AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CHALLENGES FACED BY LIBYAN PHD STUDENTS IN BRITAIN: [A STUDY OF THE THREE UNIVERSITIES IN MANCHESTER AND SALFORD]

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ABSTRACT

As a developing country, Libya has prioritised the growth of human capital as a means to achieve the government's Libyanisation programme. This concern for the country's human development has been evident in its attempts to educate and train Libyan nationals in overseas establishments. However, despite Libya's intention to benefit from established Higher Education systems internationally, the political difficulties that arose in 1993 did result in a serious setback. These particular problems emerged when UN sanctions were brought to bear on the country. The impact of such sanctions was evident in the subsequent years, when a drop occurred in the numbers of postgraduate students being funded for PhD programmes in both Britain and the United States, and as fewer students were sent to these countries, Libya naturally suffered since the national labour force did not progress in capability as much as had been hoped.

In April 2004, the last of the sanctions against Libya was lifted, since relations with Britain and the United States normalised, with the result that Libya's economic development went ahead at full pace. This has been seen by growing investment in the economy by foreign investors, and a growth in the privatisation of manufacturing and service companies. Such moves and economic reform measures require appropriately qualified personnel, and large numbers of students once again began to be sent overseas (to Britain and America) for PhD study, marking a large investment on the part of the Libyan government.

However, it is clear that certainly in the UK, Libyan PhD students encounter many challenges which detract from their effective performance on their PhD programmes and which generally result in requests for extensions to their study. Consequently, this research project has investigated those challenges using a quantitative approach in which 150 questionnaires have been completed by Libyan PhD students within three UK universities. Of these questionnaires, 135 (90% response rate) usable returns have been processed questionnaires. Additionally, interviews were held with three officials in the Libyan Embassy for the purpose of triangulating the data obtained from the survey, and establishing

overall statistics relating to the performance of Libyan nationals on PhD programmes in UK universities.

The findings reveal that Libyan PhD students face challenges that call into four different categories - English Language Difficulties, English Courses/Preparation, PhD Concern, and Family Commitment – and that within these, there are eleven separate factors that contribute to the problems encountered. Recommendations as to how these challenges can be reduced are offered.

DEDICATION

I DEDICATED THIS WORK TO THE SOUL

OF MY FATHER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DECLARATION

The author declares that this thesis was the result of her own work. No portion of the work covered in the thesis has been submitted in support of any application for another degree or qualification at this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Table of Contents

List of tables

XI

List of figures

List of abbreviations

FA	Factor analysis.
HE	Higher Education.
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions.
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency.
IELTS	The International English Language Testing system.
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency.
IELTS	The International English Language Testing system.
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin.
LD	The Libyan Dinar.
MFUO	Movement of Free Unionist Officers.
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds.
RGEC	Research Governance and Ethics Committee.
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.
SRHE	Society for Research into Higher Education.
UKCISA	UK Council for International Student Affairs.
UK	The United Kingdom.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Libya has recently experienced fundamental change politically and socially, as the events of 2011 have seen a regime change after 42 years. Currently, the country is in turmoil, with the immediate concentration of most of its citizens being on personal survival, and the goal of securing democracy, rather than on the continuation of the economic trajectory that was in place before these events. As a result, what follows refers to the relative period of stability existing in Libya prior to the most recent revolution.

Being a developing country, one of Libya's priorities has been the growth of human capital as a means to achieve the government's Libyanisation programme (Ministry of Higher Education, 2008). This concern for the country's human development has been evident in its attempts to educate and train Libyan nationals in overseas establishments. Indeed, as long ago as 1978, more than 3,000 students were studying in the United States alone (Clark, 2004), and despite the political difficulties experienced in the 1990s, which caused a reduction in the numbers of Libyan students overseas, by 2005 the numbers were nearing this early figure, with 2,775 Libyan nationals again studying in 50 different countries worldwide, and being sponsored from a budget of 170 million Dinar that was earmarked for overseas study (Report of Ministry of Higher Education, Libya, 2004/5). More recently, it was recorded that 8,160 Libyan students (including 3,484 Masters' students and 4,032 PhD students) were undertaking education abroad at the expense of government, distributed across 48 countries (Ministry of Higher Education, 2008). And at the end of 2010, it was reported that approximately 12,000 Libyan students in various disciplines were studying in more than 52 countries worldwide, concentrated mainly in Britain, Egypt, Malaysia, America, Australia, and Germany, with 3,000 of these students being in Britain (Ahlamontada – Interview, MoHE, 2010). Hence, it can be seen that Libya has a

history of sending university students abroad, and has, therefore, been committed to developing its human capital.

However, despite Libya's intention to benefit from established Higher Education systems internationally, the political difficulties referred to previously, that arose in 1993, did result in a serious setback. These particular problems emerged when UN sanctions were brought to bear on the country. The impact of such sanctions was evident in the subsequent years, when a drop occurred in the numbers of postgraduate students being funded for PhD programmes in both Britain and the United States, and as fewer students were sent to these countries, Libya naturally suffered since the national labour force did not progress in capability as much as had been hoped.

This shortcoming in Libya's human capability occurred because, in common with other countries in the Arab World, Libya's Higher Education system is still developing, and Libyan universities do not graduate many PhD students. Indeed, as of the academic year 1999/2000, only 100 students had attained PhDs from Libyan universities, and these were mainly in fields such as Arabic, Islamic Studies, and the Humanities, since as yet, Libyan universities have not yet begun to offer doctoral programmes in Science, Technology, and Engineering. Obviously, in order to develop cadres of qualified people in these areas, the Libyan government has encouraged students to pursue their doctorates abroad (Clark, 2004).

In April 2004, the last of the sanctions against Libya was lifted, since relations with Britain and the United States normalised, with the result that Libya's economic development went ahead at full pace. This has been seen by growing investment in the economy by foreign investors (Otman and Karlberg, 2005), and a growth in the privatisation of manufacturing and service companies (Central Bank of Libya, 2007). Such moves and economic reform measures require appropriately qualified personnel, and large numbers of students were once again being sent overseas (to Britain and America) for PhD study. Indeed, in 2008, there were 4,032 Libyan nationals preparing for their doctorates in what the

General People's Committee (since the regime change in 2011, the Council of Ministers) considers to be the best classified universities of the world (Ministry of Higher Education, 2008).

In particular, on 2 January, 2004, the British Council signed a cultural agreement with Libya, which was (and still is) expected to bring a 'huge increase' in the number of Libyans studying at UK universities and colleges (Times Higher Education, 2004).

As part of the strategy to attract Libyan students, and ease their transition from Libya to UK universities, the British Council teaches English to over 1,000 Libyans directly at its Teaching Centre, and to many thousands more throughout Libya, using British Council trainers based in universities across the country. The outcome of such a partnership is that at the moment there are more Libyan students in the UK than from any other Arab country, which is an incredible position given that Libya's population is just over 6,000,000. Of these, 4,000 are in UK Higher or Further Education, or studying English in preparation for this (British Embassy, Tripoli, 2009).

At the same time, another interesting situation is arising in UK universities, in that they seem to be becoming more attractive to overseas students, probably because the UK has one of the strongest traditions of Higher Education in the world and top-class institutions can be found across the country.

Nineteen of the QS World University Rankings top 100 universities in 2010 are in the UK (student advisor.com, 2012). In fact, the UK offers international students much more than just a first-rate education, as a recent article written by Saudi student, Hadeel Mufti (i-studentglobal.com, 2013) points to the attraction of the British culture, very much in evidence in the 2012 Diamond Jubilee, and Olympic and Paralympic celebrations.

Another such aspect of added value is the fact that prospective students from around the world believe the UK to be safer than the United States. And yet

another is that it has respected Higher Education institutions and that it is relatively easier to obtain a visa to study in the UK (postgrad.com).

However, some important questions can be asked in this respect, these being whether universities are properly equipped to deal with students from a wide variety of different cultural and educational backgrounds, and whether the students find they are adequately supported in their studies by the academic environment, or whether they meet obstacles.

Certainly, in the case of Libyan students, it is understood that they do encounter barriers to their effective learning, as confirmed to the researcher by the Head of Cultural Affairs at the Libyan Embassy in London, who indicated in a telephone conversation (Dr Saad Mnaa, 5.6.09) that Libyan PhD students are known to face problems and that some of these have already been reported upon in a paper presented by two such students in Libya (Alzlitny and Abu Saa, 2009). This is clearly a matter for concern, since the likelihood is that such students are not reaching their potential, and the Libyan overseas education budget is not being used effectively.

Several barriers to overseas students' ability to benefit from the HE curriculum have been identified, not least the fact that where large numbers of students from the same cultural background, and speaking the same language, are studying in the same place, the tendency to speak in their native language rather than in English, depresses the likelihood of any real progression in their development of English language, with the result that academic texts are not understood (Roberts, 2005). Furthermore, in the case of students from Muslim backgrounds, cultural traditions, such as the expectation that a male student, for example, will be accompanied by his wife and children, impact upon the choice of university, since considerations regarding appropriate schooling for children are involved (El-Arbi Ibrahem, 2007). Consequently, an appropriate school (such as the Libyan and the Saudi Schools in Manchester) will attract large numbers of students from the same background, the outcome being that the native language becomes more commonplace and the pressure to use English is less. This situation is easily seen

in respect of Libyan students, and Manchester is one place in the UK where there is a Libyan School teaching the Libyan curriculum, thereby making the Universities in Manchester a preferred place of study. The result is a concentration of Libyan PhD students, and indeed other Arabic-speaking PhD students and their families in Manchester.

1.2 Justification for the Study

As already indicated, it is because Libya is a country that is still developing its HE system, that the government is sending large numbers of students, including many postgraduate students, to the UK. In this respect, a briefing document prepared by the UK Trade and Investment Organisation (2011) has revealed that the Libyan government allocates more than 3,000 scholarships for study in Britain every year. This document calculates these scholarships to be worth more than £160 million to UK universities and colleges in fees, given that these scholarships carry through to subsequent years, such that in 2011, there were more than 8,000 Libyan students enrolled in UK universities (Maslen, 2011). Moreover, in an emerging private sector economy, Libyan families are now beginning to invest in education at all levels for their children overseas (The British Council, 2008).

Specifically, in respect of PhD education, the Libyan government invests enormously in funding students on PhD programmes overseas. Indeed, in just the 14 months since the beginning of January 2007, the Libyan Committee for Higher Education has announced a series of postgraduate scholarships overseas amounting to 5,734 in total (Australian Government, 2009)

Table 1.1: Libyan Investment in Overseas Postgraduate Scholarships

Date	Number of Scholarships	Postgraduate Study
10.1.2007	825	Masters' Degrees
28.8.2007	3,205	Masters' Degrees
5.9.2007	96	Masters' Degrees

19.9.2007	212	Masters' Degrees
20.11.2007	928	Masters' Degrees
20.11.2007	468	PhD Degrees
3.3.2008	834	Masters' Degrees
2009-2010	753	Masters' Degrees
2012	1886	Masters' Degrees
2012	1729	PhD Degrees

Source: Ministry of Higher Education (2012)

From Table 1.1 it can be seen that the vast majority of scholarships are for Masters' Degrees and the implication of this amount and type of funding is clear, since it can be presumed that from these Masters' students come the future PhD students, and as these people will have studied in English, it is in Libya's interests to allow them to build on that expertise and remain in overseas universities for their doctorates. It is, therefore, important that the Libyan government remains convinced of the value in funding students for PhDs overseas, and this is a good reason in itself for conducting the proposed study.

As the evidence is that the UK is a prime recipient of much of this educational funding, it is important for UK HE institutions to ensure value for money. Undoubtedly, there is a heavy Libyan investment in the UK education product, but if Libyan students meet obstacles to their effective study while they are here, the outcome would seem to be that they are not reaching their full potential, and consequently, part of the investment in their Higher Education is being lost. There is, therefore, genuine justification for conducting the study.

Additionally, as the researcher herself is in the position of a funded PhD student, and at a university where there are considerable numbers of Libyan PhD students (48 in total), a good research population is both available and willing to participate since the nature of the study is such as to provide recommendations to improve the experience for similar students in the future.

The literature is not rich in observations of PhD students' ability to manage PhD courses, and therefore, this study will make a contribution, specifically in respect of Libyan students, more generally perhaps in relation to students from a similar cultural background (North Africa and the Middle East), and possibly to students from other developing countries.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate the challenges that Libyan PhD students are facing whilst studying for PhDs in the UK, with a view to making recommendations to appropriate bodies to alleviate their difficulties. Five objectives are identified as a means of achieving the overall aim, as follows:

1. To review the existing literature in order to identify the barriers faced by overseas students in their academic life, and produce a theoretical framework for the questionnaire and interview to be developed.

2. To investigate the opinions of Libyan PhD students at the University of Salford, the University of Manchester, and the Metropolitan University of Manchester, regarding the barriers they encounter when studying.

3. To investigate the difficulties that Libyan PhD students face in life in general whilst studying in the UK.

4. To investigate the opinions of officials in the Libyan Embassy, who are responsible for monitoring Libyan PhD students in the UK regarding the difficulties that students face.

5. To make recommendations to address those barriers that was identified.

1.4 Research Questions

The following three research questions have been identified:

1. What challenges do Libyan PhD students face in their academic life whilst studying in the UK?

2. What attempts are made to alleviate these challenges by the Libyan authorities?

3. What attempts are made to alleviate these challenges by the UK universities participating in the study?

1.5 Proposed Research Methodology

In order to gather the data required to answer the above research questions, and hence, achieve the aim and objectives of the study, both primary and secondary data will be obtained through a series of stages. An initial literature review will be undertaken to learn what factors have been identified so far as having an impact on the ability of overseas students to cope with postgraduate education in British universities. From this review, a theoretical framework based on the factors already indicated in the literature will be established. Then, a mixed methods approach to the empirical research will be adopted, involving an interview exercise with a small number of well-informed officials at the Libyan Embassy, and a questionnaire survey with a total population of Libyan PhD students (150) from the three Universities in Salford and Manchester.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is limited to investigating the challenges facing Libyan PhD students at three universities in Salford and Manchester. The reason behind choosing these universities is that the researcher studies at one of them. Another reason is that according to the Libyan Embassy, Manchester attracts large numbers of Libyan students as it has the most major Libyan school outside of Libya.

1.7 Organisation of the Thesis

This study is divided in seven chapters, as shown in Figure 1.1.

Chapter One has provided an introduction to the research study. It has given the background to the problem and presented a rationale for pursuing the issue. It has

also established the aim and objectives for the study and the consequent research questions to be answered. Additionally, it has mentioned the proposed methodology, and confirmed the scope of the study, before giving an indication of how the thesis is structured.

Chapter Two presents a review of all the appropriate literature for the study. It begins by exploring the growth of HE and the demand for this from the developing countries, acknowledging why this demand exists. It then considers the UK as a destination for overseas university students, before examining the various challenges confronting both university lecturers and overseas students. Specifically, these challenges are identified as language differences, the variation in students' expectations of the UK educational experience and the reality, as occasioned by differences between the home and host academic cultures. Issues concerning the acculturation and socialisation of overseas students are then identified as further challenges, as is the resultant shock experienced by these students as many different aspects of their lives, both psychological and practical, are changed.

Chapter Three introduces the reader to the Libyan context, and specifically to the Libyan education system. As the history of the teaching of English language in Libya is explained, it becomes easier to appreciate the grounding which Libyan students have prior to their studies in the UK, and their reactions to the various experiences outlined in Chapter Two. Essentially, this chapter not only highlights the Libyan context, but it adds to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. It begins by providing information about Libya's geography and population, and then proceeds to present a brief history of the political development in Libya, specifically paying attention to the role of the various imperial powers that imposed their culture and language upon the country. From that point it considers the effect of this history upon the 42-year Gaddafi regime's policies regarding the teaching of English, and in particular it analyses the Libyan education system. It also considers the Libyan HE system, and the way in which English has been taught in the country, and why.

Chapter Four provides a detailed description of the research methodology employed. It introduces the research process with its various features, including the research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, data collection, and data analysis. It considers positivism and phenomenology, then deductive and inductive reasoning. Thereafter, the chapter turns to the strategy adopted for the study (survey), the research sample, and the way in which the data is collected. Issues concerning the design of the questionnaire, its piloting process, and the eventual distribution of the questionnaire for the main study are all covered. Finally, details of the interviews held in the Libyan Embassy are given. The chapter ends with a short summary.

Chapter Five presents an analysis of the data collected and the research findings. A detailed analysis of the data collected from questionnaires and interviews using the chosen data analysis techniques.

Chapter Six provides further discussion of the findings of the research from the questionnaires and interviews.

Chapter Seven provides the conclusions, recommendations for further research work and how the researcher meets the aim and the objectives of the research as well as the originality of the research.

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided an introduction to the research. A background to the study has been given and the research justification was explained. The research outline has been addressed including the research aim, the research objective and the research questions. Moreover the expected contributions were addressed and a brief view given of the proposed research methodology. Finally, this chapter presented the layout of the thesis, explaining the structure of the thesis including all the chapters. The next chapter describes the literature review.

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│         Chapter One         │
│                             │
│        Introduction         │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│         Chapter Two         │
│                             │
│      Literature Review      │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Chapter Three        │
│                             │
│         Libyan HE           │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Chapter Four         │
│                             │
│    Research Methodology     │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Chapter Five         │
│                             │
│      Research Findings      │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│         Chapter Six         │
│                             │
│ Discussion of Research Findings │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Chapter Seven        │
│                             │
│ Conclusion and Recommendations │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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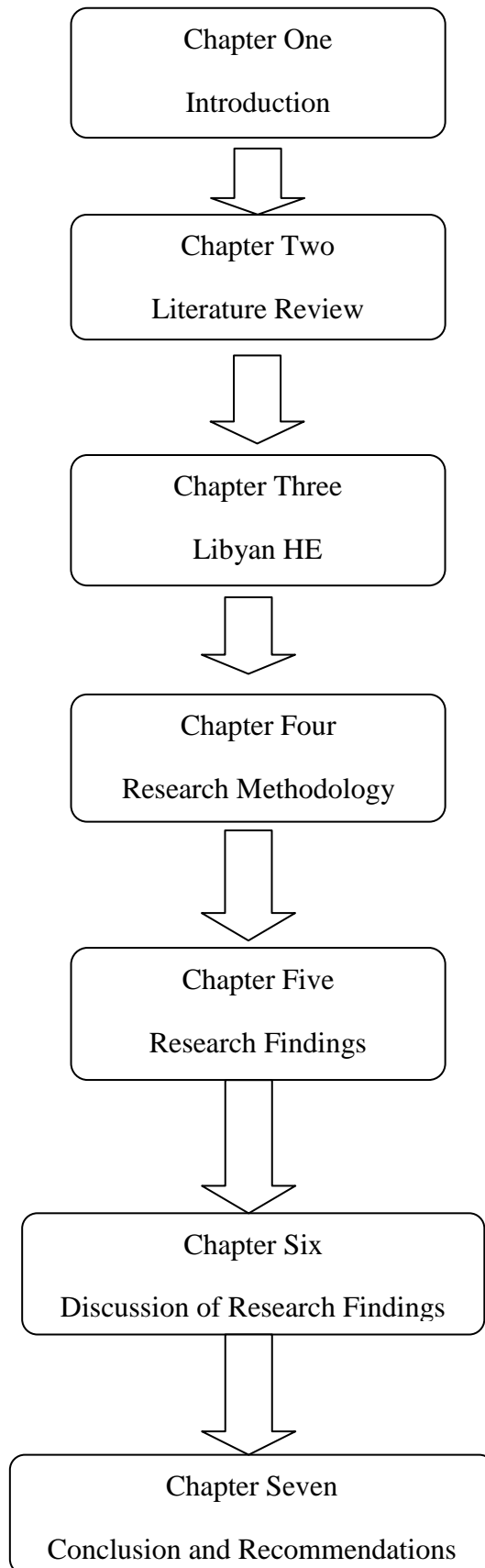
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the available literature regarding the challenges encountered by overseas students when studying abroad is reviewed. The literature in this respect comes from a number of sources, and largely approaches the issue from different aspects. Essentially, the sources are scholarly articles, some of which consider case studies of students in particular educational communities throughout the world, and commentaries from organisations with an interest in Higher Education provision and the role played within HE systems generally by overseas students. Where possible, indications of how students from Arab countries are prepared for studying abroad are given.

2.2 The Growth of Higher Education and the Demand from Developing Countries

It is documented by many researchers that Higher Education (HE) has long been believed to be the principal driver in the development and progress of societies and countries (von Greiff, 2007; Alam, 2007; Bloom, 2006), it being observed particularly by von Greiff (2007:2) that:

"There is a widespread consensus that a highly educated population is positive for economy and the society in general. High-educated workers face lower unemployment risk, earn higher wages, are presumably better informed and make wiser decisions than low educated workers. Moreover, a high-skilled [labour] force may also foster economic growth through more productivity enhancing innovations and better adoption of new technology."

In recognition of the contribution of HE to national development, the past few decades have witnessed substantial growth in enrolments in both developed and

developing countries (Schofer and Meyer, 2005), as several factors have combined to push for expanded HE opportunities. Strong social demand, technology, and the requirements of globalisation trends, have all contributed to the need for countries to improve their human capital and increase the numbers of graduates and postgraduates with special expertise (Schofer and Meyer, 2005; Chapman and Austin, 2002). This is a worldwide phenomenon (Tight, 2007; Schofer and Meyer, 2005; Adams, 2000).

However, in developing countries especially, the availability and quality of HE is not always of a type that can seriously underpin widespread improvements of human resources. As observed by Altbach (2004), around 2 million students worldwide study away from their home countries, and that figure is predicted to increase to 8 million by 2025. Libya is one such country that has historically suffered from a lack of skilled manpower which includes a shortage of teaching staff in its universities, and this has led to increasing dependence on foreign skilled labour in many fields, especially those requiring the technical expertise which is largely absent among local workers (Alawar, 2006; Eltaif, 1999; Abusnina, 1996; Mogassbi, 1984; Dughri, 1980; Gummed, 1979). Over the past few decades, as the country has attempted to keep pace with technological change, this particular problem has worsened (Alawar, 2006; Attir, 2006 and 2005), and the case for sending nationals overseas to pursue PhD qualifications has remained as strong as ever.

In their research on 54 African countries, including Libya, Teferra and Altbach (2003) illuminate a number of current trends in African HE, all of which combine to depress the quality of the provision available. These trends are: 1) the inequitable distribution of HEIs between regions in a country, 2) the mismatch between the outputs of HEIs and labour market needs, 3) shortages of and/or inadequate academic and physical infrastructure, 4) the brain drain of academic staff, 5) gender and urban/rural inequity, and 6) the domination of liberal arts rather than scientific and technological subjects. Libya, however, is not only an African country – it is also an Arab one, and as such it has many common features with the rest of the Arab World, where modern HE is a relatively new idea. As

noted by Eickelman (1992), most of these countries did not embark upon HE systems until the 1960s and 1970s. Since that time there has been significant growth, it being reported that from a starting figure of 10 universities across the Arab region in 1950, there were 233 in 2003 (UNESCO, 2004:11). Nonetheless, challenges still remain, and as highlighted by Abdrabou and El Araby (2006:16), most Arab states have been unable to satisfy student demand because of insufficient resources, and the result is that HE systems in Arab countries are "under considerable strain due to high rates of population growth and increasing social demand for higher education, which lead states and institutions to increase student enrolment often without adequate allocated financial resources".

Just as it is possible to identify trends in African HE, so too can the same be done in respect of the Arab countries, and in this respect, these have been indicated by Massialas (1991:995) and UNESCO (2003:3) as follows:

- High population growth and the massification of secondary education;
- Inadequate financial resources; inflexible and centralised management;
- Inability to meet students' needs;
- Weakness in the links between the HEIs, general and secondary education, local communities, society, and human development needs;
- Persistent mismatch between what HEIs offer and the knowledge/skills that are required for employment;
- Lack of systematic guidance and career counselling services, a situation that compounds the problem of graduate job placement;
- Lack of general co-ordination between agencies controlling national development and HEIs, resulting in unemployment or underemployment of graduates;
- Inability to offer large scale alternate routes to post-secondary education;

- Apparent non-involvement of community and business leaders in the affairs of HE.

Most developing countries are fully aware of the importance of the issues already identified, but they also appreciate the need to equip their nationals with global consciousness and with experience in other cultures if they want to be able to compete in the global economy. Consequently, there is a ready market for those universities in developed countries that wish to recruit students from overseas. Indeed, there is a ready source of provision by HEIs in the advanced countries of the world, it being estimated that the US economy for example, is boosted by more than $12 billion each year from foreign students. Additionally, it is interesting to see that foreign students make up the majority of all students at doctoral level.

2.3 The UK as Home to Overseas University Students

In the UK, universities have become increasingly diverse in their student population, it being reported by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) that between the academic year 2010/11 and 2011/12, the international students in UK HEIs increased by 1.5%, with the largest percentage coming from India, followed by China, then Pakistan and Hong Kong. Table 2.1 documents the origin of all overseas students in UK HEIs for years 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Table 2.1: International Students in UK Higher Education Institutions 2010/11-2011/12 , by Country

Country of domicile	2010/11	2011/12	% change
China	67325	78715	16.9%
India	39090	29900	-23.5%
Nigeria	17585	17620	0.2%
United States	15555	16335	5.0%
Malaysia	13900	14545	4.6%

	2010/11	2011/12	
Hong Kong	10440	11335	8.6%
Pakistan	10270	9860	-4.0%
Saudi Arabia	10185	8820	-13.4%
Canada	5945	6235	4.9%
Thailand	5905	6115	3.5%
All other non-EU countries	101915	103205	1.3%
Total non-EU domicile	298110	302680	1.5%

Source: HESA

If these enrolments are considered from a regional, as opposed to a country perspective, it can be seen that the developing regions of the world are well represented, as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: International Students in UK Higher Education Institutions 2010/11-2011/12 by Region

Region of domicile of non-UK domicile students		
Region of domicile *	**2010/11**	**2011/12**
Other European Union	130120	132550
Other Europe	16595	17890
Africa	36710	35255
Asia	185675	188525
Australasia	2400	2475
Middle East	26060	26645
North America	26095	27100
South America	3965	4090
Non-European Union	605	690

unknown		
Total non-UK domicile	**428225**	**435235**

Source: HESA

It is also the case that international students are present in most UK universities, accounting for a considerable fraction of their student intake, and that they represent an important part of UK university life, bringing many advantages (Lebcir et al, 2008). Lebcir et al (2008) argue that the presence of such students adds vibrancy to universities, by providing opportunities for contact, understanding and shared experience between students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. They also recognise that significant numbers of international students also provide opportunities for university staff to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the educational systems in different countries. These benefits are, of course, over and above the very considerable financial contribution made by international students, via the payment of full-cost fees and an injection of money into the local economy through normal living expenses. Consequently, there is competition among HEIs, not only in the UK, but also in other developed countries (United States, Europe, Australia) to attract such students, and it is, therefore, a matter of importance for HEIs to examine their provision and their value-for-money dimension (Lebcir et al, 2008), especially since this worldwide migration has given rise to an increased multicultural mix of students and indeed staff, in academia, which in themselves promote new challenges for university teachers and students (Omeri et al, 2003).

