non-traditional route to get a place on the c course – they were a mature learner. This inspired me a to attend university…' (Participant 11; traditional institution).

There is a question about what the role of institutions should be in the application process. Arguably, the quotes mentioned above support the notion of institutions gearing their digital activity towards motivating students to attend university. However, focus should arguably be given towards – at this stage – highlighting the benefits of Higher Education, as opposed to wider university attendance. This is supported by participant 24 who stated:

'A great deal of our work is concerned with letting people know that university is for them… We will go out into several schools and whilst we go under our 'banner' most of the activities that we do don't really focus on our university. We focus more on the benefits of going to university… This is also something that we put out on our social media channels too…' (Participant 24, traditional university).

A theme that did arise from 9 out of the 31 student participants is the idea of unofficial social media channels being used to act as a motivator to attending university. This could include site such as Facebook group; Twitter chats using hashtags, and platforms such as the Student Room. Whilst only mentioned by nine participants in total, it does suggest areas in which digital marketing can be used as an extrinsic motivation.

'When I was at college and searching for universities, we were encouraged to see how our institutions operated on social media. Often, conversations would not originate from institutions and more from the wider student community. Not all of the comments were

positive, but it did give us an idea of some of the opportunities at university' Participant 14; traditional university).

'As soon as I thought about university, I quickly joined an online discussion forum on Twitter around university life. University's didn't tweet, it was individual students tweeting their experiences and what they found difficult…' (Participant 32, vocational institution).

What is interesting here is that whilst familial influencers were more prevalent in the responses given by respondents, where digital influencers came to the fore more was when participants were seeking the opinions of the wider community, potentially existing/past students that they did not know personally, but whose opinion they trusted.

5.5 Theme 2: Intervening variables that moderate relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors and choice.

Having investigated what motivates students to apply for university, the next stage of the interviews was aimed at determining the factors which influence choice. The research identified the following 18 sub-themes that motivated students to apply for a university. These were as follows: academic league table ranking; appeal of city; safety; course content; opportunity to network with industry; graduate employability figures; teaching and research quality; media stories; speed of response to initial queries; entrance requirements; halls of residents; part-time employment prospects; provision for students with disabilities; visual appearance of campus; cost of studying; friends and family experience of university; parental guidance; gut feeling.

This chapter will now present a discussion of each of these components, grouped into relevant themes.

5.6 Socio-demographic influences

The first intervening variable that was explored concerned socio-demographic influencers. Traditionally, socio-demographic influencers can refer to aspects such as age and geographic location. However, the majority of student participants interviewed (29 out of 31 participants) had come straight from college, so would have been in their late teens/early twenties. Furthermore, the geographic location of participants was offset by the two institutions having a large national reach in respect to their recruitment initiatives and online, digital presence. This is exemplified in the quote below:

'At undergraduate level, we don't really segment according to age. Over 95% of our faculty last year were straight from college – and those that weren't… The vast majority had taken a gap year… There's more important socio-demographic variables to amend our content based upon'. (Participant 48, vocational institution).

The two socio-demographic variables that were apparent in interviews with students and marketing and administration staff – in terms of influencing the motivating factors – were the level of parental education and nationality. There was minimal mention of school type in relation to the role in played in moderating variables with choice.

5.6.1 Level of parental education

This was a consistent theme, particularly in the traditional institution, where it was investigated whether the prior experience of parents moderated the impact of the respective intrinsic and extrinsic motivation variables. It was apparent that this was the case, with 15 out of 31 student participants, 9 out of 17 employees, and 1 out of 1 HE marketing consultants identifying that the level of parental education acted as a socio-demographic factor when deciding what university to go to. Out of the 15 student participants who mentioned the role that their parental education had on moderating their choice, 12 of these participants were at the traditional institution.

The main theme that came across was the idea that parents tried to transfer their own experience onto students, seemingly unaware of the changes to the sector in the subsequent generation of students. Particularly, there was an emphasis on parents highlighting the doors that a degree could open in respect to employability.

'*My dad had gone to one of the old polytechnics, but had managed to get on the career ladder and progress quite well… It is apparent that his degree really did allow him to apply for jobs that he wouldn't have otherwise obtained… Since when I started secondary school, my dad particularly has had this idea that I will go to university'* (Participant 2; traditional institution).

'*It's not just the fact that some parents have degrees and some don't in respect to their own level of academic achievement… It's also about what they remember from their own university days… You know we're talking about parents who went to university themselves in the late 80's, early 90's… Their trying to transfer their own expectations onto us as institutions… At times, that's fair, but at other times it can be really tricky to manage'* (Participant 43; vocational institution).

5.6.2 Nationality

This theme focused upon the idea of first-, second-, and even third-generation nationalities (where second-generation nationalities refer to participants parents being immigrants, and third-generation nationalities refer to participants grandparents being immigrants). In the case of first-generation nationalities, this was defined as being international students (of whom only two were interviewed across 31 student participants). In total, 7 out of 31 student participants; 15 out of 17 employees, and 3 out of 3 HE marketing consultants identified that nationality act as a socio-demographic factor when deciding what university to go to. The seven student participants who identified that nationality moderated their motivation for choosing to study at university were all part of a first, second, or third-generation nationality.

The main theme that came across was the idea that individual students' attitude towards entering into Higher Education was somewhat driven by their nationality, particularly in relation to the emphasis placed on both familial sources and employability. This is exemplified in the quotes given below.

> '*My parents have made great sacrifices for me to come to the UK and study… You know there's often this perception that international students all come from rich families, but that certainly is not the case for me. My parents have to save, save, save… Right from when I was born…'* (Participant 1; traditional university).

> '*A big reason why I wanted to come and study in (name of university) is the relative close proximity to London… You know, in the US we have grown up watching all the pomp and ceremony on TV… It's great to be on the edge of Europe, giving us chance to explore'* (Participant 39; vocational university).

> *'We recognise that there's a need to service the BAME community… Across the whole sector, there's certainly an under-representation… I think this is a spill over from how university was traditionally viewed, and this is something that we're regularly working on, seeking to address'.* (Participant 20; traditional university).

5.7 Environmental influencers

5.7.1 Academic league table ranking

The reputation for academic quality can have a major bearing on student selection (e.g. Shah and Nair, 2010; Hazelkom, 2007; Gibbons, Neumayer and Perkins, 2015). League tables are regularly produced in several broadsheet newspapers and other recognised sites. Examples of this include The Guardian League Table; Times Higher Education Supplement; and The Complete University Guide. This was a prominent factor that was mentioned by the majority of participants (28 out of 31 of the student participants; 15 out of 17 of the administration and marketing staff; and all three of the HE marketing consultants).

Indeed, even for the vocational university, which is seen the be very low in academic rankings, participants still acknowledged ranking in a variety of ways, in that they were consciously aware of where the university was in the league tables but were prepared to look beyond that when making their decision. Where the traditional university was higher in the ranking, staff members particularly emphasised the relevance that this provides when marketing towards prospective students.

> *'When I decided to come to this university, I did look at the rankings system. I am conscious that this university's overall ranking is very low, but then it's a relatively new university, isn't it? I wouldn't expect it to be that high… I have friends that go to universities higher up the rankings system and – generally speaking, they speak about how their experience is poor. They have these big lecture theatres where a lecturer stands at the front and talks to them – that's not really my learning style, so ranking systems aren't everything…'* (Participant 34, vocational institution).

> *'As well as this university, I applied to universities that are highly ranked in league tables. I think all of my applications required me to obtain at least 2 A's and a B in my A-levels… I want to get a job when I finish university, so it was important that I had a recognised university on my CV'.* (Participant 6, traditional institution).

> *'In essence its our league ranking which attracts a lot of people to the university – not just students… Businesses want to be associated with (name of university) and we can generally attract more professors due to our national and international standing'* (Participant 18, traditional institution).

> *'When we go out into colleges and on open days, we don't try to hide our low league position. We don't explicitly state that we're ranked low, but what we do is try to dispel some of the myths around academic league tables. They're often based on research funding as opposed to the quality of the teaching – it's important that applicants and their parents know this*' (Participant 47, vocational institution).

In a similar vein to responses given between students, administration and marketing staff fit the narrative to suit their respective organisations. Where the organisation was ranked highly, this was deemed as being a USP that should be addressed. Where the institution was ranked lower, the relevance of league tables was discounted in terms of its relevance.

5.7.2 Departmental factors

A second predominant factor that was prevalent in the interviews related to the specific department that was applied to. This included the departmental league table rankings, the reputation and quality of staff within the department, and the wider reputation that the department was held within the community. In total, 19 out of the 31 student participants and 14 out of 18 of the administration and marketing participants identified the department as being a prominent feature. However, there was a marked different in responses between traditional and vocational institutions here. Out of the 19 students who stated that departmental factors influenced their choice, 15 of these participants were from the traditional institution (out of 17), whilst only 2 (out of 14) were from the vocational institution. Participants from the vocational setting were more interested in the wider reputation of the university as opposed to the specific department. When probed about aspects such as teaching/research quality (which arguably contribute to the departmental component in the survey) participants from the vocational institution did not consider this to be a driving factor. As demonstrated in the comments below, this was a viewed echoed by the marketing and administration staff (with 5 out of 7 at the traditional institution, compared to 2 out of 10 at the vocational institution stating that department was an influencing factor).

> *'Russell Group – that's what it came down to… My lecturers have referred to the student experience and the research that takes place, but all I looked at was the overall ranking of the university…It did help that I obtained good grades'* (Participant 5, traditional institution).

> *'At this university, the recruitment figures speak for themselves… I think that's because we're a well-established brand'* (Participant 22, traditional institution).

'When I started looking at university, it was great that Professor (staff name) was part of the department here… I have seen her speak on a range of news programmes. Knowing that she was employed by the university made me more determined to come here' (Participant 12, traditional institution).

However, participant 24 (at the traditional institution) issued a note of caution stating:

'The feeling in the sector is that universities are not doing enough to assencuate their value to the consumer. Yes, they have all the buzz words, but how do the universities stand out… This is unclear…' (Participant 24, traditional institution).

5.7.3 Location

The third factor which influenced the relationship between motivation and choice was location. This was a factor that was mentioned by 28 out of 31 student participants; 15 out of 17 of the staff members; and 2 out of 3 of the industry experts. An example of this is presented below.

'The opportunity to live on the largest city on the south coast is something that drew me to this university. I am from the Isle of Wight, and it's a very small community with limited business opportunities. Moving to Southampton means it gives me a great chance to make more contacts…'. (Participant 9, Traditional institution).

This was supplemented by students at the vocational institution.

'I selected this university based on its location… Studying Maritime, living near to the coast means that the university has access to several key partners…' In this example given here, the student was linking the city component to the departmental component (Participant 32, vocational institution).

'I enjoy hiking, going to the beach, exploring history… I'm not from the UK so Southampton is an ideal city to explore for this reason' (Participant 29, vocational institution).

The role that location plays was further reiterated by members of the marketing team, albeit with not referring to the specific locations, moreover, being located within a city with a strong identify and sense of business community.

'Something good about Southampton is the fact that it has a vibrant business community. The university – being based in the city centre, means that we are easily able to take students

> *in to view potential employers, without taking too long out of both the student's day or those businesses who are helping us'* (Participant 42, vocational institution).

It is apparent that a interrelationship exists between this component (i.e. location) and other moderating factors (i.e. department) and dependent variable (e.g. employability). This was a theme that was reiterated by another student at the vocational institution who stated:

> *'Southampton's not the biggest place, but all of the main clubs and bars are within a stone throw of one another. When I came to view the university, I went down Bedford Place and I was amazed to see how many cool bars were in close vicinity of one another'* (Participant 28, vocational institution).

This comment was consistent with the views aired by students at the vocational institution, emphasising the fact that the university was located close to the city centre. Other components that were mentioned by participants include the amenities close by, including the train station, cinema, main shopping precinct, and proximity to student accommodation.

Unsurprisingly, the train station, cinema, and main shopping precinct were not mentioned by students studying at the more traditional institution (which is located outside of the city centre). Here, students focused on different elements of student lifestyle.

> *'Walking around the campus, it's located in a great part of Southampton. It is quiet and close to where I wanted to live – but it's also close to local amenities, meaning I don't have really have to go into the city for anything'* (Participant 17, traditional institution).

Whilst location was still viewed as a prevailing factor amongst the administration and marketing staff (i.e. 15 out of 17) the emphasis of location factors was different. As opposed to considering a range of specific amenities, there was a general awareness that the location of the institution was a good place to be, and that it was well linked to other areas of the country. This was particularly true for participant 20, who concluded:

> *'A major question that is posed to us by international agents is how far is the university from London. We potentially over-egg it – on our website it says we are only an hour away from the centre of London… To be fair, we are an hour away from the centre of London without speed cameras, and if there was no other traffic on the road… But that's probably the biggest question we are asked daily…'* (Participant 18, Traditional Institution).

Now that a overview of responses of environmental influences has been provided, this chapter will now present responses pertaining to informational influences.

5.8 Informational influences

A third intervening variable that was explored by participants was the informational influences (i.e. where did prospective students get information from). This was broken down into three areas- digital media, personal sources, and traditional university communications. It is noticeable that there was no mention across the participants of the role that print media can play. This is somewhat surprising, particularly considering that print media incorporated a proven hypothesis in the quantitative stage of data collection.

5.8.1 Digital media

This theme incorporates a range of topics that were discussed by prospective participants. 8 out of 31 student participants; 9 out of 17 employees, and three out of 3 HE marketing consultants identified that digital media channels act as a source of information when deciding what university to go to.

The main social media channels that were mentioned were predominantly concerned around the Facebook and Twitter platforms. However, there was disparity found in responses by student and marketing and administration participants.

The marketing and administration participants – at both institutions – emphasised that there is a constant stream of social media activity, with a high level of interaction and engagement on posts. Within their roles, marketing and administration staff have encountered a strong a strong level of investment to encouraging digital media activity. For example, participant 49 stated:

> *'Over the past two and a half years in this role, I have seen unprecedented levels of investment into social media… I don't mean the platforms – we always used to post – but what we see more and more now is the opportunity to use social media management tools such as Hootsuite…. This is also used for listening to the online conversations to find out what people are saying about (name of University)…'* (Participant 49, vocational institution).

This viewpoint was supplemented by staff at the traditional institution with participant 19 proffering:

'… This is probably my biggest annoyance within the role… You know a lot of people see social media as being for chatting to your friends or posting silly memes… It's a really vital role for universities though and we're seeing great levels of engagement' (Participant 19, traditional institution).

In spite of the vitally of social media, the same participant went on to question the value of using social media.

'… We don't know how to harness it correctly… Most marketing managers in HEI's, they are old school… They've not really grown up with social media and don't fully understand the benefits.'

Whilst most of the student participants were aware of the existence of social media channels, most student participants did not use social media channels to assist in making a decision. Predominantly, there was a feeling that social media belonged to a community – and until when they had been offered a place at an institution, they did not feel that they could commence the engagement process with their institutions social media channel. This is exemplified by participant 38 who stated:

'No, I didn't feel comfortable joining the social media pages to ask questions… I wasn't sure that I was allowed, and my application was in the system – what if the reviewers had seemed me asking questions – would this have had a detrimental effect – I still don't know now…' (Participant 38, vocational institution).

5.8.2 Personal sources

An area that did incorporated the role that digital media played was found within the discussion of personal sources. Personal sources refers to the opinions of trusted sources who had previously attended an institution, so applicants could speak to these personal sources (i.e. family members and friends that were either currently or had studied at an institution to obtain their opinion). though was the personal sources. This is whereby people who had family members who had previous experience of an institution would speak to these family members to obtain recommendations. 18 out of 31 student participants; 12 out of 17 employees, and three out of 3 HE marketing consultants identified that personal sources act as a source of information when deciding what university to go to.

However, what was interesting was that in the case of four out of the 18 students who admitted that personal sources played a role in selecting the chosen institution, they also highlighted that personal sources could also put them off selecting a specific institution. An example of this was provided by participant 39 who stated:

> *'My brother had gone to XXX University… He had hated it… He was living in a hall of residence with 15 other people, and the lecturers just weren't prepared. Even though I received an offer from them, I decided not to take them up on it based upon my brother's advice…'* (Participant 39, vocational institution).

Though, most personal sources provided glowing recommendations of institutions. This came via several participants who highlighted an array of different personal sources.

> *'I first became aware of this university when my uncle studied here, 15 years ago… This was before it received university status, but I was aware of the physical building and location. My uncle speaks a lot about having a great time here, and he was pleased to see that there were some academic staff members still working here from his time there'* (Participant 8, traditional institution).

> *'Though it was before my time, the university used to come in during careers week to give a talk about the benefits of going to university… My tutor was the main contact person as it were for the university, and she only had good things to say about the university'.* (Participant 25, vocational institution).

> *'The main two people that I spoke about in terms of coming to university were my mum and dad. They really championed the idea. They weren't too bothered which university I went to, but I spoke about what cities I wanted to live in… From here, they helped me draw up a shortlist and obtained formal and informal information about the university from several sources, including friends on social media'* (Participant 27, vocational institution).

> *'When I was in lower VIth I was friends with two people in upper VIth who came to the (name of university) I came to visit them at university, and they always told me what a great university it was… They were loving living in Southampton and had a placement lined up by the time I started'* (Participant 17, traditional institution).

> *'A big part of my role is promoting the alumni network… When I started, we didn't really have a thriving alumni network – sure there was reference to past graduates but there*

wasn't the type of prosperity and emphasis placed in alumni that we see at other institutions… We've found that if we can encourage our alumni to advocate our brand, it will drive up student numbers' (Participant 40, vocational institution).

'We're big into encouraging students to talk about their day-to-day student experience – particularly any of the social elements they are part of… It's important that we protect the brand, but students are going to speak about their experience anyway… We know that prospective students trust what existing students say a lot more about university than what we say… So why not get them to champion our cause?' (Participant 19, traditional institution).

'… As they say, 'the proof is in the pudding'… By that, I mean if people who have previously done the course have been able to secure jobs, then we want to encourage these graduates to talk about their experience… With one of the clients that we worked with, we ran a big LinkedIn campaign… It was surprising the amount of either existing students and, or graduates weren't even on LinkedIn – and if they were, there wasn't really the connection obvious between the degree, employment, or the skills obtained.' (Participant 51, Marketing Consultant).

Within these responses (across students and staff at both institutions and the industry consultants) there is a clear awareness that personal sources would emphasise and reinforce either the employability or lifestyle components, or both.

5.8.3 Traditional university communications

As well as emphasising the role that digital media (e.g. social media/websites) played in the choice process, there was a clear theme of participants highlighting the role that traditional communications can play in the choice process. In total 21 out of 31 student participants; 10 out of 17 employees, and three out of 3 HE marketing consultants identified that traditional communication channels act as a source of information when deciding what university to go to. It is surprising that these numbers for the student participants is substantially more than the digital media informational source. These participants are what is known as being a 'digital native', and an initial assumption, is that participants would be more prone to digital – as opposed to traditional – messages. Examples of responses from participants include:

'… I really found the prospectuses useful… Our VIth form common room had the prospectus of… It must have been every university across the UK! This gave me an idea of the type of

> *course that I wanted to do… All of the courses had facts related to average earnings and employment after the course, coupled with an overview of the cool things that would take place at the university'.* (Participant 31, vocational institution).

> *'I was quite happy to go onto sources such as the UCAS website and come along to open days… But my parents really enjoyed getting hold of the prospectuses when they came along… It gave them something to look at and focus upon'* (Participant 32, vocational institution).

> *'Whatever our recruitment activity is – be it a school visit, open day, parents talk – everyone wants to see a prospectus. It gives them something tangible with the universities brand all over it. We don't put as much content in them as we once did, but they're still a vital tool for teachers and parents, albeit not as much for students'* (Participant 23, traditional institution).

Not all of the participants were enamoured with the idea of a prospectus. For example:

> *'Academic prospectuses are so 'old hat'… We can't do anything with them… There's a standard format across nearly all institutions… Welcome from the VC? Check… About the city? Check… Course overview? Check… Student testimonies? Check… There's nothing in the prospectus that you are unable to enhance online… It doesn't account for any changes and you're unable to interact with it'* (Participant 52, HE consultant).

The second type of traditional university communication tool that was utilised by both the traditional and vocational institution was open days. This is exemplified in the responses below:

> *'When I came to look around (name of university) it was great to see the university in action…. I had the opportunity to meet both academic staff and current students too… There's a big emphasis at (name of university) on sport, and there were various societies there putting on a range of events to showcase the high performance equipment at this university'*… (Participant 38, vocational institution).

> *'My father and I visiting all of the university's that I applied for over the space of around 6 weeks I think it was… When I came to Southampton, the weather was glorious – the campus was really showcased in all of its glory…. I imagined myself sitting on the grassy verges with friends that I hadn't yet met if I came to (name of university)'*… (Participant 1, traditional university).

Based the responses of two of the student participants, institutions are also able to merge the digital and traditional components of a communication mix to provide an ongoing informational influence throughout the customer journey. Specifically:

> *'… At our open day we came into a big registration hall – there must have been thousands of people there with their parents. The parents were talking a lot more than students – we all looked nervous! I remember a student ambassador giving my mum a carrier bag that had a number of branded goods – you know pens, paper etc. in it… Distinctively though there was a hashtag on the bag, with a chance to join the conversation online… On the way home from the open day I set up a Twitter account and tweeted – it was amazing to see so much content available online'* (Participant 7, traditional institution).

> *'… Well, I knew I wanted to come to (name of university) as my cousin had previously worked here as a lecturer… But my parents were really blown away with the activities on campus on the open day. From the moment we came off the motorway there were signs directing us to the city centre… There was free parking and drinks and food upon arrival… The day was structured in a clear manner… I then left my parents to hear the subject-specific talk and they went shopping… It wasn't until when we were on the way home my mum's Facebook post got loads of comments… They had gone into this photo frame and taken a picture of themselves and uploaded it… They had had a blast!'* (Participant 36, vocational institution).

Based upon the enthusiasm demonstrated for open days by participants who referred to them as being a source of information, it was perhaps surprising that more participants did not refer to the role that open days played. Upon probing in latter interviews, it became apparent that not all participants had been able to attend a traditional open day. This was for a number of reasons.

> *'This wasn't actually my first choice university – I had left it quite late in the day to decide, and I didn't get the grades to get into Oxford… Therefore, I hadn't actually been to visit the university in advance of starting here as I had missed all of the open days… I had been to Southampton beforehand though so I knew about the city…'* (Participant 11, traditional institution).

> *'I'm from China, so coming over for open days just wasn't an option for me…'* (Participant 2, traditional institution).

Furthermore, participant 37 stated:

> *'… I went to multiple open days… Up to a point they were useful, but I must have gone to six or seven over a period of 18 months… At least two institutions I went back for a second look… There was so much information to take in as everything was new, whilst at the same time institutions had a similar structure to the open days… I had suspected before coming here that open days were showing the best side of the university too…'* (Participant 37, vocational institution).

The role of traditional communications was emphasised by a number of the marketing and administration staff at institutions. For example:

> *'On certain open days, we can have over 10,000 visitors here consisting of parents, prospective students, and other family members'* (Participant 21, traditional institution).

> *'Open days are a big thing for our university – you know because of our rankings people can come along to these days with having a pre-conception about our institution and what we stand for… Open days are the one chance we have to really showcase what our university is about, and why students and their parents should come to our university…'* (Participant 42, vocational institution).

In total, 6 out of the marketing and administration staff emphasises the role that open days can play in tandem with digital marketing and social media activities. For example:

> *'I wouldn't really talk about digital and traditional approaches operating in silo to one another… We have an integrated communications mix that really looks to combine the traditional face-to-face and printed communications with our social networking channels…'* (Participant 42, vocational institution).

> *'… On open days, I never stop. I'll set up tweets in advance on Hootsuite but I'll just walk around campus with an iPhone, taking pictures, interviewing staff, students, applicants, parents… It's non-stop'* (Participant 46, vocational institution).

> *'It's vital that we capitalise on the opportunity that an open day presents… We get the chance to capture student and parents data and really make a great first impression… We can't view the open day as operating independently from any follow-on activity… If we did we would lose out on momentum and fall behind our competitors'* (Participant 19, traditional institution).

5.9 Personal influences

A fourth theme that was explored by participants was the personal influences. This theme evaluated the personal factors that influenced students. This theme was broken down into two areas: familial ties and ‘gut feeling’.