2.4 Challenges for University Teachers and Overseas Students
2.4.1 Language

As observed by Omeri et al (2003), these challenges centre on the culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, which effectively mean that some of the students could be considered disadvantaged in their ability to achieve success in their studies. This raises new pedagogic questions such as whether the traditional way of teaching in universities can effectively cater for the learning needs of both

home and international students, and whether special skills in teaching across cultures need to be developed (de Vita, 2001). This concern has not been lost on academics; indeed, several studies have been conducted on how institutions can manage the diversity brought by increasing numbers of international students, and how they can ensure quality learning for all students (Campbell, 2000; de Vita, 2000; Ladd and Ruby Jr, 1999; Tompson and Tompson, 1996), but still little is known concerning the extent of any disadvantage that might be felt by international students (da Vita, 2001).

In a paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) in December 2007, Dr Silvia Sovic discussed the notion of international students as 'others', raising in particular, language and learning traditions as factors that set these students apart from home students, who meet no problems in this regard. Additionally, she commented on the large number of studies in this field, ranging from small-scale project reports to PhD dissertations. However, in her survey of research, Pelletier (2003) diagnosed several methodological shortcomings in these studies, such as: lack of conceptual and theoretical framework, lack of attention to difference in academic level, lack of attention to gender differences, lack of focus on the experience of students beyond the university environment, lack of longitudinal studies, both of how students' experiences and attitudes change over the duration of their course, and of their subsequent careers, lack of substance, above all in terms of size and focus of samples.

Irrespective of the various criticisms of the methodological approaches to the investigation of international students' experience, however, one fact is beyond question, and that is that for a great number of these foreign students, English, which is usually the spoken language of the country where they study, is not their mother tongue, and the literature confirms that a main source of difficulty for international students is associated with language and other deficiencies in 'academic skills' (Roberts, 2005; Robertson et al, 2000 ; Ballard and Clanchy, 1997). It has been argued that language proficiency is the most important determinant of international students' academic success (Yang and Clum, 1994;

Barrat and Huba, 1994), since only if these students are proficient in this respect can they participate in class discussion, and improve their performance (Kao and Gansneder, 1995). Where such proficiency is lacking, international students visibly impair the learning experience of home students, as noted by Roberts (2005) who found that in postgraduate classes with large numbers of foreign students, complaints were often made by native English speakers that the pace of teaching was too slow as it has to accommodate students who are unable to keep up and continually ask for the tutor to repeat.

In fact, many universities set a minimum standard of English Language for international students and even though they generally offer language support (Cownie and Addison, 1996), language remains as an issue experienced by lecturers, thus demonstrating that it cannot be addressed simplistically. Arguing this point, both Cammish (1997) and Todd (1997) who say that it is impossible to separate language from culture, and draw a distinction between the difficulties encountered by international students in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Commenting on the issue of language support and responsible recruitment in respect of overseas law students, Addison and Cownie (1996) long ago stressed that lack of ability in the English language is a barrier to the academic success of these students, raising the question of the suitability of tests for English language, and whether the recommended points system bears any relevance to the nature of the academic exercise in front of them. More recently, as noted by Roberts (2005), the usefulness of such testing mechanisms has been questioned by several researchers (Sakuraku, 2000; Todd, 1997; May and Bartlett, 1995).

One problem concerned with the actual use of English language is that not only must students be able to understand it in both a written and verbal form, but they need to develop skills in its use for tasks such as summarising, extracting the main ideas and making notes, which they may never have had to do at home (Ballard, 1996). Moreover, there is a need for these students to be critical and to engage in potentially argumentative discussion both verbally and in writing, and this presents another perplexing problem since students are expected not only to work

with a different language, but to do things in them such as criticise, which their home educational culture has no concept of, and therefore, does not require (Roberts, 2005). The outcome as noted by Benzie (2010) is that students who have English as an additional language often struggle to complete the requirements of studying for a degree, and given that low levels of English language ability are widespread among these students (Frijters and Beatton, 2007; Ziguras, 2007; Birrell, 2006; Devos, 2003), it follows that the overall experience they encounter within the host HEI is less than positive.

Undoubtedly, the way in which international students learn English is important in underpinning their ability to cope with HE in a native English-speaking context. According to Gee (2008), traditional language learning theory holds that language develops via a process where, through the acquisition of a set of grammatical, lexical and phonological forms, the learner acquires language that can then be applied in a range of circumstances. Once the learner has reached a particular level of expertise in the English language s/he should be able to operate successfully in any English language environment. However, there are differing ideas in this respect, and other theorists argue that in addition to acquiring knowledge of the necessary linguistic forms, learners must develop the ability to apply these in order to properly communicate and engage completely in the full range of cultural contexts. This is known as the socio-cultural perspective on language learning, which stresses the ability to use the language for different purposes, and as argued by several researchers (Norton, 2006; Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000), which sees language as inextricable from the contexts of its use, thereby implying that what constitutes language proficiency in one context, does not necessarily imply such proficiency in another. These arguments find much support among language researchers. For example, Crichton and Scarino (2007) argue that when proficiency in language is seen simply as a skill, without a corresponding process of practice, it is tempting to consider it as something that can be mastered separately and prior to learning how to communicate. And Gee (2008) supports this, saying that when English language learning is regarded as simply developing skills it becomes an individual responsibility and activity rather than a complex process of interacting in various contexts. Gee (2008) adds that

using this perspective it is easy to blame students who are struggling with English language, rather than to look for ways of enhancing their learning experience.

It can be seen, therefore, there is a growing understanding of the importance of context in language learning since the traditional idea that this involved no more than the acquisition of words and grammatical and phonological forms, is giving way to an appreciation that culture and context has a much more powerful role in how language is used effectively (Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000; Sfard. 1998). The entire process as argued by Sfard (1998) is much more complex, involving participation in the use of language. This leads to the ideas put forward by other researchers (O'Donnell and Tobbell, 2007; Lea, 2005) that learning should be conceptualised as participation in a new cultural context. Arguably, this could require some change to the identity of the language learner/user since as noted by Besemeres and Wierzbicka (2007), individuals are in essence translating their lives from one linguistic world to another and this whole process involves pain, struggle, and reward. This argument concerning identity change finds much support (Norton, 2006; Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000). Norton (2006:26) in particular argues that "the value ascribed to speech cannot be understood apart from the person who speaks and that person … cannot be understood from larger networks of social relationships". Consequently, it can be recognised that if international students whose first language is not English are to develop the ability to communicate in a range of contexts, then it should not be assumed that they can learn everything they need in the language learning classroom. What has to happen is that such learning must include activities beyond the classroom, and these must be on an ongoing basis. A very real implication of this requirement is that for international students to develop along these lines, they should socialise as much as possible with native English speakers rather than restricting themselves to other students who speak the same language as themselves.

Undoubtedly, it is impossible to separate language from culture, and as already noted, the adjustment to the home culture is facilitated by a greater command of the language (Yang and Clum, 1994; Barrat and Huba, 1994). International students who speak English fluently tend to be less embarrassed and less self-

conscious about their accent or ethnic background, and consequently display a higher level of self-esteem and better overall adjustment (Barrat and Huba, 1994) as they are more able to socialise with their host country peers (Hayes and Lin, 1994, in Lee et al, 2009).

The ability of Libyan students in particular, to speak and use English fluently is explored in Chapter Three, where the historical background to the teaching of English in Libya is presented.

2.4.2   Differences between Academic Cultures – Expectations and the Reality

Clearly, language difficulties pose a substantial problem for many international students, but it is observed that perhaps a greater issue is the mismatch between academic expectations and experiences, and the differing teaching and learning styles that such students encounter in the host HEIs (Roberts, 2005; Ryan, 2002; De Vita, 2001; Lin, 2001; Cortazzi and Jin, 1997; Ames, 1996; Bilbow, 1989). This mismatch leads to the need to adjust to a new academic environment, and the overseas student's capacity to make such an adjustment is an issue that several researchers have highlighted. Cortazzi and Jin (1997) for example, consider the need to learn how to communicate across academic cultures, cultures of communication, and cultures of learning, and Ridley (2004) argues that whilst the academic discourse of particular disciplines may be confusing to all students entering HE, this is especially so for those whose language, literacy and learning experiences have been different from those who have been prepared to enter HE. Ridley's (2004) observation is that written assignments, in particular, show specific gaps in expectations between international students and academic tutors and how they may be addressed. One such gap relates to the need for students to think in a critical manner. For example, it has been reported (Ashman and Conway, 1997; Reid, 1989; Dunbar, 1988) that Asian students, and specifically Chinese students, are inadequately prepared for the need to think and write critically and analytically as is demanded in western universities. Yet Chalmers and Volet (1997) have challenged the notion that students from South-East Asia are 'surface learners' and 'passive non-participants', and they confront HEIs

themselves, suggesting that such stereotypes sometimes provide HEIs with a reason for ignoring the fundamental issue of student learning at university. Indeed, Jones (2005), in a comparative study of native (Australian) and non-native (Chinese) English speakers, found the determining factor of success in HE was whether a clear explanation of what was expected of students had been transmitted to them, rather than their cultural background. This outcome echoed that of previous research (Nishio, 2001; Li et al, 1997; Okorocha, 1996) that stressed the need for particular clarity in briefing international students about the learning environment which they are entering.

Such clarity should be provided at the beginning of an international student's programme as noted by Beasley and Pearson (1999) who argue that this is the point when additional learning support is required by international students who come from different teaching and learning traditions, most notably those favouring rote-learning and teacher-centred approaches. Indeed, much earlier, Samuelowicz (1987) impressed the idea that it is international students' understanding of academic expectations, conventions and standards at the host university, which is equally important as the language by which these are communicated. Moreover, as argued by Mullins et al (1995), such understanding is not only in respect of the students, since the academic staff's appreciation of the educational background of their students will further improve the overall learning experience, and mitigate mismatches between student and staff expectations.

Whatever strategies are put in place, however, it is a fact that many overseas students have to change their learning strategies to meet the requirements of the new academic culture (Ballard, 1996). And where postgraduate students in particular find difficulties, is in the relationship they expect with their supervisors, which invariably does not materialise given that the whole ethos of Masters' and doctoral research is very different from that of overseas students' home educational culture, and they see themselves as being deprived of firm and frequent guidance (Roberts, 2005).

Recent work suggests that innovative course design and effective student support policies enable students to develop better communication skills, critical thinking

and independence right from the start and this in turn improves their integration with local students and makes the whole transition process easier. The introduction of extra learning support such as interactive workshops, peer learning and support groups can reduce failure rates, and is beneficial to all students (Beasley and Pearson, 1999; Cathcart et al. 2005).

2.4.3 Acculturation and Socialisation

Issues relating to overseas students' acculturation and socialisation within the new educational environment are also reported as being important. In this respect, Gorman (1999) has observed that international students experience disadvantage according to the extent to which their cultural backgrounds differ from that of the university, and points out that students may experience feelings of isolation and exclusion from the dominant cultural group and encounter prejudicial views and racist attitudes from staff members and other students. Likewise, Deem and Brehony (2000) argue that adjustment for international postgraduate students is often elongated and complicated as they learn a new education system and adapt to a very different way of life. They point out that adjustments to social norms and cultural styles occur both within and outside the classroom. Furthermore, it has also been observed that if such adjustments cannot be easily made, as for example because of an increased diversity of students in Higher Education, meaning that the norm is not readily identifiable, then international postgraduate students may very well feel isolated as they feel different from, or separate to, those around them.

Loneliness has certainly been identified as a major part of the study experience of such students (Pargetter, 2000; Gormann, 1999) and more recently, Hendrickson et al (2011) have considered this in relation to the satisfaction levels of international students. They note the importance of friendship for all individuals in satisfying deep personal and emotional needs, referring to Maslow's third need in his hierarchy – that fulfilling the need for belonging and love. Maslow suggests that this need is based on a shared humanity that goes beyond geographic, racial, gender, social, ethnic, and religious boundaries (Zalenski and Raspa, 2006). Pangle (2002) cites Aristotle, considered the champion of friendship, who

believes that the happy man will need friends. Much research has been conducted on the subject of friendship formation of international students and it has emerged that the ability to develop friendships is one of the most important factors of acculturation, satisfaction, contentment, social support, and success for international students studying in foreign universities (Kudo and Simkin, 2003; Ying, 2002; Bochner et al, 1985). Understandably, these students develop social networks and personal relationships in various aspects of their lives in the host culture (Bochner et al, 1977), and it has been found that the strength of the ties formed is important in the satisfaction experienced by them within their particular network structures (Krackhardt, 1992). What is also the case, however, is that international students develop unique friendship networks with individuals from the same country (co-nationals), people from other foreign countries (multi-nationals), and individuals from the host country (Bochner et al, 1985; Furnham and Alibhai, 1985; Bochner et al, 1977), and that this full range of personal contacts are essential to help promote communication competence in the host environment (Kim, 2001).

Building on this understanding, Ward et al (2001) have developed a functional model of international students' social networks that suggests three types of social ties: a primary mono-cultural network consisting of bonds between compatriots, a secondary bi-cultural network connecting international students and host nationals (e.g., peer students, academic advisors), and a third multi-cultural network involving internationals from other countries. International students appear to appreciate the need for this range of contact, it being found by several researchers (Hayes and Lin, 1994; Church, 1982; Klineberg and Hull, 1979) that their expectation is one of friendship with the host community, and that where this does not follow, these students experience dissatisfaction with their experience. Indeed, research has demonstrated that international students with more contact with host nationals reported higher levels of satisfaction (UKCISA, 2004), and that whilst the majority of friendships were with co-nationals, international students preferred friendships with host nationals, since these enabled them to adapt better to life overseas (Church, 1982). Indeed, Ward and Kennedy (1993b) reported fewer social difficulties and improved communication competence among international

students with majority friendships with host nationals, and Pruitt (1978) noted more positive attitudes towards the host culture in such circumstances. More recently Maundeni (2001) and Kim (2001) found that in the absence of intimate friendships with host nationals, international students were substantially hampered in their cross-cultural adjustment process since without such interaction, they were unable to obtain insight into the minds and behaviours of local people. That said, despite the desirability of friendships with host country nationals, it is reported (Sam, 2001), that several factors militate against their development, and returning to the language problem already discussed in detail, it is reported (Kudo and Simkin, 2003; Yamazaki et al, 1997; Gudykunst et al, 1996) that spoken English is a major one, thus leading to a lack of integration of international students. In the UK, it has been reported (UKCISA, 2004), that international students are much more closely integrated with co-nationals and multi-nationals than with UK students. Moreover, Otten (2003:14) documents that "after a certain time abroad, many international students group in their national communities", and that failure to develop close social relationships with home students can have a negative influence upon a student's academic achievement.

Despite the need for meaningful contact and relationships with host nationals, however, the social networks of co-nationals are very important in supporting international students' adjustment and managing their culture shock (Roberts, 2005; Furnhan and Bochner, 1989). In fact, it is proposed that the mono-cultural network is the most important since it provides a safe harbour where international students can relax from the exhausting experience of life in the host culture and communication apprehension (Bochner, 1982). From this it can be understood that the amount of co-national interaction and the satisfaction with co-national companionship are positively associated with the psychological well-being of international students (Roberts, 2005; Ward and Searle, 1991; Searle and Ward, 1990). Moreover, it is argued by Lee (2009) that it is natural for co-nationals in the same major to have frequent interactions, as they will meet not only in their academic settings, but also on a social level. Hence, the number of co-nationals in the same department may be an important indicator of a mono-cultural social network, and as Lee (2009) further argues, given the known effect of a mono-

cultural network in reducing culture shock and providing assistance for international students, it is expected that the more co-nationals are present in the same department, the better international students adjust in the host culture.

Friendships and social networks are without doubt crucial to adjustment, but international students do sometimes perceive themselves as being discriminated against on racial or ethnic lines and this stands as another obstacle to the formation of friendships outside of the co-national community (Leong and Ward, 2000; Gorman, 1999; Kim, 1994). Moreover, the fact that international students have to break into existing friendship networks and associations presents another barrier (Woolf, 2007), since often they have to prove themselves in some way, when they are still in a vulnerable position. The result is that international students find it harder to make new friendships with host country individuals than they do with co-nationals or multi-nationals, and this in itself directs them to network with others who also do not have English language as their mother tongue, thereby consolidating the problem of insufficient usage of English in all contexts.

In all these studies of the acculturation of overseas students, however, few have taken doctoral students as their focus (exceptions being Walsh, 2010; El Arbi Ibrahem, 2007; Leonard et al, 2006; Roberts, 2005; Deem and Brehony, 2000). Of those that have, both Roberts (2005) and Walsh (2010) raise the problem that overseas doctoral students in the UK do not have any formal curricula to follow, and that by nature their research is highly individualised, presenting the risk of isolation. Deem and Brehony (2000) and Walsh (2010) emphasise that in science and technology, PhD students are immune to this problem because they are often part of established research groups including other PhD students and post-doctoral researchers. They meet in a collegiate environment together with their supervisors in a laboratory setting, whereas social science research students have no such support infrastructure and effectively work by themselves. However, Walsh (2010) does also report that whilst the circumstances of science and technology researchers are less isolating than those of social scientists, even some members of established research groups felt unsupported and marginalised. Hard evidence for such concrete effects can be seen in a review of four-year PhD thesis

submission rates that reveal these to be slightly lower for overseas students than for home students (Walsh, 2010). As already noted, Roberts (2005) found the clash of educational cultures to be of particular importance in the supervisor/student relationship, representing a severe shock to the PhD student whose expectations of direct and close supervision with strong guidance were out of synchronisation with the educational culture of research activity in the UK.

2.4.4 Shock

Shock can in fact, be used to sum up much of the experience of international students, since they are met with a whole range of circumstances that they do not expect. These combine to cause culture shock (Otten, 2003), a term first used by the anthropologist Oberg (1960), who mentions several aspects of culture shock, these being:

- strain due to the effort required to make necessary psychological adaptations;
- a sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in regard to friends, status, profession and possessions;
- being rejected by, or rejecting, members of the new culture;
- confusion in role, role expectations, values;
- surprise, anxiety, even disgust and indignation after becoming aware of cultural differences;
- feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope with the new environment.

The second bullet point – a sense of loss and feelings of deprivation – is also occasioned by another very definite aspect of culture shock, not particularly discussed in the literature, that being the higher cost of living which many overseas students experience when studying in the UK. When this does happen it has an adverse effect upon students' ability to perform academically as they struggle to keep their families accustomed to the standard of living they have been used to. Clearly, shock occurs because students are unprepared for the cost of the living differential, and specifically in the case of Libyan students, this has

surfaced as a major trauma with several unwanted consequences including damage to personal esteem.

In a letter to the Gaddafi International Charity Saif al-Islam Muammar Gaddafi, Libyan students complained about their inability to pay their necessary living expenses because of unforeseen costs such as monthly payments for television, monthly bills for water consumption, and very expensive bills for electricity, gas and transportation. Such expenses are not anticipated by these students since in their domestic situation, the Libyan state either provides these free of charge, or at heavily subsidised prices. Obviously, students being financially supported by their governments expect that their sponsors would be fully aware of the cost of living in their host country, and are surprised to find that costs that are borne by their governments at home, are the responsibility of citizens in the UK (Letter sent to the Gaddafi International Charity on 13.3.2010).

Added to these problems, are the expensive costs of housing which relegate Libyan students to the poorest areas, thereby damaging their self-esteem as they subject their families to degraded living conditions. The consequence is that many Libyan students take jobs during unsocial hours, doing work below their social class (pizza delivery), with the result that they are tired, unable to focus on their studies and inevitably require visa extensions.

The entire cultural experience, coupled with the gap between educational cultures, stands to predispose the overseas student to poor levels of achievement. Consequently, in the UK, the United Kingdom Council for International Students Affairs a Code of Practice (UKCISA) has issued a Code of Practice and a Code of Ethics to which all providers of education, whether at undergraduate or doctoral level, should adhere. These cover a vast range within the experience of overseas students aiming to ensure their fair and unbiased treatment and the most professional of teaching and administrative standards (UKCISA, 2011). In the proposed thesis, these documents will be important additional sources of literature.

2.5 Sponsoring Country's Response to the Challenges Facing Scholarship Students

Given that large number of overseas students enrolled on PhD courses in the UK are sponsored by their respective governments, it is interesting to note that there has been little research into what those governments do to ensure that individuals who are given scholarships are able to benefit and succeed from the educational programme they are funded to undertake. However, there are some instances of responses to the problems encountered by these students, and in this section, these efforts are discussed.

2.5.1 Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, some courses are provided at the University of Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University for students who are leaving the Kingdom to study abroad. These are short courses but are nonetheless, obligatory, and students must be able to show that they have attended and passed before they are allowed to continue their studies overseas. Interestingly, the objectives of the courses are not only to assist in developing the right foundation for students to study in an English-speaking environment, but also to remind them of their national heritage and to instil a sense of national pride which the government does not want them to lose whilst living in a different cultural environment. Specifically, the objectives of the course are to:

1- Strengthen the sense of national belonging within scholarship students.
2- Educate scholarship students with respect to international legal systems.
3- Prepare scholarship students psychologically, socially and behaviourally, to experience the scholarship journey.
4- Provide scholarship students with basic skills to enhance their educational achievements, and specifically to improve their English language so that they can take advantage of their academic opportunity.
5- Develop the specialised skills of the scholarship students so that they are better able to deal with problems they may encounter in their specific subject area.

6- Focus on the acquisition of general English vocabulary to facilitate ways of conversation, and on specialised vocabulary to help in their studies (imamu.edu.sa, 2013).

Additionally, the Saudi government requires all scholarship students to reach a level of 5.5 in the IELTS examination before being permitted to travel to Britain for study. Several reasons are given for this requirement. The first is that it is recognised as a minimum level by the government for students to be able to cope with the academic course for which they are being funded. It is acknowledged that the better the English language of the student, the more s/he will learn from the educational programme, and the better the return to the Saudi government in the long run. The second reason is that the Saudi government also recognises the potential for such students to fall victim to unscrupulous people in a foreign country, for example when it comes to contracts, leases and purchases, students can be cheated if they are not able to understand the wording or the conversation associated with them. Moreover, dealing with customs officials at airports, with the police or the traffic police on the street, and with doctors and other healthcare professionals is made easier by English language competence. In this respect, the government is aware that the majority of students gaining scholarships have only a basic understanding of English and that this forces them to seek out other Arab-speaking students for help when they arrive in the UK, with the result that they do not integrate properly and do not develop the capacity to ask or answer questions effectively during their studies and generally lack confidence in trying to integrate with UK society (mvr-group.net, 2013).

2.5.3 Egypt

In Egypt, at the Centre of the Development of Higher Education, in the College of Education within Ain Shams University, there are courses entitled "The Rehabilitation of Scholarship Students" which are aimed at providing scholarship students with sufficient preparation to survive overseas study from an academic, social, and cultural standpoint. The underlying rationale is the same as in Saudi

Arabia, that being to assist the student to gain the most from the investment made in him/her by the government and to bring back that benefit to the nation. The aims of these courses are to:

1- Clarify the procedures that should be taken into account before travelling and after.

2- Give candidates for scholarships some basic skills relating to their own self-development.

3- Provide candidates with knowledge and understanding of the entire experience of studying abroad by providing contacts with previous scholarship students.

4- Provide information about how to use the library, and particularly about modern technological methods in browsing and reserving books.

5- Provide information about the social aspects of life abroad, for example, concerning accommodation, transportation, Halal food.

6- Consolidate certain cultural values so as to encourage the scholarship student to be a good ambassador for his/her homeland whilst abroad, and to instil in his/her consciousness the responsibility entrusted to him for the duration of the study.

7- Strengthen English language skills in areas like summarising and writing essays in order to support the academic purpose (elearn.shams.ed.eg, 2013).

2.5.4 The Sultanate of Oman

In the Sultanate of Oman, lectures are held for students on scholarships to the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Basically, these lectures address two issues, the first being the need to achieve an IELTS score of no less than 5.5 to enable the students to benefit from the courses to be followed, and the second being related to the logistics of travelling and settling into a new cultural environment. This aspect includes details of security procedures, the need to respect differences in creeds and religions, the need to be tolerant to the new culture, and to read the regulations and guidance that they will receive in terms of leading and planning

their daily living and studying, including the need to show perseverance and diligence in their study. Additionally, in respect of the logistics of travelling, students are informed about what they should do when leaving the Sultanate, i.e. visit the Ministry of Higher Education to obtain the documentation required for a visa, applying for a visa from the British Embassy, booking travel tickets, and checking the availability of housing before the start of the study. Students are also instructed to register their personal data and contact details with the cultural attaché at the earliest possible time so as to facilitate communication and the transfer of monthly allocations (shabiba.com, 2013)

2.6 Summary and Conclusion

Having considered the various factors identified in the literature as being influential in the overseas student experience, it is readily apparent that language is of tremendous importance since it carries with it cultural properties that help in the ability to make sense of the curriculum delivered. In the case of Libyan students, it has been indicated that quite special historic events have impacted upon their ability to speak and understand the English language, and these events are reported in the following chapter. Other key influences are identified as the mismatch between students' expectations of the educational experience they will obtain when they embark on a course of study in a UK university, and the reality, which is different because of the variation in academic culture. The way in which overseas students manage to absorb the new culture and socialise within that is also pinpointed as a crucial challenge, as is the overall shock experienced as a result of all of these changes. Specifically, the loss of status and identity seems to feature as a psychological blow. From this it can be seen that whilst the chance to study overseas might be perceived as a tremendous opportunity for students from developing countries where the HE systems are insufficiently advanced to offer postgraduate, and especially doctoral programmes, that chance nevertheless comes with a whole array of challenges for those students over and above those associated with their ability to handle the intellectual demands of the curriculum.

In the next chapter, the particular case of Libyan students is considered in detail as a review is presented of the Libyan context and details of how those students are prepared for a course in a UK university are provided.

CHAPTER THREE
THE LIBYAN CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the Libyan context in order that the students who are the subject of this thesis can be properly appreciated in terms of the educational and cultural background they bring to their studies in UK HEIs. Within the chapter, an indication of the geographical, population, and political background that has influenced the HE environment in Libya, and that influences it now, is provided. In doing this, the chapter presents an in-depth analysis of the Libyan education system in general, and then proceeds to discuss higher education in particular. It considers studies that have been undertaken by several researchers into the circumstances that have led to a relatively poor level of English competence among Libyans in general, and it points to the advantages to be gained by Libyans of improving their English language ability.

3.2 Geographical and Population Details

Libya is a developing country located in North Africa in what is termed the Arab Maghreb. It has a border with Egypt in the east, with Tunisia and Algeria in the west, and with Chad, Niger and Sudan in the south. To the north Libya has a long coastline with the Mediterranean Sea, giving that part of the country a much more favourable climate than the interior, and as a result, Libya's major cities are located there, as also is the majority (86%) of the population. In total, Libya occupies a huge area making it the fourth largest country in the African continent, and is about seven times the size of the UK. The land area is about 1,775,060 sq km, but as mentioned, the interior is comprised essentially of desert or semi-desert and the Sahara weather conditions make over 90% of this territory uninhabitable (Terterov and Wallace, 2002). Tripoli is the capital of the country, and the official language is Arabic, but Italian and English, are widely understood in the major cities because of Libya's colonial heritage.

The availability of data on the population of Libya is rather limited. However, the population between 1954 (the first national census) and 2006 increased from 1.041 million to approximately 5.67 million and was expected to reach 6 million at the end of 2008 (Otman and Karlberg, 2007). This indicates that Libya's population has a relatively high growth rate (Terterov and Wallace, 2002). In fact, almost half of the population is below 20 years old, and as noted by Clark (2004), this leads to a large number of students - 1.7 million in total, with over 270,000 of these being at the tertiary level.

3.3 Political Background

Libya has recently emerged from a 42-year during which the Gaddafi revolutionary government has essentially controlled the direction of its social, economic, and political development. It is through the policies formulated in these respects that Libyan people have been educated and prepared for study in other countries in the world, whether that be a good or insubstantial preparation. However, to understand how they have been prepared, it is necessary to consider Libya's history, which shows that from early times, the country has continually been a focus of foreign countries, seeking to expand their own territories.

The result is that Libya has been through many colonial occupations, starting with the Phoenicians (813 BCE-621 BCE), the Greeks, the Romans, the Vandals, the return of the Romans, and then the Arab Muslims in 612 (Simons, 2003). The Spaniards came to rule Libya in 1501, to be followed by the Knights of Malta from 1531-1550 (Simons, 2003). Thereafter, the Ottoman Empire took control of Libya in 1551, and continued in its dominance until 1911. When the Ottoman Empire collapsed, Libya was colonised by the Italians until 1943 when Italy was defeated in the Second World War, and after the war, Libya came directly under military administration by the British and the French. It was not until the United Nations gave Libya its political independence on 24 December 1951, that Libya was finally free from the long stream of colonisers. However, in the period when King Idris ruled Libya (1951-1969), there was still much interference from Western powers, as the king developed relationships, in particular with Britain and America. This resulted in both these countries ending up with military bases

in Libyan territory (St John, 2008), which the king believed would be a protection for the country from further invasion.

However, this situation was not considered favourably by all Libyans, and under the revolutionary leadership of Colonel Mu'ammar Gaddafi, a small group of army officers, calling themselves the Movement of Free Unionist Officers (MFUO) undertook a bloodless military coup on 1 September, 1969. From that time onwards, Gaddafi adopted a political ideology that concentrated on removing all Western influence from Libya, and indeed from Africa (St John, 2008). In removing such influence, the Gaddafi regime banned many of the signs of Western culture, for example alcohol was banned, there were seizures of foreign-owned banks, and churches and nightclubs were closed down. More specifically, the only language acceptable for official communications was Arabic, and eventually, the teaching of English in Libyan schools was stopped (St John, 2008).

In the years that followed the hostility towards the Western powers escalated with various acts of terrorism being conducted by Libya. The result was that on 31 March 1992, the UN imposed an economic and air embargo upon Libya and reduced the number of Libyan diplomatic personnel serving abroad. The sanctions banned flights to and from Libya; the sales to Libya of technology and certain equipment needed for the oil sector, and involved the freezing of some Libyan assets. All of these acts placed Libya in a position of relative political isolation internationally, thereby deepening the antagonism towards the English language. It was not until 1999, when the sanctions were suspended, and finally in 2003 when the UN Security Council voted to lift more than a decade of sanctions against Libya, that relationships with the West became more cordial, and the United States slowly re-established formal contact with Libya, paving the way for a greater use of English within the Libyan education system.

3.4 Overview of the Libyan Education System

The Libyan education system starts from the level of basic education, then moves through primary education, secondary education, and finally offers higher

education, free of charge, to all who wish to take advantage of it. During the 1970s, teacher training was pushed in an effort to replace Egyptian and other non-Libyan teachers who made up a majority of teaching personnel.

El-Hawat (2003) reports that in the academic year 1975/76 the number of university students was estimated to be 13,418, there being no Higher Technical Institutes in existence. By the academic year 1989/1999 this number had increased to more than 165,447, with a further 58.877 enrolled in the higher technical and vocational sector (Table 3.1). As a consequence, the rapid increase in the number of students in the HE sector has been mirrored by an increase in the number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Table 3.1: **Number of student enrolments in Higher Education in Libya (1975-1999)**

Year	No. of Students in Universities	No. of Students in Higher Technical Institutes	Total
1975-76	13,418	-	13,418
1980-81	19,315	1,130	20,445
1984-85	32,770	3,080	35,850
1989-90	50,475	3,916	54,391
1992-93	101,093	12,921	114,014
1993-94	116,473	16,912	133,385
1995-96	160,000	28,106	188,106
1996-97	160,112	54,080	214,192
1997-98	168,123	58,512	226,635
1998-99	165,447	58,877	224,324

Source: El Hawat (2003)

More recent in the academic year 2009/10 the number of university students was estimated to be 342,687, with a further 198,007 enrolled in the higher technical and vocational sector giving a total of 540,694 which shows the increase in the number of students in the HE sector (UNESCO).

On 2 March, 1977, the General People's Congress declared the establishment of a unique political system entitled "People Power" or "the authority of the people", and subsequently, the student management system era appeared in the interval from 1983 to 1991. In this period the students were involved in managing University affairs; this system lasted for around eight years (Alfanish et al, 1998).

The entire HE sector was managed by individual Universites's People's Committees, each being led by a Secretary (Dean). Faculties were managed in the same way, each Departmental Head being a member of the Faculty's People's Committee, and each Secretary of each Faculty's People's Committee being a member of the University's People's Committee. The students were also members of the People's Committee. According to the law of the People's Congress and People's Committee, membership of the University's People's Committee and the Faculty's People's Committee were appointments for three extendable years.

Libya's higher education sector is financed by the public budget, and the teaching staff is both Libyan and expatriate as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Number of Personnel Libya's Six Largest Universities 1999-2000

| University | No. of Faculties | Teaching staff | | Total | Administrative Staff |
		Libyans	Non-Libyans		
El-Fateh	13	1,300	458	1,758	2,145
Gar-Yuins	10	588	311	899	1,004
Seventh of April	7	240	247	487	1,248
Sabha	5	204	221	425	880
Omar Al-Mukhtar	9	154	374	528	960
Al-Tahadi	9	204	371	575	721

In 2009/2010 the number of Libyan teaching staff increased by 12,728 as a result of the government investment by sending students abroad for Masters and PhDs (UNESCO). Clearly, the early policy of using foreign universities to supply postgraduate education and qualifications was shown to be successful.

Education in Libya is free to everyone from elementary school right up to University, and as noted by Porter and Yergin (2006), the system includes the following five stages:

Nursery school: for 2 years - it enrols children aged 4 and 5 years;

Basic Education: for 9 years - it enrols pupils aged from 6 years;

Secondary Education: it extends 3 years; it includes Specialised Secondary Schools and Intermediate Technical and Vocational Centres and Institutes;

Higher Education: including Universities which lasts from 4 years to 6 years for studying, and higher Specialised Vocational and Technical Institutes which last 3 years; Postgraduate Studies: including Master's Degree and PhD (Doctorate) Degree and an advanced diploma in various specialisations.

3.5 The Libyan Higher Education System

The Libyan Higher Education system plays an important role in Libya's economic, cultural and social development. It seeks to create highly qualified professionals with the education and knowledge to make them capable of being the country's main human resources on which society can rely to cope with international advances in technology. The sector plays a key role in establishing technical links with other educational organisations, locally, regionally and around the world. In doing this, the HE universities and institutes endeavour to produce expertise, critical perspective and ethical direction on social development, science, art and technology.

The universities are the core part of the HE sector in Libya which started in the early 1950s with the establishment of the Libyan University, with campuses in Benghazi and Tripoli, and gradually grew to incorporate faculties of Arts and Education, Science, Economics and Commerce, Law, and Agriculture. In 1967, it annexed both the Faculty of Higher Technical Studies and the Higher Teachers' Training College, which became Faculties of Engineering and Education. In 1970, the Faculties of Medicine, Arabic and Islamic Studies were incorporated. In 1972, the Faculty of Oil and Mining Engineering was founded which moved in the late 1970s to the Brega Oil Terminal Complex.

In 1973, the Libyan University was divided into two separate and independent universities - the University of Tripoli and the University of Benghazi, later renamed the University of El-Fateh and the University of Gar-Yunis. Due to the increasing number of students enrolling in higher education through the 1980s and 1990s, the two universities were restructured and others were established resulting in a total of thirteen universities by 1995, consisting altogether of 76 specialized faculties and more than 344 specialized scientific departments El-Hawat (2003). Due to recent policy changes, the number of universities has been reduced to nine. Figure 3.1 shows the Map of the six main universities' sites.

Libyan HE is provided by universities (both general and specialised) and higher technical and vocational institutions, which include polytechnics, higher teacher training institutes, higher institutes for trainers (training future higher technical institute instructors), and higher institutes for technical, industrial and agricultural sciences.

Figure 3.1: Map of the Six Main Universities' Sites

In respect of the higher technical and vocational institutions, Clark (2004) observes that these came about in 1980 as a result of a government policy known as the New Educational Structure for Higher Education, and that there were approximately 54 such institutions created at that point, a number which had risen by 1999/2000 to 84. New scientific institutions called Scientific Research Centres have also recently been established in such fields as health and pharmacy, education, the environment and basic sciences. They function as both research and educational institutions. In the mid-1990s several higher institutes for teacher training were established which amalgamated with the secondary teacher training schools that used to graduate primary school teachers.

The HE system is financed by, and under the authority of, the state. Each university, however, manages its own budget and administration. Clark (2004) adds from the late 1980s there has been a rapid and steady increase in the number of registered students in HE.

Admission to both university and non-university programmes requires the Secondary Education Certificate, awarded at the end of the 'intermediate' or

'secondary' school cycle. Since 1990, all universities have required a score of 65% or better on the Secondary Education Examinations to enrol in a university programme, and some faculties, such as medicine and engineering, require scores exceeding 75% for admission. Students who have an average below 65% are admitted to higher training and vocational institutes. Students from specialised secondary schools are strongly encouraged to continue their field of specialisation at the tertiary level.

Hence, the university sector has been transformed from a single, state-run multi-purpose university into a group of decentralised generalist and specialist universities. Although no official studies have been conducted concerning the distribution of student enrolments at Libyan universities, there appears to be an imbalance between the number of students enrolled in the humanities and arts, and those in sciences and technology (El-Hawat, 2003).

As a result of the growing number of university students, and the resulting pressure on the public budget, Libya's higher education policy allowed the local public administration (Shabiat) and the private sector to establish university colleges and HEIs. The local administration manages financial resources for its higher education institutes from local community sources, and, in the case of the private sector, the state assumes no financial obligations at all. Private HEIs are totally financed by individual or group investors. In a two-year period (1997-2000), the local administration authorities established more than five private universities.

The growth in female student enrolment in higher education is a positive aspect of the Libyan educational policy. The number of female students has increased dramatically (Table 3.3). During the academic year 1980-81, there were only 4,056 female students, representing about 21% of all students, whereas by the academic year 1999-2000, female students reached 51%, of the total population (counting those enrolled in higher technical institutes). Recently by 2009-10, the female students' number increased to reach 14,878 (UNESCO).

Table 3.3: Percentage of Female Students in Libyan Universities 1980-2000

| Year | Number of Students | | Total | Female % |
	Male	Female		
1980-81	15,259	4,056	19,315	21
1991-92	40,094	32,805	72,899	45
1992-93	52,568	48,525	101,093	48
1993-94	64,069	52,413	116,473	45
1994-95	-	-	160,000	40
1995-96	66,775	60,499	127,274	51
1996-97	90,112	70,000	160,112	51
1997-98	-	-	168,123	51
1998-99	81,807	83,640	165,447	51
1999-00	-	-	204,332	51

(UNESCO).

Libya has a history of sending university students abroad. In 1978, more than 3,000 students were studying in the United States alone, however, by 2002 that figure had dropped to just 33 as a result of sanctions imposed in 1986 which restricted travel to the United States by Libyan nationals.

On 31 March 1992, the UN imposed an economic and air embargo upon Libya and reduced the number of Libyan diplomatic personnel serving abroad. The sanctions banned flights to and from Libya; the sales to Libya of technology and certain equipment needed for the oil sector, and involved the freezing of some Libyan assets. In 1999, the sanctions were suspended, and finally in 2003 the UN Security Council voted to lift more than a decade of sanctions against Libya.

Late in 2003, the United States gradually began to re-establish formal relations with Libya and in recent months a delegation of academics and officials from both countries have toured universities in both Libya and the United States, and also facilitated US academic and student exchanges to Libya. According to a British Council Press Release (2003), the UK signed a cultural agreement with Libya at the end of 2003 which resulted in an increase in the number of Libyans studying in the UK. Officials from the British Council estimate that there are currently more than 3,000 Libyan students enrolled at British institutions of higher and further education. Of those, 90% are said to be on Libyan government scholarships (Clark, 2004).

In general, there is a dearth of current reliable information concerning social statistics in Libya (Rhema and Miliszewska, 2010), but according to some sources, the total number of students, including foreign ones, in Libyan Higher Institutes and Universities was 324,506 for the academic year 2009-2010 (The National Committee for Libyan Universities, 2010).

What is of interest to this thesis is how these very many students are being prepared for study in other universities, especially since many of them are progressing to postgraduate programmes after completing their Bachelors' degrees in Libya, and the next section addresses part of this issue.

3.6 The Development of English Language Competence in the Libyan Education System

It has already been indicated that changes within the education system in the post-independence phase of Libya's history, worked to the detriment of the development of the English language. In this important aspect of Libyan education it is necessary to trace how this happened.

Clearly, the educational system that Libya inherited was one that had been developed to serve the interests of the colonial powers occupying the country, and even those primary and preparatory schools that were established at private cost to the Libyan people, were subject to supervision and administration by the occupation authorities (Al Sheikh, 1972). Girls were not allowed to benefit from

education, and the occupation authorities tried to impose their own national languages in schools so that Libyans could be trained as workers and clerks to be of use in administrative positions, thereby supporting the colonisers. As observed by Toure (cited in Maudho, 1983:17):

"*the education that was given to us was designed to assimilate us, to depersonalize us, to westernize us, to present our civilization, our culture, our own sociological and philosophical conception, even our humanism as the expression of a savage and almost conscious primitivism.*"

In some sections of society, European models were very much taken on board, resulting in the appearance of local elite groups who saw their ability to speak English for example, as an indication that they were cultured (Maudho, 1983).

Once independence was secured, however, it was necessary to re-construct the system so as to enable Libya to become integrated internationally in economic, cultural, and political matters. This entailed ensuring that the teaching of foreign languages was on the educational curriculum, and that all people (not simply the small elite), were able to develop foreign language skills. As a result both English and French were introduced in Libyan universities, and indeed in schools. It is true that the general tendencies of education at that time were towards promoting the Arab culture (Al Gomati, 1978), but there was, nonetheless, an expansion in the numbers of students and in various types of educational service. At the same time, there was a general lack of resources to build new schools, and insufficient teachers to cope with the increasing volume of pupils wanting to take the opportunity for education.

With the First of September Revolution of 1969, education took a different direction as it was used to instil the revolutionary philosophy. In this respect, The Educational Report (1996) submitted to the Geneva Conference on Education, indicated that this change of course was marked by several priorities, such as the provision of free education for all citizens, compulsory education up to the end of the preparatory level (from class 1 to 9), and a state duty to build schools, colleges and universities to underpin the anticipated throughput of the system. The Report showed that by 1992-93, enrolment in the compulsory stage of education had

reached 97% of the population, in comparison with 99.7% for developed countries. Without doubt, the educational system was perceived by the Gaddafi regime as the infrastructure for the country's entire development process, being used to underpin society's political, social and economic growth and interests. In this respect, the Revolutionary regime used it to protect the Libyan culture, culminating in the eventual decision to remove the teaching of English throughout the entire education system.

This decision came about as a result of the Gaddafi regime's belief that the learning of English was a mark of uncivilised behaviour, since it was a colonial language, and in 1986, the Ministry of Education issued its resolution to the effect that English would have no further place in the Libyan education curriculum (Hussein Kreiba, The Tripoli Post, 2012). As noted by Kreiba (2012), that decision had a long-lasting influence upon the quality of education delivered to Libyans, who were caught up in the campaign being waged against English by the political apparatus. In this respect, students throughout the country were instructed to take to the streets in large numbers and to burn as many English school books as they could, resulting in the total deprivation of resources for the younger generations of Libyans that would have facilitated their communication with the outside world (Kreiba, 2012).

Indeed, the restriction on the teaching and learning of English served to imprison the Libyan population as English language teaching was replaced by a concentration on a new subject entitled 'Political Awareness' that was basically the reading of, and constant attention to, Gaddafi's Green Book ideology. By instilling this new philosophy, delivered in Arabic, and restricting material in English, the regime prevented the younger generations from even knowing about alternatives. At the same time, it has been noted that regime officials' own families were able, and indeed encouraged, to learn English at the country's expense, by being sent abroad for study (Kreiba, 2012).

This set of circumstances naturally brought frustration to teachers and students, and although Gaddafi did later re-instate English on the school curriculum, by this time the quality of available learning materials was poor, and teachers themselves

had lost confidence in their ability to teach English through lack of practice. The legacy of the political ideology over the past 42 years has been almost two entire generations of Libyans whose command of the English language is extremely poor, and who have shown apathy towards learning the language because of sheer exasperation. Indeed, as Kreiba (2012) continues to observe, many Libyans have developed a psychological block to the learning of English, it having been instilled into them that this was against the national interests.

However, it was not only the antagonism towards the English language that conspired to damage its currency and use, since even before Gaddafi's removal of English from the education system, that system itself failed to deliver competence in the language as noted by several researchers (Fenaish 1981; Balhuq, 1982; Al Moghani, 2003). In this respect, Balhuq (1982) complained that a student having studied English for six years was unable to express himself in simple English, either in speech or writing, a result attributable to several factors. These were cited as lack of proficiency among teachers, the domination of the educational system by the requirements of formal examinations, rote learning (with no understanding) by students to pass written examinations, the absence of modern resources for language learning, and the inability of teachers to use such resources (when available) skilfully. Fenaish (1981) particularly criticised the teacher training programmes for their failure to emphasise the immediate needs of teachers, and to encourage trainee teachers to explore their own values, interests, and attitudes towards the foreign language and the culture it embedded. From the perspective of students in the classroom, Gherfal (1981) found that low achievement was an outcome of fear of the subject, and in an earlier study by Lilly (1976, cited in Ashiurakis, 1987), it was seen that Libyan students who were majoring in English at university were unable to read authentic materials fluently even after two years of virtually full-time exposure to the language. Teaching styles were quoted as the reason for this. In fact, it is clear that the problem of poor English language ability is a chronic one since various aspects of this situation have been the subject of research for many years (see for example, Al Zubeidi, 1972; Marrah, 1975; Al Mehdawi, 1975; EL, Hashim, 1980; Al Moghani, 1983).

Given this historical treatment of the English language, it was obvious to many Libyans that a comprehensive change was required to improve almost all aspects of Libyan life, including education, as shown by the popular uprising, now known as 17th February Revolution (2011). Since the success of that revolution, there has been greatly increased enthusiasm among people in all walks of Libyan society for the learning of other languages than Arabic, and specifically, English.

Naturally, there is a need to re-construct Libyan society to introduce a more transparent and truly participative political apparatus, and as part of this overarching aim, the teaching of foreign languages is particularly important, since as noted by Barakat and Milton (2011), one of the main benefits of such a strategy is that people acquire enhanced abilities to communicate and interact with others who know such languages in varied social contexts, including internationally (Villano, 1996, cited in Marcos, 2001). Moreover, employment opportunities are derived from foreign language skills, and at the national level, foreign language competency increases a country's competitive strength. At the same time, knowledge of a foreign language is known to have a favourable influence upon an individual's cognitive abilities (Bamford and Mizokawa, 1991). Clearly, society benefits by citizens' proficiency in foreign languages, but perhaps the most important advantage is the opportunities for genuine diplomacy that are secured by such abilities (Marcos, 1999).

In respect of the English language particularly, as noted by several researchers (Mackay and Mountford, 1981; Ashiurakis, 1987), this has become the main international language of science, with almost two thirds of engineering literature being published in English. Moreover, it is the language of communication in international conferences and seminars, in the airline industry, and in globalised business. Indeed, according to Richards (1999, cited in McDonough and Shaw, 1996:2), "the current status of English has turned a significant percentage of the world's population into part-time users or learners of English". And as noted by Karchu (1992, cited in Widdowson, 2000), English has become a Lingua Franca operating around the globe in a vast range of communities, and in institutions concerned with commerce, diplomacy, science, technology, etc.

Gray (cited in Block and Cameron, 2002) also confirms the interconnectedness of English and globalisation, not simply through the rise in multi-national companies, and world organisations that use the language, but also because on the Internet, English predominates. Most universities in the Arab World, and certainly in science, medicine, and engineering faculties, use English as the medium of instruction, despite parallel efforts to Arabise education. Hence, there is a situation now, where in Libya, there is a desire, and a need, to right the wrongs previously done to the nation by suppressing opportunities to learn the language of the rest of the world, and this begs the question of how HE can help to do that, and how it can therefore, help Libya to recover from the civil war from which it has just emerged. Part of the answer to that question is to provide those students who are sent overseas (to the UK in the case of this study) to truly capitalise upon their opportunities by preparing them to the best level possible in the English language.

3.7 Chapter Summary and Conclusion

In this Chapter an overview of the Libyan context has been presented in order to create an understanding of the environment where the research took place, and of the type of preparation given to Libyan students before they arrive in the UK, and by implication, universities in other English-speaking countries, to commence their postgraduate studies. Information has been provided about Libya's geography and political background. It has been shown how Libya has had a long history of colonisation, and how in the most recent periods of occupation, resistance has grown such that the eventual revolution of 1969 took steps to remove the influence of English. The structure of the education system in general, and HE in particular has been presented, and the way in which the education system has dealt with the teaching of English has been discussed. From this it was seen that levels of English language acquisition and competence are poor for a variety of reasons, both ideological and practical. However, it has also been shown that with the regime change, an enthusiasm for the teaching and learning of English has surfaced, and it has been pointed out that for students to benefit from overseas study, that enthusiasm should be responded to in the HE environment so

that students can be adequately prepared for their studies in English-speaking universities. Chapter Four presents the methodology adopted for the empirical work within the study.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Research means different things to different people, and no consensus exists on how to define research (Collis and Hussey, 2003). It is, therefore, essential to describe the approach taken in this study in detail, and this chapter presents that description. It shows how the research aim, objectives, and questions guide the processes undertaken. Specifically, this chapter begins by providing a general outline of research methodology as a concept, and then moves to consider the research process with its various features, including the research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, data collection, and data analysis. It considers positivism and phenomenology, then deductive and inductive reasoning. Thereafter, the chapter turns to the strategy adopted for the study (survey), the research sample, and the way in which the data is collected. Issues concerning the design of the questionnaire, its piloting process, and the eventual distribution of the questionnaire for the main study are all covered. Finally, details of the interviews held in the Libyan Embassy are given. The chapter ends with a short summary.

4.2 Research Methodology

Collis and Hussey (2003:55) define research methodology as "the overall approach to the research process, from the theoretical foundation to the collection and analysis of the data". The choices made in this respect are extremely important, since it is necessary for the methodology to provide a coherent and systematic framework for all aspects of a study, and this includes paying attention to the techniques and tools used to gather the data, and the methods subsequently used to analyse it. It is through the methodology that the research objectives are achieved (Dwyer, 2002; Wass and Wells, 1994). Hence, the research objectives in

any study must be clearly and unambiguously stated so that the appropriate methodology can be chosen.

From this it can be understood that as objectives vary, so too do the methods available to the researcher, and as noted by Berry (1983), there is no one universally accepted scientific methodology; rather, a combination of methodological paradigms may be used by the researcher. What is clear, however, is that the methodology not only includes the theoretical underpinning to the collection and analysis of data, but is also built upon a philosophical position adopted by the researcher.