It should be noted that the limited responses from the subsequent participants (student, staff, and industry experts) could be as respondents were asked if there was anything else that they believed influenced their/students’ decision to attend university. A reason for limited responses is the role of personal sources (as an informational source) had already been mentioned.

5.9.1 Familial ties

Akin to the discussion of personal sources in the ‘informational influences’ category, ties explored the extent to which personal (i.e. familial) sources influenced an individual to attend an institution. This differed from personal sources in the information influencers category, as it referred to how familial ties made a potential applicant feel about their choice of an institution. It did not focus per se on the type of information provided, more on the general mood and feeling generated as a result of being given information. In total 10 out of 31 student participants; 1 out of 17 employees, and 1 out of 3 of the HE marketing consultants identified familial ties as being a personal influencer over choice.

There was a clear distinction in respondents based around what specific familial tie the applicant focused upon. Parents and teachers are an example of a familial tie and generally these focused upon the employment motivation of attending university.

> *‘At times it was embarrassing at the open days – my dad always wanted to know – who are the links with? What are the employability figures from the course? I didn’t – and probably still don’t – really understand what employability is!’* (Participant 33, vocational institution).

> *‘At our college, there was always a big focus on employment. Once I had seen all of the university’s open days, read the prospectuses and gathered information, I approached by course tutor for advice of where I should make my final application towards’* (Participant 3, traditional institution).

On the flip side, what could be deemed as peers (i.e. school friends and siblings) generally predominantly influenced based upon the lifestyle component.

'A good friend of mine went to Keele University… It's a campus-based university I believe… She enjoyed it, but it would feel too much like prison to me' (Participant 4, traditional university).

'I've always been interested in football. My cousin Nick plays for the (name of university) Football Team and he's involved on various committees… He's emphasised the benefits of coming here…' (Participant 40, vocational institution).

As mentioned, there was only one staff member and one marketing expert who identified the role that familial ties played on a student's decision.

'We place so much emphasis on the student application journey, it's important to consider who the main decision maker is… Ultimately for a lot of families, particularly with the change in how Higher Education is funded, it is parents who are footing the bill… If we are able to tap into the consciousness of key decision makers, whether that is parents, teachers, or older relatives, then we know we are doing a good job' (Participant 50, Marketing Consultant).

'That's the million-dollar question isn't it? How are we able to access the influencers? It's all very well putting on jazzy digitally driven open days, but how are we able to sell the message of our courses to parents? Remember, the students don't know us, we need to tap into the students trusted network and it's not easy' (Participant 40, vocational institution).

5.9.2 Gut feeling

The idea of an internal, inherent belief is something that a number of interview participants recognised as having influenced levels of motivation between being motivated to attend university and deciding to apply for a specific institution. This was a theme that was prevalent across students and staff at all institutions, coupled with the HE marketing consultants (it was mentioned by 21 out of the 31 student participants; 11 out of the 11 administration and marketing staff; and 2 out of the 3 HE marketing consultants). Whilst the label 'gut feeling' is given to this feeling (i.e. internal, deep rooted appreciation of the merits of an institution) this is a terminology that the researcher presents as a representation of an array of different descriptions. Examples that participants referred to were 'just knowing'; 'comfortable feeling…'; 'home-from-home'; and 'settled'. Indeed, the actual terminology of gut feeling was not uttered by a single participation, but it is a code attached to these feelings.

'When I came to look at different universities, I brought my parents along… I've always said that first impressions count for a lot… It's strange, even driving down to (name of city) on the day of the open day I thought, 'yes, this is what I want'. (Participant 7, traditional institution).

'The whole city had a good vibe about it… Everyone that I came across seemed friendly. Coming to university it's the first time that I would have been away from my friends and family, so it was important that I got this right' (Participant 9, traditional institution).

'I had seen other university's halls of residents… The one's at (name of university) were dated and seemed like an army camp or prison… The halls that I was shown looked out onto a lovely green space and I imagined myself being settled at this university. I'm not staying in the same halls… My halls aren't as nice actually but I've still been happy' (Participant 12, traditional institution).

'As I live in Jersey, this is the closest English city to the island. When I was offered a place as (name of university) this was something that I had really always aspired to… Being here just felt right…' (Participant 25, vocational university).

'We spend a great deal of time investing in the campus environment, particularly we look to really spruce up campus on open days… Big smiles, that's what's key…' (Participant 43, vocational institution).

'A big part of my job is getting the name of the university out there amongst local schools and colleges… When people come along to open days and/or applying for university, we really want them to have a good impression of (name of university)' (Participant 24, traditional university).

'At (name of consultancy) we do a lot of work with customer journey mapping… There's various touch points that students and their parents will come in touch with the university brand… It's vital that we build brand equity in the min of the consumer… It's about consistently giving a positive impression, so it embeds in the mind of students… It's not done by accident' (Participant 51, marketing consultant).

What appears to students at the applicant stage to be an inherent feeling that they are unable to put clearly define (though labelled here as 'gut feeling') is actually clever marketing manipulation on the part of marketing and administration staff and marketing consultants. This clearly touches upon the lifestyle intrinsic motivating factor.

When referring to the extent to which intervening variables influence the choice process, a number of respondents – as indicated above – highlighting components that could be linked into an array of intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivating variables. Coupled with the identification of the extent to which factors positively influenced choice, respondents also described how certain factors potentially caused choice to shift away from alternative institutions, and examples of this is given in the aforementioned discussion. Students were quite clear that there were a range of intervening variables which influenced their choice process and somehow linked into either their motivations of those of their parents. However, the marketing and administration staff, and the Higher Education consultants identified that this was no accident, and was caused by painstakingly developed integrated marketing communications campaigns, attempts to address macro-environmental concerns, and a thorough understanding of key influencers and the customer decision journey. This is encapsulated in the three quotes below.

> *'It's funny, I set out on deciding to go to university with an awareness that I needed to obtain a job upon graduation – you know, I couldn't afford to go to university for the sake of it… There had to be some sort of clear, tangible benefit at the other side, but I also wanted to experience the student lifestyle… Joining a football team, having student nights out, meeting new friends, being away from home… It's all part of the student experience… All of the things we have spoken about today, they nearly all address one of these reasons why I wanted to come to university'* (Participant 3, traditional institution).

> *'Before I started thinking about university, there were a range of adverts on my social media feeds. These were repeated on various billboards around the city… Before I had seen these adverts I had never really considered coming to university… The messages – of really being the best person I could be – they were really reinforced throughout the application process'* (Participant 37, vocational institution).

> *'The motivations for coming to university – at least the most obvious ones… They've been consistent now for the past 20 – 25 years… Long-term employment, and the university lifestyle. If anything, the notion of employment has come more to the fore since the changes in funding structure, but as long as we understanding these motivations and our marketing communications pivot around these motivations at different recruitment events and activities… We're not going to go wrong'.* (Participant 42, vocational institution).

5.10 Discussion

The interviews were integral to gain the opinion of undergraduate students who had recently gone through the choice process and marketing and administration staff at two institutions (a traditional and a vocational institution). Views of the marketing and administration staff were supplemented with an awareness of views of marketing experts. The results obtained in this stage of data collection were used to enhance the overall discussion. Prior to the commencement of the interviews, it could have been assumed that there would have been a greater knowledge on the part of the students of the marketing tools and techniques employed to influence their decision. There seems to be a clear disparity in relation to the views held by students and the marketing and administration staff. Furthermore, based upon the changes in digital marketing and social media. It could also have been expected for digital media to have played a more prominent role in the mind of the student. My own views were supported by those held by the marketing and administration staff.

Student participants were also incredibly reliant on the opinion of parents. Whilst initially surprising (in that it is students who would be embarking on the course of study) the financial aid provided by parents, and concern for their offspring, renders such an influence as unsurprising.

An intriguing finding was the role that campus visit days can have on the application process, particularly around influencing the 'gut feeling' felt when applying. This is despite the platitude of information available to applicants ranging from social networks, email communication, and word-of-mouth recommendations.

Thankfully, all students interviewed were willing to open up about their experiences of the choice process, and – once the meaning of motivation was explained to them, seemed to have a clear idea of what constituted their own intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, and drew relationships between these motivations and the intervening variables. Overwhelmingly, there was a sense of uncertainty during this process. This was something that the administration and marketing staff were able to address with clearly devised marketing communications activities.

5.11 Conclusion

The interviews conducted at this stage of the empirical data collection have addressed several concerns in relation to the stated research questions. The participants' thoughts on what motivated them (intrinsically and extrinsically) to attend university and the extent to which intervening variables influenced their choice process was thorough and enlightening. Interviews with both marketing and administration staff, and HE industry experts gave credence to the opinions of the students. For the vast majority of these discussed, there was consistency found between both the traditional and vocational institutions.

This thesis will now go onto merge the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative study together to provide an overall discussion for the empirical data collection that has taken place.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a discussion of the research findings in depth and detail. An analysis of the implications of the findings is given. Furthermore, this chapter explores how the study findings connect with the main themes presented in the literature review – particularly the expectancy–value theory and existing empirical studies on student motivation. This chapter is organised according to the three proposed research questions, thus detailing how this thesis contributes to the debate. It is important to note that key recommendations and specific practical and theoretical contributions (based upon these recommendations) are not included in this chapter. Instead, they are presented in the final chapter – discussions and recommendations.

This chapter is structured as followed: firstly, there is a reiteration of how the empirical data collection was made; secondly there is a discussion into the extent to which research questions 2–4 are addressed.

6.1 How empirical data was gathered

Empirical data was gathered via a mixed methods approach. Firstly, a survey was developed which sought to explore the proposed conceptual framework (presented in section 2.15). To determine the reliability of this framework with the contextual setting (i.e. UK, HE UG market) a panel discussion took place, to ensure that survey measures were appropriate for the UK market. Whilst **some** items were added, it was found that the model generated from the literature review was generally appropriate for investigation. From here, a survey was distributed to existing first-year students, asking them about their motivations, and intervening variables (i.e. informational, personal, environmental, social-demographic) which moderated the relationships between motivation and choice when selecting a specific institution. This survey was completed by first-year students at both a traditional institution (i.e. Russell Group, red brick) and a vocational institution (i.e. modern, post 1992 reform university). Once survey results were gathered and analysed, triangulation occurred by carrying out a range of face-to-face interviews with existing students, further probing their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and role of intervening variables on the selection process. Adjoined with interviewing existing students, marketing and administration staff and HE marketing consultancy experts were also interviewed, thus ensuring that a wide perspective was obtained.

This chapter will now go onto address the three empirical research questions offered at the outset of this thesis. Note that Research question 1 is addressed in the literature review chapter, and Research Question 4 is predominantly integrated into the discussion of Research Questions 2 and 3.

6.2 Research question 2: What are they key intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for a UK-based undergraduate student to attend university?

The discussion into this first research question begins by discussing the intrinsic motivations. These two intrinsic motivators (i.e. employability and lifestyle) were prevalent regardless of the university, albeit with a slight disparity in respect to what constituted 'lifestyle' from the two institutions.

6.2.1 Initial observations

Extant literature (e.g. Mogali and Yoon, 2019; Cao, Zhu, and Meng, 2016; Perna and Titus, 2005; Greenacre, Freeman, Cong, and Chapman, 2014; Walsh, Moorouse, Dunnet, and Barry,2015) purports that employability is an intrinsic motivating factor, acting as a catalyst behind the desire of would be university students to commence the application process. Empirical findings from this study support this existing stream of literature. Notwithstanding that the findings are supportive of the existing literature direction, a consensus found within student and staff participants was that the prominence of employability has increased, primarily due to the changes in the funding structure in the UK HE system (as discussed in section 2.3), this refers to students bearing the cost of their tuition fees as opposed to a proportionate cost). A prominent theme derived at both stages of data collection is that students are concerned with finding a tangible reward (e.g. long-term employment), in exchange for undertaking a financial burden. The intrinsic motivator of employability was greatly influenced by familial influencers – namely, figures that they see as being the key influencers behind their decision (i.e. parents and close family members). This supports findings generated by the likes of Moogan, Baron, and Haris (2003); Winter and Chapleo (2017); and Yang *et al.* (2020). This was a finding consistent across both institutions. It was apparent when interviewing both students and university staff members that parents seemingly tapped into this intrinsic motivation more than the actual student applicants, probing top-level institutional driven marketing messages to assess how the respective institutions were able to meet this employability intrinsic motivator. There is, however, justification behind why parental guidance and opinion is so explicitly linked to the employability intrinsic motivation of attending university. Firstly, empirical findings suggested that parents of students at both traditional and vocational institutions were financially supporting students through the duration of their course (so they too are looking for some tangible evidence of an outcome from the investment). Furthermore, parents may have a wider perspective and understanding of the world of work, and the need to ensure that the process of applying to university has linkage to obtaining long-term employment.

6.2.2 Intrinsic motivator: Lifestyle

Authors (e.g. Agrey and Lampadan, 2014; Ahmad, 2015; Ali-Choudhury *et al.* 2009) identified an array of different lifestyle related factors which can contribute towards wanting to attend university. Whilst the 'lifestyle' component was extracted from the rotated factor analysis (RFA) the qualitative findings further reinforced findings presented in the extant literature, acknowledging a range of lifestyle factors which contribute to wanting to go to university. Whilst lifestyle was recognised as a prevalent factor at both institutions, it did seem to be more prevalent at the vocational, as opposed to the traditional, institution. This conclusion is drawn primarily from the qualitative findings, as the quantitative findings suggested a minimalistic level of variation. Whereas students who identified employability as an intrinsic variable when deciding to go to university were heavily influenced by their parents, students who identified lifestyle as an intrinsic factor were more susceptible to influence by other personal sources (i.e. peers, friends, and wider society pressures). A feasible suggestion as to why students at a vocational institution may focus more on the lifestyle component is because the participants in general seemed to be the first generation of their family to be attending university – there may not be as many pre-conceptions (either false or valid) of the long-term benefits of attending university. This was a view echoed in discussions with the marketing and administration staff at both institutions. These long-term benefits generally focus on the longer lasting implications of embarking on a university course (i.e. employability – once the course is completed – thus referring to the longer lasting divestment from an institution), whilst focusing upon the intrinsic motivation of lifestyle is a more short-termism perspective. A theme even more pronounced was the focus of different aspects of lifestyle at the different institutions. Indeed, whilst making the above claim, there is minimal concession made to lifestyle being a prevalent intrinsic motivator. Moreover, there seemed to be focus on different areas of lifestyle at the respective institutions. Specifically, respondents of the vocational institution focused more on the city and surrounding area, and nightlife components of lifestyle whereas respondents from the traditional institution focused more on the campus environment, and sports and societies components (e.g.; Ahmad, 2015; Pippert *et al.* 2013). A plausible explanation for this is that the vocational institution is embedded more into the heart of the city centre (thus being exposed to the more city related components of lifestyle such as local night clubs, bars, and restaurants) whereas the traditional institution is located on the periphery of the city (thus respondents focusing more on the institutional driven components of a student lifestyle such as the campus environment and on-site facilities). Further research would be needed to determine the extent to which these results are transferable across the whole sector and would be based upon the location of the respective institutions. Furthermore, an assumption being made is that applicants to the traditional institution would have acknowledged the location of the institution prior to commencing their studies, and likewise for the applicants for the vocational institution.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding this observation, it was initially surprising that so much emphasis was placed by respondents on the intrinsic motivation of lifestyle, in comparison to discussing the intrinsic motivation of employability. Upon reflection, there are two plausible reasons for this. Firstly, the time in which data is collected (i.e. once students have commenced the course and been living in the campus/city environment) may dictate that respondents are more acutely aware of the lifestyle components (for example, in the qualitative interviews a number of student respondents spoke about joining certain sports and societies, thus supporting the discussion by Gatfield *et al.* 1999, and Ali-Choudhury *et al.* 2009). If respondents had been asked prior to the commencement of their studies, they may not necessarily have been aware of the existence of these societies. Similarly, if students were asked their opinion of factors that motivated their decision to attend university towards the end of their course, there may have been a greater emphasis placed on the employability components as that would have been more prevalent within the student's minds. Secondly (and contradictory to the points) it is apparent that respondents from both institutions were aware of the key social features of the city where the institutions were based. The awareness of the city – namely the location, reputation, and safety – was consciously in the mind of applicants, prior to beginning the formal UCAS application process. It is fair to assume that prospective students may have heard of a city based upon factors including its location, sporting prowess, or local and national news, prior to delving into specific details of universities to determine its graduate employability rate.

6.2.3 Intrinsic motivator: Employability

Whilst there was a greater depth and enthusiasm when discussing the intrinsic motivation of lifestyle, employability cannot be discounted as a clear intrinsic motivating factor when deciding whether to attend university. As emphasised, student respondents identified that their parents had a vested interest in the long-term implications (i.e. employability) of investing in a university course, but university marketing and administration staff, and HE marketing consultancy experts, also clearly highlighted the need to emphasise both employability initiatives and lifestyle USPs that were prevalent across both institutions.

Now that a discussion into the intrinsic motivating factors behind attending university, this section will now provide a discussion into the extrinsic motivating factors behind attending university. The quantitative and qualitative findings (presented in chapters 6 and 7 respectively) overwhelmingly support hypotheses 2b, whilst the findings partly support hypotheses 2a. Furthermore, these two extrinsic motivators (i.e. familial and digital) were prevalent regardless of the university. This discussion will now present an overview of how hypothesis 2b was overwhelmingly supported.

6.2.4 Extrinsic motivator: Familial influencers

Multiple authors (e.g. Chapleo, 2010; Gunn and Hall, 2008; Gibbons, Neumayer and Perkins, 2015; James *et al.*, 1999; Lee and Morrish, 2012; and Winter and Chapleo, 2017) found that familial influencers play a key role in extrinsically motivating students to apply for university. The familial influencers which were prevalent was the role that (generally) older siblings, and parents played. The role of older siblings was particularly pertinent if there was more of a substantial age gap between these familial influencers and the applicants. This (i.e. the age difference between applicants and older siblings) was a theme that arose in the qualitative interviews and was not explored in the survey – it does give rise to further research for exploring the extent of correlation between these variables. Respondents from both institutions conveyed a clear aspirational message in terms of following older siblings and other trusted sources into the realms of Higher Education. This may be because the younger siblings have seen the opportunities (both in terms of lifestyle and employability) that has been afforded to their older peers, and applicants are conscious that they want to experience similar opportunities.

The most distinctive familial influence though was parental influence. Parental influence has already been discussed when discussing the ‘employability’ intrinsic motivation. Unsurprisingly, student and staff participants at both institutions equally felt that parents had a keen interest in ensuring that their children obtain the best opportunities in life. Therefore, irrespective of the level of parental education, parents acted as an extrinsic motivation behind attending university. Based upon respondents this seemed to work one of two ways. Firstly, if one or both parents had previously attended university, parents wanted their children to have the same life experiences that were afforded to them, and the greater probability of obtaining (a graduate level) employment upon graduate. Secondly, if the student's parents had not attended university – either due to academic ability or lack of funding – parents were keen for their children to take advantage of the opportunity that was being afforded to them. It is recognised that these observations are assumptions based upon the responses of students and the marketing and administration staff – either via the qualitative or quantitative measures. The actual opinions of parents have not been obtained, and this would certainly be an area for further exploration.

6.2.5 Extrinsic motivator: Digital influencers

The second extrinsic motivation area that was prevalent in findings was the role of digital influencers, as highlighted by Teng *et al.* (2015). In contrast to the extrinsic motivation of familial sources generally raised awareness of attending university by portraying university's in a positive, institution specific light, it was apparent that digital sources – whilst still acting as an extrinsic motivator – were used more as a catalyst to raise awareness of issues surrounding the UK HE environment in general. This was particularly the case for students at the vocational institutions – ironically where familial influences were not as prevalent, whereas students at the traditional institution did not pay much heed to the extrinsic influencer of digital sources. For example, a participant commented that social media channels had raised awareness of macro changes to the sector – such as the role that Brexit may play in reshaping the UK HE landscape or the impact of increased levels of tuition fees on students. These conversations (i.e. digital influencers) that students had followed (at the time as FE students) had spiked an interest in the sector in general, which subsequently translated into a desire to attend university. These results should be considered when institutions determine how to harness the opportunity that digital media channels provide moving forwards. Rather than using digital media channels as an extrinsic motivator to attend university, could they be used to motivate prospective applications and other stakeholders, such as parents to gather more information on their prospective choices? In respect of digital influencers, arguably the main finding from the qualitative stage of research is that digital channels can be used to leverage motivation to attend university, but institutions need to play the role of an observer as opposed to an active participant. Digital influencers acting as an extrinsic motivator often were third-party sites – such as 'Twitter' and student owned social media platforms and websites such as 'The Tab' – to find out more information about university life. Institutions should act as facilitators and sign posters in respect to accessing this third-party information that seeks to either portray university's in a more positive light, or provide institutions with the chance to respond to any macro-environmental changes. Unsurprisingly, students who did not have the strong familial influencers – either parental, sibling, or college support- were also more likely to engage via digital channels to find out more information about attending university in the first place. Overwhelmingly, students who fell into this category were from the vocational institution. This is unsurprising, as the quantitative survey indicated that many first-generation university attendees were at the vocational institution. Therefore, it stands to reason that they would venture to other sources of information (including, but not limited to digital sources) as an extrinsic motivator. These findings provide a new insight into the differences between applicants to traditional and vocational institutions in respect to the extent to which they engage with digital influencers. Further research could focus upon specific types of digital influencers.

Now that there has been a discussion into the role which intrinsic and extrinsic motivators play on the choice process (with an awareness that they do play a role and there is disparity found between the different types of institutions), there will now be a discussion into the extent to which variables moderate the relationship between these factors and different relationships.

6.3 Research question 3: To what extent do intervening variables moderate intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of UK-based undergraduate students?

As per the literature review, the discussion of these interviewing variables is classified into four types of intervening variables: socio-demographic influencers; environmental influencers; informational influencers; personal influencers. The discussion into this research question begins with a discussion into socio-demographic factors.

6.3.1 Socio-demographic influencers

Students whose nationality was classified as being ‘international’ as opposed to ‘home’ had a greater focus on digital influencer channels (H4a and H4b). This is to be expected, as international students will be less likely to travel to a campus and be exposed to a university’s traditional marketing offerings, such as open days and campus visits (e.g. Wilkins, 2013; Wilkins and Huisman, 2015; El Nemar and Vrontis, 2016). This was supported by the qualitative findings, where international students referred to the idea that digital channels were a vital source of information in motivating them to attend university. Notwithstanding the role that digital channels played, it was also apparent that international students had a greater level of expectation in terms of providing information via digital channels (e.g. Sleeman, Lang, and Lemon, 2016; Vrontis *et al.*, 2018). Participants clearly identified that provision in other Western countries – notably Canada and the USA – had a greater level of digital provision in respect of interactive apps and virtual campus tours. Conversely, albeit unsurprisingly, home students were more likely to consider more traditional sources of information. Statistical analysis (i.e. t-tests) found that face-to-face engagement, gut feeling, living, and personal choice factors were more prevalent for home students. This is expected, considering the easier levels of accessibility to open days on the part of home students. Notwithstanding these findings, the desire for increased digital interaction on the part of international students could be transferred to home students. This would facilitate engagement with home students who were unable to attend physical open days, as well as increasing the levels of institutional brand exposure. Developing digital provision to provide more influence – irrespective of the nationality of students – would facilitate institutions being able to carry out more recruitment activities independent of location, dates, and time zones.

Other than the impact on digital influencers, it is perhaps unsurprising that nationality did not play a significant role in altering the extent to which students engaged with the other extrinsic (i.e. familial) and the two intrinsic motivations (i.e. familial, lifestyle, employability). Irrespective of nationality, it can be assumed that all students are looking to enjoy a certain type of student lifestyle whilst at university, albeit focusing on different components of lifestyle. This was apparent within the qualitative interviews, with UK-based students referring to traditional components of the student lifestyle – such as a flexible timetable, working part-time, living in halls, and enjoying the night life, whilst international students (albeit in a smaller sample) focused on the idea of immersing the wider UK cultural components and visiting tourist sites, across the breadth of the UK. A somewhat alarming response amongst the international students in interviews is that they sometimes felt ostracised from certain aspects of UK lifestyle, and they had not had the opportunity to explore the same aspects of UK/university life that they had expected upon application. This is an interesting area to investigate (i.e. the extent to which expectation matches up with reality) Likewise, in respect to employability, home students focused upon the idea of graduate employability, with a specific focus on working in central hub cities such as London and Birmingham, whilst international students predominantly focused on the idea of developing skills that they would be able to utilise to take back to their home country. Further research could take a far more diverse look at different nationalities and the extent to which the nationality influences the extrinsic and intrinsic variables.