4.3 The Research Process

In this section the research process adopted for this study is discussed in detail. Issues related to the research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, data collection, and data analysis are discussed in detail. Figure 4.1 depicts the research process as suggested by Saunders et al (2007).
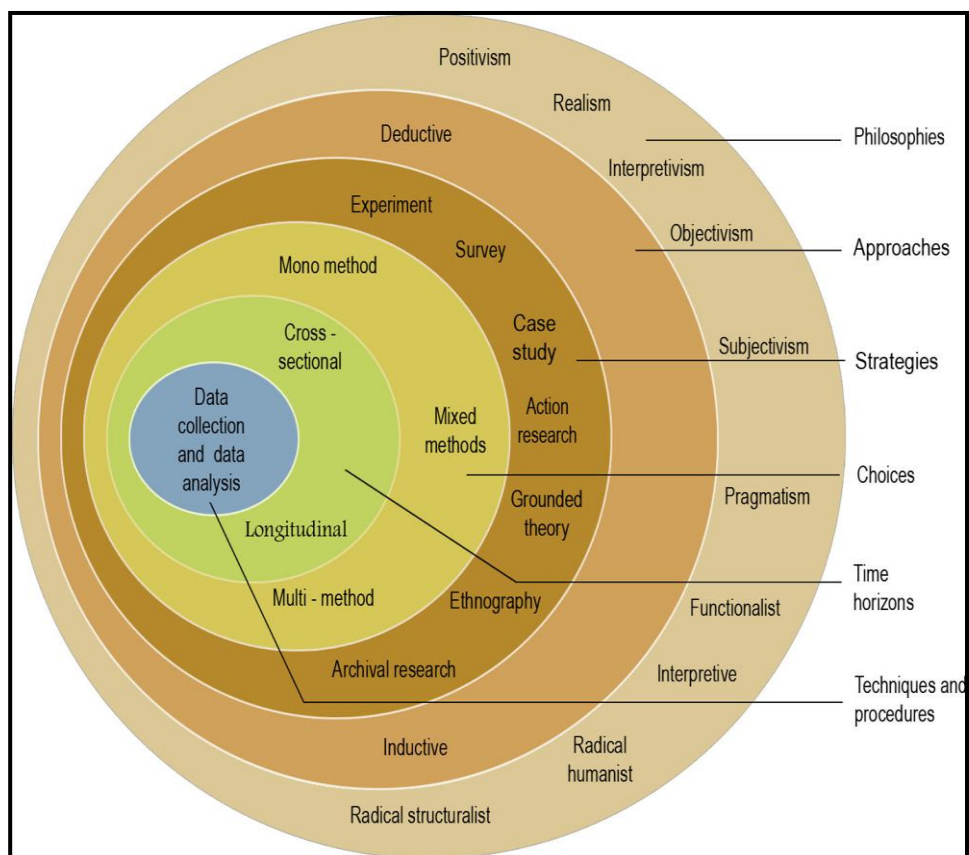
Figure 4.1: The Research Process (Saunders et al, 2007)

4.3.1 Research Philosophy

Saunders et al (2003) state that the research philosophy reflects the way in which the development of knowledge is considered, which in turn influences how research is undertaken. It can be understood, therefore, that an appreciation of philosophical issues is crucial in order to clarify research designs and give some guidance as to which will be successful (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). In general terms, two main research philosophies in the social sciences have been identified, these being the positivist and the phenomenological approaches (Saunders et al, 2007; Collis and Hussey, 2003; Easterby-Smith et al, 2002; Hussey and Hussey, 1997).

Positivists believe that knowledge is an objective truth which is learned by researchers remaining detached from what is being observed, and using quantitative measures to analyse what is seen, gathered, and or experienced (Saunders et al, 2003; Robson, 2002). The idea, as described by Easterby-Smith et al (2002:28) is that "[t]he social world exists externally, and that its properties should be measured through objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection or intuition". Positivists are not concerned with the detail of people's inner mental states (May, 1997), but rather seek the facts or causes of social phenomena, paying little regard to the subjective state of the individual. Consequently, logical reasoning is applied to the research so that precision, objectivity and rigour replace hunches, experience, and intuition as the means of investigating a research problem. Positivism is underpinned by the belief that the study of human behaviour should be conducted in the same way as studies conducted in the natural sciences. According to positivists, social reality is independent of those involved, and exists irrespective of whether we are aware of it (Collis and Hussey, 2003). In providing explanations of events, it is laws of science that are used, and they allow for researchers to establish causal relationships between the variables. Essentially, positivist research is deductive, it includes gathering and analysing quantitative data, and it involves highly structured methodologies that facilitate subsequent replication by other researchers and in other contexts (Saunders et al, 2003).

Almost the opposite beliefs are held by phenomenologists, who consider that reality is socially constructed and receives its meaning from people, therefore being neither objective, nor exterior (Collis and Hussey, 2003; Hussey and Hussey, 1997). In this type of research, the concentration is on the meaning, rather than the measurement, and on the ways which people make sense of the world, especially through sharing their experiences with others via the medium of language (Easterby-Smith et al, 2004). Phenomenologists attempt to understand and explain a phenomenon without searching for external causes or fundamental laws (Easterby-Smith, 1991), believing that no understanding of reality can be reached unless the details of the situation are thoroughly explored (Remenyi et al, 1998, cited in Saunders et al, 2003). As all situations vary, it must be acknowledged that so too will interpretations differ among those involved, and in this respect, there are significant social forces and processes that are influential in the way these interpretations are made (Saunders et al, 2003). In their focus on finding answers to questions concerning the 'what', 'why', and 'how' of a situation, phenomenologists accept that these answers are inherently dependent upon those researching into the particular situation concerned.

The distinctions between these two fundamental philosophical positions are provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Contrasting Implications of Positivism and Phenomenology

Theme	Positivism	Phenomenology
The observer	Must be independent	Is a 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 progress through	Hypotheses and deduction	Gathering rich data from which ideas are induced
Concepts	Need to be operationalised so that they can be measured	Should incorporate stakeholder perspective

Units of analysis	Should be reduced to simple terms	May include the complexity of "whole" situations
Generalisation through	Statistical probability	Theoretical abstraction
Sampling requires	Large numbers selected randomly	Small numbers of cases chosen for specific reason

Source: Easterby-Smith et al (2004:30)

According to Collis and Hussey (2003), positivists are interested in the inter-relationship of the objects they are studying and believe that these objects were present before they took an interest in them. Additionally, Saunders and Liptrot (1993) stated that knowledge in positivism is limited to observed facts and that which can be deduced from those observed facts. In as much as this study seeks to explore the challenges faced by Libyan PhD students, and works from the premise that the challenges were in evidence before the researcher's interest in them, positivism is considered to be an appropriate overall stance to take.

4.3.2 Research Approach

Having considered the alternatives in respect of the philosophical stance which a researcher may take, the next issue to address is which methodological approach to use, and in this respect, there are two, these being: deductive and inductive. Collis and Hussey (2003:15) observe that the form relates to an approach "in which a conceptual and theoretical framework is developed and then tested by empirical observation". Hence, outcomes are "deduced from general inference" (ibid). Consequently, deductive research moves from what is generally known or understood, to what may not already be known – it results in information about a particular case being deduced on the basis of what is known about other cases that are similar. Figure 4.2 shows the relationship between the general theory and confirmation of a particular instance.
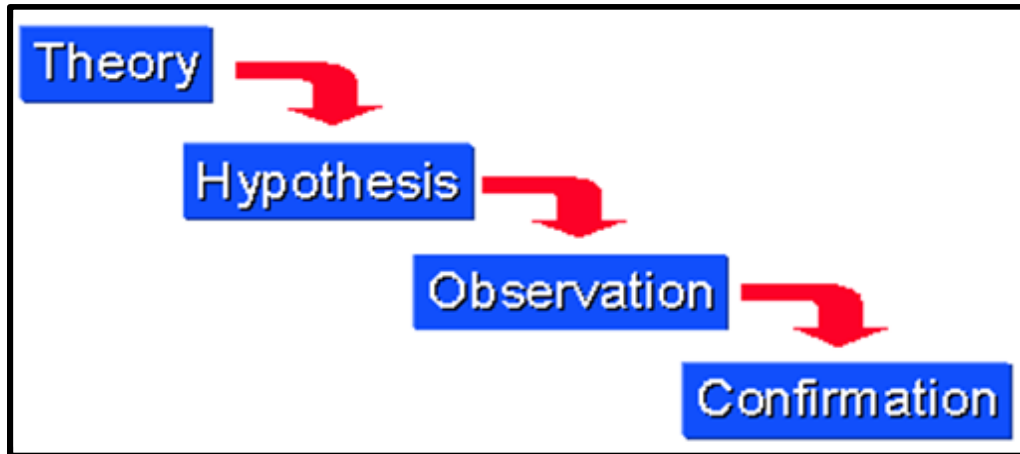
Figure 4.2: The Deductive Approach (Trochim, 2006)

The inductive approach, however, works the other way round, with a particular case serving as the impetus for the development of a general theory. Collis and Hussey (2003:15) note that in an inductive study, "theory is developed from the observation of empirical reality"; it is created by considering the specific, and then identifying a general pattern (theory), and this relationship is shown in Figure 4.3.
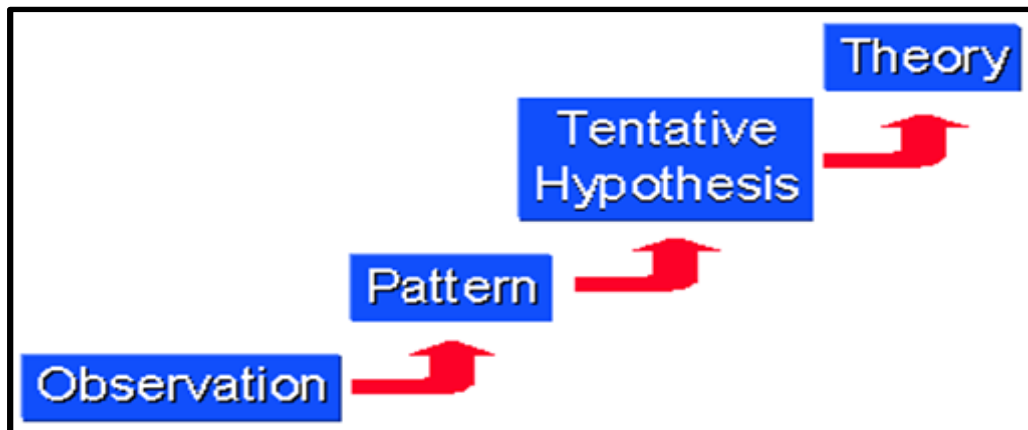
Figure 4.3: The Inductive Approach (Trochim, 2006)

In fact, a researcher is not confined to one of these approaches, and can use both within the same study (Perry, 2001; Cavaye, 1996). Perry (2001) observes a continuum from pure induction (theory-building) to pure deduction (theory-

testing), suggesting that a middle ground can be found in which theory can be both confirmed and/or rejected. As argued by Saunders et al (2007), a way forward in this respect is to review the existing body of literature and to create an initial framework which can stand as the basis for gathering empirical data, and then after analysing the findings, to see what the case in question brings to that literature (i.e. how it agrees or disagrees). From that point onwards, a new framework taking into account the new knowledge and understanding gained from the particular empirical work conducted, can be formulated. In this study, both deductive and inductive approaches are used because there are two different types of data collection, these being the main type (questionnaire survey) and the supplementary type (interviews) that supports the first.

4.3.3 Research Strategy

Once decisions concerning the approach have been made, considerations of the exact strategy to be followed to meet the aims and objectives of a piece of research, are then required, and in this situation, a researcher has several options available (Velde et al, 2004; Yin, 2003). In choosing from these options, a researcher brings to bear various epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions as well as considerations of the nature of the research topic. Experiments, surveys, histories, analysis of archival information, and case studies, are all contenders, as argued by Yin, who suggests the relevant situations when each is appropriate, as indicated in Table 4.2. However, he stated that there are there conditions that should be considered when determining the most appropriate research strategy. These are:

1. The type of research question posed
   2. The extent of control an investigator has over actual behaviour
   3. The degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events

Table 4.2: Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies

Strategy	Form of Research Question	Requires control of Behavioural events	Focus on contemporary Events
Experiment	How, Why?	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, What, Where, How many, How much?	No	Yes
Archival analysis	Who, What, Where, How many, How much?	No	Yes/No
History	How, Why?	No	No
Case study	How, Why?	No	Yes

Source: Yin (2003:5)

According to Yin (2003), the type of research questions being asked point to the strategy to be employed, and in this respect he stated that "what" questions tend to be more concerned with the survey strategy, as can be seen in Table 4.2. The issue of how to phrase research questions in crucial for any researcher since these questions have to ensure that they are formulated in such a way as to secure answers that will enable the aims and objectives of a study to be achieved. In this study, the five research questions (as indicated in Section 1.5) are all in the "what: category, and therefore, the survey strategy is indicated by Yin (2003). Saunders et al (2007) also state that the survey strategy is a popular and common approach in social research and is most frequently used to answer "what" questions. Surveys tend, therefore, to be used for exploratory and descriptive research, since they allows researchers to generate findings that are representative of entire populations at a lower cost.

Robson (2002) argues that surveys are true research strategies, rather than methods, since they represent an overall approach to conducting social research. Denscombe (2003) also makes this point, saying that as part of the overall survey strategy it is possible to use several methods (questionnaire, interviews, documents and observation). Indeed, a flourishing business has grown in conducting surveys, usually for market research, and nowadays people from all walks of life are often asked to participate in survey research for one reason or another. Providing a definition of the survey, Zikmund (2002:175) notes that it is: "A research technique in which information is gathered from a sample of people by using a questionnaire or interview; a method of data collection based on communication with a representative sample of individuals"; and Gray (2005:99) states that it is "a detailed and quantified description of a population - a precise map or a precise measurement of potential it involves the systematic collecting of data". Essentially, a survey is a methodology which is positivistic in nature, and that involves a sample from a given population that is studied in order to make inferences about the entire population (Collis and Hussey, 2003).

For various reasons the survey has been chosen as the research strategy for this study. These reasons are outlined as follows:

- A positivist paradigm has been chosen as the underlying philosophical position for the study and this fits with the notion of a survey.
- The three research questions are all "what" questions, which lend themselves to best being explored using the survey approach.
- By using the survey strategy the researcher is mostly independent of what is being investigated, and hence, the researcher is able to collect and analyse the data gathered with the minimum degree of bias.
- The survey strategy gives the researcher more control over the research process (Saunders, 2007).
- Since a PhD programme has a limited amount of time, the survey strategy is a suitable research method. Moreover, in this particular case, where the country was involved in a civil war, respondents were anxious about their

lives and families in general, and a survey is considered to be less intrusive
and make it easier for people to participate in research than other methods.

- The survey approach enables researchers to find relationships between
particular variables which is the aim of the study.

4.3.4   Selection of the Survey Sample

When undertaking survey research with a large population, it is virtually
impossible to involve all of that population, and hence a sample is usually taken.
Sekaran (2003) notes that the population refers to the entire group of people,
events of things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigation, and
Saunders et al (2007:205) define the population as "the full set of cases from
which a sample is taken", while McClelland and Porter (2008/9:2) define it as
"the people or objects from which you wish to gain information".

In this study, participants from three different universities comprise the sample.
These respondents are approached in exactly the same way. The three samples in
question are concerned with the total populations of Libyan PhD students based in
three main universities in the North West of England. The total population of the
three universities includes all the PhD students of Libyan nationality, registered at
the University of Salford, the University of Manchester, and Manchester
Metropolitan University, irrespective of year of registration. It is envisaged that at
the time of conducting the empirical work, a population of 150 students (from the
total population of 1,500 PhD students in the UK) will be involved. Clearly, it is
possible to consider the overall group of students as one large sample on the basis
of their nationality and hence, cultural background, but at the same time it is also
possible to think of the population as three separate samples, in as much as the
fact that they are registered at different universities might produce variations in
their experience and their overall ability to participate in their PhD programmes.
It is, however, accepted, that whilst studying at different universities, the
population involved is likely to socialise outside of their PhD programmes and
that their families may support each other. Currently, the sample populations at
each of the three case study universities are: 48 PhD students at the University of

Salford, 55 at the University of Manchester, and 47 at Manchester Metropolitan University (giving a total of 150).

4.3.5   Stages in the Survey Planning

Conducting a survey is much more than simply designing a questionnaire and collecting data. Indeed, Burgess (2001) identifies six steps in the overall process as shown in Figure 4.4.
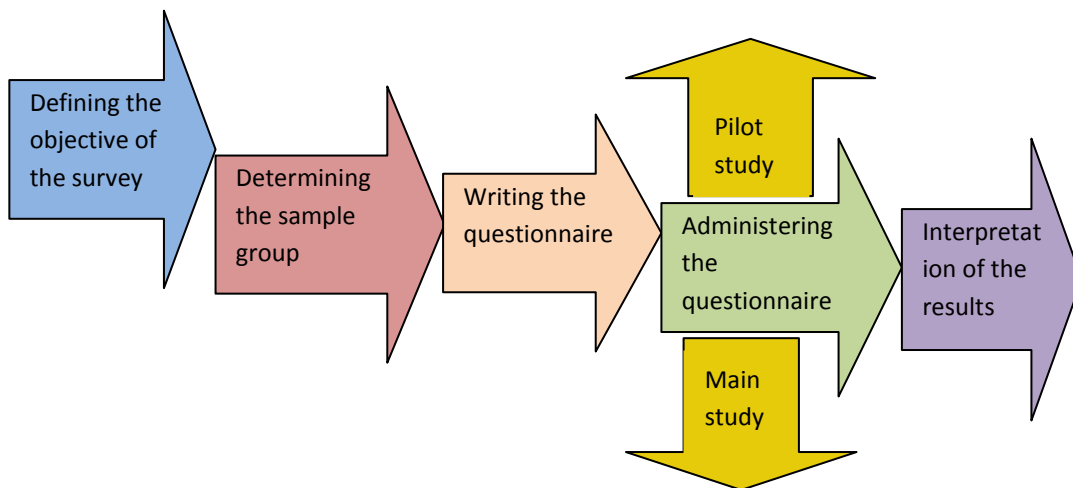
Figure 4.4: Survey design process (Burgess, 2001)

In this study the research aim is defined in Section 1.3, and the sample defined in Section 4.3.4. The next stage in the process is to design the questionnaire to be used, but before doing this it is essential to make a decision as to whether quantitative, qualitative, or a mixture of this type of information is required. Consequently, the following section considers these different types of data and their suitability for the study.

4.3.6   Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches to Data Collection: Mixed Methods and Triangulation

It has been mentioned (Denscombe, 2003) that the survey strategy allows for the collection of many different types of data, included in which are data that can be counted, and data that need to be interpreted. Simply, these can be described as quantitative data and qualitative data, and approaches of these kinds have been well documented in the literature.

Quantitative research has been defined by Punch (2005) as empirical work in which the data gathered appear as numbers, and Collis and Hussey (2003) note that this mode of operation measures variables or counts instances of a particular phenomenon. Therefore, a study that gathers measurable information about any subject falls into the category of quantitative research (Hancock, 1998), and relies on systematic non-human instrumentation and statistical analysis. Traditionally, positivists have depended upon such an approach (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994), using methods of data collection that deal with numbers and anything that is measurable, so that ultimately they can confirm existing propositions, or predict future behaviour.

In contrast, qualitative research is interpretive. It rejects the notion of measuring a phenomenon by counting, and instead uses interpretive techniques to get to the heart of the meaning, rather than the frequency of social phenomena (Van Maanen, 1983). The key here is the reference to 'social' since this type of research recognises the need to interpret data from the perspective of those who form the research population. Indeed it has been described by Bryman (1998:46) as "an approach to the study of the social world which seeks to describe and analyze the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied". It is argued (De Vaus, 2002:5) that qualitative data provide rich insights into real-life situations and are more able [than quantitative data] to make sense of behaviour within its wider context".

Positivists have criticised qualitative approaches to research as non-scientific, and consequently, it is suggested (Yardley, 2000) that a number of conditions should be met when conducting qualitative research, these being: Sensitivity to context - in terms of related theory, epistemological commitment of the research, and socio-cultural context of data collection; Commitment, rigour, transparency and coherence – in terms of researcher engagement with the study, completeness of data collection and analysis, careful description of the research process and intellectual coherence of the arguments presented through the analysis; and Impact and importance - in terms of substance and worth of the work in relation to earlier theory and the specific issues being explored.

It is not only qualitative research that attracts criticism, however; indeed, both approaches have strengths and weaknesses. That said, they have both survived in research work for many years, and it is clear that certain studies are better pursued using one approach, while others fare better with the other. Dey (1993) has tabulated the differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Distinctions between Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

Quantitative Approaches	Qualitative Approaches
Based on meanings derived from numbers	Based on meanings expressed through words
Collecting results in numerical and standardised data	Collecting results in non-standardised data requiring classification into categories
Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics	Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualisation

Source: Dey (1993)

It is clear from Table 4.3 that these two approaches are useful for different kinds of research study, and as noted by Oppeneheim (1992), the eventual choice of whether to pursue qualitative or quantitative data depends upon the suitability of the data to meet the research objectives. He makes the point that in fact, no single method can be claimed to be better than another because of the inherent benefits and shortcomings of each. And, he suggests that a researcher can adopt both approaches within the same study in order to reap the advantages of both, and counteract the disadvantages of the other. This constitutes a mixed methods strategy, which allows for data obtained from different and disparate sources (i.e. in the form of numbers and words) to be 'triangulated'.

According to several researchers (Bryman, 1990; Denzin. 1989; Punch, 2005; 1998), 'triangulation' is the combination of research strategies in order to

investigate the same research problem using different approaches, and this allows for the validity of the conclusions reached to be strengthened. The concept can be traced back to Campbell and Fiske (1959) who refer to it as a method that can demonstrate how a hypothesis can survive when considered from different methods of testing; and later, Fielding and Fielding (1986) described it as a concept associated with orienteering, whereby bearings are taken from two landmarks in order to locate oneself at their intersection. The end aim of triangulation is, therefore, to increase confidence in the findings, and this is believed to occur through the use of both quantitative and qualitative data, an approach which is referred to as mixed methods.

It is noted by Creswell (2005) that the mixed methods approach in social science research is relatively new, that it involves the collection, analysis, and combination of qualitative and quantitative data within a single study, thereby permitting triangulation of the data. That said, several other researchers (Creswell, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Brannen, 1992; Brewer and Hunter, 1989; Bryman, 1998) have reported the value that the ability to triangulate data can bring to a research study and advocate this as a component of sound research design. Moreover, the use of mixed methods is believed to overcome the weaknesses of a single approach (Polit and Beck, 2004), since there is much less opportunity for critics to be sceptical about the findings reached when a hypothesis or proposal is supported by conclusions arrived at from multiple types of data. Further, it has also been argued (Brannen, 2000), that by using mixed methods in one study, it is possible for a researcher to gain insights which could not have emerged simply by adopting one approach.

It must, however, be recognised that a mixed methods approach can be complex, and that time-constraints may preclude such a strategy. There is also the possibility that the results from one method might not agree with those from another method (Mason, 1996). That said, even in such circumstances, it is argued (Ghauri et al, 1995) that having the ability to triangulate data is still worthwhile, since different results can generate a better appreciation of the research topic. By using the questionnaire to gain insight from a range of Libyan students all following a similar process, and then by discussing (via an interview approach)

the issues associated with PhD study as seen by government officials, the methods used in this study allow for a suitable mix of perspective which sheds light on the precise issue being studied.

4.4 Data Collection Methods

Given the fact that data triangulation is valuable, the study will aim to achieve this by adopting an approach which is largely quantitative in nature, but which also has a small qualitative input. In both approaches, use is made of primary and secondary data.

Sekaran (2003) stated that primary sources are data that are directly collected and obtained for the first time by the researcher for the purpose of the research problem at hand. There are several methods that can be used in collecting the primary data such as questionnaires, interviews and observations (Kumar, 2005; Collis and Hussey, 2003; Easterby-Smith, 2004; Blaxter et al, 2006; Saunders et al, 2007). In this study, the collection of primary data is embodied in a questionnaire survey with 150 PhD students from Libya in the three universities already identified as forming the survey sample, and in a small interview exercise with some officials from the Libyan Embassy in London. Within this attempt to gather primary data both quantitative and qualitative measures are used. The questionnaire is designed in the main as a quantitative instrument, aiming to secure information that can be treated numerically and from which certain statistical findings can be gained. The interview is designed as a qualitative instrument, the data from which will be interpreted by the researcher according to the main themes of the study. The collection of both types of data within the overall empirical element of the study will allow for an element of triangulation.

In respect of secondary sources of data, these include the review of academic journals' articles, textbooks, documents, published statistics, and dissertations and theses (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Blaxter et al (2006) suggest that it is sensible to use secondary data if it exists because it is difficult to conduct a research study in isolation from what has already been done and because it may shed light on, or complete, the primary data collected. For this study, the researcher collected secondary data from different sources that she considered reliable and credible.

This involved a range of textbooks, journal articles, and some previous studies related to the problems affecting overseas students.

This secondary data gave the researcher a broad understanding of the topic under investigation. It was also used in formulating and understanding the research problem better and helped the researcher in suggesting the applied research methodology. Since the chosen research strategy is a survey and the main data collection method is a questionnaire, most of key points of the questionnaire were gathered from the literature review and used in structuring questions of the questionnaire.

4.4.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a common instrument for collecting information, and as noted by Sharp and Howard (1996), it has grown in its use in the twentieth century. Whilst this approach is especially designed for large populations, it can also be used for smaller samples (Newell, 1993). Sekaran (2003:200) defines a questionnaire as "a pre-formulated written set of questions to which participants record their answers, usually within largely closely defined alternatives". A similar explanation is provided by deVaus (1996) who suggests that the technique asks each individual in the research sample to answer the same questions in a pre-determined order. Like interviews, questionnaires, provide a way of gathering research data, but their nature is quite different from interviews, since in a questionnaire, it is the participant who records the information for the researcher to analyse, rather than the researcher who either takes notes in an interview, or works from a transcript of the proceedings and then chooses what to consider or disregard.

As noted by Newell (1993:96), a questionnaire is "… a set of questions for respondents to complete themselves". Hague (1993) notes that the primary purpose of a questionnaire is to draw accurate information from the respondent, and that accurate information is obtained by asking the right question of the right person. This gives a clue to the need for effort in the process of questionnaire design, and again as noted by Hague (1993), a questionnaire facilitates data processing because if properly designed, the various answers are recorded in a

place where the data processing person or team knows where to find them. This concentration on data collection echoes the thoughts of Oppenheim (1992) who argues that a questionnaire is not an official form, nor a set of casually-produced questions, but rather an important research instrument, designed to collect data and then allow for its measurement.   In this respect Simmons (in Gilbert, 2001:86) asserts that "[t]he success of a survey depends on the questions that are asked, the ways in which they are phrased and the order in which they are placed". Clearly then, a questionnaire must be carefully constructed if it is to be effective as a research tool.

There are certain benefits to be gained by using a questionnaire, rather than an interview approach. For example, self-administered questionnaires provide the opportunity to reach beyond what is physically possible for a researcher to achieve, and this can maintain the anonymity and privacy of the respondent. Additionally, the approach is more economical than an interview exercise, and usually faster, thereby offering a method that allows a researcher to collect a large amount of data from a large population without great cost. Furthermore, the potential for interviewer bias is removed (Babbie, 1998). It is also noted that questionnaires can be quick and easy to administer (Fowler, 2002; Moser and Kalton, 1979).

However, there are also disadvantages to the use of questionnaires, and an important one is that the researcher generally has no control over how a questionnaire is completed, meaning that it is not possible to be completely sure that the intended person is actually providing the answers (Hall and Hall, 1996), as the job may have been delegated to someone else to fill in on behalf of the person for whom it was originally intended. This means that the individual concerned might not have all the required information to answer accurately and fully. Another disadvantage is that the researcher is not usually present when the respondent is completing the questionnaire and, therefore, cannot clarify any confusion that might arise in the mind of the respondent about what exactly the question is asking. And yet another shortcoming is that questionnaires generally attract a low response rate, whereas interviews guarantee a 100% response (de Vaus, 1996), and a low response rate may prejudice the results. The point is made

by researchers (Jankowicz, 2005; Dillman, 2000) that postal questionnaires, in particular are not very successful because not only do they have poor response rates, but they also suffer from response bias, and the researcher is unable to verify the information provided.

Some of these disadvantages can, however, be overcome with sufficient attention to the design of a questionnaire. In this respect, Simmons (in Gilbert, 2001) provides guidelines, suggesting that the researcher consider the following:

- Relevance to participants: respondents must have the knowledge and willingness to answer the questions.
- Clarity: questions must be clearly understood and not ambiguous in any way, especially when the questionnaire is self-administered.
- Leading questions: these must be avoided otherwise the research will not be objective.
- Double-barrelled questions: these must be avoided because the answer to the first part may be different from the answer to the second part and hence confusion will arise in completion.
- Hypothetical questions: these should be avoided because the data required is about what is actually the case.
- Secondary information: as the purpose of a questionnaire is to obtain primary data, the questionnaire should not ask the respondent to report on someone else's views.
- Periodicity: when questions regarding time are included, they should be presented with specific categories and terms such as 'frequently' or 'regularly' should be avoided because these are too vague.
- Sensitivity: questions must be phrased sensitively to ensure that respondents are not offended.

Saunders et al (2000) also indicate that careful design of individual questions, clear layout of the questionnaire form, and lucid explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire can help alleviate problems concerning the response rate, validity and reliability of questionnaires. Moreover, in order to guarantee that a questionnaire will work with its intended population, it should be tested for

precision of expression, objectivity, relevance and suitability for the research problem, and this will require a pilot to identify any likely obstacles to the successful completion of the instrument (Leedy, 1997).

The response rate can also be improved by ensuring that respondents are fully aware of the benefit their contribution will make to the overall study, and by making it easy for them to respond (including a stamped, addressed envelope, for example) (Fowler, 2002), and by contacting the intended recipient in advance to 'lock him/her' into the research.

Having chosen a questionnaire as a research instrument, the next issue to consider is the type of questionnaire which is most suitable, and in this respect, Saunders et al (2007) make the distinction between self-administered, and interviewer-administered questionnaires as indicated in Figure 4.5.
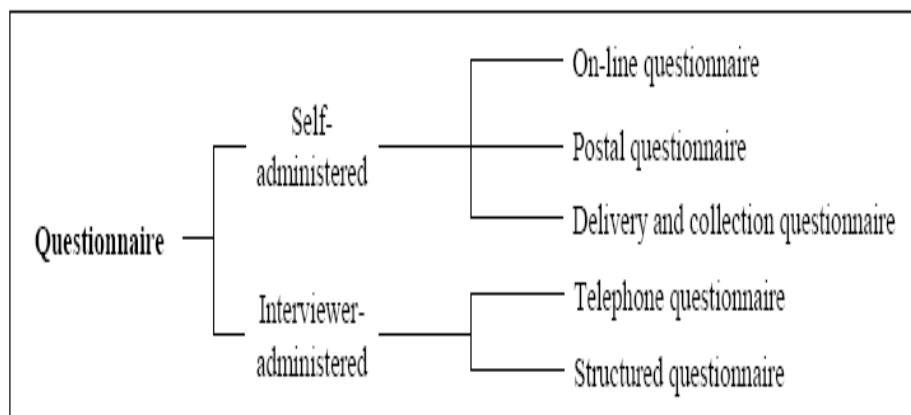
Figure 4.5: Types of Questionnaire (Saunders et al, 2007)

It can be seen in the figure 4.5 that the first type of instrument, the amount of contact between the researcher and the respondent is minimal, whereas in the second type, the researcher is a key player, since s/he must be present to ask the questions. Other researchers consider questionnaires as falling into four types, these being face-to-face, mail, telephone, and Internet-based (Zikmund, 2000; Czaja and Blair, 1996). In respect of the first approach, the total amount of time to complete one questionnaire may be prohibitive, taking into account the travelling time involved as well.

In respect of the face-to-face approach, this is time-consuming and not really practical with a large population, although it has the distinct advantage that once the researcher is in physical contact with the intended respondent, that individual is more likely to participate.

In respect of the mailed approach, this is straightforward requiring only that the researcher sends the questionnaire with a covering letter and a pre-paid return envelope, to the individuals in his/her target population. It has the potential to gather a large volume of accurate data for a large population in a highly economical way (Saunders et al, 2000; Zikmund, 2000; Babbie, 1998).

In respect of the telephone approach, this can be useful in reducing the time taken by either face-to-face or mailed questionnaires, but it is only appropriate when small amounts of information are required and the time taken of the respondent is minimal.

In respect of the internet-based approach, this is now accepted as an efficient and relatively low cost survey method (Dommeyer and Moriarty 2000; Sheehan and Hoy, 1999), which can be administered either as a web-based survey to invite potential respondents to visit the site and complete the questionnaire or via email. Such an approach has, however, attracted criticism on the grounds that participants are not representative of the overall population (Sheehan and Hoy, 1999).

Having considered the potential of a questionnaire to gather information from a large population, and taken into account the various ways of ensuring that a questionnaire is successful as a research instrument, it has been decided to adopt this method of obtaining data from Libyan PhD students. The first of the advantages already outlined (its ability to reach a large population) is an important one in the decision, as also is the fact that the information being sought is clearly of particular importance to these students. It is, therefore, believed that the response will be high as these students are naturally motivated to want to improve their own postgraduate experience and that of other research students from Libya who will follow in their footsteps. Moreover, the fact that the questionnaire was

personally distributed was believed to introduce a personal element into the transaction which participants being of the same culture, would appreciate.

Additionally, it is believed that the anonymity which a questionnaire offers will encourage them to be honest and reveal some of their problems whereas an interview situation might not elicit such information because of embarrassment on their part, not only because they may feel unhappy to disclose any personal weakness, but also because the interviewer is female and cultural influences make such disclosure even more difficult to a woman researcher. However, it is also thought that they will want to help a fellow Libyan PhD student and this too, will increase their motivation to participate, and the fact that the researcher will be permanently on site/in the area, and available for consultation if necessary, will serve as a reminder/encouragement to the survey population to complete their questionnaires.

It was also believed that a questionnaire approach to the study would enable it to be easily replicated in the future by researchers in universities elsewhere in the UK, and therefore add to the store of information gathered about Libyan PhD students' experience and obstacles to their achievement. Finally, there were limitations upon the researcher's time and resources, and it was acknowledged that this large number of students would not be accessible using a technique other than a questionnaire. Therefore, it was decided that the use of a questionnaire was the best way to collect data for the study.

4.4.2   The Questionnaire Design

A questionnaire was subsequently designed to establish information about:

- how respondents prepared for their PhD studies both at home and in the UK
- respondents' expectations of their PhD studies before they registered
- respondents' experiences during their PhD studies
- how respondents believed these experiences could have been improved

In developing the questionnaire, the researcher took note of the research methodology literature that is expansive in this area, and which all aims to ensure that researchers develop the best instruments possible in order to maximise the

response and to encourage potential respondents to complete the questionnaire correctly, and thereby allow the researcher to analyse the data efficiently. The safest way of ensuring these outcomes is to use fixed-alternative questions, which are also known as 'closed questions', since these take less time to answer and make the completion of the questionnaire easier for the respondents (Zikmund, 2000). Furthermore, this format makes it easier to make comparisons of different types of respondent (Oppenheim, 1992), and whilst closed questions are used, when a fixed alternative is provided, it is possible to gather data on belief, behaviour, and attribute (Saunders et al, 2000). It is important, however, to ensure that the statements made in order to obtain the fixed alternative response are appropriate to the respondents, since it is known that individuals are more likely to respond to questionnaires that cover issues that are relevant to them (Heberlein and Baumgarter, 1978).

The fixed-alternative format is basically a scaling method, and such methods are used widely in order to measure opinion or satisfaction (Oppenheim, 1992). The Likert-type scale provides several shades of response for each statement made, such that the researcher can establish the degree of impact or otherwise upon the respondent of the particular statement concerned. There is no absolute limit to the number of responses that can be used in a Likert-type scale, but generally, four or five shades of opinion, ranging from one that shows the statement has high impact upon the respondent to one that signals it has very low or no impact at all. Researchers differ in their approach to such scales, some believing it is necessary to allow a respondent who is not affected at all by a statement to actually report that, and others thinking that the omission of a neutral point forces respondents to think carefully and make a decision. Brace (2004:84) for example observes that "If you choose the unbalanced form and force respondents away from the neutral alternative, then the researcher must be careful that this will not introduce bias into the data". Iraossi (2006), on the other hand, advocates the use of a four-point Likert scale precisely to encourage respondents to make a choice. For this reason, and the fact that the four-point scale keeps the number of response options as small as possible, thereby allowing the respondents to make a useful choice from among the listed options, the four-point scale is adopted for this study.

In formulating the questions, the literature reviewed in Chapter Two was used as the basis for identifying themes that were already known to exist. Additionally, attention was given to the types of information required. In this respect, it is noted by Hague (1993) that questions can be categorised as classificatory, behavioural, and attitudinal. When factual information is required, classificatory questions are asked. These allow, for example, the researcher to obtain details regarding respondents' demographic details. Behavioural questions ask for details of how often respondents do something in particular, and attitudinal questions ask for details of what respondents believe about a particular issue.

In respect of behavioural and attitudinal questions, it is also possible to further differentiate between open and closed questions. Closed questions are designed for ease of completion, they provide two or more defined response choices, ranging from a simple Yes/No opportunity, to a long Likert-type scale. In presenting questions of this nature, the researcher is reducing the need for the respondent to think in great depth. Open questions are not restricted in the same way. They often begin with words like "why", "how", or phrases such as "what do you think of …" or "can you talk to me about …" and in many cases they are not questions but rather statements that need a response.

In terms of their analysis, open questions are dealt with in the main on a thematic basis where the researcher interprets the answers in the light of a particular construct being explored. Closed questions on the other hand are usually converted into a numerical format and then subjected to statistical analysis (Pallant, 2001).

In respect of the structure of the questionnaire, this was divided into five main sections. The first asked for demographic information, and particularly explored family circumstances. The second concerned the type and amount of preparation that students had before they began their PhD registration. The third asked for information concerning the respondents' expectations of PhD study in the UK, and the fourth asked the respondents to reflect on their actual experiences of being a PhD student in the UK. Finally, the fifth section asked students to indicate what would improve their experience.

4.4.3   The Covering Letter

Although the questionnaire was hand-delivered, it did nonetheless include a covering letter which was written on the letterhead of the School of Built Environment, the University of Salford. This was done with the intention of giving the respondents a good initial impression, and the letter itself confirmed the aim of the survey, stated the importance of the research, and encouraged the students to participate. Additionally, the letter emphasised that all answers would remain confidential to the research and that respondents would be assured anonymity.

4.5 The Pilot Study

As shown in Section 4.3.5, in the six-stage model of survey design, proposed by Burgess (2001), the fourth step is to conduct a pilot study. The first three stages (defining the aims, determining the sample, and writing the questionnaire) having been completed, it is then necessary to undertake a pilot study before administering the questionnaire to the main sample.

According to Polit et al (2001:467), a pilot study is a feasibility exercise conducted as a "small scale version[s], or trial run[s], done in preparation for the major study". Piloting, or pre-testing is an important step during which the researcher can identify any problems of comprehension or meaning that have not been spotted during the design stage (Douglas and Craig, 2007; Jankowicz, 2005). In this respect, it is noted that even experts in questionnaire design find it virtually impossible to get a questionnaire right on their first attempt, and therefore, it is vital to pilot a questionnaire before going live with the real version (Leung, 2001). Such an exercise has the advantage of potentially providing advance warning of where a research project might fail, where it might be hard to follow research protocols, or whether the proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated. Moreover, as noted by Bell (1993), researchers should know how long their research instruments will take the average respondent to complete. Often it is helpful for the researcher to give an indication to prospective participants of the amount of time they are being asked to give, and without piloting the instrument involved, the researcher would have no genuine

knowledge of this. And another benefit of a pilot is that it may reveal items that do not yield usable data, and thereby enable their removal before they emerge as complicating the data (Bell, 1993)

Hence, the pilot can contribute not only to a better understanding of the research instrument itself, but also of the procedure envisaged to execute the survey (Czaja and Blair, 1996; Oppenhiem, 1992). The purpose of pre-test is to refine the questionnaire so as to ensure that the respondents would have no problems in answering the questions and researchers would have no difficulties in recording data. Essentially, therefore, the process allows researchers to establish whether respondents understand the questions and instructions, and whether the meaning of questions is the same for all respondents (Kelley et al, 2003), thereby increasing the reliability and validity of the instrument. In this respect, De Vaus (1993) advocates that a researcher should never take any risks, and should always conduct a pilot test.

Baker (1994), does however, also indicate that a pilot need not involve all aspects of a major study, and can simply consist of the testing of one particular research instrument (Baker, 1994). In terms of a questionnaire for example, Leung (2001) argues that even experts in this area believe it to be almost impossible to get a questionnaire right on their first attempt, and the observation is made that even in a small study, undertaking a pilot can save valuable time at a later date as any problems should be revealed at this stage (University of Portsmouth, 2006). The idea is to test any proposed questionnaire on a small sample of people whose characteristics are the same or similar to those who will be completing the final questionnaire (Leung, 2001), but individuals who might be members of the full study should not be included (Oxford, 2005), as this may result in 'questionnaire fatigue', meaning the person is less likely to respond the second time round. Galloway (1997) argues that as a general rule, a researcher should aim to pilot between 5-10% of the final sample number (Galloway, 1997). It is also reported (Peat et al, 2002:123) that a pilot study will enhance the internal validity of a questionnaire if the researcher:

Asks the subjects for feedback to identify ambiguities and difficult questions

Records the time taken to complete the questionnaire and decides whether it is reasonable

Discards all unnecessary, difficult or ambiguous questions

Assesses whether each question gives an adequate range of responses

Establishes that replies can be interpreted in terms of the information that is required

Checks that all questions are answered

Re-words or re-scales any questions that are not answered as expected

Shortens, revises and, if possible, pilots again.

Additionally, it is suggested (Huxham, 2005), that participants complete the questionnaire while the researcher is present so that s/he can note any questions they struggle with, and check that they are interpreting the questions in the way intended. It is also strongly recommended by Boynton (2004), that the results of the pilot study are not combined with the results of the eventual questionnaire, particularly if changes are made after the pilot.

Given the many advantages associated with the piloting of research instruments, a pilot study was undertaken in this research study. The questionnaire was considered to be ready for distribution after being critically reviewed by the researcher's supervisor and some PhD colleagues, and some slight amendments made. The instrument was then piloted by the researcher in the University of Salford with 15 students who were representative of the overall population of Libyan doctoral students at the three universities forming the overall sample. As mentioned previously, the current numbers of such students registered across the three universities is 150, so this sample of 10% is considered to be sufficient to produce representative comments regarding the appropriateness of the questionnaire. The questionnaire appears as Appendix A.

From the pilot study, it became clear that:

- Most of the questions were clear and the respondents felt confident in answering them.

- A small number of questions needed modification so they could be better understood.

- Most respondents felt the need to have more time to answer the questions in order to provide more reliable information.

- Most students avoided answering the open-ended questions. This could be an indication of insufficient time being available, or a wish not to answer in depth.

Considering these outcomes, the following actions were taken:

- Some rewording was undertaken.

- More explanation of the aim and the objectives of the study were added to the cover page.

- More time was included in the schedule for the main data collection stage.

- The number of open-ended questions was reduced by 17, by re-writing them as closed questions, leaving four open questions at the end.

In summary, the pilot study was an essential element since it pointed up small areas for improvement and gave the opportunity for a more meaningful response from the sample. Hence, it contributed towards increasing the degree of validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

4.6 The Main Study – Questionnaire Survey

The researcher conducted the process of questionnaire distribution personally in her own university, and in the other two universities, this was done by the use of an intermediary - a male PhD student known to the researcher, who acted as the distribution and collection point. The questionnaire was accompanied by a student consent form, and the cover letter containing the information mentioned previously in Section 4.4.3. This method of distribution was believed to encourage as great a response as possible, especially as the two distributors were in the same position as the respondents (PhD students from Libya).

Of the 150 questionnaires that were distributed to the whole population, a total of 138 completed forms were received. After processing the 138 returned questionnaires, the researcher considered 135 questionnaires to be usable, having

rejected three because they were found invalid for use and analysis. The response rate is shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Response Rate.

Description	Number	Percent %
Distributed Questionnaires	150	100
Total Received Questionnaires	138	92
Unusable Questionnaires	3	1.4
Usable Questionnaires	135	90

From Table 4.4 it can be seen that the response rate was 90%, which is good by any standards, since this shows that a very high proportion agreed to participate. Bryman (2004:98) mentions that the response rate is "the percentage of a sample that does, in fact, agree to participate", and he makes the point that this concept is a common one in social research. It indicates in a way, the extent to which the respondents perceive the research to be worthwhile since they give of their time to participate. It is aregued by Kadasah (2000) that a 50% response rate is adequate, a 60% response rate is good, and a response rate of 70% is very good. Consequently, the claims that the response rate of 90% in this study was very good are justified, and this demonstrates that the respondents felt the issues on which they were commenting were very important.

4.7 The Interview

A small number of interviews were held with appropriate officials at the Libyan Embassy, specifically to establish what challenges the Embassy personnel were aware of in terms of PhD students registered in the UK.

Interviews are usually conducted to collect qualitative information (Easterby-Smith, 2004; Patton, 2002; Saunders et al, 2000; Verma and Mallick, 1999; Oppenheim, 1992), often to support the data gathered from a questionnaire survey, or to inform the design of a questionnaire for a subsequent survey. Cohen and Manion (2000:277) define the interview as "a conversation directed by an interviewer to a respondent for the specific objective of collecting information relevant to the study", and similarly, Bell (1999:99) states it to be "a conversation

between interviewer and participant with the intention that a researcher can elicit certain information from the participant". It can be appreciated, therefore, that in all interview situations, the researcher and the interviewee hold a simultaneous conversation, whether this is face-to-face or via the telephone, and that interviewees are not required to complete any documentation as is the case with a questionnaire survey.

The interview is popular in a wide range of research designs (Robson, 2002; Fielding and Thomas, in Gilbert, 2001), and Robson (2002) notes three different types: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured, which correspond with other typologies, as for instance that discussed by Fielding and Thomas (in Gilbert, 2001) which uses the labels, standardised, semi-standardised, and non-standardised. To these three types, May (2001) adds a fourth, the group interview. The structured interview is conducted by the researcher through the use of a schedule of pre-determined questions, and the order is usually fixed (Robson, 2002). In this case, the interview resembles a questionnaire exercise but with the researcher in attendance, and it is considered by some (King, 2004; May, 2001) that this type of interview represents a quantitative approach to data collection. The semi-structured (semi-standardised) interview is also based on pre-determined questions but the researcher can make modifications as the interview progresses in response to the interaction between him/herself (Robson, 2002), and effectively this allows the researcher to probe the interviewee on particular issues of interest that might arise (Fielding and Thomas, in Gilbert, 2001). In contrast to both these types of interview, the unstructured variant is more of a conversation between the interviewer and interviewee with the researcher merely guiding the direction of the encounter (Robson, 2002; Fielding and Thomas, in Gilbert, 2001), and allowing "the respondent to answer without feeling constrained by pre-formulated questions with a limited range of answers" (May, 2001:121). It is considered (King, 2004; May, 2001) that semi-structured/semi-standardised and unstructured/non-standardised interviews represent qualitative research interviews.

However, as the interview is a highly subjective technique, the possibility of bias in the process is a strong one, and the interviewer's attitude and manner may not only affect the respondent's behaviour and responses, but the way in which the data collected is subsequently interpreted and presented. Hence, there is always a question of the degree of academic rigour associated with interview material. Considering such issues, Borg (1981:87) notes that there may be "an eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer ... or the tendency of the interviewer to seek out the answers that support his preconceived notions". Likewise, the very relationship upon which the interview encounter is based is crucial, since any signs of antagonism between the two parties are likely to render the data, if obtained, unrepresentative and potentially flawed. If the interviewer has particularly strong opinions on the issue being discussed, it is crucial that s/he is extra careful in the way the questions are asked of the interviewee (Bell, 1999) since this is the type of situation that could introduce bias. Indeed, interviews should be conducted with a clear protocol in mind.

As part of that protocol, and irrespective of the intention of the interview, or the style adopted, it is important to develop trust between the interviewer and those to be interviewed, since the main reason for using interviews as a research technique is to learn about people's feelings and attitudes, and these will not be revealed without a good rapport between the two parties. Moreover, interviewees will not feel comfortable about participating if they are concerned that what transpires in the process may later be attributed to them, so guarantees of confidentiality are essential, and there should be no pressure placed upon interviewees to be tape recorded. This means that the interviewer will require special skills to conduct the interview and at the same time record the proceedings, and basically, this requires preparation and the same type of piloting operation already discussed in 4.5.

Another important consideration in interviewing is the actual number of interviews it is possible and reasonable to conduct. Patton (2002) has argued that there are no rules governing the number of interviews a researcher might conduct in a study, and that the sample size in qualitative research depends upon the purpose of the study, and the available time and resources. In this respect, it is

important to plan carefully because transcription is a major and time-consuming task (especially, where audio recordings are made), and there comes a point when no more new information can be gained from continuing to interview different individuals. Moreover, as argued by Easterby-Smith et al (2004), it is necessary for the interviewer to write notes immediately after each interview, and this process lengthens the overall time the researcher needs to allocate to each particular interview.

In considering the practicalities of arranging interviews on a face-to-face basis, it might be the case that a researcher has no choice but to opt for telephone interviews. These do not have the advantage of being able to observe interviewees' non-verbal behaviour, but they do provide an opportunity to reach individuals who are geographically dispersed, or too busy to commit in advance to a particular arrangement. Nonetheless, where used, they need considerable preparation to ensure that all the necessary topics are considered as invariably the telephone conversation is shorter than the face-to-face encounter.

In the event, the interview schedule (Appendix B) was created as a result of the literature review and discussed with the researcher's supervisor. It was not appropriate to pilot the schedule in the conventional sense since the number of interviewees was very small and there was no population on which to conduct a pilot. A total of three officials were interviewed in the Libyan Embassy. These were personnel with responsibility for dealing with PhD students in different fields of study. Each of the interviews lasted between 25 and 30 minutes and with the permission of the people concerned, all three were tape-recorded. Whilst there was no difficulty in obtaining information from the interviewees, it was clear that they were all extremely busy people and that they could not give any more time to the research. Hence, the original estimation by the researcher that interviews would last for 45 minutes, was found to be overly ambitious.

4.8 Ethical approval

Researchers should be ethical. Saunders et al. (2007) refer to ethics in the context of research as the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour in relation to the

rights of those who become the subject of the work, or are affected by it. Blumberg et al. (2005 cited in Saunders et al., 2007) define ethics as the "moral principles, norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others".

In this respect and according to the University of Salford policy, the researcher applied for ethical approval prior conducting the field study. The Research Governance and Ethics Committee (RGEC) have granted the researcher the ethical approval to conduct her field study (Appendix C).

4.9 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has presented a thorough explanation of the research approach adopted for the empirical work and provided adequate justifications at every stage for the decisions taken. It began by defining the concept of research methodology, and included in this discussion the fact that in determining an overall methodological approach, the aims and objectives to be achieved are the main things to consider. Moving on to the actual research process, the chapter explored issues such as research philosophy, approach, strategy, data collection, and data analysis. In respect of the research philosophy, it was shown how the positivist approach was more appropriate for this study, and that both deductive and inductive reasoning is applied to the different types of data collected. Moving then to the actual strategy to be employed, the chapter outline how a survey strategy was used, predominantly because the nature of the research questions, being "what" rather than "how" or "why" questions, lend themselves to survey. Details of the survey sample have then been given, from which it is clarified that a sample of 150 PhD students from Libya studying at three universities in Manchester and Salford were asked to participate. Qualitative and quantitative approaches to the collection of data have been discussed, and the actual methods of data gathering used have been highlighted, from which it was shown that a questionnaire was very carefully designed and piloted before being used for the main study. In the design of the questionnaire great attention was paid to the literature to ensure that the types of questions used would yield the best response possible. In the event, it was emerged that a 90% response rate was obtained, this signalling an extremely

good outcome. Details of the way in which the interviews with personnel at the Libyan Embassy were carried out are also provided.