The second socio-demographic variable examined was level of parental education (i.e. whether parents had attended university). The most significant results found that parental education influences the extent of familial recommendation. Levels of parental education generally seemed to be split into one of two categories. Category 1 was whereby parents had never attended university. Therefore, they would play the supportive, proud role, facilitating the choice of university very much based upon the intrinsic motivations of the student (i.e. what they considered to be motivating them internally). More specifically, parents who had never attended university encouraged students to attend university, albeit not playing a major role in deciding what university their children should go to. However, akin to a point previously discussed, where parents had previously attended university, participants gave the impression that their parents – albeit not necessarily accurate – that they were far more informed over the decision that had to be made and put it upon themselves to be explicitly involved in that decision-making process. Whilst most participants parents all had an influence in their decision to go to university, the greater the level of parental education – particularly on the part of the father – led to an increased level of familial influencers. It is interesting to note that if the mother had previously been to university, a significant impact was not subsequently demonstrated in either quantitative or qualitative findings. This may be because fathers seek to have a hands on role and expect that their own perspective are taken more into account – and/or they are more willing to give their perspective! Whilst parental support in the decision process is encouraging to an extent, institutions found that parents would often by basing their experiences upon either (a) their previous experience – often in the 1980's or 1990's when universities were very different places (e.g. Chapleo, 2007); or (b) reviews found on external sites including the student room and Facebook. These reviews were predominantly negative in nature as students would often only post comment when they had issues with an institution. Therefore, the opinion of parents – albeit as key influencers – is somewhat blurred.

The final socio-demographic factor investigated concerned the type of school attended. As highlighted, this is an area that has not previously extensively been investigated, other than Hemsley-Brown (2014). It is apparent that there is a significant difference based around type of school in terms of the type of information that participants look to access, with fee-paying school applicants being more focused on traditional sources, and state school applicants being more focused on digital sources of information (all participants who had been to a fee-paying school were part of the traditional institution). Potentially, a reason for this is because fee-paying schools having a consistent history of students attending university, and, therefore, rely on the same tried and trusted methods to attract and engage with students. Alternatively, students who attended 'state'/free schools potentially do not have any many familial sources that they can tap into, and, therefore, use digital means to find out information around an institution. This is an interesting segment that institutions can target.

Within the interviews, there were other socio-demographic factors that were mentioned by participants. Predominantly, this focused around members of the LGBT community. Whilst admittedly this was only two participants who raised this issue, they did highlight that being part of this community influenced their decision greatly. They wanted to be sure that the respective institutions had a welcoming environment with appropriate societal support, with a clear policy within both the institution and the city. Respondents who spoke about this made clear linkages to the lifestyle intrinsic motivation variable, and the familial, and digital extrinsic motivation variables. Both participants came from the vocational institution, but this was not a demographic variable that participants were initially split intentionally, so the disparity between the two institutions cannot be made (one would assume the same would be true at the traditional institution). Another factor mentioned by one participant was having caring responsibilities, and how this influenced tapping into digital sources of information to find out what provision the institution provided (i.e. whether there was a nursery on site). Again, this number is too small to draw extensive conclusions, with this does seem to be an area that could be investigated further. What is particularly interesting to note is whereby participants (irrespective of the institution) did not fit into the mould of an UK, traditional UG student, digital influencers appeared to come more to the fore in influencing a decision.

6.3.2 Environmental influencers

Now that a discussion into socio-demographic findings has been carried out, this section will now discuss the impact of environmental factors on intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

The first environmental influencer explored was departmental. This incorporated features about the department including faculty members, positive news stories, research output, and specific equipment within a department used to enhance learning. feel about specific departmental features. The quantitative results suggested that environmental influencers have minimal impact on the extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, with only hypothesis 7b (which looked at the role of location in relation to the intrinsic motivating factor of lifestyle) being supported by statistical tests.

However, this underplayed the emphasis that qualitative findings found in relation to departmental, and how departmental factors can moderate the intrinsic and extrinsic variables, namely employability and digital influencers. The linkage with employability supports work by suggested that departmental certainly played a role in intervening in the relationship between both the digital extrinsic information source and the employability intrinsic source. The latter point is unsurprising and supports work by the likes of Brown *et al.* (2009) and Veloutsou *et al.* (2004), as applicants and their parents will want to know what employability initiatives are set up in the department. As conceded by marketing and administration staff, universities can often rely on the university wide figures for employability without necessarily breaking the figures down per department, particularly if the top-level figure is more positive than the specific departments score for employability. Interestingly though, the more departments were transparent in terms of their offering, the more students thinking acknowledged the connection with employability. This raises an interesting point in relation to transparency – there is a need for institutions to move away from university wide figures and provide a clearer reflection to decision makers when they are going through the choice process. This approach would arguably lead to a far greater level of trust. Another theme that developed is that decision makers could engage one another during the choice process via digital channels when reviewing the department. Evidence of this was found in the sign posting by fellow students via Facebook groups, WhatsApp chats, and The Student Room to direct one another towards sites such as Unistats, thus giving a fairer reflection of the university experience. This is interesting, as Unistats was not a site that was encountered in either the literature review or the panel discussion prior to developing a survey. Other examples included applicants encouraging one another to follow a module specific Twitter feed and to follow the school-specific Instagram account to gain more information of the day-to-day school interactions. Linked to the idea of both lifestyle and digital influencers, participants spoke about the idea of course-specific associated societies (for example, participants mentioned the existence of a Law Society and a Marketing Society at the traditional and vocational institution respectively). This conjoined element (i.e. whereby there is an intervening activity which tapped into multiple intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivator was a key theme that consistently developed throughout the qualitative interviews). Whilst participants at both institutions referred to the role that department can play in selection, there was an increased prominence of the departments if these departments were integral to the respective institutions. For example, at the vocational institution it was well known for both its Maritime and Sports related courses, whilst at the traditional institution it was well known for its Computer Science operations. Therefore, participants highlighted that these departments almost operated in silo to the main institution and reflected in participants attitudes to any employment opportunities as being part of that specific department, rather than the institution. To extend this idea further, institutions could seek to transfer the credibility of specific schools and faculties across to other departments.

Furthermore, there could also be an attempt to transfer the positive associations with these specific schools into other intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors. A final factor that came across – predominantly at the traditional institution – is the number of academics who engage with prospective students, independent of the university. Whilst one of the university marketing and administration staff members ceded that this can sometimes lead to the loss of control of the brand, from the individual applicants perspective, having a 'real-life' academic engaging with applicants by showcasing some of the course activities certainly gave the department credibility. Furthermore, the students who had mentioned this also stated that they had made their parents and peers (i.e. fellow applicants) aware of such activity, thus driving interest and credibility in the institution.

The second environmental feature discussed was location. Location touched upon all the respective intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors. Location refers to aspects of where the university is located, be it the surrounding area or the city. Within a range of existing academic articles, location has been identified as a prominent factor (e.g. Moogan and Baron, 2003; Henriques *et al.*, 2018; Brown *et al.*, 2009). Students at the vocational institution particularly highlighted how location can tap into the intrinsic motivation of employability for two reasons. Firstly, they were conscious of the need to obtain practical work experience to supplement their academic studies, and secondly, they wanted to ensure that there was enough provision for part-time employment whilst completing their course. Perhaps a reason for this is that students are conscious that there is an increased level of expectation from prospective employers of having employment in conjunction with any academic qualifications. A reason why this may have been highlighted more at the vocational institution is because it is particularly true for vocational universities, where potentially the image of the brand for vocational institution is not as strong as a traditional institution for prospective employers, so students will need to ensure they obtain the necessary work experience to compensate for this. Students at both institutions mentioned the lifestyle intrinsic motivating factor. Whilst some students spoke about the night life activities (as previously discussed by Wilkins, Shams, and Huisman, 2013) and coffee shops , it was interesting that a number of students spoke about the ease of access to grocery stores between the breaks in lectures. Furthermore, for the traditional institution students, they were heartened by the idea of being just over an hour away from London via public transport. Whilst this is something that students at the vocational institution did not mention, a reason that this could have been accentuated by students at the traditional is there is a bus which visits the campus that goes to London. It is proposed that institutions could harness any third-party offering to emphasise the features and benefits of studying there. Further research of both traditional and vocational institutions could be carried out to determine what third-party opportunities to accentuate the city image are available to universities. Location was clearly mentioned in terms of familial influencers. At the vocational institution, it was apparent that the majority of student participants were in a relative close proximity (i.e. under an hour drive and/or train journey) from their home address. For the traditional institution, though students seemed to come from further afield, it was important that the city was serviced by motorways, an airport, and a large train station. Probing participants further, it became apparent that this was a factor that was clearly in the mind of parents. This is consistent with findings offered by Greenacre *et al.* (2014) Whilst students searched for information about a university and a course when going through their UCAS applications, it was also apparent that they would search for information connected to the city/location. This included any hotel accommodation, Google Maps, and various review sites, such as TripAdvisor. Using relevant hashtags, some participants sought content on the location that would assist them in their choice process. Universities can use this information to tap into the location and city specific features that prospective students – and their key influencers – would find relevant and interesting in their search process.

The final environmental variable investigated was rankings. Research by Dawes and Brown (2003) and Hazelkorn (2015) suggests that rankings are important when selecting an institution. However, this was not highlighted within the quantitative analysis. Within the qualitative analysis, it was found that rankings were prominent – albeit in the mind of parents (i.e. familial influencers). The higher ranked an institution was, the more prominence parents would place on it in encouraging their children to attend that specific university. Nevertheless, it was apparent within interviews with both students and marketing and administration staff that parents and applicants did not really understand the rankings system, in terms of what the criteria were behind each table. Whilst applicants to the traditional institution focused more on rankings than those at the vocational institution, the emphasis placed on rankings was somewhat negligible in the minds of the students, thus supporting research by Le *et al.* (2020). Students (at both institutions) seemed to be more interested in other environmental criteria, as demonstrated by the discussion. The only thing to qualify this statement with though is that – upon probing – other institutions that applicants had applied for were in the same classification (i.e. similarly ranked) to the institution in question. Therefore, whilst students claimed that in their mind rankings were not important, it was still a measure by which students narrowed down their initial application choice set.

6.3.3 Informational influencers

This sub-section the chapter will now evaluate the extent to which informational influencers moderate the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

Quantitative findings found that the following communication sources played a role in moderating the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic communications – digital media; traditional print media; and personal sources. It is somewhat surprising that neither traditional university recruitment events (such as open days and prospectuses) were found to influence either intrinsic or extrinsic motivations. Similarly, clearing was found to not have an impact on the motivators.

The qualitative research concluded that the traditional university communications (predominantly open days and prospectuses) influenced only the extrinsic familial sources, with minimal impact on digital influencers (extrinsic motivation); and lifestyle and employability (intrinsic motivations). This finding was consistent across both institutions. A plausible explanation for this is when gathering information to meet the intrinsic motivations of employment and lifestyle, students are likely to obtain this information from elsewhere as they would wish to delve into the topic to determine how their employment and lifestyle motivations will be met. Admittedly, other traditional university communications – notably school visits, outreach activities, and summer camps – had made some participants aware of the university lifestyle and employment opportunities that were on offer at university – as we will encounter applicants sought further clarification for these factors away from traditional university channels. This conflicts with findings offered by Mogaji and Yoon (2019). As mentioned, traditional communications impacted upon the level of familial influencers, thus supporting the research offered by Rutter, Lettice and Nadeau (2017), and Brown *et al.* (2009). A potential reason for this is if parents attended the open day, then they may be suitably impressed with the university campus and environment, and therefore, emphasise that the institution was a clear option. This is supported by Mogali and Yoon (2019). Furthermore, having a physical prospectus could act as an 'aid-memoir' for parents, thus giving a clear point of reference. It is apparent from findings that whilst traditional university communications can be a way of generating a short list of prospective institutions (e.g. Brown, Varley and Pal, 2009), traditional marketing communications can also be used to reduce said shortlist. It is apparent – particularly from the qualitative findings - that traditional university communications still have a place in terms of tapping into certain motivations, but they are more concerned with influencing significant others within the decision-making process. The likes of Rutter, Lettice, and Nadeau (2017) and Mogali and Yoon (2019) argue that prospectuses and open days can be more interactive, thus allowing more potential students and their parents to engage with the brand remotely. Furthermore, such an approach would facilitate the sharing of information pertaining to the lifestyle and employment intrinsic motivation variables, coupled with building upon the digital extrinsic motivation. Another point to make is that respondents identified that open days are concerned with showcasing an institution and campus and its entirety. Whilst this supports views held by Schofield *et al.* (2013) and there are merits in terms of economics of scale and maximum exposure, open days could be more geared towards specific schools and faculties, thus ensuring that content delivered is more pertinent to the audience.

The second informational influencer to consider is digital media. Unsurprisingly, for applicants who were influenced by the extrinsic influencer of digital sources, there was a clear correlation between the impact that digital media communications had on emphasising the role that extrinsic digital sources had. Furthermore, shortcomings of traditional university communications (namely the lack of focus on intrinsic motivations) were addressed via digital communications. This was particularly true in relation to the respective websites. This built upon findings by Branco Oliveira and Soares (2016) and Galan, Lawley, and Clements (2015). Both institutions had dedicated sub-sections dedicated towards exploring issues of the university lifestyle and employability. Several students at both institutions also commented that this website support was also found within the respective student union websites there was further information – particularly around student lifestyle. Nevertheless, a general feeling is was that the vast majority of information was static-there was minimal . opportunity to contact specific departments to find out how institutions and the specific departments would support students in realising these motivations further. There is a clear need for institutions to set up specific digital channels so universities are able to showcase what they offer. Conversely, digital media did not seem to impact upon the familial extrinsic motivator. It seems as if for information gathering purposes parents relied more on traditional sources of information. There was a clear identification at both institutions that participants would see some type of recruitment information – often via traditional or digital communications – and then seek to ratify this information via social media channels. Often, these channels were not institution owned, meaning that prospective students saw the information as being impartial – and thus supporting findings by Shields and Peruta (2019). One area of digital communications touched upon – albeit not extensively - by the traditional university but surprisingly not the vocational institution is by engaging with mobile technology to attract more applicants. The traditional university had an app that allowed applicants to get updates through concerning the process of their application. However, this was a feature that was utilised once an application had been made – there is seemingly no attempt to utilise mobile technology to mobilise prospective students and parents prior to the application process. Arguably, the features that the app offers –

i.e. updating the application – could easily be communicated via other means – such as email messages -and it is difficult to determine what the level of value offered through using the app (indeed, this was an irrelevant factor when students were asked about the relevance of this during the quantitative interviews).Examples of how an app could be utilised for recruitment purposes include it being developed by the existing student cohort; a live Q & A session on Twitter with academics and/or students and/or honorary graduates; and some type of gamification to build upon the brand exposure. Furthermore, it was surprising that no This could include an app being set up by the student body; a live Q & A session/diary with an existing student; a calendar of events that have taken place (with video and social content); and any gamification to subsequently build the brand exposure. Whilst there was an app existed, it was apparent that institutions did not employ any geofencing activities on open days (whereby applicants and their parents could be welcomed to an open day. This could incorporate maps, a table of events, and directions coupled with video welcoming messages). Feedback on open days could also be obtained directly through the app, and even offers and good luck messages on the day of exams and exam results could be sent out, directly to the individual student. There could potentially be a separate app for parents of students It is surprising that this has not been explored by the institutions, and equally – it is surprising that, as it stands, there is no empirical literature examining this. This is a gap in the literature that could be developed further. More research of other institutions would have to take place to determine whether the lack of engagement with mobile technology is representative across the whole of the (UK) HE sector, coupled with a specific awareness of what specific tools applicants would be looking for in an app.

The third informational influencer initially identified was personal sources. This is whereby applicants with converse with friends and contacts who have had exposure to the institution and ask them questions about the university. As this was not university driven content, often participants seemingly could find out more relevant information. Applicants were also far more willing to ask questions pertaining to lifestyle and employability, as they could ask questions on a one-to-one basis without the fear of coming across as either too keen or ill-informed. It was also apparent that information from personal sources was often obtained from either digital (i.e. via WhatsApp and Facebook messenger) or face-to-face, although predominantly communicated via some type of digital platform. Personal sources do not necessarily define individuals/groups that applicants know well – participants classified personal sources as individuals they knew, albeit at times tenuously. as well as face-to-face). The other idea of personal sources that emerged is that applicants would not necessarily have to speak directly to personal sources to find out information, Information could be found by following relevant social media conversations to give a clearer perspective of how intrinsic motivations would be met. Institutions should seek to encourage existing students and alumni to share good news stories via social media channels to build upon this. This is supported by Gai *et al.* (2016), Khanna, Jacob, and Yadav (2014) and Alnawas (2014).

Based upon panel discussions, another informational influencer identified was clearing. Clearing is a process utilised by students who have not achieved their expected grades, and institutions with spaces on course to access other courses and increase their student numbers respectively. Clearing is a process that was certainly prominent at the vocational institution, albeit with no instances of clearing at the traditional institution. This conflicts with research by Mogaji (2016) who found that clearing was prominent at some Russell Group institutions, so this potentially reflected the sample as opposed to a general theme. A plausible reason why clearing was more prominent at the vocational institution is that entrance requirements were less, whilst the traditional institution had a higher threshold level.

Qualitative results suggested that clearing had a moderating impact on two out of the four moderating factors – digital sources and lifestyle. Whilst no moderating impact was found to existing between familial sources, this is unsurprising, as it would have contradicted parents' thoughts of what the best institution was for their children. It was apparent from interviews though that students felt their parents were not necessarily averse to the clearing process – though there was a general lack of understanding of what clearing consisted of. The intrinsic motivator of employment was also insignificant for students who had gone through clearing. An explanation behind this is due to the relative limited period that students had to decide – they may not have been able to assess the long-term employability potential of the course when deciding. Upon probing, it was apparent that students had an awareness of any employability components from their preliminary search and had generally assumed that these same opportunities would be in place, and the key facet was obtaining a place on a course at relative short notice.

Whilst participants expressed disappointment at the time of their A-level results that they had to enter the clearing process, participants who referred to clearing were more concerned that they would be happy living in the city of the vocational institution and the campus environment. A key factor in this process was whether university accommodation was available to allow them to enjoy the trappings of a university lifestyle. There was a clear indication amongst participants that students' initial choice was in similar sized towns, so students wanted a similar type of lifestyle that they felt they would have encountered with their first choice.

The other factor that clearing had a moderating impact on was digital influencers. As time to decide was somewhat limited, it was found that participants were more likely to carry out a digital search, reviewing the content of the main websites whilst accessing various chat rooms (such as The Student Room), and social media pages (notably the main Twitter feed). Out of the 10 participants who had gone through clearing, eight of them had asked a question through social media channels that helped to influence their decision. Specific concerns that participants wanted addressing were around lifestyle components and the course content. It is interesting that – at a time of uncertainty – participants seemed to turn to digital channels for their choices to be affirmed. Participants asked questions that they were likely to have known the answer to or could have easily found it elsewhere. However, they seemed to reach to these digital channels was expediency and urgency were necessary. Participants commented that the level of detail in response, the time taken, and the warmth of the response were all factors that they considered when making their final decision. Research into clearing is somewhat limited, and this is certainly another area that could be explored in greater depth. It would also be interesting to interview participants at a traditional institution who had gone through clearing, to determine if the expectations were any different between types of institutions.

To conclude, it is apparent that all four of these communication tools have a role to play. However, viewing them in silo to one another is dangerous. Universities should seek to embed an integrated marketing communications campaign to ensure that the plethora of communication tools speak to the different students to address the array of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Out of all of the intervening variables between motivation and choice, this is the one area that university's marketing teams are able to utilise to guide applicants, but it is apparent that so much more could be done at the two institutions. As it stands, the two institutions approach seems to be unstructured, with a need for more conjoined thinking. A point that has previously been made that we keep returning to is that there appears to be certain channels which are more pertinent to parents than the final decision maker/key user (i.e. the student). This is a failing on the part of institutions.

6.3.4 Personal influencers

Finally, the discussion will now evaluate the impact of the last set of intervening variables, personal sources. Based upon the quantitative findings, It is apparent that only hypothesis 13c was supporting by the statistical tests, with there being a relationship between familial sources and the familial extrinsic motivating factor.

The first informational influencer identified was familial sources. Whilst similar this is different to the familial extrinsic motivation, as the latter looks at the extrinsic motivation of encouraging students to begin the application process to a university, whilst familial sources looks at opinions given by familial members once the search process has commenced. Furthermore, familial sources are separate to personal sources (found within informational influences) as personal sources refer to the ad hoc, informal relationships that decision makers will have with people, whilst familial sources explores the more intense relationships that decision makers have with their closest family.

It was apparent that familial sources absorbed more information delivered through traditional university channels, such as open days. Whilst attending open days, applicants at both institutions did not ask detailed questions of various recruitment teams and students, but parents were far more willing to go into depth asking probing questions about the city, course, and university. A consistent theme amongst participants was that parents would ask the same questions at each institution. Whilst none of the student participants interviewed remotely referred to parents making a decision on their behalf, six of the participants said that parents would reserve judgement until all optional institutions had been visited and would then provide a precis overview of their opinion on the strengths and weaknesses of each institution, thus giving a more holistic perspective. Unsurprisingly, familial sources did accentuate the role of familial sources (as the extrinsic motivator), as university's which reinforced the parent's image of what university should consist of invariably garnered support, irrespective of the type of institution Familial sources would also predominantly focus on the employability intrinsic motivator of attending a specific university, asking questions pertaining to this. Little heed was given to lifestyle opportunities. Perhaps a reason for this is parents would assume that students would have a greater awareness of the lifestyle components, something that was found to be true in the discussion surrounding gut feeling.

The second personal source explored was gut. This evaluated to how students felt internally about institutions. The interviews demonstrated that gut feeling derived from several sources – including their impression of an institution's digital channels; their feeling when visiting institutions on an open day; and any prior knowledge they held of the institution. Invariably though, gut referred to their initial 'snap' thoughts when they encountered the institution as an option for the first time. When considering gut feeling, little heed at either institution was paid to the employability intrinsic motivation. Potentially a reason for this is employability is an expected outcome derived from a rational thought process, whilst lifestyle is more of the emotional aspects, focusing on how content an individual is likely to be whilst studying at the institution, and living in the city environment. There was a clear awareness - at both institutions – of individuals gut intuition giving them a sense of 'belonging' when considering different institutions. Potentially due to their age (i.e. having recently entered adulthood), participants confessed to struggling to communicate in an open and transparent manner with their parents (and at times peers) when considering the choice process. An underlying theme that emerged from discussions is that students – particularly at the vocational institution – had different agendas than their parents when considering what university to attend, and this came through when discussing any inherent feelings. (Based upon the opinion of students and the administration and marketing staff) there was a clear thread running through most discussions that students wanted to attend a university for the immediate lifestyle benefits that they would enjoy. Students did not want to disclose to parents (and indeed the institutions they were applying to) that this was arguably the main motivating factor behind attending university so would often keep this gut feeling to themselves. Gut feeling also very much depended upon where students saw themselves in respect of their own lives. What type of environment did they wish to live in? Did they wish to live close to home, or put some distance between their home town further away? Were they currently in a relationship? Where were their close friends going to university? All of these were examples of internal issues which applicants wrestled with which contributed to their gut feeling.

Furthermore, it was also apparent with speaking with both students and administration and marketing staff, that gut feeling is also linked to the extrinsic motivation of digital influencers. Digital platforms provide an opportunity to either reinforce or detract away from the powerful, internal opinion that students may have about an institution. There is a need to ensure that the branding message found on digital influencers is consistent and clear, thus reinforcing the gut image that applicants may have.

6.4 Research question 4: To what extent do intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, and intervening variables, differ based upon the type of institutions?