In the following chapter, the data obtained from the questionnaire survey is presented and analysed.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the survey data. The main purpose of data analysis is to provide empirical answers to the research questions raised at the beginning of the research and presented in Chapter One. General information about the questionnaire respondents was analysed using basic descriptive statistics, thereby providing an overview of the characteristics of the research population, whilst factor analysis was used in respect of the opinions offered by the respondents. In respect of the factor analysis, this was used to classify the factors into smaller groups with communalities, which means the extent to which an item correlates with all other items so as to enable a better interpretation. The chapter proceeds by describing the techniques used to analyse the questionnaire data, and then provides the results of that analysis. After interpreting those results, the interview data is then presented.

5.2 Coding Questionnaires

Once data collection is completed, then the next task is to decide how to code each question so that it can easily be seen which values should be inputted into SPSS. This is necessary because numerical values are needed representing answers to questions on a questionnaire or other data collection sheet for SPSS to analyse the data.

5.2.1 Codebook

The codebook tells the coder how each questionnaire will be coded for data entry. The following table 5.1 shows the basic codebook of my questionnaire. It specifies the question on the questionnaire from which the data is taken, the variable name, the operational definition of the variable, and the coding options.

Table 5.1: Codebook of the questionnaire.

Question No.	Coding
1	26-30 =1 31-35 =2 36-40 =3 41-45 =4 46-50 =5 51-55 =6 56-60 =7 missing=9
2	male=0 female=1 missing=9
3	Libya = 1 UK = 2 Non English Speaking country = 3 Other English Speaking country = 4
4	Single = 1 Married = 2 Missing = 9
5, 6, 7,10,11.13,15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 28, 30, 31, 52,	Yes = 1 No = 2 Missing = 9
8, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 42, 43. 44, 47, 49, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 67	Strongly agree = 4 Agree = 3 Do not agree = 2 Do not agree at all = 1 Missing = 9
9, 65	Always = 4 Most of the time =3 Occasionally = 2 Never = 1 Missing = 9
12	Ireland = 1 Canada = 2 Malaysia = 3 Missing = 9
14	Libya = 1 Egypt = 2 Jordon = 3 Missing = 9
16, 22	3+ months = 1 2 months = 2 1 months = 3 0 months = 4

	Missing = 9
18	12 months = 1 8 months = 2 6 months = 3 Missing = 9
20	Year = 1 Year + = 2 Missing = 9
39	Year 1 =1 Year 2 = 2 Year 3 =3 Year 4 = 4 Missing = 9
55	Writing = 1 Reading = 2 Speaking = 3 Listening = 4 Understanding = 5 Missing = 9
51	Very good = 4 Good = 3 Bad = 2 Very bad =1 Missing = 9
66	Very important = 4 Important = 3 Not very important = 2 Not very important at all = 1 Missing = 9

5.3 Factor Analysis

Brown (2006) explains that factor analysis is a technique used to identify a small number of underlying dimensions from amongst a large number of variables, and Everit and Hothorn (2011) echo this observation, noting it to be a data reduction technique that aims to analyse the correlations between a numbers of factors. It can be understood, therefore, that the underlying assumption of factor analysis is that several factors exist to explain the inter-relationships among observed variables.

5.3.1   Factor Analysis Requirements

Factor analysis is not appropriate in all circumstances, and in determining the appropriateness of the technique, it is important to assess the suitability of the

data. In this respect, Pallant (2001) has proposed two methods for evaluating the adequacy and suitability of data, the first being that suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) who argued that at least 300 cases are required for factor analysis, and the second being the use of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test. If the value of the KMO is between 0.5 and 0.99, the data is suitable for factor analysis (Pallant, 2001). However, Al-Madi (2005, citing Morgan and Griego, 1998) has recommended that the KMO should be greater than 0.7, and is actually inadequate if less than 0.5. In this study, the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin KMO Sampling Adequacy Value was computed using the SPSS package Ver.17, and the result was acceptable (**0.767**), indicating the data as being suitable for factor analysis.

5.4 Types of Variable

Puri (2002) defined a variable is an observable quantity or attribute that varies from one member of the population being studied to another. The literature on statistics (Puri, 2002; Siegel and Castellan, 1998) indicates that there are four types of measurement scale associated with variables - nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio - and that researchers should be aware of the implications of each for the interpretation of statistical tests.

5.5 Data Examination, Validity and Reliability

Accuracy of measures will show whether the measurement instrument is appropriate or not. In this section, the focus is on those aspects of the measures which contribute to accuracy, which are reliability and validity.

5.5.1 Validity of the Questionnaire

Validity has been defined by many authors, sometimes in terms of measurements. Kumar (2005:137) defines validity as:

"The ability of an instrument to measure what it is decided to measure; it is the degree to which the researcher has measured what he has set out to measure".

Easterby-Smith et al. (2004:134) also defined validity as:

"A question of how far we can be sure that a test or instrument measures the attribute that it is supposed to measure".

Clearly, the questionnaire must cover the research issues by using relevant questions and providing adequate coverage of the investigative questions (Saunders et al, 2007).

Litwin (1995) specified four types of validity when testing a survey instrument. They are: face, content, criterion, and construct validity. Face validity relates to the instrument being reviewed by any normal individual, while content validity refers to reviewing by experts. Criterion validity is a measure of how well the instrument compares to either another instrument or to a predictor. Construct validity is a theoretical long-term evaluation of the survey instrument with respect to how meaningful it has been after years of experience. The researcher in this study aimed for content validity. As explained in the last chapter, the questionnaire design went through several stages. Firstly, a thorough literature review was carried out which included previous studies on the problems that affect overseas students in the UK. The literature review contributed to the first draft of the questionnaire. Secondly, the supervisor reviewed the questionnaire and necessary changes were made. A pilot study was then undertaken by sending the questionnaire to a small number of individuals representing the research sample. These stages confirmed the questionnaire as being valid.

5.5.2 Reliability of the Questionnaire

Reliability refers to an instrument's ability to provide consistent results in repeated use (Golafshani, 2003). Gray (2005) observes that in terms of questionnaire design, high reliability means that something measured today should attract the same measurement when measured on another occasion. Easterby-Smith et al. (2004:135) defines reliability as "a matter of stability". Hence, if a questionnaire is consistent and stable, it is said to be reliable.

In this study, the researcher used the most common measure for internal consistency which is Cronbach's coefficient. One of the most common tests is Cronbach's alpha. This is reliable in measuring the consistency of all items, both globally and individually (Gray, 2005; Saunders et al., 2007). For exploratory research, reliability coefficients in the order of 0.6 are acceptable, whereas in

social science research, the reliability coefficient should be 0.7 or above (Easterby-Smith et al., 2004).

The results of the reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha ranges) are shown in brief in the following tables:

Table 5.2 Case Processing Summary

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	135	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	135	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 5.2 shows the number of cases (participants) used in calculating the reliability of the scale. An N

of 135 is presented in the table, indicating that all 135 participants were included in the analysis.

Table 5.3: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.716	5

Table 5.3 displays the value of coefficient alpha for the five item scale. The value of coefficient alpha is 0.72 which indicates a high degree of internal consistency among the items on the scale.

According to Pavot (1991), and Pallant (2001), the satisfaction scale has good internal consistency with a reported Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.7. The results from the reliability analysis indicate that all item scales can be used for further analysis. Moreover, the results obtained show that all of them have satisfactory reliability coefficients. Furthermore, the reliability coefficient obtained for all variables has a satisfactory reliability coefficient (0.72). To increase the reliability and validity of measures, measuring variables were tested and statistical significance was analysed using factor analysis and multiple regressions.

5.6 Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was first performed using descriptive statistics, looking at the frequency of the variables in the Demographics data section of the questionnaire and showing this by means of pie chart graphs. Reliability analyses using the Cronbach's alpha as well as univariate analysis were also conducted, as were multivariate analyses such as Factor Analysis (FA). All these techniques were undertaken using the statistical package 'SPSS' version 17.

5.6.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Student Sample

In respect of the gender of the sample, 69% of the students were male, thus showing that less than a third were women. Of the total sample, the vast majority were between 36 and 45 years old, specifically, 30.4% fell into the age band 36-40 years, and 28.1% within the age band 41-45 years. The remaining age groups of 26–30, 31-35, 46-50 and 51-55 years, represent 5.9%, 15.6%, 17% and 3% respectively. It is perhaps not surprising to see the majority of 55.5% being between 36 and 45 years old since PhD scholarships have tended to be awarded to those with seniority and long service, but who are also expected to have working years left after graduating.

In respect of the marital and parental status of the sample, 84.4% of respondents were married, and 77.8% of respondents had children. From this information, it can be seen that only 16.6% were single, again not a surprising statistic given the age distribution just referred to. As the vast majority were between 36 and 45

years old, it is to be expected that by that time they would be married and have children. In fact, only 6.7% of those who were married had no children.

5.6.2   General Information

Based on the data available from the survey, data files were made via SPSS V-17.

5.6.2.1 Cultural and Academic Background

This section presents the details of the respondents in terms of their cultural and academic background. The overall results are displayed in Table 5.3.

As shown in Table 5.4, 42.2% of respondents were very clear that they did not have a firm plan of study before coming to the UK and a further 24.2% also said they were unclear, meaning that 66.6% of all PhD students had no real idea about how they would proceed with their studies. This may be because the large majority of them (68.1% + 13.3% = 81.4%) were aware that there would be differences in educational practice from what they were used to Libya, and by implication, that there would be different expectations of them. In this respect, the majority also felt that it would be difficult for them to fit into the local culture (34.1% strong agreement and 37% agreement), although the figures were different when it came to considering how their families would fit into the local culture, since about half the students felt this would be relatively easy (49.6%) and half felt this would be relatively hard (50.4%). A good majority did, however (39.3% strongly agree + 25.9% agree = 65.2%), think that there would be problems because of their religious background. And a very big majority (75.6% strong disagreement + 11.9% = 87.5%) believed that they would not be able to finish their PhD on time. This may have been because again, the vast majority (57.8 strongly agree + 28.1% agree = 85.9%) perceived the teaching methods in the UK to be different from what they were used to in Libya, although the majority (23.7% strongly agree + 40% agree = 63.7%) were of the opinion that there would be a good level of academic support available to them at their university. That said, another big majority (43% strongly agree + 28.9% agree = 71.9%) indicated that the role played by the PhD supervisor was completely different from what they had expected.

Table 5.4: Student Attitudes towards Educational Culture

Factor elements	SA%	A%	NA %	NAA %
I had a firm plan of my studies	13.3	20.0	24.4	42.2
I thought the educational culture would be different as it is from the Libyan one	68.1	13.3	13.3	5.2
I thought I could easily fit into the local culture	14.1	14.8	37.0	34.1
I thought my family would fit into the local culture	22.2	27.4	28.9	21.5
I thought my religious background would be a concern	39.3	25.9	15.6	19.3
I will finish my PhD on time	6.7	5.9	11.9	75.6
Teaching methods are different from how I learnt previously	57.8	28.1	7.4	6.7
Level of the academic support available by the University	23.7	40.0	30.4	5.9
The role of my supervisor is completely different from my expectations	43.0	28.9	13.3	14.8

Clearly, from these results it can be understood that the entire PhD experience was perceived to be a challenge by the students before they embarked upon their registrations, and that they had expected something quite different in the role played by their supervisor.

5.6.2.2 Univariate Analysis

In order to test whether any difference in the answers to Q1 to Q35 occurred as a result of the respondents' characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, and parenthood, non-parametric tests (Mann Whitney, and Kruskal-Wallis) were used where appropriate.

Kruskal-Wallis Test: is the analogue to the F-test used in analysis of variance. While analysis of variance tests depend on the assumption that all populations under comparison are normally distributed, the Kruskal-Wallis test places no such restriction on the comparison.

The Kruskal-Wallis test at a significance level of 0.05 may be used to determine whether evidence exists to conclude that the answers tend to differ as a result of the respondents.

In our study a Kruskal-Wallis Test is conducted to explore whether any difference in the answers to some questions from our questionnaire.

5.6.2.2.1 Gender

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a significant effect of gender in the answers to some of the questions (bolded values P<.05) as shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Effect of Gender (Kruskal-Wallis Test)

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
P-VALUE	0.150	**0.018**	0.359	0.055	0.905
Question	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
P-VALUE	0.905	**0.009**	**0.009**	0.308	0.853
Question	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
P-VALUE	0.556	0.398	0.064	0.086	**0.021**
Question	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
P-VALUE	0.370	0.229	0.219	0.433	0.492
Question	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25
P-VALUE	0.496	0.198	0.914	0.488	0.354
Question	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
P-VALUE	0.062	0.55	0.715	0.358	0.881
Question	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35
P-VALUE	0.773	**0.035**	0.3	0.138	0.186

Key:

Q2: (Q9 in the questionnaire): I speak English with my family

Q7: (Q13 in the questionnaire): Did you take a Special English Language course in Libya before you come to the UK for your PhD programme?

Q8: (Q14 in the questionnaire): Did you take Special English Language course in the UK before you began your PhD studies?

Q15: (Q17 in the questionnaire): Have you ever done any serious prolonged reading of academic articles in English?

Q32: (Q34 in the questionnaire): I will finish my PhD studies on time.

### 5.6.2.2.2	Age

The Kruskal-Wallis test also revealed a significant effect according to the respondent's age on the answers to certain questions (bolded values P<.05), as shown in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Effect of Age (Kruskal-Wallis Test)

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
P-VALUE	0.156	**0.016**	0.169	0.834	0.234
Question	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
P-VALUE	0.25	**0.00**	**0.00**	0.871	0.065
Question	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
P-VALUE	**0.049**	0.064	0.129	0.112	0.643
Question	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
P-VALUE	0.65	0.509	0.623	0.883	0.941
Question	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25
P-VALUE	0.939	0.12	0.198	0.314	0.162
Question	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
P-VALUE	0.893	0.364	0.485	0.346	0.389
Question	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35
P-VALUE	0.427	**0.026**	0.433	0.990	0.36

Key:

Q2: (Q9 in the questionnaire): I speak English with my family

Q7: (Q13 in the questionnaire): Did you take Special English Language course in Libya before you come to the UK for your PhD programme?

Q8: (Q14 in the questionnaire): Did you take Special English Language course in the UK before you began your PhD studies?

Q15: (Q17 in the questionnaire): Have you ever done any serious prolonged reading of academic articles in English?

Q32: (Q34 in the questionnaire): I will finish my PhD studies on time

5.6.2.2.3 Marital Status

Again, the Kruskal-Wallis test showed a significant influence by the respondent's marital status on some of the questions (bolded values P<.05) as revealed in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Effect of Marital Status (Kruskal-Wallis Test)

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
P-VALUE	0.257	**.000**	**0.001**	0.939	0.284
Question	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
P-VALUE	0.284	**0.00**	**0.00**	0.284	**0.017**
Question	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
P-VALUE	0.836	0.508	0.889	0.809	0.72
Question	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
P-VALUE	0.126	0.098	0.15	0.44	0.924
Question	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25
P-VALUE	0.937	0.586	0.321	0.658	0.369
Question	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
P-VALUE	0.448	0.367	0.565	0.746	0.453
Question	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35
P-VALUE	0.121	**0.00**	**0.019**	0.223	0.662

Key:

Q2: (Q9 in the questionnaire): I speak English with my family

Q3: (Q11 in the questionnaire): Did you begin your PhD course in the UK immediately after completing Master' degree in another English speaking country?

Q7: (Q13 in the questionnaire): Did you take Special English Language course in Libya before you come to the UK for your PhD programme?

Q8: (Q14 in the questionnaire): Did you take Special English Language course in the UK before you began your PhD studies?

Q10: (Q16 in the questionnaire): Did you take any special course in study and research skills before you began your PhD studies?

Q32: (Q34 in the questionnaire): I will finish my PhD studies on time.

Q33: (Q41 in the questionnaire): I found the teaching methods are problematic for me as they differ from how I learnt previously.

5.6.2.2.4   Parenthood

The Kruskal-Wallis test also revealed a significant effect upon the answers according to parenthood (bolded values P<.05) as indicated in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Effect of Parenthood (Kruskal-Wallis Test)

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
P-VALUE	0.323	**0.00**	**0.002**	0.801	0.411
Question	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
P-VALUE	0.411	**0.00**	**0.00**	0.411	**0.011**
Question	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
P-VALUE	0.627	0.658	0.702	0.648	0.932
Question	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
P-VALUE	0.123	0.119	0.074	0.198	0.757
Question	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25
P-VALUE	0.760	0.702	0.392	0.826	0.479
Question	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
P-VALUE	0.087	0.604	0.782	0.936	0.606
Question	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35
P-VALUE	0.124	**0.001**	**0.044**	0.474	0.727

Key:

Q2: (Q9 in the questionnaire): I speak English with my family.

Q3: (Q11 in the questionnaire): Did you begin your PhD course in the UK immediately after completing Master' degree in another English speaking country?

Q7: (Q13 in the questionnaire): Did you take Special English Language course in Libya before you come to the UK for your PhD programme?

Q8: (Q14 in the questionnaire): Did you take Special English Language course in the UK before you began your PhD studies?

Q10: (Q16 in the questionnaire): Did you take any special course in study and research skills before you began your PhD studies?

Q32: (Q34 in the questionnaire): I will finish my PhD studies on time.

Q33: (Q41 in the questionnaire): I found the teaching methods are problematic for me as they differ from how I learnt previously

5.6.2.3 Factor Analysis

As already indicated, Factor Analysis (FA) is a data reduction technique used to condense large data sets into smaller ones by subsuming certain characteristics under a larger umbrella heading (West, 1991).   It is a statistical approach that performs such an action with the minimum loss of information, and it was used with the data gathered from this study as a means of reducing the large amount of highly correlated variables into a smaller number of latent uncorrelated variables (factors), and thus to determine the factors affecting Libyan PhD students. The steps in FA are to select and measure a set of variables, prepare the correlation matrix, extract a set of factors (latent variables), rotate the factors (if necessary) to increase the interpretability, and ultimately interpret the results. It is worth noting that a factor is more easily interpreted when several observed variables correlate highly with it and do not correlate with other factors. The FA starts by displaying the correlation matrix, which is a square matrix symmetrical 22 by 22. Because of its size only a portion is displayed here in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix[a]

		Place of previous achievements	Speaking English with family	Country of non Arabic speaking	Arabic-speaking countries	English course length	English course length	if so give details of the length	Accommodation arranged by whom ?	If not, how did you find suitable accommodation	Issue that prevented you from being properly settled	describe those concerns	reasons for studying at your current University	had a firm plan of my studies in terms of what to do and how long it would take	thought the educational culture would be as different as it is from the Libyan one	thought I could easily fit into the local culture	thought my family would fit into the local culture	thought my religious background would be a concern	I found it difficult to receive an offer of registration from my current University	I will finish my PhD on time	found the teaching methods are problematic for me as it differs from what I learnt previously	I am satisfied with the level of the academic support available by the University	I found the role of my supervisor is completely different from my expectations
Correlation	Place of previous achievements	1.000	-.154	-.372	.317	.325	.219	.029	-.005	-.105	.177	.109	-.151	-.372	-.020	.022	.093	.002	.019	-.289	.335	.015	-.167
	Speaking English with family	-.154	1.000	.356	-.096	-.171	-.084	.092	.033	.001	.040	.054	.055	.054	-.040	-.021	-.077	.096	-.110	.077	-.338	-.001	.024
	Country of non Arabic speaking	-.372	.356	1.000	.041	-.071	-.510	.072	-.036	-.032	-.039	-.070	-.050	.362	.012	-.082	-.079	.070	.021	.583	-.421	.062	.123
	Arabic-speaking countries	.317	-.096	.041	1.000	.073	-.036	.077	-.155	-.158	.040	.120	-.082	-.372	-.100	.018	-.074	.013	.042	-.287	.393	.061	.063
	English course length	.325	-.171	-.071	.073	1.000	-.245	.093	-.064	.010	.065	.010	.089	-.015	-.077	-.031	-.018	.141	.033	.354	.083	.087	-.175
	English course length	.219	-.084	-.510	-.036	-.245	1.000	-.124	-.042	-.068	-.035	.135	.091	-.281	-.001	.216	.187	-.250	.007	-.491	.292	-.101	.000
	if so give details of the length	.029	.092	.072	.077	.093	-.124	1.000	-.114	-.141	.103	-.143	.025	-.094	-.070	-.033	.034	.041	-.071	.070	.013	.037	-.026
	Accommodation arranged by whom ?	-.005	.033	-.036	-.155	-.064	-.042	-.114	1.000	.678	.026	.073	-.086	.144	.076	.075	-.006	-.042	-.109	-.034	.004	.009	.009
	If not, how did you find suitable accommodation	-.105	.001	-.032	-.158	.010	-.068	-.141	.678	1.000	-.057	.047	-.139	.152	.064	.031	.011	-.020	-.008	.039	-.030	-.058	-.120
	Issue that prevented you from being properly settled	.177	.040	-.039	.040	.065	-.035	.103	.026	-.057	1.000	.028	-.087	.005	-.110	.065	.039	-.036	-.005	.062	-.050	-.087	.077
	describe those concerns	.109	.054	-.070	.120	.010	.135	-.143	.073	.047	.028	1.000	.076	-.169	.169	.066	-.052	-.085	-.074	-.193	.160	-.040	-.016
	reasons for studying at your current University	-.151	.055	-.050	-.082	.089	.091	.025	-.086	-.139	-.087	.076	1.000	.015	.121	-.009	.013	-.009	.051	-.015	-.022	-.012	-.044
	had a firm plan of my studies in terms of what to do and how long it would take	-.372	.054	.362	-.372	-.015	-.281	-.094	.144	.152	.005	-.169	.015	1.000	.101	.010	-.059	.011	.057	.382	-.236	-.071	.013
	thought the educational culture would be as different as it is from the Libyan one	-.020	-.040	.012	-.100	-.077	-.001	-.070	.076	.064	-.110	.169	.121	.101	1.000	.021	.014	-.130	.011	.073	-.011	-.056	.023
	thought I could easily fit into the local culture	.022	-.021	-.082	.018	-.031	.216	-.033	.075	.031	.065	.066	-.009	.010	.021	1.000	.683	-.785	.039	-.052	.054	.027	-.115
	thought my family would fit into the local culture	.093	-.077	-.079	-.074	-.018	.187	.034	-.006	.011	.039	-.052	.013	-.059	.014	.683	1.000	-.760	.085	-.054	.030	.118	-.175
	thought my religious background would be a concern	.002	.096	.070	.013	.141	-.250	.041	-.042	-.020	-.036	-.085	-.009	.011	-.130	-.785	-.760	1.000	-.118	.102	-.026	-.005	.212
	I found it difficult to receive an offer of registration from my current University	.019	-.110	.021	.042	.033	.007	-.071	-.109	-.008	-.005	-.074	.051	.057	.011	.039	.085	-.118	1.000	.006	.047	.051	-.078
	I will finish my PhD on time	-.289	.077	.583	-.287	.354	-.491	.070	-.034	.039	.062	-.193	-.015	.382	.073	-.052	-.054	.102	.006	1.000	-.372	.127	.102
	found the teaching methods are problematic for me as it differs from what I learnt previously	.335	-.338	-.421	.393	.083	.292	.013	.004	-.030	-.050	.160	-.022	-.236	-.011	.054	.030	-.026	.047	-.372	1.000	.032	-.070
	I am satisfied with the level of the academic support available by the University	.015	-.001	.062	.061	.087	-.101	.037	.009	.058	-.087	-.040	-.012	-.071	-.056	.027	.118	-.005	.051	.127	.032	1.000	.024
	I found the role of my supervisor is completely different from my expectations	-.167	.024	.123	.063	-.175	.000	-.026	.009	-.120	.077	-.016	-.044	.013	.023	-.115	-.175	.212	-.078	.102	-.070	.024	1.000

a. Determinant = .001

This table shows the top half of the R-matrix, which contains the Pearson correlation coefficient between all pairs of questions.

In deciding how many factors are to be extracted using Kaiser's criterions, researchers use latent roots or Eigen values, and scree test criteria. Latent roots or Eigen values are in fact the most popular methods in this respect. In this study, only those components carrying an Eigen value of 1 or more than 1 and half were regarded as significant, and all those below were ignored.

The Scree test is used to identify the optimum number of factors that can be extracted before the amount of unique variance begins to dominate the common variance structure. The scree test is obtained by plotting the Eigen values against the number of factors in their order of extraction, and the shape of the resulting curve is used to evaluate the cut-off point.

In factor analysis, a principal component approach is used with varimax rotation. The results of the analysis were in the form of 4 components, each component consists of many factors; the researcher chose only those factors with factor loadings of 0.4 or higher, based on the sample size and the criteria of the Significance of factor loadings (Hair et aI., 1998).

5.7 Interpreting the Output from SPSS

The determinant of the R-matrix is vital for testing for multicollinearity or singularity and should be greater than 0.00001. If it is less than this value then look through the correlation matrix for variables that correlate very highly and consider eliminating one of the variables before the factor analysis is run (Field, 2005)

The determinant of the correlation matrix for these data is .001 which is greater than the necessary value of 0.00001. As a result all questions in this part correlate fairly well.

For these data the KMO value is 0.557 which falls in the range of being good. Also Bartlett's test is highly significant (P < 0.001). So, it is possible to be confident that FA is appropriate for this part.

Bartlett's measure tests the null hypothesis that the original correlation matrix is an identity matrix. Then the correlation coefficients would be zero. A significant test indicates that the R-matrix is not an identity matrix; therefore, there are some relationships between the variables.

For these data, Bartlett's test is significant (P<0.001), and therefore, FA is appropriate.

Table 5.10: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.557
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	872.040
	Df	231
	Sig.	.000

Table 5.11: Extraction Method – Principal Component Analysis

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.333	15.149	15.149	3.333	15.149	15.149	3.151	14.321	14.321
2	2.530	11.499	26.648	2.530	11.499	26.648	2.626	11.938	26.259
3	1.901	8.641	35.289	1.901	8.641	35.289	1.927	8.759	35.018
4	1.685	7.661	42.949	1.685	7.661	42.949	1.745	7.931	42.949
5	1.388	6.307	49.256						
6	1.237	5.624	54.881						
7	1.203	5.470	60.350						
8	1.118	5.084	65.434						
9	1.001	4.550	69.985						
10	.937	4.258	74.243						
11	.899	4.089	78.332						
12	.828	3.763	82.095						

13	.682	3.101	85.196							
14	.632	2.872	88.068							
15	.614	2.792	90.860							
16	.443	2.013	92.873							
17	.405	1.841	94.714							
18	.364	1.652	96.367							
19	.300	1.365	97.732							
20	.214	.971	98.702							
21	.154	.698	99.401							
22	.132	.599	100.000							

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

SPSS extracts all factors with Eigen values greater than 1.50, which leaves four factors. Thereafter, SPSS produces the table of communalities before and after extraction.

Table 5.12: Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Place of previous achievements	1.000	.579
Speaking English with family	1.000	.230
Non-Arabic speaking country	1.000	.611
Arabic-speaking countries	1.000	.363
English course in Libya	1.000	.609
English course in UK	1.000	.615
If course followed give details of the length	1.000	.185
Accommodation arranged by whom?	1.000	.709
If not, how did you find suitable accommodation	1.000	.760
Issue that prevented you from being properly settled	1.000	.054
Describe those concerns	1.000	.127
Reasons for studying at your current University	1.000	.073
Had a firm plan of my studies in terms of what to do and how long it would take	1.000	.454

Thought the educational culture would be as different as it is from the Libyan one	1.000	.086
I found it difficult to receive an offer of registration from my current University	1.000	.054
I will finish my PhD on time	1.000	.721
Found the teaching methods are problematic for me as they differ from how I learnt previously	1.000	.500
I am satisfied with the level of the academic support available by the University	1.000	.103
I found the role of my supervisor is completely different from my expectations	1.000	.178
I thought my family would fit into the local culture	1.000	.796
I thought my religious background would be a concern	1.000	.872
I thought I could easily fit into the local culture	1.000	.769

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Compare the rotated component matrix with the un-rotated solution.

Table 5.13: Component Matrix[a]

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Place of previous achievements	.557	-.312	.141	.389
Speaking English with family	-.343	.091	-.006	-.324
Non-Arabic speaking country	-.710	.186	.262	-.057
Arabic-speaking countries	.349	-.390	.283	.099
English course in Libya	-.034	-.176	.344	.678
English course in UK	.652	.046	-.227	-.369
If followed, give details of the length	-.061	-.109	.408	.046
Accommodation arranged by whom	-.055	.253	-.688	.411
If not, how did you find suitable accommodation	-.101	.273	-.658	.492
Issue that prevented you from being properly settled	.033	-.011	.178	.145
Describe those concerns	.253	-.052	-.238	-.057
Reasons for studying at your current University	-.001	.033	.068	-.259
Had a firm plan of my studies in terms of what to do and how long it would take	-.554	.355	-.125	.070

Thought the educational culture would be as different as it is from the Libyan one	-.021	.180	-.216	-.078
I found it difficult to receive an offer of registration from my current University	.067	.105	.179	.080
I will finish my PhD on time	-.704	.211	.304	.299
Found the teaching methods are problematic for me as they differ from how I learnt previously	.610	-.292	-.057	.198
I am satisfied with the level of the academic support available by the University	-.031	.048	.178	.261
I found the role of my supervisor is completely different from my expectations	-.211	-.185	-.061	-.308
I thought my family would fit into the local culture	.415	.727	.304	.057
I thought my religious background would be a concern	-.450	-.795	-.190	.049
I thought I could easily fit into the local culture	.414	.744	.208	.020

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 4 components extracted.

Table 5.14: Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Place of previous achievements	-.615	.020	-.075	.441
Speaking English with family	.358	-.075	-.092	-.296
Non-Arabic speaking country	.764	-.074	-.137	.051
Arabic-speaking countries	-.416	-.094	-.337	.261
English course in Libya	-.007	-.060	-.029	.778
English course in UK	-.592	.254	-.009	-.447
If followed, give details of the length	.089	.002	-.348	.236
Accommodation arranged by whom	-.007	-.012	.841	.030
If not, how did you find suitable accommodation	.044	-.006	.863	.113
Issue that prevented you from being properly settled	-.007	.058	-.086	.207
Describe those concerns	-.291	-.006	.138	-.152
Reasons for studying at your current University	.040	.048	-.164	-.206
Had a firm plan of my studies in terms of what to do and how long it would take	.609	.024	.286	-.033

Thought the educational culture would be as different as it is from the Libyan one	.052	.079	.202	-.189
I found it difficult to receive an offer of registration from my current University	.012	.172	-.082	.132
I will finish my PhD on time	.758	-.036	-.001	.382
Found the teaching methods are problematic for me as they differ from how I learnt previously	-.684	.001	.004	.181
I am satisfied with the level of the academic support available by the University	.068	.081	-.011	.304
I found the role of my supervisor is completely different from my expectations	.121	-.269	-.136	-.269
I thought my family would fit into the local culture	-.031	.889	-.019	.068
I thought my religious background would be a concern	.053	-.927	-.046	.086
I thought I could easily fit into the local culture	-.040	.875	.049	-.009

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Before rotation, most variables loaded highly onto the first factor and the remaining factors appeared unimportant. However, the rotation of the factor structure has considerably clarified the situation, which is that there are four factors and variables that load very highly onto only one factor.

All the answers that load highly on factor 1 are to questions that relate to 'academic background and PhD study', and hence, this factor is labelled 'PhD concern'.

All the answers that load highly on factor 2 are to questions that relate to 'cultural and religious aspect', and therefore, this factor is labelled 'cultural concern'.

All the answers that load highly on factor 3 are to questions that relate to 'accommodation', and hence, this factor is labelled 'accommodation concern'.

And all the answers that load highly on factor 4 are to questions that relation to 'English language', so this factor is labelled 'English course'.

5.8 Difficulties in Academic Life

In this section, the respondents' comments regarding the difficulties facing them whilst studying in the UK are revealed, and the results are summarised in Table 5.15.

From Table 5.15 it can be seen that 39.3% of respondents strongly agreed that they felt pressure as a result of sending their children to Libyan school and another 20.7% agreed, meaning that this was an issue faced by over half of the entire sample (60%). English was also an enormous problem, as 68.1% of respondents were in strong agreement with the statement that this was the case, and a further 17% agreed, seemingly indicating that for most students it was a serious problem, having an influence upon their ability to obtain an offer to study in the UK. It also emerges from the statistics that 37.8% of the respondents did not believe the Libyan Embassy provided them with any support (strongly disagreeing with the statement). However, there were positives in that 39.3% of the respondents believed they were able to manage their financial affairs effectively whilst studying in the UK, and 39.3% also felt that their tutors in their universities were helpful to them. Indeed, an additional 19.3% felt their tutors were extremely helpful to them, meaning that in total 58.6% of the research population were satisfied with the amount of assistance being offered to them by their university tutors. However, it can also be seen from the table that the students were faced with substantial challenges because 45.2% and 35.6% respectively believed they were very much over-burdened, and over-burdened, by their domestic responsibilities, and at the same time 43.7% and 28.1% respectively knew other Libyan PhD students who experienced the same problems, meaning that a total of 71.8% of the PhD population were aware that their compatriots were also confronted by such difficulties. A means of solving some of these difficulties seemed to be to make friends with English students since this was seen to be a way of improving English language competence (46.7% in strong agreement, 34.8% in agreement = 81.5%).

Table 5.15: Difficulties Experienced by Students

Factor elements	SA%	A%	NA%	NAA%	N/A
Pressure of Libyan school	39.3	20.7	2.2	1.5	36.3
English an obstacle to get an offer in UK	68.1	17.0	8.9	5.9	-
English an obstacle to get UK visa	52.6	16.3	21.5	9.6	
Managing Financial affairs effectively	15.6	39.3	27.4	17.8	
Feel burdened by domestic responsibilities	45.2	35.6	12.6	6.7	
Having English friend improves my language	46.7	34.8	10.4	8.1	
Found Libyan embassy helpful	11.9	18.5	31.9	37.8	
Found tutors helpful	19.3	39.3	28.9	12.6	
Have PhD Libyan friend who experience the same problems	43.7	28.1	20	8.1	

5.9 Univariate Analysis

In order to test for any difference in the answers to (Q30 to Q52 in the questionnaire) resulting from the respondents' age, gender, marital status, and parenthood, non-parametric tests (Mann Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis) were used where appropriate

5.9.1   Age

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a significant effect of age on most of the items (bolded values $P < .05$) as shown in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16: Effect of Age (Kruskal-Wallis Test)

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
P-VALUE	**0.001**	**0.001**	0.184	**0.001**	0.263
Question	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
P-VALUE	**0.023**	**0.001**	**0.001**	0.517	**0.014**
Question	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
P-VALUE	0.244	0.088	**0.022**	**0.05**	**0.005**

Q1: (Q8 in the questionnaire) Sending my children to Libyan school puts a lot of pressure on me and on my children

Q2: (Q30 in the questionnaire) Level of English is an obstacle for many students to get an offer in the UK

Q4: (Q32 in the questionnaire) My level of English language is good enough for a PhD programme

Q6: (Q36 in the questionnaire) My experience in terms of my family life

Q7: (Q37 in the questionnaire) Do you have private medical insurance for yourself and your family?

Q8: (Q38 in the questionnaire) I have managed my financial affairs effectively whilst I have been studying

Q10: (Q44 in the questionnaire) I feel burdened by domestic responsibilities

Q13: (Q49 in the questionnaire) I found tutors at my University helpful in resolving any problem I may have

Q14: (Q51 in the questionnaire) How important to you is your local Libyan community in supporting you through your PhD studies?

Q15: (Q52 in the questionnaire) I have Libyan friends studying for PhDs at other Universities in the UK who experience the same problem

5.9.2 Gender

The Kruskal-Wallis test indicated a significant effect of gender on some of the items (bolded values $P<.05$) as shown in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17: Effect of Gender (Kruskal-Wallis Test)

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
P-VALUE	0.665	**0.004**	0.889	**0.022**	0.075
Question	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
P-VALUE	0.067	**0.049**	0.471	0.131	0.342
Question	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
P-VALUE	0.867	0.532	0.591	0.941	0.217

Q2: (Q30 in the questionnaire) I think the low level of English is an obstacle for many students to get an offer in the UK

Q4: (Q32 in the questionnaire) My level of English language is good enough for a PhD programme

Q7: (Q37 in the questionnaire) Do you have private medical insurance for yourself and your family?

5.9.3   Marital Status

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a significant effect of marital status on most of the items (bolded values P<.05) as shown in Table 5.18.

Table 5.18: Effect of Marital Status (Kruskal-Wallis Test)

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
P-VALUE	**0.0001**	**0.0001**	0.311	**0.0001**	0.093
Question	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
P-VALUE	**0.0001**	**0.0001**	**0.0001**	0.525	**0.0001**
Question	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
P-VALUE	**0.0001**	**0.0001**	**0.0001**	**0.0001**	**0.0001**

Q1: (Q8 in the questionnaire) Sending my children to Libyan school puts a lot of pressure on me and on my children.

Q2: (Q30 in the questionnaire) Level of English is an obstacle for many students to get an offer in the UK

Q4: (Q32 in the questionnaire) My level of English language is good enough for a PhD programme

Q6: (Q36 in the questionnaire) My experience in terms of my family life

Q7: (Q37 in the questionnaire) Do you have private medical insurance for yourself and your family?

Q8: (Q38 in the questionnaire) I have managed my financial affairs effectively whilst I have been studying

Q10: (Q44 in the questionnaire) I feel burdened by domestic responsibilities

Q11: (Q46 in the questionnaire) Having English friends makes me socialise and improves my language

Q12: (Q48 in the questionnaire) From my personal experience I found the Libyan embassy helpful in resolving any problems I may have

Q13: (Q49 in the questionnaire) I found tutors at my University helpful in resolving any problem I may have

Q14: (Q51 in the questionnaire) How important to you is your local Libyan community in supporting you through your PhD studies?

Q15: (Q52 in the questionnaire) I have Libyan friends studying for PhDs at other Universities in the UK who experience the same problem

5.9.4 Parenthood

The Kruskall-Wallis test demonstrated a significant effect of parenthood on most of the items (bolded values $P<.05$) as shown in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19: Effect of Parenthood (Kruskal-Wallis Test)

Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
P-VALUE	**0.0001**	**0.0001**	0.521	**.0001**	0.201
Question	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
P-VALUE	**0.0001**	**0.0001**	**0.0001**	0.128	0.0001
Question	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
P-VALUE	**0.0001**	**0.0001**	**0.0001**	0.0001	**0.0001**

Q1: (Q8 in the questionnaire) Sending my children to Libyan school puts a lot of pressure on me and on my children.

Q2: (Q30 in the questionnaire) Level of English is an obstacle for many students to get an offer in the UK

Q4: (Q32 in the questionnaire) My level of English language is good enough for a PhD programme

Q6: (Q36 in the questionnaire) My experience in terms of my family life

Q7: (Q37 in the questionnaire) Do you have private medical insurance for yourself and your family?

Q8: (Q38 in the questionnaire) I have managed my financial affairs effectively whilst I have been studying

Q10: (Q44 in the questionnaire) I feel burdened by domestic responsibilities

Q11: (Q46 in the questionnaire) Having English friends make me socialise and improves my language

Q12: (Q48 in the questionnaire) From my personal experience I found the Libyan embassy helpful in resolving any problems I may have

Q13: (Q49 in the questionnaire) I found tutors at my University helpful in resolving any problem I may have

Q14: (Q51 in the questionnaire) How important to you is your local Libyan community in supporting you through your PhD studies?

Q15: (Q52 in the questionnaire) I have Libyan friends studying for PhDs at other Universities in the UK who experience the same problem

5.10   Factor Analysis

The FA starts by displaying the correlation matrix, which is a square symmetrical matrix (14 by 14). Because of its size only a small portion of the matrix is displayed here as Table 15.20.

Table 5.20: Factor Analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	1.000	.309	.059	-.320	-.096	-.220	-.290	-.154	.303	-.156	-.202	-.197	-.276	.308
2	.309	1.000	.099	-.719	-.291	-.301	-.294	-.229	.286	-.134	-.254	-.250	-.247	.293
3	.059	.099	1.000	-.285	-.140	-.049	-.165	-.028	.187	-.062	-.046	-.049	-.082	.106
4	-.320	-.719	-.285	1.000	.485	.337	.270	.227	-.176	.027	.214	.128	.213	-.315
5	-.096	-.291	-.140	.485	1.000	.101	.053	.274	-.012	-.085	.081	-.007	.025	-.097
6	-.220	-.301	-.049	.337	.101	1.000	.449	.017	-.320	.177	.372	.244	.358	-.424
7	-.290	-.294	-.165	.270	.053	.449	1.000	-.020	-.368	.199	.364	.306	.389	-.413
8	-.154	-.229	-.028	.227	.274	.017	-.020	1.000	.004	.013	.003	.017	-.048	-.040
9	.303	.286	.187	-.176	-.012	-.320	-.368	.004	1.000	-.207	-.415	-.345	-.382	.489
10	-.156	-.134	-.062	.027	-.085	.177	.199	.013	-.207	1.000	.557	.710	.734	-.262
11	-.202	-.254	-.046	.214	.081	.372	.364	.003	-.415	.557	1.000	.870	.677	-.576
12	-.197	-.250	-.049	.128	-.007	.244	.306	.017	-.345	.710	.870	1.000	.711	-.477
13	-.276	-.247	-.082	.213	.025	.358	.389	-.048	-.382	.734	.677	.711	1.000	-.550
14	.308	.293	.106	-.315	-.097	-.424	-.413	-.040	.489	-.262	-.576	-.477	-.550	1.000

a. Determinant = .001

5.11   Interpreting the Output from SPSS

The determinant of the correlation matrix for these data is .001 which is greater than the necessary value of 0.00001. As a result, all questions in this part correlate fairly well.

For these data the KMO value is 0.767 which falls in the range of being good. Also Bartlett's test is highly significant (P < 0.001). So, we can be confident that FA is appropriate for this part.

Bartlett's measure tests the null hypothesis that the original correlation matrix is an identity matrix. Then the correlation coefficients would be zero. A significant test tells us that the R-matrix is not an identity matrix; therefore, there are some relationships between the variables.

Table 5.21: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.767
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	854.428
	Df	91
	Sig.	.000

SPSS extracts all factors with Eigen values greater than 1, which leaves four factors.

Table 5.22: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.721	33.722	33.722	4.721	33.722	33.722	3.189	22.781	22.781
2	2.161	15.436	49.158	2.161	15.436	49.158	2.755	19.677	42.458
3	1.232	8.803	57.961	1.232	8.803	57.961	2.079	14.848	57.306
4	1.006	7.187	65.147	1.006	7.187	65.147	1.098	7.841	65.147
5	.879	6.277	71.424						
6	.761	5.436	76.860						
7	.699	4.992	81.852						
8	.641	4.582	86.433						
9	.532	3.801	90.234						

10	.489	3.490	93.724
11	.406	2.900	96.624
12	.211	1.510	98.134
13	.173	1.233	99.367
14	.089	.633	100.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Then, SPSS shows the communalities before and after extraction, depicted in Table 5.23

Table 5.23: Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Sending my children to Libyan school puts a lot of pressure on me and on my children	1.000	.390
Level of English is an obstacle for many students to get an offer in UK	1.000	.629
Low level of English is an obstacle for many student to get UK visa	1.000	.880
My level of English is good enough for a PhD programme	1.000	.778
If your English is not good, where do you experience difficulties	1.000	.560
My experience in terms of my family life	1.000	.522
I have managed my financial affairs effectively whilst I have been studying	1.000	.558
The most difficult aspects of the language for you	1.000	.507
I feel burdened by domestic responsibilities	1.000	.765
Having English friends makes me socialise and improves my language	1.000	.784
Is the Libyan Community supporting your PhD studies?	1.000	.587
I have Libyan friends studying for PhD at other universities in the UK, who experience the same problems	1.000	.783
I found the Libyan Embassy helpful in resolving any problems I may have	1.000	.783
I found tutors at my University helpful in resolving any problems I may have	1.000	.870

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

It is now possible to compare the rotated component matrix with the unrotated solution.

Table 5.24: Component Matrix[a]

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
I found the Libyan Embassy helpful in resolving any problems I may have	.814			
Is the Libyan Community supporting your PhD studies?	.809			
I found tutors at my University helpful in resolving any problems I may have	.779	.411		

113

	1	2	3	4
I have Libyan friends studying for PhD at other universities in the UK, who experience the same problems	-.733			
Having English friends makes me socialise and improves my language	.616	.479		
I feel burdened by domestic responsibilities	-.598			
I have managed my financial affairs effectively whilst I have been studying	.597		-.439	
My experience in terms of my family life	.571			
Sending my children to Libyan school puts a lot of pressure on me and on my children	-.461			
My level of English is good enough for a PhD programme	.500	-.715		
Level of English is an obstacle for many students to get an offer in UK	-.542	.557		
The most difficult aspects of the language for you		-.438	.507	
Low level of English is an obstacle for many students to get a UK visa				.866

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

4 components extracted

Table 5.25: Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
I found tutors at my University helpful in resolving any problems I may have	.909			
Having English friends makes me socialise and improves my language	.874			
Is Libyan Community supporting your PhD studies	.809			
I found the Libyan Embassy helpful in resolving any problems I may have	.808			
I have managed my financial affairs effectively whilst I have been studying		.715		
My experience in terms of my family life		.703		
I feel burdened by domestic responsibilities		-.645		
I have Libyan friends studying for PhD at other universities in the UK, who experience the same problems	-.408	-.640		
Sending my children to Libyan school puts lot of pressure on me and on my children		-.521		
My level of English is good enough for a PhD programme			.748	
The most difficult aspects of the language for you			.665	
Level of English is an obstacle for many students to get an offer in UK		-.428	-.658	
Low level of English is an obstacle for many student to get UK visa				.927

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation. a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Before rotation, most variables loaded highly onto the first factor and the remaining factors did not appear to be important. The rotation of the factor structure confirmed this outcome, such that it can be seen that there are four factors and variables which load very highly onto just the one factor (with the exception of two questions). When the content of the questions that load highly onto factor 1 are considered, it can be observed that they all relate to 'help found', and consequently this factor can be labelled as 'support is very important'.

The questions that load highly onto factor 2 all seem to relate to 'family aspect', and hence, this factor can be labelled 'family commitment'.

The questions that load highly onto factor 3 all seem to relate to 'English language', and consequently, the factor is entitled 'English language difficulties '. Finally, the question that loads highly onto factor 4 relates to 'fear of not getting a UK visa'.

5.12   Scree Plot

Figure 5.1 shows the scree plot, resulting from the test conducted to establish the optimum number of factors it is possible to extract before the unique variance starts to dominate the common variance structure. The eigenvalues are plotted against the number of factors in order of the extraction, with the curve that results being used to assess the cut-off point. From Figure 5.1 it can be seen that there is a decreasing curve to the graph, the eigenvalue being highest for the first factor and decreasing for the subsequent factors. The first eigenvalue corresponding to the first factor accounts for the most variance in the data, whilst later factors account for continually less and less of the variance. Furthermore, it can be observed that the curve changes slope (elbow shape) after FOUR factors, but there is another drop after SEVEN factors before a stable plateau is reached, and all the variance explained by each subsequent factor is very small.

The question of how many factors to retain is an important one here and in this connection it is important to keep in mind that one of the reasons for running a factor analysis is to reduce the large number of variables that describe a complex concept to a few interpretable latent variables. In other words, the objective is to

arrive at a smaller number of interpretable factors that explain the maximum amount variability in the data.

Therefore, another important metric to keep in mind is the total amount of variability of the original variables explained by each factor solution.

The first four factors (15.149, 11.499, 8.641, and 7.661) together explain most of the variability in the original variables, so it can be presumed that those factors are a good, simpler substitute for all the variables and the others can be dropped without losing much of the original variability.

It is also important to bear in mind that each of the identified factors should have at least three variables with high factor loadings (see Table 5.12: Component Matrix).
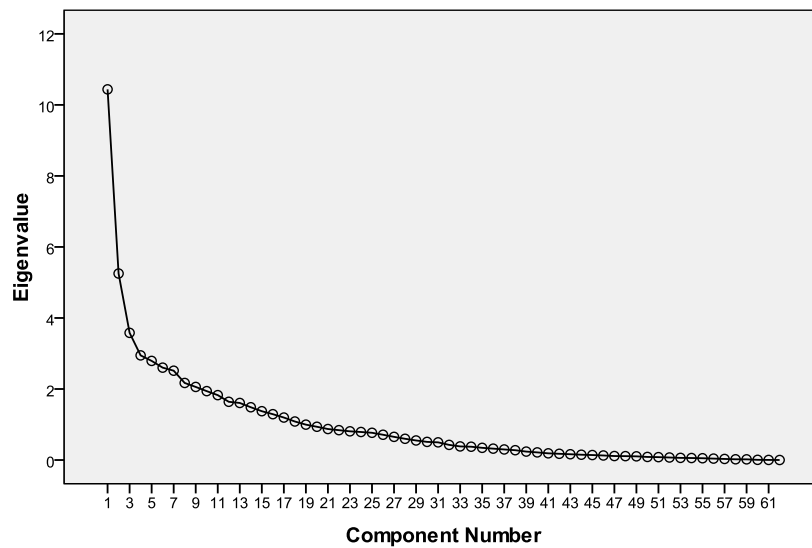
Figure 5.1: Scree Plot

5.13   Open Questions on the Questionnaire

The questionnaire also contained four open questions, the responses to which are now presented.

These open questions comprised Part Five of the questionnaire, and the comments appear in Tables 5.26-5.29.

Table 5.26: What could the University do to improve your overall PhD Experience?

Comments	out of 135 students
More English for academic purpose sessions.	103
More training sessions on research and research methodology.	21
More time from our supervisors as they are always busy.	11

Table 5.27: What could the Libyan Embassy do to improve your overall PhD experience?

Comments
Improve its communication services, as students usually travel to London just for simple enquiries.
Avoid the delay in replying to students' requests and enquiries as these delays interrupt their studies.
Speed up the extension procedure.

Table 5.28: What could Libyan universities do to improve the overall PhD experience of future Libyans coming to the UK to study?

Comments
Prepare students appropriately before sending them abroad by providing them with good English language courses and other training sessions in research skills and research methodology. Doing this in Libya will save money and time.
Advise students in the humanities and/or with poor English language competence, to study in Arab countries to overcome their language difficulties.
Encourage students to remain in Libya to study for their PhDs if their field does not specifically demand that they have to go abroad to gain this qualification.

Table 5.29: Is there anything else not covered in this survey that might help you to study at PhD level in your University any better, and if so, what?

Comments
No

5.14   Interviews with Libyan Officials

The interviews with the Libyan officials at the Embassy in London took place on 20th March 2013 at 15:30 hours. They were conducted in Arabic and have been translated by the researcher who holds a Master's degree in English/Arabic translation. Three officials were involved in the interviews, referred to in this reporting as Ahmed, Ali and Tareq. For reasons of confidentiality, these are not the interviewees' real names.

Question 1- How many Libyan PhD students are now studying in UK Universities?

Responding to the question, all three interviewees answered that there were approximately 6,000 students studying in UK universities, and that of these, about 1,500 were PhD students. They also indicated that most of the students concerned were in the Greater Manchester Universities. This was an encouraging response since the study was conducted with students from precisely this region.

Question 2 - Do Libyan PhD students encounter difficulties in obtaining offers to register at UK Universities ?

Ahmed believed they did meet such difficulties, and cited the reason as being that the majority of them arrive from Libya with a very low level of English that was really no more than beginners' level.

Ali agreed that students could not easily receive offers from UK universities.