As highlighted in the above discussions, congruence is found in the role that employability plays as an intrinsic motivator and familial influencer plays as an extrinsic motivator. Disparity is found based upon the emphasis placed on lifestyle components. More weight was placed by vocational students on a wider range of lifestyle aspects (namely the nightlife, city and surrounding area). A reason for this is the proximity of the vocational institution to the city centre. Conversely, students at the traditional institutions placed emphasis on other lifestyle components, namely, sports and societies and the campus environment. Difference was also found based upon the impact of digital influencers, with students at the vocational institution seemingly more impacted by digital influencers. This was particularly the case if these students did not have strong familial influencers. Differences between the emphasis placed on moderating variables was somewhat negligible. Whilst at times differences were acknowledged, there is minimal evidence of a pattern across participants to suggest that students at different institutions have a greater emphasis on certain moderating variables.

6.5 Conclusion the discussion chapter

Within the empirical findings there are several key conclusions drawn. Consistency between the type of institution is found in the role of parental influence; the increased emphasis needing to be placed on digital channels to realise motivations, with a recognition of the role that different types of digital channels can play, with third-party sites and departmental specific sites being recognised as appropriate. There is a clear need for the intrinsic motivations to be captured within all channels of communications.

Based upon differences found between the type of institutions, these are somewhat minimal. The role that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations play upon a decision are consistent across both types of institutions, though more nuanced differences emerged based upon the qualitative interviews. This justified the methodological perspective of a mixed methods approach, and whilst results between the two stages are apparent (i.e. no difference whatsoever was found in the quantitative research yet was found in the qualitative research) this is consistent with other research (e.g. Peruta and Shields, 2019).

Based upon a review of the two main research questions, it is apparent that there is a variable level of moderation of the intervening variables on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors. Whilst conclusions are drawn within the discussion, coupled with an awareness of the implications of theory, practice, and policy, there are several key themes that emerge across the research questions. These are reiterated and delved into in the final chapter – conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the main findings from the empirical investigation. From here theoretical, practical, and policy driven recommendations are proffered. There is an evaluation of the limitations of the thesis and the suggested directions for future research linked to this thesis. Finally, this chapter closes with an overall reflection of the completion of a PhD programme.

The previous results chapter has uncovered the new knowledge that informs expectancy–value theory (EVT) and practice within HE marketing. The practical findings are interesting to several stakeholders. Namely, practitioners working within a HE environment (both marketers and administrators – who were sampled in this study; and university leaders and policy makers); school/college teachers who are advising students on their education and/or career progression; key influencers in the student-choice process, particularly parents; and obviously students at different stages of the choice process. This can include students who are due to go through the UCAS application process in the foreseeable future; students who are currently going through the UCAS application process; and students who have recently gone through the application process (who use this study as a means of reflecting on their choice) Furthermore, given the parallels found between the marketing of HE and the marketing of other high-involvement goods, services, and experiences (such as car and house purchases) it is hoped that the research has a wider impact on other sectors. Understanding what intrinsically and extrinsically drives an individual to embark on their choice behaviour – and what factors moderate that choice – is vital in gaining a deeper understanding of the consumer, irrespective of the sector. Coupled with benefiting the UK HE market, this research can act as a launch pad for further research into the complex environment of student choice. Finally, the model developed in chapter 2 and subsequently empirically tested can be used as a model in an educational and consultancy setting.

This chapter will now present an overview of the implications of the findings of this thesis.

7.1 Managerial implications

There are several implications for managers who are responsible for developing HE recruitment and marketing strategies. As identified in section 2.3, there are increasing levels of competition between different universities. Changes to the sector and wider macro-environmental changes (including Brexit and COVID-19) will require institutions to be more robust and proactive with their finite resources, including how they utilise digital channels. Based upon the findings, the following core recommendations to managers (addressing Research Objective 5, presented in section 1.2) are offered.

Firstly, institutions should be prepared to divest control of the brand. Whilst this may be an alien concept to managers of a certain generation and/or perspective, institutions are unable to control and guide every single conversation concerning the institutions. Dialogue via social media will occur, and institutions should be both proactive and reactive to these conversations, albeit in a nuanced manner. Managers should allow for a greater level of free flow of information. Ultimately, a fairer representation of the sentiment towards institutions demonstrated online. Furthermore, the sentiment analysis could highlight any levels of brand evangelism taking place, and digital channels could become more prominent – both as an extrinsic motivator, and a moderator in the relationship between motivation and choice. As the student body becomes increasingly digitalised (i.e. Gen Z), coupled with the social distancing implications of the COVID-19 outbreak, this will become more prominent.

Secondly, universities should try to be at the forefront of digital innovation when it comes to marketing and recruitment activities. It was apparent that there is still an over-reliance on traditional communication tools. Whilst there is credence in this approach – not least as these traditional tools are still effective – see below – the traditional (and digital!) marketing communications still have a somewhat stodgy, formal feel to them. Whilst this information provided via these channels is important, more regular updates of existing digital platforms should take place, and marketing managers should seek to implement more mobile marketing (including gamification), virtual reality, and augmented reality into their recruitment and marketing activities, interjecting at key points of the customer journey that speak to the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of students. Using these aforementioned techniques are particularly relevant considering the globalised nature of the HE market, and any spill over from social distancing measures due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Thirdly, and conversely to the aforementioned point, the urge to reduce the role that traditional communications play in the marketing activities of institutions should be resisted. Traditional marketing communications still has a role to play – particularly with familial influencers – and traditional communications should be run in tandem – as opposed to at the behest – of digital activity. This hybrid approach may initially involve traditional communications being targeted towards familial influencers, and digital media being more targeted towards students.

Fourthly, HEI's should be clear on cultivating the USP of their institutional brand to stakeholders. An aspect that has been apparent throughout the research is the need for institutions to capitalise on any unique brand features – irrespective of whether it is a vocational or traditional institution. This may refer to a unique course or faculty; the heritage of the institution; employability links; or being an integral part of the regional community. Whatever the USP is, this should be extracted and communicated to stakeholders, with clear reference for the implications to the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of applicants.

Fifthly, there should be a recognition of the significant role that parents play in the emergence of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of students. It is apparent that any integrated marketing communications campaign either needs to target parents of students or there needs to be a separate campaign needs to be devised that maps the customer journey of familial influencers. This should incorporate an analysis of a range of parental socio-demographic factors, thus facilitating the tailoring of any campaign.

Sixthly, all schools and/or individual faculty members should be encouraged to tap into the intrinsic motivation variables of students. From personal experience, academic departments can have too much of a market-oriented approach to promoting their own portfolio of courses, and there needs to be a greater emphasis on the co-creation of value with all stakeholders in the promotion of their courses. Individual departments should be more involved in the planning process and should be implored to utilise traditional and digital channels whenever necessary.

Seventhly, institutions need to keep abreast of any wider macro changes, both in terms of the HE environment, digital platforms, and developments to the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators of students (and their parents). There is a requirement for institutions to carry out their own research to understand the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations on the choice, and the extent to which intervening variables can moderate these motivations.

Finally, in respect of addressing the gap in the research by way of the research design (i.e. in terms of providing a comparison between a traditional and vocational institution) it can be concluded that extrinsic motivations – and the level of influence of intervening variables – is generally similar, irrespective of the type of institution. Likewise, there were a range of similar relationships in respect of between intervening variables. Where difference was found was in relation to intrinsic motivations – with students at the traditional institution being more focused on the employability intrinsic motivation variable, and students at the vocational institution placing greater emphasis on the lifestyle intrinsic motivation variable. Nevertheless, irrespective of the institution, a clear integrated communications plan needs to be implemented to encourage applications, endorsements (i.e. positive word-of-mouth) and ultimately, choice.

Now that there has been a review into the implications for managers, this chapter will now present an overview of the implications for students (and parents of) for commence the UCAS application process.

7.2 Implications for students entering the UCAS process and their parents

There are several implications for students applying for university and their parents. These stakeholders are grouped together as arguably the advice given is applicable to both the student and their parents.

Firstly, recognise that things change –Students have developed as millennials and Gen Z consumers, exposed to a range of digital sources and influencers, constantly recognising the role that mobile and social media has in everyday life. They are exposed to range of stimuli that their parents simply would not have been exposed to at the same age, which in turn can impact what their expectations are out of university. Parents need to recognise this.

Secondly, be honest – Particularly for students at the vocational institution, it was apparent that applicants were more interested in the lifestyle motivating factor whilst parents were more concerned with the employability motivating factor. Between these 2 key stakeholders, there needs to be a more transparent conversation to reach congruence in respect of the merits of attending a specific university and what drives the decision.

Thirdly, tap into as many channels as possible – despite the multiple sources of information available, it was apparent that there is a sizeable proportion these sources applicants and their parents simply had not heard of. Institutions carry out a range of marketing and recruitment activities – particularly on digital media channels – that is simply not reaching its target audience. Examples of sources of information that students and their parents can access into university/school-specific blogs; university league tables; and social media channels. It is unclear at this stage if this is due to apathy, or a lack of awareness of the existence of these platforms.

Fourthly, be prepared to share information on the iterative process of choice with each other (i.e. between students and parents) and fellow students. It has become apparent that there appears to be a chasm in the expectations between parents and students. As the discussion chapter highlighted, parents gave a summative overview of each institution once the process had completed. Could this take place on an ongoing basis? Furthermore, students should seek to educate their parents on what specific lifestyle/employability aspects they come across, and how this leaves them feeling in the decision process.

Fifthly, decide in advance what are the main factors that constitute their motivation for attending HE and what their key choice criteria is. It was apparent whilst collecting and reviewing empirical data that different intervening variables were at play in the minds of different students. For each individual student, it is important to consider what they believe are the key factors which moderate their choice. Of course, these could evolve as students go through the choice process, but this would allow them to go through the process in a clear(er), systematic manner to thus identify what factors exist and what different considerations they need to make. This is particularly imperative considering the high-involvement nature of the decision.

Sixthly, students should consider what perspective they are taking when considering their choice – what college have they gone to? What are the expectations on HE progression? What are their parents' expectations? What job do they consider doing upon graduation? What type of university lifestyle do they want? Having an idea of the answer to these questions can provide a compass that can be referred to at intermittent points.

Finally, both parents and students should recognise that deciding which university to go to is a significant decision, that can ultimately be life changing. Entering the HE environment is one which should not be taken lightly, and emotionally, students should try to ensure that they are in the right place to make a balanced decision.

7.3 Policy implications

There are several policy implications that this research has identified. These are hereby presented:

Firstly, The UK government and institutions should examine the key intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for entering into the HE system on an ongoing basis. This would support any marketing activities by the institutions and give the UK government a clearer understanding of what drives student choice. In understanding what motivates choice, the UK government's policy could seek to address any skills shortages that exist to champion these specific courses. The introduction of the ‘Apprenticeship’ scheme in the UK HE sector – is an example of the type of policy that occurs as a result of understanding motivation.

Secondly, both the UK government and institutions should seek to understand the extent to which intervening variables moderate choice within the HE sector. Therefore, an attempt should be made to streamline the application process.

Thirdly, linked to the aforementioned point, there is an awareness that students are asked to make their institution choice at a rather difficult time (i.e. in the midst of completing their entry qualifications). Is there an argument for a complete revamp of the application system if more focus was placed upon digital materials? This may mean less of a reliance on traditional university communications (such as open days) but arguably a digitalised process could make the application far smoother. Nevertheless, such a suggestion does remove the notion of HE institution selection being a high-involvement choice.

Finally, when referring to UK choice – and highlighting how institutions address any intrinsic and extrinsic motivation variables – both the UK government and institutions should be encouraged to make full use of digital technology when communicating information to potential students and their parents. To maximise students’ opportunity to select the best course for them, universities should seek to hold more virtual events (such as virtual open days), utilising technology such as gamification and virtual reality to build brand awareness. Arguably, the HE sector (as a whole) should be encouraged to provide suitable tools for local colleges and sixth forms, meaning that students would be able to assess the employability and lifestyle elements, both in an individual and group (i.e. with peers or their parents) setting.

7.4 Theoretical implications

This study has developed new knowledge in a range of areas, with findings that could impact on a range of stakeholders as they embark on the student-choice process and they assess the respective intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors, and intervening variables.

The theoretical implications of this thesis can be broken down into two areas –, the implications for expectancy–value theory, and the development of a new conceptual framework that can be used for investigating the relationship between student motivation and student choice. Based upon empirical testing, it is apparent that the theoretical framework initially proposed at the end of the literature review – and slightly amended to incorporate additional variables in the methodology chapter – is appropriate for testing the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of students applying for university, albeit with the caveats discussed below. To solidify the appropriateness of this model, more empirical testing is needed (in a range of educational contexts).

Until now, expectancy–value theory has only been applied to the HE sector in a few studies (e.g. Chen, Gupta, and Hoshower, 2006; Friednman and Mandel, 2009; Chen, Gupta and Hoshower, 2004). it is apparent that EVT is an appropriate theory for investigating a HE context. Due to the minimal amount of research which currently investigates the role that EVT plays in the motivation to attend university, this research could act as a starting point for further investigations into the role that EVT can play in the HE sector.

This research identifies and evaluates the main intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors that act as the catalyst behind student choice. Whilst previous studies have explored some of these motivating factors to a degree (e.g. Maringe, 2006; Naude and Ivy, 1999; Perna and Titus, 2005). No existing empirical study has reflected the wider changes to the digital landscape and investigated the extent to which this can influence choice. By enveloping (and subsequently investigating) the idea of digital influencers into the proposed theoretical model, there is a clearer awareness of how digital influencers can play a role in motivating individuals to apply for an institution.

This research also recognises that there are a range of different intervening variables that moderate the impact of these intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors. Therefore, this research evaluates the extent to which these intervening variables play a moderating role between motivation and choice. This adds a new level of discussion to what is already a complex subject around student choice).

This research is set apart from several other studies, as it tests the framework generated. There are many existing frameworks (e.g. Vrontis, Thrassou and Melanthiou, 2007) that have not been empirically tested by the academics who have generated the models.

The comparison between two institutions (a traditional and vocational institution) helps to extract and evaluate any key differences of students applying to different types of institutions. This comparison has occurred in a limited number of existing studies, and providing this comparison adds a greater level of richness and transferability to the findings.

The empirical data collection incorporates the perspective of a range of different stakeholders. The majority of previous studies have only sought the perspective of a single stakeholder (i.e. institution or student). Again, providing the perspective of multiple stakeholders means that the model generated is more robust and can stand up better to scrutiny.

Considering these top-level contributions, this study adds a new, innovative, and exciting dimension to the existing body of literature on HE marketing, particularly with the focus on motivation and choice.

7.5 Limitations

There are, however, several limitations to this study that should be acknowledged.

Firstly, there could be an issue in relation to the sampling frame for this study. Due to a convenience sampling approach being utilised, student participation was somewhat clustered around certain schools and faculties. If this study was to be repeated a different sampling approach could be utilised (i.e. probability sampling) to ensure a more equal spread of participants. Such an approach would further address the 5 objectives set out in section 1.2.

Secondly, this research only looks at the UK HE sector at a particular point in time. There have been various macro- and micro-environmental changes (see below) since the empirical data collection took place which may alter the perspective of participants. However, this is a criticism which is true of all research, which is why the collection of primary data should be an iterative process. Such an approach would further address the 5 objectives set out in section 1.2.

Thirdly, there is a question of the transferability of results into other westernised HE environments that operate under different structures. Even if the study's findings could be applied to other westernised settings, the approach may not be applicable to other settings (i.e. non-westernised). However, the UK – and other westernised sectors – have an internationalised approach to student activities so it may be applicable in this area. Such an approach would further address the 5 objectives set out in section 1.2.

Fourthly, there could be qualms over when data was obtained. It can be argued that collecting data once students have commenced their studies may-contaminate students' perceptions in respect to what motivated them to apply to university. This is a slight shortcoming when addressing objective 3.

Fifthly, as this thesis incorporates an array of factors that can contribute towards motivation and moderate these motivating factors when making a choice, there is the concession that certain aspects were not explored as deeply as the researcher would have liked. This research should act as a starting point for further research moving forward, thus facilitating a further addressing of research objective 2.

Sixthly, a theme that is consistently referred to throughout the study in the role of parents. Whilst there have been some studies which have investigated the role of parents (e.g. Wilkins and Huisman, 2013; Hemsley-Brown, 2012; Lai *et al.* 2014) the findings on the role of parents is based upon the opinions of students and university staff. To obtain a more rounded perspective, there would need to be data obtained directly from parents. This would facilitate in ehancing findings for objectives 2 and 5.

Seventhly, beyond collecting information pertaining to parental education and type of school attended, there was little information gathered in respect to student's background. For example, questions could have been asked in relation to household income; whether older siblings had attended university; and region of the country students were from to determine whether or not this influenced motivation. Perhaps a reason this did not take place as it would have made the final survey too overburdened for the participant. However, arguably more information could have been asked to have refined ideas further. This would enhance the findings for objective 3.

Finally, this study has only focused upon 2 x universities in the UK. There is a need for far more research to determine the extent to which findings are applicable across the whole of the UK sector. Such an approach would be time dependent. Such an approach would further address the 5 objectives set out in section 1.2.

7.6 Directions for future research

There are areas for future research. These build upon the limitations and are detailed below:

Firstly, considering the recent COVID-19 outbreak, it would be interesting to re-deploy the study to determine whether changes to the wider macro-environment alter the motivation for students to attend university, and the extent to which intervening variables can moderate that factor. It is observed that COVID-19 has driven university operations (including teaching, recruitment, and promotion) to digital channels, so it would be highly interesting to repeat this study now to determine whether results would be different.

Secondly, there is the option of simply repeating this research at the same institutions at a different point in time. Changes such as UK government and funding allocation, coupled with changes in student demographics and demands may mean that there are similarities/disparities between results. Similarly, as a more digitalised generation grows up within the UK it may be that the extrinsic motivator digital influencers has a more prominent role.

Thirdly, for participants who expressed that digital influencers were an extrinsic motivator, and/or that digital sources acted as a moderating source of information, a narrower focus could be made on specific social media channels and/or digital activities. Within this study, the notion of 'digital communication' is very much grouped together. An investigation of more specific digital channels could be made.

Fourthly, the same research albeit at different institutions, either within a UK or other westernised HE environments. This would give more credibility to the proposed model and/or determine the transferability of the model to other HE environments respectively. Furthermore, such research could also facilitate a comparison within the existing findings.

Fifthly, a major issue that consistently came up throughout the study was the role that parents play, as both an extrinsic motivator and as a moderating variable. As highlighted in section 7.5, it is apparent that this was not investigated (i.e. the opinion was not sought) during the process of data collection. If the study took place again, the research design would be developed so that time was allocated to interview parents. This could determine the extent to which they believe their students stated motivation is a true reflection of their actual motivation, coupled with an awareness of what they believe are their (i.e. parents) own motivations for their children. This would provide a deep dive into the opinion of parents and provide more credibility to the proposed findings.

Sixthly, the academic and marketing staff interviewed for this study were very much the middle management/student facing staff members of the respective universities. Whilst this gives a clear reflection of what is happening on the ground level, interviewing higher level decision makers (e.g. VCs/DVC/PVC/registrar) could give a clearer overview of the overall strategy of universities. Furthermore, incorporating the views of academic staff members in empirical data collection would also harvest the perspective of a key stakeholder.

Seventhly, there could be another approach to data collection. Namely, participants could be asked to record their observations in relation to motivations in a diary. These diaries could be extracted for themes, which would allow for a comparison of what motivates students over an extended period.

Eighthly, this research focuses on motivations prior to commencing the choice process. It would be interesting to observe how these motivations fluctuated over the duration of their studies. This would facilitate a greater comparison with the work of Moogan (2020).

Finally, if the researcher was to be repeated, a different approach to obtaining participants could be made to ask students about their motivation processes prior to either commencing study, and/or commencing their UCAS process. Participants could be accessed via social networks (though this could raise questions as towards the appropriateness of participation – i.e. how we could assure that participants were embarking on the UCAS process) or via local colleges.

7.7 A reflection

The completion of this PhD has certainly not been without its challenges. When I began the course at the University of Southampton in 2012, I certainly did not envisage the route I would take to get here, seven and a half years later. There have been suspensions to study, a relocation, getting engaged, married, and fathering two children… My life has changed, immeasurably for the better. I have learnt to take my time when working on a substantive piece of academic work, viewing the process as a marathon, as opposed to a sprint.

In reflecting on the process, I consider what drove me to commence my own programme of study. Intrinsically, I was motivated by the employment prospects that a PhD could bring in terms of career progression. I hope that a PhD will solidify my position as an academic and be the start of some sort of publication record. The main extrinsic motivation was digital influencers – particularly as I was a lecturer (and retain a keen interest) in Digital Marketing. I have found that – over the last seven and a half years – the motivation for progressing and ultimately completing the programme have evolved – with various intervening variables moderating both the initial factors and bringing other factors into play. This is to be expected. I look forward (in anticipation) to the next stage of my career.

APPENDIX A: REFERENCED PUBLICATIONS

A.1 Examples of journal in which authors' research was reported

The first three rows of this table were presented as Table 2.1 (page 10).

Table A - 1: Journal in which authors' research was reported (Source: author's own).

Title of journal (alphabetic order)	Authors
Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education	Ahmad (2015); Gatfield (1999)
British Educational Research Journal	Foskett, Dyke, and Maringe (2008); Hemsley-Brown (2015)
Higher Education Quarterly	Cao, Zhu and Meng (2016); Davies and Williams (2001); Gunn and Hill (2008); Jongbloed (2003); Korfmann, Muller, Ehlert, and Haase (2019)
International Journal of Educational Management	Alfattal (2017); Alves and Raposa (2010); Bonnema and Van der Waldt (2008); Chen and Zimitat (2006); Dao and Thorpe (2015); Durkin, McKenna and Cummins (2012); Fujita, Harrigan and Soutar (2017); Gibbs, Pashiardis, and Ivy (2008); Greenacre, Freeman, Cong, and Chapman (2014); Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2010); Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2015); Ivy (2010); James-MacEachern and Yun (2017); Maria-Cubillo, Sanchez, and Cerviño (2006); Maringe (2006); Maringe and Carter (2007); Mazzarol and Soutar (2002); Mogali and Yoon (2019); Naude and Ivy (1999); Othman, Mohamad, and Barom (2019); Petruzzellis and Romanazzi (2010); Ramachandran (2010); Santos, Rita, and Guerreiro (2018); Veloutsou, Lewis, and Paton (2004)
International Journal of Public Sector Management	Hemsley-Brown and Lowrie (2010); Hemsley-Brown, Lowrie, and Chapleo (2010); Hemsley-Brown, Lowrie, Gruber, Fuß, Voss, and Gläser-Zikuda (2010); Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006)

Title of journal (alphabetic order)	Authors
Journal of Further and Higher Education	Chapleo and Winter (2017); Kaye and Bates (2017); Moogan (2020); Moogan and Baron (2003)
Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management	Baldwin and James (2000); Branco Oliveira and Soares (2016); Briggs and Wilson (2007); Fagerstrøm, and Gheorghita (2013); Le, Dobele, and Robinson (2019); Martensson and Richtner (2015); McManus, Haddock-Fraser and Rands (2017); Palmer (2013); Schofield, Cotton, Gresty, Kneale, and Winter (2013); Szekeres (2010); Tapper and Filippakou (2009)
Journal of Studies in International Education	Lee (2014); Marginson and Van der Wende (2007); Sleeman, Lang, and Lemon (2016); Wilkins, Balakrishnan, and Huisman (2012); Wilkins and Huisman (2013); Wu (2014)
Perspectives	Chapleo and Simms (2010)
Studies in Higher Education	Briggs (2006); de la Torre, Rossi, and Sagarra (2018); Haywood and Scullion (2018); Hemsley-Brown (2012); Kalafatis and Ledden (2013); Simões and Soares (2010). Wilcox, Winn, and Fyvie-Gauld (2005); Wilkins and Huisman (2015); Woodall, Hiller, and Resnick (2014)
Tertiary Education and Management	Bélanger, Bali, and Longden (2014); Dunnett, Moorhouse, Walsh, and Barry (2012); Grebennikov and Shah (2013)
The Journal of Higher Education	Chapman (1981); Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, and Terenzini (2004); Perna and Titus (2005); Rowan-Kenyon, Bell, and Perna (2008)
Journal of Marketing for Higher Education	Abubakar, Shanka, and Muuka (2010); Angulo, Pergeolva, and Rialp (2010); Brech, Messer, Vander Schee, Rauschnabel, and Ivens (2017); Chapleo, Carrillo Duran, and Castillo Diaz (2011); Chee, Butt, Wilkins, and Ong (2016); Clark, Fine, and Scheuer (2017); Constantinides and Zinck Stagno (2011); Dawes and Brown (2002); del Rocio Bonilla, Perea, del Olmo, and Corrons (2019); Edmiston-Strasser (2009); Gai, Xu, and Pelton (2016); Galan, Lawley, and Clements (2015); Gatfield and Chen (2006); Gibbs (2007); Guilbault (2016); Harker, Slade, and Harker (2001);

Title of journal (alphabetic order)	Authors
	Hayes, Ruschman, and Walker (2009); Helgesen (2008); Khanna, Jacob, and Yadav (2014); Mazzarol, Soutar, and Thein (2001); Ng and Forbes (2009); Nedbalová, Greenacre, and Schulz (2014); Obermeit (2012); Pampaloni (2010); Peruta and Shields (2017); Peruta and Shields (2018); Pippert, Essenburg, and Matchett (2013); Pringle and Fritz (2019); Roszkowski and Spreat (2010); Rutter, Lettice and Nadeau (2017); Simiyu, Bonuke, and Komen (2019); Teng, Khong, and Chong (2015); Trullas, Fusalba, Fito, and Sallan (2018); Winter and Thompson-Whiteside (2017); Zhu (2019)
Global Business and Economics Review	Melanthiou, Thrassou, and Vrontis (2017)
Journal of Brand Management	Chapleo (2011)
Journal of Business Research	El Nemar, Vrontis, and Thrassou (2018); Hayes (2007); Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007); Henriques, Matos, Jerónimo, Mosquera, da Silva, and Bacalhau (2018); Lowrie (2007); Miotto, Del-Castillo-Feito, and Blanco-Gonzalez (2019); Rutter, Roper, and Lettice (2016); Vrontis, Thrassou, and Melanthiou (2007); Zheng (2014)
Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science	Fujita, Harrigan, and Soutar (2017)
Journal of Marketing Management,	Bolat and O'Sullivan (2017); Carter and Curry (2011); Naidoo, Shankar, and Veer (2011)
Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice	Fujita, Harrigan, and Soutar (2018)

Title of journal (alphabetic order)	Authors
Marketing Intelligence & Planning	Assad, Melewar, Cohen, and Balmer (2013); Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003); Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009); Moogan, Baron, and Bainbridge (2001)

A.2 Key literature on the intrinsic motivational driver of employability as an influencer of student choice

The first three rows of this table were presented as Table 2.3 (page 44).

Table A - 2: Key literature on the intrinsic motivational driver of employability as an influencer of student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Agrey and Lampadan (2014)	A survey was developed, based upon the literature review and eight interviews with first-year students. In total, 441 respondents participated in the survey. Employability was found as a prevailing factor in student choice.	Mixed methods approach	2
Bonnema and van der Weldt (2008);	Stratified sample of 19 secondary schools identified ten factors under the VARCLUS procedure, identified employability factors as one of the factors behind university choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Branco Oliveira, and Soares (2016)	16 face-to-face interviews investigating motivation and choice criteria in universities. Found that wanting to develop professional contacts was a reason for international student mobility.	Qualitative approach	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that choice is complex, with employability being one of the key factors of student choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Cao, Zhu, and Meng (2016)	Survey of 780 participants found that career prospects is a driving factors behind international student mobility. Exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis employed.	Quantitative approach	2
Carter and Yeo (2009)	Survey generated a comparison between UK and Malaysian education sector. Found that employability is driving motivation behind entering university.	Quantitative approach	2
Dunnet, Moorhouse, Walsh, and Barry (2012)	Single focus group, followed by 400 participants completing an online survey.	Mixed methods approach	2
Garver, Spralls,and Divine (2009)	Focus group investigating the increased emphasis on career services within universities.	Qualitative approach	2
Glover, Law, and Youngman (2002)	Survey of 400 students at commencement of course and 400 students at completion of university course, followed by 16 in-depth interviews investigating the importance of employability in comparison to the pursuit of knowledge.	Mixed methods approach	2
Han (2014)	Literature review into college choice in the USA. Found that earning potential is a key driver in student motivation in the USA.	Literature review	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Henriques, Matos, Jerónimo, Mosquera, da Silva, and Bacalhau (2018)	Using fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA), data was collected from 368 eligible questionnaires. Study concluded that graduate employability is a first order choice criterion.	Quantitative research approach	2
James, Baldwin, and McInnis (1999)	Two surveys carried out in 1998 and 1999, with 937 and 538 respondents, respectively. Followed up by 12 telephone interviews with participants. Found that graduate employability figures were a key choice criterion.	Mixed methods research approach	2
Khanna, Jacob, and Yadav (2014)	276 responses to an online survey that sought to measure different ‘touch points’ for an institutions brand. Concluded that graduate employability figures influences applications	Quantitative research approach	2
McGregor, Thanki, and McKee (2002)	Utilised a 1 in 2 sample (4,240 individuals) of Northern Irish entrants into HE in 1991/1992. Found that employability was a driving factor behind selection of a university away from Northern Ireland. Carried out a comparison of demographic variables.	Quantitative approach	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Mogali and Yoon (2019)	Thematic analysis of 121 prospectuses of UK universities. Findings suggested that messages were predominantly about the location, the course, student experience (i.e. lifestyle), credibility, and career progression.	Qualitative approach	3
Moogan (2020)	In determining the 'problem recognition' stage of the CDP, the author found in most participants (focus groups with sample size of 35 participants), career development was seen to be the solution behind commencing a postgraduate course.	Quantitative approach	2
Moogan and Baron (2001)	In determining the problem recognition stage, the authors found that career development (linked to earning capacity) was viewed as a priority.	Qualitative research approach	2
Moogan, Baron, and Harris (2003)	Many respondents who were applying for university highlighted the need to obtain a 'decent and well-paid job' as a reason behind attending university.	Qualitative research approach	2
Naude and Ivy (1999)	In exploring changes to the UK HE system, questionnaire responses were obtained from 131 responses from senior staff at UK institutions. Found that on a basic premise, employment was one of the core benefits that was sought by applicants.	Quantitative approach	3
Rudd, Djafarova, and Waring (2012)	Interviews with 51 international Chinese students, at UK Business Schools, found that the level of graduate employability plays a role in study decisions.	Qualitative research approach	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Sabir, Ahmad, Ashraf, and Ahmad (2013)	Survey of 226 participants highlighted that career prospects and employability were key drivers of decision to enter Higher Education (Pakistani context).	Quantitative approach	2
Tomlinson (2008)	Interviews with 53 final year undergraduate students. Investigated the extent to which employability variable has been met.	Qualitative approach	2
Trullas, Simo, Fusalba, Fito, and Sallan (2018)	Focus groups with four participants; followed by survey with 359 participants. Structural equation modelling employed. Study focused upon the extent to which existing students had employability needs met, and what universities can do for future cohorts.	Mixed methods approach	2
Wilkins, Shams, and Huisman (2013)	Surveys of 1,549 of year 12 VIth form students (spread across four institutions). Main conclusion is that students demonstrated a high level of anxiety, and concerned about earning potential due to changes in the macro and micro HE environment.	Quantitative approach	2

A.3 Key literature on the intrinsic motivational driver of lifestyle factors as an influencer of student choice

The first three rows of this table were presented as Table 2.4 (page 46).

Table A - 3: Key literature on the intrinsic motivational driver of lifestyle factors as an influencer of student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Agrey and Lampadan (2014)	A survey was developed, based upon the literature review and eight interviews with first-year students. In total, 441 respondents participated in the survey. The opportunity to join a sports club was found as a reason behind attending university.	Mixed methods approach	2
Ahmad (2015)	21 face-to-face interviews and 250 questionnaires distributed, investigating the motivation to attend branch campuses. Found that the chance to engage with sports clubs and societies (as if studying at the main campus) was vital for motivation to attend branch campuses.	Mixed methods approach	2
Ali-Choudhury, Bennett, and Savani (2009)	Interviews with 25 marketing managers and communications directors at universities in London and the South East of England (post 1992 institutions). Concluded that universities need to be 'friendly' and one way that this can be portrayed is via an active student union promoting vibrant sports and societies clubs.	Qualitative approach	3

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Bailey, Gosper, Ifenthaler, Ware, and Kretzschema (2018)	Survey into 744 students, discussing differences between enrolling part-time, online, and traditional course. Concluded that a flexible lifestyle is a reason why students are motivated to study.	Quantitative approach	2
Gatfield (1999)	261 surveys given to student, who identified that joining an academic based 'society' was a reason behind joining an institution.	Quantitative approach	2
Greenacre, Freeman, Cong, and Chapman (2014)	Ten focus groups, each with 8–10 participants; followed by a survey of 258 participants. Whilst study focused upon WOM, study concluded that WOM is used to communicate flexible lifestyle.	Mixed methods approach	2
Mogali and Yoon (2019)	Thematic analysis of 121 prospectuses of UK universities. Findings suggested that messages were predominantly about the location, the course, student experience (i.e. lifestyle), credibility, and career progression.	Qualitative approach	3
Townsend and Wilson (2006)	Interviews with 19 participants, with main conclusion that the opportunity to make friends at a higher level would facilitate a smooth transition into Higher Education.	Qualitative approach	2
Wilcox, Winn, and Fyvie-Gauld (2005)	Interviews with 34 1st year students, who found that the intention to make friends was one of the main reasons behind maintaining engagement with a university course.	Qualitative approach	2

A.4 Key literature on the extrinsic motivational driver of familial influences on student choice

The first four rows of this table were presented as Table 2.5 (page 49)

Table A - 4: Key literature on the extrinsic motivational driver of familial influences on student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Chen and Zimitat (2006)	518 completed surveys were subjected to principal component analysis. Found that close friends and family members were a driving factor in students' decisions to study overseas.	Quantitative research approach	2
James, Baldwin, and McInnis (1999)	Two surveys carried out in 1998 and 1999, with 937 and 538 respondents respectively. Followed up with 12 telephone interviews with participants. Found that the opinion of parents was as key source of information.	Mixed methods research approach	2
Lee and Morrish (2012)	20 interviews (9 parents, and 11 students) in a study that explored. The research concluded that cultural relationships can influence the role that parents have on encouraging their children to attend university.	Qualitative research approach	2
Moogan, Baron, and Harris (2003)	Almost a third of respondents (out of a total of 19 pupils) highlighted that parents were responsible for their decision to attend university.	Qualitative research approach	2
Winter and Chapleo (2017)	Telephone interviews with 24 participants, asking them to consider how the service environment impacts their choice of university. Found that the opinion of close	Qualitative research approach	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
	friends and family members is used as a motivating factor		
Yang, Yen, and Balmer (2020)	In-depth interview with 34 Taiwanese and 11 Chinese students found that parents have a clear influence over students wishing to study in HE.	Qualitative research approach	2
Zhang, Lui, and Hagedorn (2013)	96 completed studies by female undergraduate students assessing motivations behind studying overseas. Found that the role of parents clearly acted as a motivator to commence the application decision.	Quantitative research approach	2

A.5 Key literature on the socio-demographic factor of parental education as an influencer of student choice

The first three rows of this table were presented as Table 2.7 (page 55)

Table A - 5: Key literature on the socio-demographic factor of parental education as an influencer of student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Al-Yousef (2009)	Focus groups and individual interviews with 54 young women (aged 16–20) from a range of cultural backgrounds. The study concluded that levels of involvement differed based upon the gender of the parent, although there is little relationship between the parent's educational background and the level of involvement.	Qualitative approach	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Boudarbat and Montmarquette (2009)	Results based upon a survey of 18,708 graduates suggests that the weight placed on earnings depends upon the educational level of parents who are of the same gender as applicants.	Quantitative approach	2
Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009)	Examined applicant's choice with reference to Kotler's 5-stage model. four focus groups with 22 participants in total from one university. Concluded that their parental education has a large impact on selection.	Qualitative approach	2
Cho, Hudley, Lee, Barry, and Kelly (2008)	Web-based survey carried out amongst 1,549 incoming (i.e. freshman) students in the USA. Study concluded that level of parental education has a strong impact upon choice.	Quantitative approach	2
Lubbe and Petzer (2013)	Web-based survey of 1,290 respondents in South Africa. Found that level of parental education was key factor that influenced university choice.	Quantitative approach	2
O'Shea, Stone, Delahunty, and May (2016)	Investigation of 'first in family' university attendees in Australia. Found that being first in family leads to identification of employability development and realising generational dreams and ambitions.	Mixed methods approach	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Pugeley and Coffey (2002)	In a thematic analysis, the authors explored the involvement of parents with no prior experience of education. Conclusions suggested that these parents were generally unaware of any alternatives that existed.	Qualitative approach	2
Rowan-Kenyon, Bell, and Perna (2008)	Data from descriptive case studies of 15 high schools. Respondents focused specifically on how parental involvement shaped college opportunity. Clear correlation between higher level of parental education and enrolment at university.	Qualitative approach	2

A.6 Key literature into the socio-demographic factor of nationality as influencers of student choice.

The first three rows of this table were presented as Table 2.8 (page 56)

Table A - 6: Key literature into the socio-demographic factor of nationality as influencers of student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Alfattal (2017)	1,304 usable questionnaires were collected in comparison of international and home students in the USA. Conclusions drawn suggested that international students are more likely to focus upon emphasis of familial sources as an extrinsic motivator.	Quantitative approach	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Cho, Hudley, Lee, Barry, and Kelly (2008)	Web-based survey carried out amongst 1,549 incoming (i.e. freshman) students in the USA. Study concluded that nationality has a strong impact upon choice.	Quantitative approach	22
Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2016)	Based upon extensive review of existing literature, authors found that nationality will influence the choice in university, particularly amongst first-generation attendees.	Analysis of existing literature	
Ivy (2010)	Survey of 427 students in sixth form colleges in Leicester. Found that the student's career (i.e. employability factors) was the most prevalent, irrespective of ethnicity). The influence of family was most important amongst African and Pakistani students; apparent that home students had little emphasis on familial sources within their own choice.	Quantitative approach	2
Moogan (2020)	Focusing upon postgraduate students, focus groups investigated differences amongst international students in terms of why UK is destination choice.	Qualitative approach	2
Pippert, Essenburg, and Matchett (2013)	Content analysis of over 10,000 photographs from 165 US institutions, found that majority of institutions provided images of a diverse racial campus environment. However, this was unrepresentative of the actual student body.	Content analysis.	2

A.7 Key literature on the environmental factor ‘department’ as an influence on student choice

The first four rows of this table were presented as Table 2.10 (page 61)

Table A - 7: Key literature on the environmental factor ‘department’ as an influence on student choice (Source: author’s own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Bonnema and van der Weldt (2008);	Stratified sample of 19 secondary schools identified ten factors under the VARCLUS procedure, identified course content as one of the factors behind university choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that choice is complex, with academic reputation of department being one of the key factors of student choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009)	Examined applicant’s choice with reference to Kotler’s 5-stage model. Four focus groups with 22 participants in total from one university. Concluded that course content has a large impact on selection.	Qualitative research approach	2
Drewes and Michael (2006)	Used a set of microdata on university applications to examine role played by attributes of university in choice. Comparison of 17 universities in Ontario, Canada. Found that reputation of research quality was a driving factor in institutional choice.	Observation of existing data	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Hemsley-Brown, Lowrie, Gruber, Fuß Voss, and Gläser-Zikuda (2010)	Whilst this research focused upon student satisfaction, results garnered could feed into the choice process. Questionnaires were distributed in lectures to students, with 544 (main study) completing the survey. Findings indicate that teaching quality is a main factor of student satisfaction.	Quantitative research approach	2
Imeda, Kongolo, and Grewal (2004)	A descriptive survey that examined the choice factors of four South African institutions, the survey found that teaching resources and quality was a driving factor behind choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Khanna, Jacob, and Yadav (2014)	276 responses to an online survey that sought to measure different 'touch points' for an institutions brand. Concluded that reputation of teaching quality influences applications	Quantitative research approach	2
Korfmann, Muller, Ehlert, and Haase (2020)	Using data from a discrete choice experiment, the authors specifically investigated the role of departmental features at individual institutions.	Quantitative research approach	3
Maringe (2006)	387 students at sixth forms and colleges completed a survey on factors that influence student choice. Found that academic reputation can play an important role in decision-making.	Quantitative research approach	2
Miotto, Castillo-Feito, and	By carrying out a survey of 509 professors at 47 different Spanish universities, the authors	Quantitative research approach	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Blanco-Gonzalez (2019)	concluded that a reputation has a significant and positive effect on its legitimacy.		
Moogan, Baron, and Bainbridge (2001)	In a longitudinal study of 32 participants, the attribute of location was considered to be important, particularly in the latter stages of an application process.	Qualitative research approach	2
Oplatka and Hemsley-Brown (2010)	A comparative online survey of 68 academics in UK & Israel found that research factors was a driving force within the marketisation of HE.	Quantitative research approach	3
Price, Matzdorf, Smith, and Agahi(2003);	A survey of undergraduates found that a number of factors, including course content, has an important influence on student choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Rudd, Djafarova, and Waring (2012)	Interviews with 51 international Chinese students, at UK Business Schools, found that the reputation of teaching quality plays a role in study decisions	Qualitative research approach	2
Schofield, Cotton, Gresty, Kneale, and Winter (2013)	Facilitated due to changes in the UK HE sector, the authors identified that course content was one of themes rising out of the changes, particularly in relation to new universities.	Qualitative analysis of literature	2
Veloutsou, Lewis, and Paton (2004);	Survey of 306 pupils in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland identified seven broad sources of information/choice criteria categories, of which course content was one.	Quantitative research approach	2

A.8 Key literature on the environmental factor 'location' as an influence on student choice

The first four rows of this table were presented as Table 2.11 (page 63)

Table A - 8: Key literature on the environmental factor 'location' as an influence on student choice (Source: author's own).

Location			Link to research objective?
Abubakar, Shanka, and Muuka (2010)	Survey completed by 190 participants into the role that location can play in the selection criteria in the preferences of international students – investigation focused on a comparison of two institutions in Australia – one on the east coast and one on the west coast.	Quantitative research approach	2
Agrey and Lampadan (2014)	A survey was developed, based upon the literature review and eight interviews with first-year students. In total, 441 respondents participated in the survey. A safe environment was found as a prevailing factor in student choice.	Mixed methods approach	2
Ahn and Davis (2020)	A survey completed by 426 participants found that the geographical location of an institution helped to formulate the sense of belonging felt by students.	Quantitative research approach	2
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that choice is complex, with city appeal being one of the key factors of student choice.	Quantitative research approach	2

Location			Link to research objective?
Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009)	Examined applicant's choice with reference to Kotler's 5-stage model. Four focus groups with 22 participants in total from one university. Concluded that the location of a university has a large impact on selection.	Qualitative research approach	2
Chapleo (2008)	In interviews with 12 external opinion formers (i.e. senior management within funding bodies and blue-chip organisations), findings concluded that location was a prominent choice factor.	Qualitative research approach	3
Gottschall and Saltmarsh (2017)	This research focused upon the role of online promotional videos at an Australian university. The research concluded that emphasising the city aspects are key when influencing prospective students to attend a university.	Observation	2
Hemsley-Brown (2012)	This study used thematic analysis on the personal statements of 60 HE applicants. Found that location was a clear choice criterion for applicants.	Qualitative research approach.	2
Henriques, Matos, Jerónimo, Mosquera, da Silva, and Bacalhau (2018)	Using fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA), data was collected from 368 eligible questionnaires. Study concluded that appeal of a city is a second order choice criteria.	Quantitative research approach	2
Obermeit (2012)	In a review of existing literature, author found that location was one of four driving factors influencing choice of institution.	Review of literature	2

Location			Link to research objective?
Pampaloni (2010)	Survey of 43 participants, concluded that the appeal of a city plays a role in the choice criteria for USA students.	Quantitative research approach	2
Rekettye and Pozsgai (2015)	Study explored how the awarding of the title 'European Capital of Culture' helped universities within host cities appeal to more prospective students.	Observations	2
Roszkowski and Spreat (2010)	Using the Admitted Student Questionnaire Plus (ASQ+), research sampled 2,692 accepted applicants for a university in separate years. Found that the city appeal is a prevalent factor in choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Rudd, Djafarova, and Waring (2012)	Interviews with 51 international Chinese students, at UK Business Schools, found that the destination city and level of personal safety plays a role in study decisions.	Qualitative research approach	2
Sia (2013)	A survey collected responses from 463 participants. The survey concluded that location was a driving factor behind student choice of an institution.	Quantitative research approach	2
Winter and Chapleo (2017)	Telephone interviews with 24 participants, asking them to consider how the service environment impacts their choice of university. Found that the city appeal was an influencing factor, albeit students can be geographically unaware.	Qualitative research approach	2

Location			Link to research objective?
Winter and Thompson-Whiteside (2017)	Convenience sample of 105 university prospectuses, followed by interviews with 15 university marking decision makers. The main implications found were that implications were in the eye of the beholder (i.e. applicant) and institutions should seek to offer a means for differentiation	Qualitative research approach	3

A.9 Key literature on the environmental factor 'rankings' as an influence on student choice

The first four rows of this table were presented as Table 2.12 (page 65).

Table A - 9: Key literature on the environmental factor 'rankings' as an influence on student choice (Source: author's own).

Rankings			Link to research objective?
Assad, Melewar, Cohen, and Balmer (2013)	In face-to-face interviews with 8 x marketing and recruitment staff members, found that rankings were a prominent factor in student choice.	Qualitative research approach	3
Bowden (2000)	Provided a review of existing UK (Times; Sunday Times; Financial Times) and overseas league tables. Research published in 2000, meaning some league tables that are prevalent (e.g. *The Guardian* and online league tables) not included in the review. Conclusions that league tables can often be misleading.	Observation of existing data	2

Rankings			Link to research objective?
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that choice is complex, with academic reputation being one of the key factors of student choice.	Quantitative research approach	
Chapleo (2011)	Argued in literature review that 'league table' position can replace market share.	Literature review discussion	-
Dao and Thorpe (2015)	In an assessment of Vietnamese students, a survey of 1,124 of current or recently completed university students found that rankings influenced choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Gibbons, Neumayer, and Perkins (2015)	Explored the impact of the UK's NSS (National Student Survey) on undergraduate degrees. Concluded that there was a small statistical significant effect on the university subject level, whereas information in league tables was more salient.	Observations of existing data	-
Gunn and Hill (2008)	Found a correlation between the league table position of institution and the number of applications (i.e. the higher ranking an institution the increased number of applications that would take place).	Observations of existing data	-
Han (2014)	Literature review into college choice in the USA. Found that university ranking is a key choice criterion in the USA.	Literature review	2
Hazelkorn (2008)	Survey of institutional leaders/managers, exploring how HEIs are responding to the impact of league tables.	Quantitative research approach	3

Rankings			Link to research objective?
Henriques, Matos, Jerónimo, Mosquera, da Silva, and Bacalhau (2018)	Using fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA), data was collected from 368 eligible questionnaires. Study concluded that university reputation/ranking is a first order choice criterion.	Quantitative research approach	2
Khanna, Jacob, and Yadav (2014)	276 responses to an online survey that sought to measure different 'touch points' for an institutions brand. Concluded that a university's ranking position influences applications.	Quantitative research approach	2
Martensson and Richtner (2015)	Findings indicate that some of the parameters used in rankings are in reality less important to students. An example of this was the focus on research in developing rankings.	Mixed methods approach	2
Poole, Levin, and Elam (2018)	Developed a new model to cluster and classify HEIs. In total, 42 variables were incorporated to group 761 private HEIs and 414 public HEIs.	Observation of existing data	2
Roszkowski and Spreat (2010)	Using the Admitted Student Questionnaire Plus (ASQ+), research sampled 2,692 accepted applicants for a university in separate years. Found that the ranking of institutions is a prevalent factor in choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Tapper and Filppakou (2009)	Commentary provided on challenges facing rankings systems.	Literature review	-

Rankings			Link to research objective?
Veloutsou, Lewis, and Paton (2004);	Survey of 306 pupils in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland identified seven broad sources of information/choice criteria categories, of which course and university reputation was one.	Quantitative research approach	2

A.10 Key literature into digital communication channels which influence student choice

The first four rows of this table were presented as Table 2.13 (page 69).

Table A - 10: Key literature into digital communication channels which influence student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Bélanger, Bali, and Longden (2014)	Collected data from both the Facebook and Twitter accounts of all 106 Canadian universities, over the course of six months. They concluded that institutions Twitter accounts were predominantly focused around a 'campus news' – broadcasting information from campus providing news and promoting the institutional brand.	Qualitative research approach	3

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Brech, Messer, Vander Schee, Rauschnabel, and Ivens (2017)	The research identified the Facebook pages and websites of 159 German and UK institutions, and their respective websites. A review into the most recent 20 Facebook postings on these respective Facebook pages. The study concluded that a universities size and reputations will mean that they have bigger online communities. However, this study focused only on the Facebook platform, and fails to consider the different types of stakeholders.	Netnographic based research	3
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that a university's website was a key source of information.	Quantitative research approach	2
Chapleo, Carrillo Duran, and Castillo Diaz (2011)	Web pages of 20 UK universities were investigated by authors. Found that information on teaching and research are well communicated, but social values such as social responsibility were not.	Content and multivariate analysis	3

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Clark, Fine, and Scheuer (2017)	Analysed how social media can be used to develop relationship quality between HEI's and various stakeholders. The results highlighted the primary Facebook page as being a primary source of engagement, concluding that followers would be '…*more likely to be exposed to the benefits that come from an institution's social media site'* (p.6). Only a rudimentary approach has been used though, with the number of Facebook followers being used for assessment purposes.	Qualitative research approach	2
Constantinides and Zinck Stango (2012)	Survey of 400 prospective university, aimed at identifying socio-demographic features, information sources used; and reasons behind using social media. Investigation on wider usage of social media, as opposed to how social media is used for searching for information when applying for university. In understanding these aspects though, universities could amend their own social media offering to appeal more to target audience.	Quantitative research approach	2
Del Rocio Bonilla, Perea, del Olmo, and Corrons (2019)	Using data from the official Instagram account of the University of Barcelona, an analysis of the posts published by the university was carried out. The time period for this analysis was over the duration of an academic year. Analysed the extent to which posts facilitated engagement with institution.	Netnography based research	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Fagerstrøm and Ghinea (2013)	The research investigated how the development of Facebook groups by a university influenced interactions and the context of conversations. In total 126 participants were members of the Facebook group.	Content analysis of social media site	2
Fujita, Harrigan, and Soutar (2017)	Five Facebook threads were presented to focus groups of students. Participants were asked to comment upon their own engagement behaviours; engagement drivers with a HEI. Findings concluded that engagement with an institutions Facebook page was passive, and but that social media could enhance identification with a university.	Qualitative research approach	2
Fujita, Harrigan, and Soutar (2017)	Explored the nature of collaborative co-creation in a social media brand community. An analysis of the UWA (University of Western Australia's) Student's Facebook page. This led to the formulation of 331 threads (200 started by the page and 131 by users). The study concluded that social media in Higher Education can facilitate the co-creation of value. The research only focused on one platform (i.e. Facebook) and one institution (i.e. UWA).	Netnographic based research	2
Gai, Xu, and Pelton (2016)	Examined content posted by Chinese applicants to American universities on the www.chasedream.com platform.	Netnographic based research	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Galan, Lawley, and Clements (2015)	Twelve qualitative interviews at an Australian university, investigating how and why potential business postgraduate students use social media for deciding where to study a postgraduate taught course. 10 themes (that were mapped to the CDP) were identified. With the most prevalent theme being '*finding out about university and campus life'*.	Qualitative research approach	2
Le, Dobele, and Robinson (2019)	This research analysed data from the question-and-answer site Quora. In total 865 questions were analysed to examine the factors student seek when selecting information. The findings report that reputation, career prospect, learning and teaching, administration, and student life were key choice criteria.	Netnographic based research.	2
Lund (2018)	Using Habibi, Laroche, and Richard's (2014) theory of social media marketing, the author investigated the relationships between the number of followers and interactions on top-ranked universities' Facebook pages and the attributes of those universities. Pearson and ANOVA tests were carried out.	Quantitative research approach	2
Mogaji (2016)	Analysis of 134 university websites (prior and during clearing process) concluded that 110 of these websites were willing to accept students via clearing.	Observation of websites	3

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Moogan (2020)	In determining the 'awareness and influential sources' stage of the CDP, the author found in all participants (focus groups with sample size of 35 participants), utilised some type of social media, with the Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook platforms mentioned.	Quantitative research approach	2
Palmer (2013)	Investigated how six Australian universities utilise Twitter. Concluded that students welcomed the opportunity to interact with universities during their application stage via social media. It is felt that students can be communicated to whilst they are 'on the move' – thus meaning that communication delivered from the university not distracting them too much from their day-to-day lives. This investigation was overly simplified, with only tweets originating from the Twitter handle of the university being analysed.	Qualitative research approach	2
Peruta and Shields (2017)	Content analysis of 66 US colleges and universities to investigate whether differences exist between schools in relation to how content is managed. The study concluded that differences did exist between academic schools, with different schools managing their Facebook pages based upon '*gut feelings'* of individuals, rather than any substantial best strategic approach. The investigation focused only on Facebook and only measured 'clicks' when determining engagement.	Qualitative research approach	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Pringle and Fritz (2018)	A mixed method multi-case study approach explored the authenticity of brand promises at three universities in Canada through Twitter and Facebook postings between February to April 2016 using cloud-based text and network analysis. Concluded that social media strategies are limited to push notifications as opposed to strengthening brand and responding to negative messages.	Netnographic based research	-
Rutter, Roper, and Lettice (2016)	Analysed content from main Facebook and Twitter accounts of 56 UK HEIs, concluding that there was no difference in terms of the receptiveness of social media activity between different institutions. This conflicts from findings by Peruta and Shields (2017). Concluded that there would be difference in the type of content posted by Russell Group institutions.	Qualitative research approach	3
Shields (2016)	Collected data from the Twitter accounts of 211 universities that appeared in at least two of the prominent world university rankings table. Investigating relationships that universities have with one another via Twitter. No awareness of relationships with other stakeholders.	Netnographic based research	-

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Shields and Peruta (2019)	Mixed methods approach that carried out a survey from current university students in the US (n=364) followed by one-to-one interviews (n=12), albeit with students at a small liberal arts college. Whilst survey suggested students do not use social media when making a choice, interviews suggested that it did play a role.	Mixed methods approach	2
Simiyu, Bonuke, and Komen (2019)	Taking a convenience sample of 504 students from four Kenyan universities, the study evaluated the indirect effect of brand personality on the relationship between social media and student's behavioural intentions. The results suggest that there is a strong correlation between social media activity and behavioural intentions.	Quantitative research approach	2
Simões and Soares (2010)	Survey research into 1,641 Portuguese undergraduate students, found that the official website was a key source of information.	Quantitative research approach	2
Vrontis, El Nemar, Ouwaida, and Shams (2018)	Carrying out a survey of 230 international students at colleges and universities in Lebanon, research found that international students still prefer traditional sources, except for social media channels during their search, with the most popular sites being Facebook, Instagram, Google+, and YouTube.	Quantitative research approach	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Link to research objective?
Winter and Chapleo (2017)	Telephone interviews with 24 participants, asking them to consider how the service environment impacts their choice of university. Found that the official website is used as a source of information.	Qualitative research approach	2
Zhu (2019)	Using data gathered from 163 UK HEIs' Weibo accounts in 2012 and 2018, and WeChat accounts in 2018, the study found a positive association between Chinese students studying at these institutions and engagement with social media platforms.	Netnography based research	-

A.11 Key literature into traditional university communication channels which influence student choice

The first four rows of this table were presented as Table 2.16 (page 75).

Table A - 11: Key literature into traditional university communication channels which influence student choice (Source: author's own).

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Links to research objective?
Briggs (2006)	Survey of 651 students (in two undergraduate disciplines, across six universities). Concluded that choice is complex, with information provided by university being one of the key factors of student choice.	Quantitative research approach	2
Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009)	Examined applicant's choice with reference to Kotler's 5-stage model. Four focus groups with 22 participants in total	Qualitative research approach	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Links to research objective?
	from one university. Concluded that open days is used as a key source of information.		
Durkin, McKenna, and Cummins (2012)	A description of how one UK university uses emotional connections in HE marketing. Paper concludes that open days can be used to build emotional connections.	Case study description	-
Moogan and Baron (2003)	Survey of 674 VIth form and college students found that the prospectus is a key source of information.	Quantitative research approach	2
Obermeit (2012)	Analysis of literature into the USA and German HE systems, concluded that information provided by universities influenced choice.	Literature review analysis	-
Rutter, Lettice, and Nadeau (2017)	Analysed the role that a prospectus plays on brand positioning gearing for student choice. Identified the prospectuses of 10 HE institutions. The following five brand traits were identified: 1. Competence 2. Excitement 3. Ruggedness 4. Sincerity 5. Sophistication	Quantitative research approach	2
Svekeres (2010)	Literature review into existing literature and major macro-environmental changes, emphasised the role that open days	Review of literature	2

Author(s) and year	Context	Research approach	Links to research objective?
	continues to have a source of information.		
Winter and Chapleo (2017)	Telephone interviews with 24 participants, asking them to consider how the service environment impacts their choice of university. Found that the prospectus and open days are used as a source of information.	Qualitative research approach	2

APPENDIX B: SURVEY AT VOCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Dear participant:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, centred around your decision to study at Southampton Solent University. I am completing a PhD at the University of Southampton School of Management. Your participation in this research is greatly appreciated in contributing to my research.

This survey is the first stage of a number of opportunities for you to participate in research over the next academic year. There will be an opportunity to participate in future stages of research if you wish to do so.

This survey will take no more than 10 minutes to complete. If you have any questions regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at dwp1g12@soton.ac.uk.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you success with your own studies.

Kindest regards,

David W. Peck

Are you studying full-time or part-time?

- ☐ Full-time
- ☐ Part-time

What school are you based in?

- ☐ School of Art, Design, and Fashion
- ☐ School of Business and Law
- ☐ School of Communications and Marketing
- ☐ School of Martime Science and Engineering
- ☐ School of Media Art and Technology
- ☐ School of Sport, Health, and Social Sciences

Was Southampton Solent University your first choice of university?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Would rather not say

Dedication

Thinking about your decision to enter into Higher Education, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Scale from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5
I wanted to attend university to develop my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to become more employable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to increase my earning potential	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to develop new skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to make professional contacts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to make friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to join sport clubs and societies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to have a flexible lifestyle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to enjoy the nightlife	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I chose to attend university as I can't find a permanent job without a degree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thinking about your decision to come to this university, to what extent did the following impact your decision to attend Southampton Solent University?

Scale from 1 = No impact to 5=Strongly impact

	1	2	3	4	5
Position in academic league tables of university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Position in academic league tables of course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Appeal of Southampton as a city (i.e. activities/events)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal safety in city	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Course content	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunity to network with industry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional accreditations associated with course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Graduate employability figures	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reputation of teaching quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reputation of research quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stories within media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scale from 1 = No impact to 5=Strongly impact

	1	2	3	4	5
Administration efficiency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information provided by university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quick response to application	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Entrance requirements for course (i.e. interview/UCAS points/Entry requirements)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Halls of residence (i.e. university accommodation)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The opportunity to live with parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Part-time employment prospects	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provision for students with disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visual appearance of campus	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tuition fees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Availability of financial support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends and family currently studying at the university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends and family had previously studied at the university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Guidance from parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Guidance from close friends and family members	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
‘Gut feeling’	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what extent did the following sources of information influence your decision to apply to Southampton Solent University?

Scale ranges from 1=No influence to 5=High level of influence

	1	2	3	4	5
Clearing hotline	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University prospectus	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Open days	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Taster events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Live chat function (on university website)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official Facebook page	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official LinkedIn page	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official Twitter account	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official YouTube channel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official University blog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official School-specific blog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unofficial Facebook pages	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unofficial LinkedIn pages	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unofficial Twitter accounts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unofficial YouTube channels	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
National media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Local media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
www.thestudentroom.co.uk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Prospects website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
UCAS website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University ranking websites	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Close friends/family members	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Which of the following ranking/information sites have you consulted (please tick all that apply)?

- ☐ The Complete University Guide
- ☐ The Guardian University League Tables
- ☐ Times Higher Education University Ranking
- ☐ Shanghai Jiao Tong University Global Rankings
- ☐ The Independent University Rankings
- ☐ NSS (National Student Survey) League Tables
- ☐ Unistats website
- ☐ DLHE (Destination of Leavers in Higher Education) site
- ☐ Other (please state): ____

Have you been in touch with any specific university departments or staff members prior to commencing your course? (Please state department/staff member name.)

What of the following social media accounts do you have?

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Google +
- ☐ Vine
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ N/A - I don't use social media
- ☐ Other (please specify): ____

Thinking about your use of social media, why do you use social media? Please tick all factors that apply.

- ☐ Stay in touch with contacts
- ☐ View pictures and videos
- ☐ Make appointments with contacts
- ☐ Share pictures and videos
- ☐ Entertainment
- ☐ Search for new contacts
- ☐ Search for information about university life
- ☐ Search for information about Southampton Solent University
- ☐ Search for information about subject
- ☐ Search for information about city of Southampton
- ☐ Read product reviews prior to purchase
- ☐ Share opinions on forums
- ☐ Review purchased products
- ☐ Share experiences through own online blog
- ☐ Vote in polls
- ☐ Subscribe to RSS feeds
- ☐ Share information about a sport or hobby
- ☐ Other (please specify):____

How long (per day) would you say you spend on social media sites?

- ☐ Under 15 minutes
- ☐ 15 – 30 minutes
- ☐ 31 minutes – 1 hour
- ☐ Between 1 – 2 hours
- ☐ Over 2 hours
- ☐ N/A I don't have use social media sites

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Would rather not say

Are you a UK-based or international student?

- ☐ UK
- ☐ International

If you are an international student, what country are you from?

Did you go to a fee-paying or state school?

- ☐ Fee-paying
- ☐ State school
- ☐ Would rather not say

Did your parents attend university?

- ☐ Yes, both parents
- ☐ Yes, only father
- ☐ Yes, only mother
- ☐ No
- ☐ Would rather not say

Would you be willing to take part in future research?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ No

What is your date of birth (please give in DDMMYYYY format)?

If you are interested in taking part in future research, please provide your email address herewith so we can be in touch with you.

APPENDIX C: SURVEY AT TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION

Dear participant:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, centred around your decision to study at the University of Southampton. I am completing a PhD at the University of Southampton School of Management. Your participation in this research is greatly appreciated in contributing to my research.

This survey is the first stage of a number of opportunities for you to participate in research over the next academic year. There will be an opportunity to participate in future stages of research if you wish to do so.

This survey will take no more than 10 minutes to complete. If you have any questions regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at dwp1g12@soton.ac.uk.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you success with your own studies.

Kindest regards,

David W. Peck

Are you studying full-time or part-time?

- ☐ Full-time
- ☐ Part-time

What faculty are you based in?

- ☐ Faculty of Business, Law, and Art
- ☐ Faculty of Engineering and the Environment
- ☐ Faculty of Health Sciences
- ☐ Faculty of Humanities
- ☐ Faculty of Medicine
- ☐ Faculty of Natural and Environmental Sciences
- ☐ Faculty of Physical Sciences and Engineering
- ☐ Faculty of Social, Human, and Mathematical Sciences

Was the University of Southampton your first choice of university?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Would rather not say

Thinking about your decision to enter into Higher Education, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Scale from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5
I wanted to attend university to develop my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to become more employable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to increase my earning potential	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to develop new skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to make professional contacts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to make friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to join sport clubs and societies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to have a flexible lifestyle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I wanted to attend university to enjoy the nightlife	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I chose to attend university as I can't find a permanent job without a degree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thinking about your decision to come to this university, to what extent did the following impact your decision to attend the University of Southampton?

Scale from 1 = No impact to 5=Strongly impact

	1	2	3	4	5
Position in academic league tables of university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Position in academic league tables of course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Appeal of Southampton as a city (i.e. activities/events)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal safety in city	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Course content	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunity to network with industry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional accreditations associated with course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Graduate employability figures	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reputation of teaching quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reputation of research quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stories within media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scale from 1 = No impact to 5=Strongly impact

	1	2	3	4	5
Administration efficiency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information provided by university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quick response to application	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Entrance requirements for course (i.e. interview/UCAS points/Entry requirements)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Halls of residence (i.e. university accommodation)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The opportunity to live with parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Part-time employment prospects	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provision for students with disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visual appearance of campus	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tuition fees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Availability of financial support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends and family currently studying at the university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends and family had previously studied at the university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Guidance from parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Guidance from close friends and family members	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
‘Gut feeling’	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what extent did the following sources of information influence your decision to apply to the University of Southampton?

Scale ranges from 1=No influence to 5=High level of influence

	1	2	3	4	5
Clearing hotline	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University prospectus	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Open days	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Taster events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Live chat function (on university website)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official Facebook page	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Scale ranges from 1=No influence to 5=High level of influence

	1	2	3	4	5
Official LinkedIn page	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official Twitter account	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official YouTube channel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official University blog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Official School-specific blog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unofficial Facebook pages	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unofficial LinkedIn pages	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unofficial Twitter accounts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unofficial YouTube channels	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
National media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Local media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
www.thestudentroom.co.uk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Prospects website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
UCAS website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University ranking websites	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Close friends/family members	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University of Southampton App	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Which of the following ranking/information sites have you consulted (please tick all that apply)?

☐ The Complete University Guide
☐ The Guardian University League Tables
☐ Times Higher Education University Ranking
☐ Shanghai Jiao Tong University Global Rankings
☐ The Independent University Rankings
☐ NSS (National Student Survey) League Tables
☐ Unistats website
☐ DLHE (Destination of Leavers in Higher Education) site
☐ Other (please state): ____

Have you been in touch with any specific university departments or staff members prior to commencing your course? (Please state department/staff member name.)

What of the following social media accounts do you have?

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Google +
- ☐ Vine
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ N/A – I don't use social media
- ☐ Other (please specify): ____

Thinking about your use of social media, why do you use social media? Please tick all factors that apply.

- ☐ Stay in touch with contacts
- ☐ View pictures and videos
- ☐ Make appointments with contacts
- ☐ Share pictures and videos
- ☐ Entertainment
- ☐ Search for new contacts
- ☐ Search for information about university life
- ☐ Search for information about University of Southampton
- ☐ Search for information about subject
- ☐ Search for information about city of Southampton
- ☐ Read product reviews prior to purchase
- ☐ Share opinions on forums
- ☐ Review purchased products
- ☐ Share experiences through own online blog
- ☐ Vote in polls
- ☐ Subscribe to RSS feeds
- ☐ Share information about a sport or hobby
- ☐ Other (please specify): ____

How long (per day) would you say you spend on social media sites?

- ☐ Under 15 minutes
- ☐ 15 – 30 minutes
- ☐ 31 minutes – 1 hour
- ☐ Between 1 – 2 hours
- ☐ Over 2 hours
- ☐ N/A I don't have use social media sites

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Would rather not say

Are you a UK-based or international student?

- ☐ UK
- ☐ International

If you are an international student, what country are you from?

Did you go to a fee-paying or state school?

- ☐ Fee-paying
- ☐ State school
- ☐ Would rather not say

Did your parents attend university?

- ☐ Yes, both parents
- ☐ Yes, only father
- ☐ Yes, only mother
- ☐ No
- ☐ Would rather not say

As alluded to previously, this is the first stage of research. Would you be willing to take part in future research?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ No

What is your date of birth (please give in DDMMYYYY format)?

If you are interested in taking part in future research, please provide your email address herewith so we can be in touch with you.

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW WITH STUDENTS

Housekeeping questions

- Name of participant
- Permission to record
- Confirmation that results are anonymised
- Confirmation of action if respondent can be identified
- Does participant want copy of:
    - Transcript?
    - 2-page summary?
    - Transfer report?
    - Interim report?
    - Final PhD document

Introductory questions

- What course are you studying?
- What social media sites do you have accounts on?
- How active are you on these accounts?
- What makes you like/forward a story? Provide justification

Main questions

- What motivated you to attend university?
- Thinking about when you came to this university, what were the main influencers behind your decision?
- What different sources of information did you consult when deciding to come to university?
- Did you follow any university/student social media accounts prior to coming to university?

Closing questions

- Do you have any questions/closing comments?
- Do you know anyone else that would be interested in the research?

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW WITH MARKETING & ADMINISTRATION STAFF

Housekeeping questions

- Name of participant
- Permission to record
- Confirmation that results are anonymised
- Confirmation of action if respondent can be identified
- Does participant want copy of:
  - Transcript?
  - 2-page summary?
  - Transfer report?
  - Final PhD document

Introductory questions

- What is current job title? How long have they been in role? What does job involve?
- How do you engage prospective and current students in your day-to-day work? What are the benefits to this? What are the drawbacks?

Main questions

- What motivates students to attend university?
- What are the main influencers behind a student's decision?
- What are the main sources of information that students consult?
- How are your social media efforts measured?
- Do you believe that students engage with the university via social media? Why/why not?
- What are the main socio-demographic driving factors influencing the relationship between motivation and choice?

Closing questions

- Do you have any questions/closing comments?
- Do you know anyone else that would be interested in the research?

REFERENCE LIST

Abubakar, B., Shanka, T. and Muuka, G.N., 2010. Tertiary education: an investigation of location selection criteria and preferences by international students – The case of two Australian universities. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 20(1), pp.49–68.

Adams, R. (2018) UK universities 'still inflate their statuses despite crackdown' *The Guardian* [online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/sep/21/uk-universities-still-inflate-their-statuses-despite-crackdown [Accessed 10th February 2019]

Adams, R. (2019) 'Only half of UK universities read for a no-deal Brexit – study' *The Guardian* [online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/sep/16/only-half-of-uk-universities-ready-for-no-deal-brexit-study [Accessed 10th December 2019]

Agrey, L. and Lampadan, N., 2014. Determinant factors contributing to student choice in selecting a university. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 3(2), pp.391–404.

Agyei-Mensah, B.K., Ho, H.C. and Lee, L., 2016. Evaluating the Effect of the Adoption of English on Students As the Default Homepage Language in a Non-English Speaking Country University. *KJEP*, 13(1), pp.47-66.

Ahmad, S.Z., 2015. Evaluating student satisfaction of quality at international branch campuses. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 40(4), pp.488–507.

Ahmad, S.Z. and Buchanan, F.R., 2017. Motivation factors in students' decision to study at international branch campuses in Malaysia. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(4), pp.651-668.

Ahn, M.Y. and Davis, H.H., 2020. Four domains of students' sense of belonging to university. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(3), pp.622-634.

Akhtar, M., 2008. What is self-efficacy? Bandura's 4 sources of efficacy beliefs. *Positive Psychology UK*.

Ajzen, I. and Fishbein, M., 2008. Scaling and testing multiplicative combinations in the expectancy–value model of attitudes. *Journal of applied social psychology*, 38(9), pp.2222-2247.

Alfattal, E., 2017. International students' college choice is different! *International Journal of Educational Management*. 31(7) 930 - 943

Ali-Choudhury, R., Bennett, R. and Savani, S., 2009. University marketing directors' views on the components of a university brand. *International review on public and nonprofit marketing*, 6(1), p.11 - 33

Altbach, P.G., 2004. Higher Education crosses borders: Can the United States remain the top destination for foreign students? *Change: the magazine of higher learning*, 36(2), pp.18-25.

Alves, H. and Raposo, M., 2010. The influence of university image on student behaviour. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 24(1) 73 - 85

Al-Yousef, H., 2009. 'They know nothing about university–neither of them went': the effect of parents' level of education on their involvement in their daughters' higher education choices. *Compare*, 39(6), pp.783-798.

Angulo, F., Pergelova, A. and Rialp, J., 2010. A market segmentation approach for Higher Education based on rational and emotional factors. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, *20*(1), pp.1-17.

Ashley, C., Gillespie, E.A. and Noble, S.M., 2016. The effect of loyalty program fees on program perceptions and engagement. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(2), pp.964-973.

Asaad, Y., Melewar, T.C., Cohen, G. and Balmer, J.M., 2013. Universities and export market orientation: An exploratory study of UK post-92 universities. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*. 31 (7) pp. 838 -856

Atkinson, J.W., 1957. Motivational determinants of risk-taking behavior. *Psychological review*, 64(6p1), p.359.

Augar, P. (2019) Independent panel report to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding May 2019. London: APS Group [online] Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805127/Review_of_post_18_education_and_funding.pdf [Accessed 2nd June 2019]

Ayoubi, R.M. and Massoud, H.K., 2012. Student aspiration factors, university reputation and the entry standards to UK universities. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 34(4), pp.609-621.

Babin, B. J., & Harris, E. J. (2018) *CB8 Consumer Behavior* Boston: Cenage Learning

Bagga, T. and Bhatt, M., 2013. A study of intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing consumer buying behaviour online. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Management Research and Innovation*, 9(1), pp.77-90.

Bagozzi, R.P., 1984. Expectancy–value attitude models an analysis of critical measurement issues. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 1(4), pp.295-310.

Bailey, M., Gosper, M., Ifenthaler, D., Ware, C. and Kretzschma, M., 2018. On-campus, distance or online? Influences on student decision-making about study modes at university. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 34(5).

Baldwin, G. and James, R., 2000. The market in Australian Higher Education and the concept of student as informed consumer. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *22*(2), pp.139-148.

Ball, C., Huang, K.T., Cotten, S.R., Rikard, R.V. and Coleman, L.O., 2016. Invaluable values: an expectancy–value theory analysis of youths' academic motivations and intentions. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(5), pp.618-638.

Bandura, A., 1986. The explanatory and predictive scope of self-efficacy theory. *Journal of social and clinical psychology*, 4(3), pp.359-373.

Barakat, A. and Moussa, F., 2017. Using the expectancy theory framework to explain the motivation to participate in a consumer boycott. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, 11(3).

Bates, E.A. and Kaye, L.K., 2014. "I'd be expecting caviar in lectures": the impact of the new fee regime on undergraduate students' expectations of Higher Education. *Higher Education*, *67*(5), pp.655-673.

BBC (2017) Scrap student loan interest and extend payback time – review *BBC News* [online] Available from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-41796728 [Accessed 11th March 2019]

Baty, P., 2010. The world university rankings. *Times Higher Education*, *27*.

Beggs, J.M., Bantham, J.H. and Taylor, S., 2008. Distinguishing the factors influencing college students' choice of major. *College Student Journal*, 42(2), pp.381-395.

Bélanger, C.H., Bali, S. and Longden, B., 2014. How Canadian universities use social media to brand themselves. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 20(1), pp.14-29.

Bergkvist, L. and Rossiter, J.R., 2007. The predictive validity of multiple-item versus single-item measures of the same constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44(2), pp.175-184.

Binsardi, A. and Ekwulugo, F., 2003. International marketing of British education: research on the students' perception and the UK market penetration. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 21(5), pp.318-327.

Blaxter, L., Hughes, C. & Tight, M., 2010. *How to research*, NY: Open University Press.

Bolat, E. and O'Sullivan, H., 2017. Radicalising the marketing of higher education: learning from student-generated social media data. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 33(9-10), pp.742-763.

Bonnema, J & Van der Waldt, V. and la Rey, D., 2008, 'Information and source preferences of a student market in higher education', *International Journal of Educational Management*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 314-327

Botas, P.P., Huisman, J. and de Boer, H., 2013. How will English Higher Education look like in 2025? *International Higher Education*, *72*(Summer).

Boudarbat, B. and Montmarquette, C., 2009. Choice of fields of study of university Canadian graduates: the role of gender and their parents' education. *Education Economics*, 17(2), pp.185-213.

Bowden, R., 2000. Fantasy higher education: University and college league tables. *Quality in higher education*, 6(1), pp.41-60.

Bradley, N. 2010. *Marketing Research: Tools and Techniques* 2nd Edition Oxford University Press New York

Branco Oliveira, D. and Soares, A.M., 2016. Studying abroad: Developing a model for the decision process of international students. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 38(2), pp.126-139.

Brech, F.M., Messer, U., Vander Schee, B.A., Rauschnabel, P.A. and Ivens, B.S., 2017. Engaging fans and the community in social media: Interaction with institutions of higher education on Facebook. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 27(1), pp.112-130.

Briggs, S., 2006. An exploratory study of the factors influencing undergraduate student choice: the case of Higher Education in Scotland. *Studies in Higher Education*, *31*(6), pp.705-722.

Brown, C., Varley, P. and Pal, J., 2009. University course selection and services marketing. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*. 27(3) pp. 310 - 325

Brown, R. and Carasso, H., 2013. *Everything for sale? The marketisation of UK Higher Education*. Routledge.

Browne, J. 2010. Securing a sustainable future for Higher Education: An independent review of Higher Education funding and student finance [Online]. Available at: http://www.independent.gov.uk/browne-report (Accessed: 28 August 2016).

Busby, E. (2017) Poor students three times more likely to live at home while at university, study says *The Independent* [online] Available from: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/poor-students-live-at-home-university-sutton-trust-social-mobility-a8229816.html [Accessed 10th March 2019]

Cao, H., Jiang, J., Oh, L.B., Li, H., Liao, X. and Chen, Z., 2013. A Maslow's hierarchy of needs analysis of social networking services continuance. *Journal of Service Management*. 24(2) 170 - 190

Cao, C., Zhu, C. and Meng, Q., 2016. A survey of the influencing factors for international academic mobility of Chinese university students. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 70(2), pp.200-220.

Carter, R.E. and Curry, D.J., 2011. Using student-choice behaviour to estimate tuition elasticity in Higher Education. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *27*(11-12), pp.1186-1207.

Carter, S. and Yeo, C.M.A., 2009. My place or yours? Perceptions of, and selection choice criteria for, Higher Education institutions: the case of UK and Malaysian students. *International Journal of Economics and Business Research*, *1*(2), pp.165-190.

Cashell, E. (2017) What uni Investigates: Why Is There a Decline In University Applications? *WhatUni?* [online] Available from: https://www.whatuni.com/advice/news/why-is-there-a-decline-in-university-applications/65817/ [Accessed 30th December 2018]

Casidy, R. and Wymer, W., 2016. A risk worth taking: Perceived risk as moderator of satisfaction, loyalty, and willingness-to-pay premium price. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 32, pp.189-197.

Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019) *Digital Marketing* 7th edition Pearson Education Limited, London

Chapleo, C., 2008. External perceptions of successful university brands. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 8(3-4), pp.126-135.

Chapleo, C., 2011. Exploring rationales for branding a university: Should we be seeking to measure branding in UK universities? *Journal of Brand Management*, 18(6), pp.411-422.

Chapleo, C., Carrillo Durán, M.V. and Castillo Díaz, A., 2011. Do UK universities communicate their brands effectively through their websites? *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 21(1), pp.25-46.

Chapleo, C. and Simms, C., 2010. Stakeholder analysis in Higher Education: A case study of the University of Portsmouth. *Perspectives*, *14*(1), pp.12-20.

Chapman, D.W., 1981. A model of student college choice. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *52*(5), pp.490-505.

Charmaz, K., 2006. *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage.

Reference list

Chase, C., Geringer, S. and Stratemeyer, A., 2019. The Effect of University Marketing Efforts on Students' Academic Decision-Making: An Empirical Study. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 19(6).

Chee, C.M., Butt, M.M., Wilkins, S. and Ong, F.S., 2016. Country of origin and country of service delivery effects in transnational higher education: a comparison of international branch campuses from developed and developing nations. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 26(1), pp.86-102.

Chen, C.H. and Zimitat, C., 2006. Understanding Taiwanese students' decision-making factors regarding Australian international higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 20(2) 91- 100

Chen, Y., Gupta, A. and Hoshower, L., 2006. Factors that motivate business faculty to conduct research: An expectancy theory analysis. *Journal of Education for Business*, 81(4), pp.179-189.

Chitturi, R., Raghunathan, R. and Mahajan, V., 2008. Delight by design: The role of hedonic versus utilitarian benefits. *Journal of marketing*, 72(3), pp.48-63.

Cho, S.J., Hudley, C., Lee, S., Barry, L. and Kelly, M., 2008. Roles of gender, race, and SES in the college choice process among first-generation and non-first-generation students. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 1(2), p.95.

Churchill Jr, G.A., 1979. A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16(1), pp.64-73.

Clark, M., Fine, M.B. and Scheuer, C.L., 2017. Relationship quality in higher education marketing: the role of social media engagement. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 27(1), pp.40-58.

Clarke, M., 2007. The impact of higher education rankings on student access, choice, and opportunity. *Higher Education in Europe*, 32(1), pp.59-70.

Coleman, D.F. and Irving, P.G., 1997. The influence of source credibility attributions on expectancy theory predictions of organizational choice. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement*, 29(2), p.122.

Collis, J., & Hussey, R. (2009) Business research: a practical guide for undergraduate & postgraduate students 3rd edition Palgrave MacMillan

Constantinides, E. and Zinck Stagno, M.C., 2011. Potential of the social media as instruments of higher education marketing: A segmentation study. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 21(1), pp.7-24.

Cooper-Hind, H. and Taylor, J., 2012. Student complaints: an accurate measure of student dissatisfaction? *Higher Education Review*, *44*(3).

Crabtree, B. F., and Miller, W. F., 1992. 'A template approach to text analysis: Developing and using codebooks'. In B. F. Crabtree and W. L. Miller (Eds.), *Research methods for primary care*, Vol. 3. Doing qualitative research (p. 93–109). Sage Publications, Inc.

Crebert, G., Bates, M., Bell, B., Patrick, C.J. and Cragnolini, V., 2004. Developing generic skills at university, during work placement and in employment: graduates' perceptions. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *23*(2), pp.147-165.

Cresswell, J. W. (2007) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among 5 traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Creswell, J.W., & Clark, V.L.P. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. London: Sage

Crosby, L.A. and Taylor, J.R., 1981. Effects of consumer information and education on cognition and choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 8(1), pp.43-56.

Cummings, W.H. and Venkatesan, M., 1976. Cognitive dissonance and consumer behavior: A review of the evidence. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 13(3), pp.303-308.

Czaja, R., & Blair, J. (2005) *Designing Surveys: a guide to decisions and procedures* 2nd edition USA: Sage

Dao, M.T.N. and Thorpe, A., 2015. What factors influence Vietnamese students' choice of university? *International Journal of Educational Management*. 29(5) 666 - 681

Davies, P. and Williams, J., 2001. For me or not for me? Fragility and risk in mature students' decision-making. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 55(2), pp.185-203.

Dawes, P.L. and Brown, J., 2002. Determinants of awareness, consideration, and choice set size in university choice. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 12(1), pp.49-75.

de la Torre, E.M., Rossi, F. and Sagarra, M., 2018. Who benefits from HEIs engagement? An analysis of priority stakeholders and activity profiles of HEIs in the United Kingdom. *Studies in Higher Education*, 44 (12) pp. 2163 - 2182

del Rocío Bonilla, M., Perea, E., del Olmo, J.L. and Corrons, A., 2019. Insights into user engagement on social media. Case study of a higher education institution. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, pp.1-16.

Dearden, L., Fitzsimons, E. and Wyness, G., 2011. The Impact of Tuition Fees and Support on University Participation in the UK. CEE DP 126. *Centre for the Economics of Education (NJ1)*.

Dearing, R. (1997) Higher Education in the learning society [online] Available from: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/dearing1997/dearing1997.html [Accessed 1st May 2015]

Dey, I. (1993) *Creating Categories: Qualitative Data Analysis*, London: Routledge.

Diamantopoulos, A., & Schlegelmilch, B. B. 2000 *Taking the Fear Out of Data Analysis* Cenage Learning: London

Drewes, T. and Michael, C., 2006. How do students choose a university? an analysis of applications to universities in Ontario, Canada. *Research in Higher Education*, 47(7), pp.781-800.

Dubois, A. and Gadde, L.E., 2002. Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research. *Journal of business research*, 55(7), pp.553-560.

Dunnett, A., Moorhouse, J., Walsh, C. and Barry, C., 2012. Choosing a university: A conjoint analysis of the impact of higher fees on students applying for university in 2012. *Tertiary Education and Management*, *18*(3), pp.199-220.

Durkin, M., McKenna, S. and Cummins, D., 2012. Emotional connections in Higher Education marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *26*(2), pp.153-161.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Jackson, P. (2012) Management Research 4th edition; London, SAGE

Eccles, J.S., Adler, T.F., Futterman, R., Goff, S.B., Kaczala, C.M., Meece, J.L., Midgley, C. and Spence, J.T., 1983. Achievement and achievement motivation. *Expectancies, values and academic behaviors*, pp.75-146.

Eccles, J., Wigfield, A., Harold, R.D. and Blumenfeld, P., 1993. Age and gender differences in children's self-and task perceptions during elementary school. *Child development*, 64(3), pp.830-847.

Edmiston-Strasser, D.M., 2009. An examination of integrated marketing communication in US public institutions of higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 19(2), pp.142-165.

Eigenraam, A.W., Eelen, J., Van Lin, A. and Verlegh, P.W., 2018. A consumer-based taxonomy of digital customer engagement practices. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 44, pp.102-121.

Eisenhardt, K.M., 1989. Building theories from case study research. *Academy of management review*, 14(4), pp.532-550.

El Nemar, S., Vrontis, D. and Thrassou, A., 2018. An innovative stakeholder framework for the Student-Choice Decision making process. *Journal of Business Research*.

Enders, C.K. and Tofighi, D., 2007. Centering predictor variables in cross-sectional multilevel models: a new look at an old issue. *Psychological methods*, 12(2), p.121.

Esson, J. and Ertl, H., 2016. No point worrying? Potential undergraduates, study-related debt, and the financial allure of Higher Education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(7), pp.1265-1280.

Evans, K.R., Margheim, L. and Schlatter, J.L., 1982. A review of expectancy theory research in selling. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 2(2), pp.33-40.

Fagerstrøm, A. and Ghinea, G., 2013. Co-creation of value in higher education: using social network marketing in the recruitment of students. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 35(1), pp.45-53.

Festinger, L., 1957. *A theory of cognitive dissonance* (Vol. 2). Stanford university press.

Fishbein, M.E., 1967. Readings in attitude theory and measurement.

Fishbein, M. and Ajzen, I., 1975. Formation of intentions. *Journal of Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Process*, pp.335-383.

Flyvberg, B., 2011. Managing major projects. *The Oxford Handbook of Project Management*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.

Foskett, N., Dyke, M. and Maringe, F., 2008. The influence of the school in the decision to participate in learning post-16. *British Educational Research Journal*, *34*(1), pp.37-61.

Foskett, N.H. and Hemsley-Brown, J., 1999. Invisibility, perceptions and image: Mapping the career choice landscape. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 4(3), pp.233-248.

Friedman, B.A. and Mandel, R.G., 2009. The prediction of college student academic performance and retention: Application of expectancy and goal setting theories. *Journal of college student retention: Research, theory & practice*, 11(2), pp.227-246.

Fujita, M., Harrigan, P. and Soutar, G., 2017. A netnography of a university's social media brand community: Exploring collaborative co-creation tactics. *Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science*, 27(2), pp.148-164.

Fujita, M., Harrigan, P. and Soutar, G.N., 2017. International students' engagement in their university's social media. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 31(7) 1119 - 1134

Fujita, M., Harrigan, P. and Soutar, G.N., 2018. Capturing and co-creating student experiences in social media: A social identity theory perspective. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 26(1-2), pp.55-71.

Gai, L., Xu, C. and Pelton, L.E., 2016. A netnographic analysis of prospective international students' decision-making process: implications for institutional branding of American universities in the emerging markets. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 26(2), pp.181-198.

Galan, M., Lawley, M. and Clements, M., 2015. Social media's use in postgraduate students' decision-making journey: an exploratory study. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 25(2), pp.287-312.

Galotti, K.M., 1999. Making a 'major' real-life decision: College students choosing an academic major. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 91(2), p.379.

Garcia, J. and Gustavson, A.R., 1997. The science of self-report. *APS Observer*, 10(1).

Garver, M.S., Spralls III, S.A. and Divine, R.L., 2009. Need-based segmentation analysis of university career services: Implications for increasing student participation. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 3, p.1.

Gatfield, T., 1999. Examining student satisfaction with group projects and peer assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 24(4), pp.365-377.

Gatfield, T. and Chen, C.H., 2006. Measuring student choice criteria using the theory of planned behaviour: The case of Taiwan, Australia, UK, and USA. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 16(1), pp.77-95.

Gerring, J., 2007. The case study: what it is and what it does. In *The Oxford handbook of comparative politics*.

Ghazali, G.M. and McPherson, G.E., 2009. Malaysian children's attitudes towards learning music. *Music Education Research*, 11(2), pp.193-219.

Gibbons, S., Neumayer, E. and Perkins, R., 2015. Student satisfaction, league tables and university applications: Evidence from Britain. *Economics of Education Review*, 48, pp.148-164.

Gibbs, P., 2007. Does advertising pervert Higher Education? Is there a case for resistance? *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, *17*(1), pp.3-11.

Gibbs, P., Pashiardis, P. and Ivy, J., 2008. A new higher education marketing mix: the 7Ps for MBA marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 22(4) 288 - 299

Glaser, B., 1978. Theoretical sensitivity. *Advances in the methodology of grounded theory*.

Glover, D., Law, S. and Youngman, A., 2002. Graduateness and Employability: student perceptions of the personal outcomes of university education. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 7(3), pp.293-306.

Goodwin, C., Smith, K.L. and Spiggle, S., 1990. Gift giving: consumer motivation and the gift purchase process. *ACR North American Advances*.

Goodwin, N.R., Ackerman, F. and Kiron, D. eds., 2013. *The consumer society* (Vol. 2). Island Press.

Gorden, R. L. (1980). Interviewing: Strategy, techniques, a nd tactics. Homewood, IL: Dorsey.

Gottschall, K. and Saltmarsh, S., 2017. 'You're not just learning it, you're living it!' Constructing the 'good life' in Australian university online promotional videos. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 38(5), pp.768-781.

Grebennikov, L. and Shah, M., 2013. Monitoring trends in student satisfaction. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 19(4), pp.301-322.

Greenacre, L., Freeman, L., Cong, K. and Chapman, T., 2014. Understanding and predicting student Word of Mouth. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 64, pp.40-48.

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S., 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2(163-194), p.105.

Guilbault, M., 2016. Students as customers in higher education: reframing the debate. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 26(2), pp.132-142.

Gummesson, E., 2000. *Qualitative methods in management research*. Sage.

Gunn, R. and Hill, S., 2008. The impact of league tables on university application rates. *Higher Education Quarterly*, *62*(3), pp.273-296.

Han, P., 2014. A literature review on college choice and marketing strategies for recruitment. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, *43*(2), pp.120-130.

Hanlon, A, 2018. *Digital Marketing: Strategic Planning & Integration*. Sage: London

Harker, D., Slade, P. and Harker, M., 2001. Exploring the decision process of school leavers' and'mature students' in university choice. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 11(2), pp.1-20.

Hausman, A., 2000. A multi-method investigation of consumer motivations in impulse buying behavior. *Journal of consumer marketing*, 17(5), pp.403-426.

Hayes, T., 2007. Delphi study of the future of marketing of Higher Education. *Journal of business research*, *60*(9), pp.927-931.

Hayes, T.J., Ruschman, D. and Walker, M.M., 2009. Social networking as an admission tool: A case study in success. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 19(2), pp.109-124.

Reference list

Haywood, H. and Scullion, R., 2018. ‘It’s quite difficult letting them go, isn’t it?’UK parents’ experiences of their child’s higher education choice process. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(12), pp.2161-2175.

Hazelkorn, E., 2008. Learning to live with league tables and ranking: The experience of institutional leaders. *Higher Education Policy*, 21(2), pp.193-215.

Heath, M.T., Tynan, C. and Ennew, C.T., 2011. Self-gift giving: Understanding consumers and exploring brand messages. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 17(02), pp.127-144.

Helgesen, Ø., 2008. Marketing for higher education: A relationship marketing approach. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 18(1), pp.50-78.

Hemsley-Brown, J., 1999. College choice: perceptions and priorities. *Educational Management & Administration*, *27*(1), pp.85-98.

Hemsley-Brown, J., 2012. ‘The best education in the world’: reality, repetition or cliché? International students' reasons for choosing an English university. *Studies in Higher Education*, 37(8), pp.1005-1022.

Hemsley-Brown, J., 2015. Getting into a Russell Group university: high scores and private schooling. *British Educational Research Journal*, 41(3), pp.398-422.

Hemsley-Brown, J. and Goonawardana, S., 2007. Brand harmonization in the international higher education market. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), pp.942-948.

Hemsley-Brown, J., Lowrie, A. and Chapleo, C., 2010. What defines “successful” university brands? *International Journal of Public Sector Management*. 23(2) 169 - 183

Hemsley-Brown, J., Lowrie, A., Gruber, T., Fuß, S., Voss, R. and Gläser-Zikuda, M., 2010. Examining student satisfaction with higher education services. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*. 23(2) 105 - 123

Hemsley-Brown, J. and Lowrie, A., 2010. Higher education marketing. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*. 23(2)

Hemsley-Brown, J. and Oplatka, I., 2006. Universities in a competitive global marketplace: A systematic review of the literature on Higher Education marketing. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 19(4), pp.316-338.

Hemsley-Brown, J. and Oplatka, I., 2010. Market orientation in universities: A comparative study of two national higher education systems. *International Journal of Educational* Management. 24 (3) 204 - 220

Hemsley-Brown, J. and Oplatka, I., 2015. University choice: what do we know, what don't we know and what do we still need to find out? *International Journal of Educational Management*, *29*(3), pp.254-274.

Hemsley-Brown, J. and Oplatka, I., 2016. Context and concepts of higher education consumer choice. In *Higher education consumer choice* (pp. 14-43). Palgrave Pivot, London.

Henriques, P.L., Matos, P.V., Jerónimo, H.M., Mosquera, P., da Silva, F.P. and Bacalhau, J., 2018. University or polytechnic? A fuzzy-set approach of prospective students' choice and its implications for higher education institutions' managers. *Journal of Business Research*, 89, pp.435-441.

Hiller, A. and Woodall, T., 2019. Everything Flows: A pragmatist perspective of trade-offs and value in ethical consumption. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 157(4), pp.893-912.

House of Commons Report (2018) The Higher Education Market – forty-fifth report of session 2017/2019 [online] Available from: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmpubacc/693/693.pdf [Accessed 10th November 2018]

Imenda, S.N., Kongolo, M. and Grewal, A.S., 2004. Factors underlying technikon and university enrolment trends in South Africa. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 32(2), pp.195-215.

Ivy, J., 2010. Choosing futures: influence of ethnic origin in university choice. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 24 (5) 391 -403

Jabbar, A., Analoui, B., Kong, K. and Mirza, M., 2018. Consumerisation in UK Higher Education business schools: higher fees, greater stress and debatable outcomes. *Higher Education*, 76(1), pp.85-100. QAA, 2018

Jackson, K., & Bazeley, P. (2019) *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVIVO* 3rd edition Sage: London

Jackson, D., 2015. Employability skill development in work-integrated learning: Barriers and best practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 40(2), pp.350-367.Somerville (2018)

James-MacEachern, M. and Yun, D., 2017. Exploring factors influencing international students' decision to choose a higher education institution: A comparison between Chinese and other students. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 31(3), pp.343-363.

Jones, K., 2016. *Education in Britain: 1944 to the present*. John Wiley & Sons.

Jongbloed, B., 2003. Marketisation in higher education, Clark's triangle and the essential ingredients of markets. *Higher education quarterly*, 57(2), pp.110-135.

Judson, K.M. and Taylor, S.A., 2014. Moving from marketization to marketing of Higher Education: The co-creation of value in Higher Education. *Higher Education Studies*, 4(1), pp.51-67.

Jungblut, J., Vukasovic, M. and Stensaker, B., 2015. Student perspectives on quality in Higher Education. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 5(2), pp.157-180.

Kalafatis, S. and Ledden, L., 2013. Carry-over effects in perceptions of educational value. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(10), pp.1540-1561.

Kaye, L.K. and Bates, E.A., 2017. The impact of higher fees on psychology students' reasons for attending university. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 41(3), pp.379-392.

Kent, R. 2001 *Data Construction and Data Analysis for Survey Research* Palgrave MacMillan, London

Khanna, M., Jacob, I. and Yadav, N., 2014. Identifying and analyzing touchpoints for building a Higher Education brand. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(1), pp.122-143.

Kiatkawsin, K. and Han, H., 2017. Young travelers' intention to behave pro-environmentally: Merging the value-belief-norm theory and the expectancy theory. *Tourism Management*, 59, pp.76-88.

Klein, H.J., 1989. An integrated control theory model of work motivation. *Academy of management review*, 14(2), pp.150-172.

Klein, H.J., 1991. Further evidence on the relationship between goal setting and expectancy theories. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, 49(2), pp.230-257.

Korfmann, F., Müller, S., Ehlert, S. and Haase, K., Students' perceptions, academic departments' image, and major-choice in business administration studies—The example of Hamburg Business School. *Higher Education Quarterly*.

Kuzma, J.M. and Wright, W., 2013. Using social networks as a catalyst for change in global higher education marketing and recruiting. *International Journal of Continuing Engineering Education and Life Long Learning*, 23(1), pp.53-66.

Le, T.D., Dobele, A.R. and Robinson, L.J., 2019. Information sought by prospective students from social media electronic word-of-mouth during the university choice process. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 41(1), pp.18-34.

Lee, C.F., 2014. An investigation of factors determining the study abroad destination choice: A case study of Taiwan. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 18(4), pp.362-381.

Lee, C.K.C. and Morrish, S.C., 2012. Cultural values and higher education choices: Chinese families. *Australasian Marketing Journal* (AMJ), 20(1), pp.59-64.

Liao, H.L., Liu, S.H. and Pi, S.M., 2011. Modeling motivations for blogging: An expectancy theory analysis. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 39(2), pp.251-264.

Lightfoot, L. (2016) Back home and in debt: life after university tuition fees *The Guardian* [online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/aug/30/university-tuition-fees-are-they-worth-it-students [Accessed 3rd February 2019]

Lillyman, S. and Bennett, C., 2014. Providing a positive learning experience for international students studying at UK universities: A literature review. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 13(1), pp.63-75.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G., 1990. Judging the quality of case study reports. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 3(1), pp.53-59.

Locke, E.A. and Latham, G.P., 2004. What should we do about motivation theory? Six recommendations for the twenty-first century. *Academy of management review*, 29(3), pp.388-403.

Lowrie, A., 2007. Branding higher education: Equivalence and difference in developing identity. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), pp.990-999.

Lubbe, I. and Petzer, D.J., 2013. Key information sources influencing prospective students' university choice: a South African perspective. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 27(4), pp.920-940.

Lund, T., 2012. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches: Some arguments for mixed methods research. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 56(2), pp.155-165.

Lutz, R.J. and Bettman, J.R., 1977. Multiattribute models in marketing: A bicentennial review. *Consumer and industrial buying behavior*, pp.137-149.

Malhorta, N. K., Birks, D. F., & Wills, P. A. (2012) Marketing Research: An Applied Approach 4th edition Pearson Education: London

Manyiwa, S. and Brennan, R., 2012. Fear appeals in anti-smoking advertising: How important is self-efficacy? *Journal of Marketing Management*, 28(11-12), pp.1419-1437.

Manski, C.F., Wise, D.A. and Wise, D.A., 1983. *College choice in America*. Harvard University Press.

Marginson, S. and Van der Wende, M., 2007. To rank or to be ranked: The impact of global rankings in Higher Education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3-4), pp.306-329.

María Cubillo, J., Sánchez, J. and Cerviño, J., 2006. International students' decision-making process. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 20(2), pp.101-115.

Maringe, F., 2006. University and course choice: Implications for positioning, recruitment and marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 20(6), pp.466-479.

Maringe, F. and Carter, S., 2007. International students' motivations for studying in UK HE. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 21(6) 459 - 475

Marsden, D. and Littler, D., 1998. Positioning alternative perspectives of consumer behaviour. *Journal of marketing management*, 14(1-3), pp.3-28.

Mårtensson, P. and Richtnér, A., 2015. What parameters do students value in business school rankings? *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 37(6), pp.646-658.

Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper and Row.

May, J., Delahunty, J., O'Shea, S. and Stone, C., 2016. Seeking the Passionate Career: First-in-Family Enabling Students and the Idea of the Australian University. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 70(4), pp.384-399.

Mazis, M.B., Ahtola, O.T. and Klippel, R.E., 1975. A comparison of four multi-attribute models in the prediction of consumer attitudes. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2(1), pp.38-52.

Mazzarol, T. and Soutar, G.N., 2002. "Push-pull" factors influencing international student destination choice. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 16(2) 82 - 90

Mazzarol, T., Soutar, G.N. and Thein, V., 2001. Critical success factors in the marketing of an educational institution: A comparison of institutional and student perspectives. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 10(2), pp.39-57.

McDaniel, C., & Gates, R. (2018) *Marketing Research* 11th edition Wiley

McGregor, P., Thanki, R. and McKee, P., 2002. Home and away: graduate experience from a regional perspective. *Applied Economics*, 34(2), pp.219-230.

McKee, D., Simmers, C.S. and Licata, J., 2006. Customer self-efficacy and response to service. *Journal of Service Research*, 8(3), pp.207-220.

McLeay, F., Lichy, J. and Asaad, F., 2018. Insights for a post-Brexit era: marketing the UK as a study destination–an analysis of Arab, Chinese, and Indian student choices. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, pp.1-15.

McManus, R., Haddock-Fraser, J. and Rands, P., 2017. A methodology to understand student choice of Higher Education institutions: the case of the United Kingdom. Jou*rnal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 39(4), pp.390-405.

McPherson, G.E. and O'Neill, S.A., 2010. Students' motivation to study music as compared to other school subjects: A comparison of eight countries. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 32(2), pp.101-137.

Melanthiou, Y., Thrassou, A. and Vrontis, D., 2017. A value-based transcription of student choices into Higher Education branding practices. *Global Business and Economics Review*, 19(2), pp.121-136.

Miotto, G., Del-Castillo-Feito, C. and Blanco-González, A., 2019. Reputation and legitimacy: Key factors for Higher Education Institutions' sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Business Research*.

Mogaji, E. and Yoon, H., 2019. Thematic analysis of marketing messages in UK universities' prospectuses. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 33(7) 1561 - 1581

Molesworth, M., Scullion, R. and Nixon, E. eds., 2010. *The marketisation of Higher Education*. Routledge.

Moogan, Y.J., 2020. An investigation into international postgraduate students' decision-making process. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 44(1), pp.83-99.

Moogan, Y.J. and Baron, S., 2003. An analysis of student characteristics within the student decision making process. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 27(3), pp.271-287.

Moogan, Y.J., Baron, S. and Bainbridge, S., 2001. Timings and trade-offs in the marketing of higher education courses: a conjoint approach. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*. 19(3) 179 - 187

Morrish, S.C. and Lee, C., 2011. Country of origin as a source of sustainable competitive advantage: the case for international higher education institutions in New Zealand. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 19(6), pp.517-529.

Mosteller, J. and Poddar, A., 2017. To share and protect: Using regulatory focus theory to examine the privacy paradox of consumers' social media engagement and online privacy protection behaviors. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 39, pp.27-38.

Moustakas, C., 1994. *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage publications.

Mughal, A.W., 2016. Investigating the impact of the tier 4 policy on international students at private colleges in the UK. *Journal of International Students*, 6(1), pp.241-261.

Reference list

Naidoo, R., Shankar, A. and Veer, E., 2011. The consumerist turn in Higher Education: Policy aspirations and outcomes. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27(11-12), pp.1142-1162.

Nasri, W. and Charfeddine, L., 2012. Motivating salespeople to contribute to marketing intelligence activities: An expectancy theory approach. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 4(1), p.168.

Naude, P. and Ivy, J., 1999. The marketing strategies of universities in the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 13(3) 126 - 134

Ng, I.C. and Forbes, J., 2009. Education as service: The understanding of university experience through the service logic. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 19(1), pp.38-64.

Nedbalová, E., Greenacre, L. and Schulz, J., 2014. UK Higher Education viewed through the marketization and marketing lenses. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(2), pp.178-195.

Nicolescu, L., 2009. Applying marketing to Higher Education: Scope and limits. *Management & Marketing*, 4(2).

Niles, F.S., 1995. Cultural differences in learning motivation and learning strategies: A comparison of overseas and Australian students at an Australian university. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 19(3), pp.369-385.

Obermeit, K., 2012. Students' choice of universities in Germany: structure, factors and information sources used. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 22(2), pp.206-230.

O'Loughlin, D. and Szmigin, I., 2006. "I'll always be in debt": Irish and UK student behaviour in a credit led environment. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*. 23(6) 335 - 343

Oplatka, I. and Hemsley-Brown, J., 2010. The globalization and marketization of higher education: Some insights from the standpoint of institutional theory. *Globalization and internationalization in higher education: Theoretical, strategic and management perspectives*, pp.65-80.

O'Sullivan, K., Robson, J. and Winters, N., 2019. 'I feel like I have a disadvantage': how socio-economically disadvantaged students make the decision to study at a prestigious university. *Studies in Higher Education*, 44(9), pp.1676-1690.

Othman, M.H., Mohamad, N. and Barom, M.N., 2019. Students' decision making in class selection and enrolment. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 33(4) 587 - 603

Owen, J. (2016) Our careers education is flawed: we need to think about skills not jobs *The Guardian* [online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/nov/24/our-careers-education-is-flawed-we-need-to-think-about-skills-not-jobs [Accessed 3rd April 2019]

Padlee, S.F., Kamaruddin, A.R. and Baharun, R., 2010. International students' choice behavior for higher education at Malaysian private universities. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 2(2), p.202.

Palmer, S., 2013. Characterisation of the use of Twitter by Australian Universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 35(4), pp.333-344.

Pampaloni, A.M., 2010. The influence of organizational image on college selection: what students seek in institutions of higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 20(1), pp.19-48.

Papworth, J. 2013 A Parent's university bill: £650 a month *The Guardian* [online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/money/2013/aug/10/parent-university-bill-loans-grants [Accessed 10th June 2016]

Parker, D.F. and Dyer, L., 1976. Expectancy theory as a within-person behavioral choice model: An empirical test of some conceptual and methodological refinements. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 17(1), pp.97-117.

Parker, P.M. and Tavassoli, N.T., 2000. Homeostasis and consumer behavior across cultures. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 17(1), pp.33-53.

Pascarella, E.T., Pierson, C.T., Wolniak, G.C. and Terenzini, P.T., 2004. First-generation college students: Additional evidence on college experiences and outcomes. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 75(3), pp.249-284.

Perna, L.W. and Titus, M.A., 2005. The relationship between parental involvement as social capital and college enrollment: An examination of racial/ethnic group differences. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76(5), pp.485-518.

Peruta, A. and Shields, A.B., 2017. Social media in higher education: understanding how colleges and universities use Facebook. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 27(1), pp.131-143.

Peruta, A. and Shields, A.B., 2018. Marketing your university on social media: a content analysis of Facebook post types and formats. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 28(2), pp.175-191.

Peters, D.L. and Daly, S.R., 2013. Returning to graduate school: Expectations of success, values of the degree, and managing the costs. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 102(2), pp.244-268.

Pettinico, G. and Milne, G.R., 2017. Living by the numbers: understanding the "quantification effect". *Journal of Consumer Marketing*. 34(4) 281 - 291

Petruzzellis, L. and Romanazzi, S., 2010. Educational value: how students choose university. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 24(2) 139 - 158

Pincus, J., 2004. The consequences of unmet needs: The evolving role of motivation in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review*, 3(4), pp.375-387.

Pippert, T.D., Essenburg, L.J. and Matchett, E.J., 2013. We've got minorities, yes we do: Visual representations of racial and ethnic diversity in college recruitment materials. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 23(2), pp.258-282.

Poole, S.M., Levin, M.A. and Elam, K., 2018. Getting out of the rankings game: a better way to evaluate higher education institutions for best fit. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 28(1), pp.12-31.

Price, I.F., Matzdorf, F., Smith, L. and Agahi, H., 2003. The impact of facilities on student choice of university. *Facilities*.

Pringle, J. and Fritz, S., 2019. The university brand and social media: using data analytics to assess brand authenticity. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 29(1), pp.19-44.

Proctor, S. (2006) *Doing Postgraduate Research* 2nd edition Sage: London

Pugeley, L. and Coffey, A., 2002. Keeping the customer satisfied: Parents in the higher education. *Welsh Journal of Education*, 11(2), pp.41-58.

Ramachandran, N.T., 2010. Marketing framework in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 24(6) 544 - 556

Rayburn, J.D. and Palmgreen, P., 1984. Merging uses and gratifications and expectancy–value theory. *Communication Research*, 11(4), pp.537-562.

Raymond, M.A., Mittelstaedt, J.D. and Hopkins, C.D., 2003. When is a hierarchy not a hierarchy? Factors associated with different perceptions of needs, with implications for standardization–adaptation decisions in Korea. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 11(4), pp.12-25.

Reay, D., Davies, J., David, M. and Ball, S.J., 2001. Choices of degree or degrees of choice? Class, ‘race’ and the Higher Education choice process. *Sociology*, 35(4), pp.855-874.

Rekettye, G. and Pozsgai, G., 2015. University and place branding: The case of universities located in ECC (European Capital of Culture) cities. *Ekonomski vjesnik: Review of Contemporary Entrepreneurship, Business, and Economic Issues*, 28(S), pp.13-24.

Roberts, D., Hughes, M. and Kertbo, K., 2014. Exploring consumers' motivations to engage in innovation through co-creation activities. *European Journal of Marketing*. 48(1/2) 147 - 169

Robinson, C. and Schumacker, R.E., 2009. Interaction effects: centering, variance inflation factor, and interpretation issues. *Multiple linear regression viewpoints*, 35(1), pp.6-11.

Rook, D.W., 1987. The buying impulse. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(2), pp.189-199.

Rossiter, J.R., 2002. The C-OAR-SE procedure for scale development in marketing. *International journal of research in marketing*, 19(4), pp.305-335.

Roszkowski, M.J. and Spreat, S., 2010. Weighing the difference: the validity of multiplicative and subtractive approaches to item weights in an instrument assessing college choice decisions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 20(2), pp.209-239.

Rousseau, A., Eggermont, S. and Frison, E., 2017. The reciprocal and indirect relationships between passive Facebook use, comparison on Facebook, and adolescents' body dissatisfaction. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 73, pp.336-344.

Rowan-Kenyon, H.T., Bell, A.D. and Perna, L.W., 2008. Contextual influences on parental involvement in college going: Variations by socioeconomic class. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79(5), pp.564-586.

Rutter, R., Lettice, F. and Nadeau, J., 2017. Brand personality in higher education: anthropomorphized university marketing communications. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 27(1), pp.19-39.

Rutter, R., Roper, S. and Lettice, F., 2016. Social media interaction, the university brand and recruitment performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(8), pp.3096-3104.

Ryan, M.J. and Bonfield, E.H., 1980. Fishbein's intentions model: a test of external and pragmatic validity. *Journal of Marketing*, 44(2), pp.82-95.

Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L., 2000. Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American psychologist*, 55(1), p.68.

Sabir, R.I., Ahmad, W., Ashraf, R.U. and Ahmad, N., 2013. Factors affecting university and course choice: A comparison of undergraduate engineering and business students in Central Punjab, Pakistan. *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research*, 3(10), pp.298-305.

Santos, C.L., Rita, P. and Guerreiro, J., 2018. Improving international attractiveness of higher education institutions based on text mining and sentiment analysis. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 32(3) 431 – 447

Sashittal, H.C., Sriramachandramurthy, R. and Hodis, M., 2012. Targeting college students on Facebook? How to stop wasting your money. *Business Horizons*, 55(5), pp.495-507.

Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019) *Research Methods for Business Students* – 8th edition Pearson: London

Savolainen, R., 2012. Expectancy-value beliefs and information needs as motivators for task-based information seeking. *Journal of Documentation*.

Savolainen, R., 2017. Information need as trigger and driver of information seeking: a conceptual analysis. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*.

Savolainen, R., 2018. 'Self-determination and expectancy-value: Comparison of cognitive psychological approaches to motivators for information seeking about job opportunities'. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*. 70. 00-00. 10.1108/AJIM-10-2017-0242.

Sax, L.J., Gilmartin, S.K. and Bryant, A.N., 2003. Assessing response rates and nonresponse bias in web and paper surveys. *Research in higher education*, 44(4), pp.409-432.

Schmitt, B., 1999. Experiential marketing. *Journal of marketing management*, 15(1-3), pp.53-67.

Schofield, C., Cotton, D., Gresty, K., Kneale, P. and Winter, J., 2013. Higher education provision in a crowded marketplace. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 35(2), pp.193-205.

Shah, J. and Higgins, E.T., 1997. Expectancy× value effects: Regulatory focus as determinant of magnitude and direction. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 73(3), p.447.

Shields, A.B. and Peruta, A., 2019. 'Social media and the university decision. Do prospective students really care?' *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 29(1), pp.67-83.

Shields, R., 2016. Following the leader? Network models of "world-class" universities on Twitter. *Higher Education*, 71(2), pp.253-268.

Sia, J., 2013. University choice: Implications for marketing and positioning. *Education*, 3(1), pp.7-14.

Simintiras, A.C., Cadogan, J.W. and Lancaster, G.A., 1996. Salesforce behavior: In search of motivational determinants. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 25(5), pp.421-437.

Simiyu, G., Bonuke, R. and Komen, J., 2019. Social media and students' behavioral intentions to enroll in postgraduate studies in Kenya: a moderated mediation model of brand personality and attitude. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, pp.1-21.

Simões, C. and Soares, A.M., 2010. Applying to higher education: information sources and choice factors. *Studies in Higher Education*, 35(4), pp.371-389.

Simons, H., 2009. Evolution and concept of case study research. *Case study research in practice*, pp.12-28.

Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S., & Hogg, M. K. (2006) *Consumer behaviour: a European perspective* 3rd edition Harlow, Financial Times/Prentice Hall

Spiggle, S., 1986. Measuring social values: A content analysis of Sunday comics and underground comix. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(1), pp.100-113.

Spiggle, S., 1994. Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(3), pp.491-503.

Stake, R.E. 1995. *The art of case study research*. London, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Steel, P. and König, C.J., 2006. Integrating theories of motivation. *Academy of management review*, 31(4), pp.889-913.

Strauss, A.L., 1987. *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge university press.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J., 1990. *Basics of qualitative research*. Sage publications.

Sweeney, J.C., Hausknecht, D. and Soutar, G.N., 2000. Cognitive dissonance after purchase: A multidimensional scale. *Psychology & Marketing*, 17(5), pp.369-385.

Szekeres, J., 2010. Sustaining student numbers in the competitive marketplace. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 32(5), pp.429-439.

Tapper, T. and Filippakou, O., 2009. The world-class league tables and the sustaining of international reputations in Higher Education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 31(1), pp.55-66.

Teng, S., Khong, K.W. and Chong, A.Y.L., 2015. Study abroad information in the new media. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 25(2), pp.263-286.

Thiele, T., Singleton, A., Pope, D. and Stanistreet, D., 2016. Predicting students' academic performance based on school and socio-demographic characteristics. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(8), pp.1424-1446.

Tolman, E.C., 1954. Freedom and the cognitive mind. *American Psychologist*, 9(9), p.536.

Tomlinson, M., 2008. ‘The degree is not enough’: students’ perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability. *British journal of sociology of education*, 29(1), pp.49-61.

Townsend, B.K. and Wilson, K., 2006. " A hand hold for a little bit": Factors facilitating the success of community college transfer students to a large research university. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47(4), pp.439-456.

Trautwein, U., Marsh, H.W., Nagengast, B., Lüdtke, O., Nagy, G. and Jonkmann, K., 2012. Probing for the multiplicative term in modern expectancy–value theory: A latent interaction modeling study. *Journal of educational psychology*, 104(3), p.763.

Trier-Bieniek, A., 2012. Framing the telephone interview as a participant-centred tool for qualitative research: a methodological discussion. *Qualitative Research*, 12(6), pp.630-644.

Trullas, I., Simo, P., Fusalba, O.R., Fito, A. and Sallan, J.M., 2018. Student-perceived organizational support and perceived employability in the marketing of higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 28(2), pp.266-281.

UCAS (2018) Is being a live at home student the right choice for your family UCAS [online] Available from: https://www.ucas.com/connect/blogs/being-live-home-student-right-choice-your-family [Accessed 1st June 2019]

Universities UK (2018) Students need better information about tuition fees and student loans – new survey [online] Available from: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/news/Pages/students-need-better-information-about-tuition-fees-and-student-loans-.aspx [Accessed 1st June 2019]

van Herpen, S.G., Meeuwisse, M., Hofman, W.A., Severiens, S.E. and Arends, L.R., 2017. Early predictors of first-year academic success at university: pre-university effort, pre-university self-efficacy, and pre-university reasons for attending university. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 23(1-2), pp.52-72.

Veloutsou, C., Lewis, J.W. and Paton, R.A., 2004. University selection: information requirements and importance. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 18(3) 160 - 171

Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W. and Deci, E.L., 2006. Intrinsic versus extrinsic goal contents in self-determination theory: Another look at the quality of academic motivation. *Educational psychologist*, 41(1), pp.19-31.

Vrontis, D., Thrassou, A. and Melanthiou, Y., 2007. A contemporary Higher Education student-choice model for developed countries. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), pp.979-989.

Vroom, V.H., 1964. *Work and motivation*. John Wiley & Sons

Walker, R. (1985) *Applied Qualitative Research* Cambridge University Press: Aldershot

Wallendorf, M. and Belk, R.W., 1989. Assessing trustworthiness in naturalistic consumer research. *ACR special volumes*.

Wigfield, A. and Cambria, J., 2010. Expectancy–value theory: Retrospective and prospective. *Advances in motivation and achievement*, 16(part A), pp.35-70.

Wigfield, A., Eccles, J.S., Mac Iver, D., Reuman, D.A. and Midgley, C., 1991. Transitions during early adolescence: Changes in children’s domain-specific self-perceptions and general self-esteem across the transition to junior high school. *Developmental Psychology*, 27(4), p.552.

Wigfield, A., Tonks, S. and Eccles, J.S., 2004. Expectancy value theory in cross-cultural perspective. *Big Theories Revisited*, 4, pp.165-198.

Wilcox, P., Winn, S. and Fyvie-Gauld, M., 2005. 'It was nothing to do with the university, it was just the people': the role of social support in the first-year experience of higher education. *Studies in higher education*, 30(6), pp.707-722.

Wilkie, W.L., 1975. *How consumers use product information: An assessment of research in relation to public policy needs*. US Government Printing Office.

Wilkie, W.L. and Pessemier, E.A., 1973. Issues in marketing's use of multi-attribute attitude models. *Journal of Marketing research*, 10(4), pp.428-441.

Wilkins, S., Balakrishnan, M.S. and Huisman, J., 2012. Student choice in higher education: Motivations for choosing to study at an international branch campus. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 16(5), pp.413-433.

Wilkins, S. and Huisman, J., 2013. Student evaluation of university image attractiveness and its impact on student attachment to international branch campuses. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 17(5), pp.607-623.

Wilkins, S. and Huisman, J., 2015. Factors affecting university image formation among prospective higher education students: The case of international branch campuses. Studies in Higher Education, 40(7), pp.1256-1272.

Wilkins, S., Shams, F. and Huisman, J., 2013. The decision-making and changing behavioural dynamics of potential Higher Education students: the impacts of increasing tuition fees in England. E*ducational Studies*, *39*(2), pp.125-141.

Winter, E. and Chapleo, C., 2017. An exploration of the effect of servicescape on student institution choice in UK universities. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 41(2), pp.187-200.

Winter, E. and Thompson-Whiteside, H., 2017. Location, location, location: does place provide the opportunity for differentiation for universities? *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, *27*(2), pp.233-250.

Witt, C.A. and Wright, P.L., 1992. Tourist motivation: life after Maslow. *Tourist motivation: life after Maslow.*, pp.33-35.

Woodall, T., Hiller, A. and Resnick, S., 2014. Making sense of Higher Education: students as consumers and the value of the university experience. *Studies in Higher Education*, *39*(1), pp.48-67.

Wu, Q., 2014. Motivations and decision-making processes of mainland Chinese students for undertaking master's programs abroad. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *18*(5), pp.426-444.

Yang, H.P., Yen, D. and Balmer, J.M., 2020. Higher education: a once-in-a-lifetime purchase. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*.

Yin, R.K., 2014. *Case study research: Design and methods (applied social research methods)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.

Zhang, Y.L., Lui, J. and Hagedorn, L.S., 2013. Post transfer experiences: Adult undergraduate students at a research university. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 21(1), pp.27-36.

Zheng, P., 2014. Antecedents to international student inflows to UK higher education: A comparative analysis. Journal of Business Research, 67(2), pp.136-143.

Zhu, Y., 2019. Social media engagement and Chinese international student recruitment: understanding how UK HEIs use Weibo and WeChat. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, *29*(2), pp.173-190.