Tareq also said that this was a problem, and that it was common for students to remain in the UK for more than a year trying to obtain an offer, without success.

Hence, there was complete recognition that obtaining an offer to register for PhD within UK universities was hard for a Libyan student.

Question 3 - To what extent do you think that low scores in English language cause such difficulties?

Ahmed had already indicated the low levels of English proficiency as the reason, but enhancing on this response he said that it was quite clear that potential Libyan PhD students simply cannot achieve the required scores in the IELTS test.
Ali also agreed that the inability to pass the IELTS test was the reason why students did not receive offers, and he also said that some students leave the UK because they are not successful in demonstrating English language competence via the IELTS test and go to study in Arab countries as a second choice, where the language of study is Arabic.
And Tareq added that even though some students studied for a full year on a language course, and then received a further four additional months' tuition in this respect, they were still not able to achieve the required scores in IELTS test.

So, from these responses it is obvious that very low competence in the English language stands as a barrier to Libyan students receiving offers for PhD registration in UK universities. And this seemed to be the situation for many students even when they had been sponsored for more than a year on a full-time English language course in the UK.

Question 4 - How do you think this problem might be solved?

Ahmed said that in order to solve this problem students must be prepared by giving them intensive courses in English Language in Libya, before sending them to study for a PhD in the UK.

Ali said that the Libyan government should pay more attention to teaching the English Language at all levels of education in schools in Libya so that students can arrive at university with a good command of the language and build on that.
And Tareq said that Libyan students should be given English courses in Libya before being sent abroad to an English-speaking country to study.
From these responses it is clear that the Embassy officials believe solutions exist, these being found in enhancing the teaching of English in Libyan schools at all levels, and by implication, in Libyan universities, and by providing intensive courses in English to individuals before they leave Libya to join PhD programmes in the UK.

Question 5 - Do Libyan PhD students report any problems to you in respect of their studies in UK universities?

Ahmed, Ali, and Tareq all agreed that problems are reported to them by Libyan PhD students concerning their studies in UK universities.

Question 6 -What are these problems and why do you think they exist?

In Ahmed's opinion, the most important problem reported was language since this has effects upon the students' ability to study. Ahmed also indicated a social problem resulting from the fact that most of the students were married with children, and that often they had large family units. Family life was cited as an issue since it caused PhD students to be continually busy such that they had not

time to study. Ahmed also added, in respect of family life, that some female students become pregnant and have to fit their PhD studies around this situation which may prevent them from working at all when the baby is newly born. Finally, Ahmed referred to the revolution and its consequences, both emotional and physical.

Ali agreed with Ahmed that the poor levels of English language served as the major problem, highlighting the fact that some of the students involved had never actually studied English formally prior to their PhD since they had studied for Masters' degrees that were delivered in Arabic. Ali also referred to the revolution and its effects on the Libyan students. And finally, he mentioned another social problem of cultural origin, which is that some students who were taken care of by their fathers when they were in Libya, found it difficult to manage their own lives when they were expected to be independent individuals in the UK.

Tareq cited the same language and family issues as did Ahmed and Ali. Specifically, he mentioned students' inability to use modern technology in learning, and their restricted opportunities to learn how to do this and to study properly because of being overloaded with family responsibilities. Again, Tareq referred to the fact that many of them have big families and simply cannot finish their PhDs on time. Tareq also mentioned that previously students had complained of financial difficulties, but indicated that this problem had been solved recently by an increase in the monthly allowance given to students for their whole time whilst in the UK. Finally, Tareq reported receiving complaints from students about problems they experienced with their supervisors and/or their universities.

Hence, the major problems facing PhD students as reported to Embassy officials, are their inability to deal with English language, inability to use modern technology in learning, the heavy responsibilities they face because of having big families, the revolution and its consequences, certain social problems, some problems between students and their supervisors or universities, and the financial problems which had recently been resolved.

Question 7 - Do these problems cause Libyan PhD students to require additional time to finish their studies and graduate?

Ali and Tareq both said that these problems did cause PhD students to require extra time in order to finish, and Ahmed added that the overwhelming majority of students (98%) fell into this category.

Qiestion 8 - How do you think these problems might be solved?

Ahmed was clear in saying that students who were sent abroad to study for PhD should not have responsibilities that prevented them from studying. Consequently, he believed that PhD students should be young (around 25 years old), to that they had not started a family and that they had the required amount of time at their disposal to devote to their studies. Ahmed also believed that there should be a better relationship between the Embassy and the universities so that there could be joint efforts made to monitor PhD students' progress and to solve any problems that might arise during their studies.

Ali echoed the comments made by Ahmed, saying that students are more able to learn and apply themselves when they are younger rather than older, but he also made the point that students' level of English should be high before they are allowed to come to the UK to study.

And, apart from agreeing with the above points, Tareq also said that students should be given courses in technology as well as English before they leave Libya for the UK, to ensure that they can benefit from the teaching and research methods in the UK.

So, it can be seen that there are two separate elements in terms of PhD student preparation. The first is the intellectual preparation which requires students to acquire an enhanced level of English by attending English courses in Libya before being allowed to study abroad, and to become competent in the use of modern technology – again before leaving Libya for study in the UK. The second element is the social/family dimension which can only be addressed by taking a new approach to the sponsoring of PhD students such that those who are capable are

sent to UK universities when they are relatively young so that they do not have family responsibilities and can devote the proper amount of time to their studies. As a way of helping these students who would then be younger overall, the Embassy could contribute towards their supervision and monitoring to a greater extent.

Question 9 - Do you think there is sufficient liaison between the Embassy and UK Universities that register Libyan PhD students?

It was clear from the responses to the previous question that the Embassy wished to be more involved in the PhD experience of Libyan students, but this was emphasised in the answers to Question 9. In this respect, Ahmed complained that the communication between the Embassy and the universities in respect of Libyan students and the Embassy's ability to supervise their activities was weak. Ali confirmed that this had been the case previously when there had been no communication between the Embassy and the universities, but indicated that recently, some level of communication had begun. And Tareq echoed Ali's comments, stating that although for a long time there had been no communication between the Embassy and the universities, a new department within the Embassy, entitled 'Public Relations', had been established precisely to supervise student progress at their universities.

So, it can be seen that in the aftermath of the revolution, before which there had been no liaison between the Embassy and UK Universities, the new Public Relations department had been created to address some of the problems associated with Libyan PhD students, and caused by a lack of communication between the universities and the Embassy.

Question 10 - Do you think there is sufficient academic support from the UK Universities for the Libyan PhD students?

This was a question that allowed the officials to confirm what they had said in the previous question about the lack of communication between the Embassy and the universities, because it was clear from the responses that the officials had no idea of the level of academic support provided for Libyan PhD students. Ahmed said that because of the tradition of no communication between the Embassy and the

universities, he did not know whether there was an appropriate amount of academic support for the students or not. Ali said the same, blaming weak communication for the lack of information in this respect. However, Tareq said he knew that some universities provided certain inputs to support PhD students, but he was unable to give precise examples.

Clearly, the answers indicate that the Embassy officials were ignorant of the exact experience provided for Libyan PhD students because of the absence of communication between the Embassy and the UK universities; and that what information they had was acquired from students rather than formally through some university channel.

5.15   Conclusion

This chapter shows the different techniques and considerations of data analysis and identifies the challenges that affect the Libyan PhD students studying in UK universities.

The first section illustrated the description of the method, which contributes to accuracy and provides reliability and validity. The second section tested the factors in order to reduce the overlapping of measured factors to a smaller set of factors. The third section showed the answers of the open questions on the questionnaire by the students. The fourth section presented the interviews made with the three of Libyan officials at Libyan Embassy.

The next chapter will discuss the test results of the challenges that faced Libyan PhD students in their study.

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results obtained from the survey questionnaire and the interviews presented in the previous chapter are discussed. An interpretation of the findings is derived from the quantitative and qualitative data obtained in the study, so that an in-depth understanding of the challenges facing Libyan PhD students whilst studying for PhDs in the UK is acquired.

The study recognises that Libyan PhD students encounter many obstacles whilst studying for PhDs in the UK, and that some of these appear not to have been formally identified in the existing literature, as no previous research has been conducted specifically concerning this particular group of students.

As indicated in Chapter One, the research problem concerns the heavy Libyan investment in the UK education product, and the fact that Libyan students are met with barriers to their success while they are here for doctoral studies. Given these challenges, the outcome would seem to be that Libyan PhD students are not reaching their full potential, and consequently, part of the investment in their Higher Education is being lost. Indeed, the questionnaire findings revealed that 75.6% of students believed they would not be able to finish their PhD on time, as shown in Table 5.3, a fact that was confirmed by the Embassy officials who said that 98% of all students asked for extensions precisely because they were not able to meet the PhD deadline.

The main research question addressed in this thesis has involved the need to identify and understand the difficulties facing Libyan PhD students in their academic life whilst studying in the UK. This question was raised since no previous investigation has been made that has attempted to identify the challenges that exist in this respect, and consequently, the study was undertaken with the primary aim of identifying, examining, and providing insight into this matter. In gaining such insight, the study aimed to provide solutions to the challenges

identified, with the ultimate intention of facilitating Libyan PhD students' academic progress and enhancing their overall experience during their UK stay.

6.2 Data Collection Methods and Statistical Techniques

Chapter Five has provided some answers to the research questions by identifying the challenges facing Libyan PhD students in their studies, and highlighting the relationship between these challenges. Essentially, these challenges were seen to lie in four different areas – English Language Difficulties, English Courses/Preparation, PhD Concern, and Family Commitment - which can be considered as a theoretical framework within which to interpret the overall problem experienced by these students.

6.3 Discussion of the Findings

In discussing the findings, a prime consideration is the interaction between the different variables that all have a bearing on whether Libyan students are able to finish their PhD studies on time. And according to these findings as presented in Chapter Five, it is clear that all the factors are important, although to a different degree, in influencing the students' ability to focus on their studies and complete their doctoral courses.

The English language, academic culture, expectations and reality, acculturation and socialisation, and culture shock are all identified as challenges which respondents to the survey questionnaire have commented upon through the 36 statements devised to test the importance of each factor in supporting or hindering students' efforts to finish their PhD studies on time.

In the following sections, the results pertaining to these challenges are discussed, and recommendations are offered for improvements where these can be identified.

6.3.1   Discussion of the Results from the Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was used to identify the challenges that affect Libyan PhD students in their study. The results of the factor analysis involved four

components containing 11 elements that are believed to explain all factors and represent them. These components are:

6.3.1.1 English Language Difficulties

The biggest challenge facing Libyan PhD students, and a great number of other foreign students, is the English language which is the spoken language within the UK where they are studying. This is not unexpected since the literature has many commentaries to the effect that studying in a language other than the learner's mother tongue is one of the main difficulties facing international students which may negatively affect their performance. Indeed, several studies investigating experiences of international students regarding foreign language difficulties have shown a lack of language competence as a substantial problem (Mostafa, 2001; Cammish, 1997; Macrae, 1997; Roberts, 2005; Robertston et al, 2000). Moreover, it is shown that the lack of language competence does not only affect the students' power to grasp information, but also filters through to other academic skills where deficiencies can be identified because of language inability (Roberts, 2005; Robertson et al, 2000). At the same time, as observed by Omeri et al (2003), students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds are naturally disadvantaged in their ability to achieve to the same degree as students from the home country. Clearly, therefore, there can be no doubt, as argued by several researchers (Yang and Clum, 1994; Barrat and Huba, 1994), that language proficiency is the most important determinant of international students' academic success.

From the findings presented in Table 5.24 it can be seen that students in this study confirmed that the English language represented one of the very important challenges they face. Indeed, two statements regarding language have high loadings, these being: their level of English to do PhD (.748), and where they experienced difficulties in English (.723).

This particular difficulty which faces Libyan PhD students, is related to several factors such as the differences between teaching and learning style between the

UK and Libya, as evidenced in Table 5.3 where it is seen that 57.8% point strongly to this cause. Certainly, the literature is confirmed by this finding (Roberts, 2005; Ryan, 2002; De Vita, 2001; Lin, 2001).

A prime reason for the low level of English capability is the decision made by the Gaddafi regime, mentioned in Chapter Three, to remove the teaching of English language from the Libyan education curriculum in 1986. That particular decision quite clearly has had a long-lasting influence upon the quality of education delivered to Libyans, the result being that over the past 42 years, almost two entire generations of Libyans have suffered through their possession of an extremely poor level of English language capability, and that teachers themselves lost confidence in their ability to teach English through lack of practice (Kreiba, 2012).

However, this problem was noted even before Gaddafi's removal of English from the education system, since it was known that the existing system had failed to deliver competence in the language, as observed by several researchers (Fenaish, 1981; Balhuq, 1982; Al Moghani, 2003) and mentioned earlier in Chapter Three. Hence, it can be argued that deeply-rooted problems in the perception of how best to deliver an English language curriculum were in evidence in Libya, and that the decision to abandon the teaching of English was not only politically-inspired but also response to a failing in the education system, which the country had no expertise to remedy.

Obviously, poor English language capabilities influence performance on academic courses, but going back a step it can be seen that the actual opportunity to gain access to such academic courses has been severely restricted by low English abilities. Table 5.14, for example, indicates that 68.1% of all respondents agreed strongly that they were unable to get an offer to study in the UK because of their low level in English, and 52.6% strongly agree that their low level of English served as an obstacle in trying to obtain a UK visa to study. Indeed, this loaded highly at .927 as can be seen in Table 5.24, so the importance of this factor is clear.

Moreover, it was not only the students themselves who felt disadvantaged by their poor English, since the officials in the Libyan Embassy also reported that the PhD students of whom they were in charge, faced significant language challenges. In fact, they cited the low level of English as one of the major reasons why students do not receive offers from UK universities since many of them are unable to pass the IELTS test, and where they do succeed in gaining offers, they still struggle with their academic studies. Furthermore, those who fail the test often decide to leave the UK to study in Arab countries where the language of study is Arabic, because they have no confidence in their own ability to follow a course to improve their English.

6.3.1.2 English Courses - Preparation

In order to know whether students prepared well for their PhD studies in Libya, a question was asked about the English courses they had followed, and their length. This was to determine the amount of English preparation they had had, bearing in mind that in their normal educational programme there was no English language on the curriculum, as already discussed.

It was shown in Table 5.13 that this particular issue of English courses had a high loading of .778, indicating that most respondents had not attended any English courses in Libya before coming to the UK to study. Given that they had not received any formal English language tuition in their schools, this demonstrates that some of these participants may have had only a rudimentary knowledge of, and fluency in English, gathered purely from interaction with individuals who did have some understanding, and this is by no means sufficient preparation for even a basic academic course, let alone a postgraduate programme requiring in-depth research of scholarly articles, and the requirement to produce an 80,000 word thesis in academic English language. Those respondents who had attended courses in English at their universities were obviously better prepared, but even these courses had been short in nature and the students concerned were not satisfied with their length.

This outcome was also confirmed in the interviews undertaken with the Libyan officials, who agreed that Libyan students were not prepared by their universities, or by the Ministry of Education before being sent abroad. And these officials commented that such a lack of preparation severely affected their ability to succeed on the course of study for which they were being funded.

6.3.1.3 PhD Concern

PhD concern is a component that embodies the academic background of the students and their concern about their PhD studies. Within this particular component, six factors had a high load as shown in Table 5.13, these being: non-Arabic speaking country (.764), I will finish my PhD on time (.758), I found the teaching methods different from how I learnt previously (.684), place of previous achievements (.615), I had a firm plan of study in terms of what to do and how long it would take (.609), and English course in the UK (.592).

Students' academic background, the place of their previous studies, and whether those students had been enrolled in English-speaking universities or not, were concerns for most PhD students. Most of those who experienced English difficulties had gained their Masters' degrees in Libya or in Arabic-speaking countries, meaning that their English level was very basic, and some of them were even at the beginners' level of English language learning when they began their PhDs. Being acutely aware of their inabilities in this respect caused them to worry about their chances of success in their research, and about the prospect of not finishing it on time. This outcome was noted by many researchers who argued that language proficiency is the most important determinant of international students' academic success (Yang and Clum, 1994; Barrat and Huba, 1994).

The difference in educational culture - different teaching methods and learning style – between Libya and the UK were also highlighted as important issues for Libyan students, it being found that 57.8% of respondents strongly agreed that they found the teaching methods and learning style to be completely different from what they were accustomed to. This result was consistent with outcomes found by Roberts (2005), Ryan (2002), De Vita (2001), and Lin (2001), who all

pinpointed one of the major problems faced by overseas students as being the mismatch between academic expectations and experiences, and the differing teaching and learning styles that such students encounter in the host HEIs. Clearly, from the results it can be understood that the entire PhD experience was perceived to be a challenge by the students before they embarked upon their registrations, and that they had expected something quite different in the role played by their supervisor.

On this matter Roberts (2005) has argued that postgraduate students in particular find difficulties in the relationship they experience with their supervisors, since their expectations of close monitoring, direction and support, invariably do not materialise given that the whole ethos of Masters' and Doctoral research demands self-motivation, and is very different from that of overseas students' home educational culture. In this situation, these students see themselves as being deprived of firm and frequent guidance, and as a consequence they feel lost in the process. This psychological outlook coupled with the inability to communicate in English effectively serves to drive a wedge within the student/supervisor relationship, as the expectations of the supervisor are of a student who can deal critically with arguments in the English language, whilst those of the Libyan PhD student are that the supervisor will basically tell him/her exactly what to do and operate rather like a schoolteacher than a supervisor and guide. Hence, the whole supervisor/student relationship can become a source of stress to the Libyan student.

Another factor that was considered important in the PhD concern component as shown in Table 5.3, was the lack of knowledge about the experience awaiting students in the UK. In this respect, Table 5.3 reports that 42.2% of respondents had no firm plan of study before coming to the UK, and a further 24.2% also said they were unclear, meaning that 66.6% of all PhD students had no real idea about how they would proceed with their studies. This may be because the large majority of them (68.1% + 13.3% = 81.4%) were aware that there would be differences in the approach from that in Libya, and by implication, that the universities where they were registering would have different expectations of

them. Clearly, this is an unacceptable situation as it merely serves to destabilise students who essentially come to the UK in a state of ignorance, and it suggests that when many of them do arrive they have no genuine self-motivated PhD plan, but are rather simply sponsored for whatever reason, and left to see what emerges from early discussions with academics in universities. It is not surprising, therefore, that some students do not show great commitment to their research, as it may not have emerged entirely from their own thoughts.

In respect of the factor concerned with finishing the PhD on time, Table 5.3 showed that 75.6% of students did not believe they would finish their study on time as a result of the combined challenges mentioned thus far. This was also confirmed by the officials in the Libyan Embassy who produced statistics to the effect that approximately 98% of all Libyan PhD students required extra time because of the difficulties encountered during their experience, suggesting that a mere 2% managed to finish their PhD studies according to the normal timetable set by their universities. This is obviously a massive drain on the Libyan funders and prevents any real attempt at planning the overseas PhD student budget since virtually all students who apply for funding overshoot their requests as they pass the deadlines for submission and require more financial support.

The last important factor in the PhD concern component was English courses in the UK and their length. Students were definite about the importance of such courses in helping them in their PhD study, as the vast majority had not attended any such tuition in Libya before arriving in the UK to study. However, the length of the courses they were allowed to follow was considered to be insufficient to prepare them for the postgraduate demands of a PhD. That said, students did appear to be satisfied by the support offered by their universities during their PhD journey, through English classes and courses. However, despite such attempts to support PhD students from overseas, universities, as noted by Cownie and Addison (1996), still find that language remains an issue experienced by lecturers, and that despite the fact that they set a minimum standard of English language for internationals students.

Officials from the Libyan Embassy confirmed the situation with Libyan PhD students, pointing out that the very low competence in the English language forced students to spend a long time taking English courses, and that some students were even sponsored for one year on full-time English courses in the UK before they embarked upon their PhD because it was found that their possession of the English language was almost non-existent. However, they also reported that this period of time was then deducted from the time they had been allocated for their PhD studies, so from the beginning, some students had no chance whatsoever of finishing a PhD course on time if they were deprived of one of the three years of full-time study stipulated for this. Clearly, this problem could be solved if equivalent courses were delivered in Libya prior to students' arrival in the UK.

6.3.1.4 Family Commitment

Family commitment encompasses all those responsibilities that Libyan PhD students have while they study in the UK. As shown in the study, 84.4% of respondents were married and 77.8% of them had children while a very small percentage (6.7%) were married but had no children. This personal situation in which the vast majority of Libyan PhD students find themselves means that they arrive in a strange country, with an enormously different educational culture, to study in a foreign language for the most important academic qualification in their lives, with the burden of heavy family responsibilities which cannot do anything else but detract from their ability to study. Of this group of respondents, 30.4% were within the age band 36-40 years, 28.1% within the age band of 41-45, and 17 % within the age band of 46-50, suggesting that they had mature families consisting of several children of school age, all of whom require to be integrated within the local population. The remaining age groups of 26–30, 31-35, 46-50 and 51-55 years, represent 5.9%, 15.6%, 17% and 3% respectively.

The findings also revealed that 60% of the research population were male as shown in Figure 5.1, and hence, it can be understood that just under half of the sample were female students who themselves have additional problems associated

133

with pregnancy and maternity. Officials in the Libyan Embassy confirmed the immense difficulties encountered by female students.

Whether male or female, however, the majority of the students had parental responsibilities, and as most of the families do not speak English to the same extent as the parent-PhD student, that individual (the mother or father) has to do everything associated with the families' integration and general living, by her or himself. This involves, for example making and attending GP appointments, dental appointments, school parents' evenings etc. All these responsibilities mean that PhD students are essentially trying to manage two full-time jobs, one as a full-time research student, and the other as a full-time carer, and this makes them forever busy and having to concentrate on the most fundamental of things simply to ensure the survival of their families, whereas the whole purpose of them being away from Libya and here in the UK, is not to do that but to be free to engage in the rigorous academic activity associated with doctoral study. It is noted in the literature (El-Arbi Ibrahem, 2007) that students from Muslim backgrounds must also respect their cultural traditions, and these include the expectation that a male student, for example, will be accompanied by his wife and children when he travels abroad to study. Table 5.14 reveals that 45.2% of all respondents strongly agree that they feel burdened by domestic responsibilities.

Closely associated with such domestic responsibilities is the financial aspect of students' lives, since most of them have large families that need to be supported. To assure this, some students must take up part-time work to obtain more money as the cost of living in the UK is substantially higher than in Libya, and greater than they expect. Consequently, what personal time students may have left after dealing with their family and cultural/religious responsibilities is often taken up doing menial jobs to improve their financial position. Inevitably, the time for studying is squeezed even further as mentioned in Chapter Two. Table 5.14 confirms that 39.3% of respondents agreed that they could not manage their financial affairs effectively.

This was also accepted by the interviewees from the Libyan Embassy, who referred to the fact that most PhD students were older, married, and according to

Libyan culture, accompanied by their families. These officials were perfectly aware of the domestic responsibilities placed upon the PhD students and recognised that these contributed greatly to their inability to finish their PhDs on time. They also pointed out that family life particularly took its toll on female students, some of whom inevitably became pregnant and had to fit their PhD studies around this situation, requiring at least a further year of registration to accommodate late pregnancy and the time when the baby is newly born. Additionally, the Embassy officials acknowledged that because of family responsibilities most students complained about financial problems, although they indicated that efforts had recently been made to solve this particular problem by increasing the monthly financial allowance to all students.

Table 5.24 provides statistics demonstrating the weight of these factors, as the statement relating to financial matters attracted a score of .715, and the one referring to their family life experience scored .703. These statistics confirm that the vast majority of students felt their family commitments and the associated need for financial security were very great.

6.3.2   Discussion of the Open Questions in Part Five of the Questionnaire

According to the findings from the respondents as given in the Chapter Five, several points emerged. Regarding the first question on what the universities could do to improve the overall PhD experience, students raised three issues; the first was that they needed additional tuition in respect of English for academic purposes, such as on how to write assignments, summarise and extract the main ideas from a text, and make notes. Within the literature it is argued (Ballared, 1996) that in order to use the English language appropriately, students must be able to understand it in both a written and verbal form, and that they do need to develop skills in terms of using the language for tasks such as summarising and criticising, since they may never have had to do that at home.

When it is considered that not only may students never have been exposed to critical writing even in their mother tongue, the magnitude of the task facing them becomes clearer. Certainly, the comments from this question confirmed the need

felt by Libyan PhD students to be given much more help and support in terms of English language as they fully appreciate that their level of English is low and insufficient for them to actually do a PhD.

This finding is also supported by the factor analysis conducted on the English language difficulties component, as explained earlier in this chapter.

The second point raised in response to this open question was the need for more training sessions on research and research methodology, since again this is an essential area of the curriculum which is totally absent in Libya. Again, this provides evidence of the different educational cultures between Libyan and the UK, and of the lack of preparation for genuine research work. Hence, Libyan PhD students need to be oriented towards an investigative culture, and this is not something that can be achieved in a short period of time as the Libyan educational culture is rooted in the Libyan national culture and not easily diluted.

The last point raised by students in answer to this open question was that they need additional supervision time from their supervisors as they are always busy. This ties in with the factor analysis outcomes concerning the expectations and the reality, and as confirmed in the literature that overseas students find difficulties in the relationship they expect with their supervisors which in doctoral research is very different from the relationship in Masters' research (Roberts, 2005).

The second open question asked students what the Libyan Embassy could do to improve the overall PhD experience. In response to this question, students requested that the Embassy improve its communication services as traditionally, students have been forced to travel to the Embassy in London for simple enquiries. Whilst this situation has improved since the Revolution, it was still noted that the Embassy should avoid the usual delays in replying to students' requests and enquiries as these delays interrupt their studies. Finally, the students mentioned that the Embassy should accelerate the extension procedure which currently takes a long time as it requires approval from the authorities in Libya.

From the answers to this second open question it is clear that although the services in the Libyan Embassy are showing signs of improvement since the Revolution,

there is nonetheless room for more advancement in the service provided, and that students still need more support from their Embassy in order to manage their studies effectively.

The third open question concerned what Libyan universities could do to improve the overall PhD experience of future Libyans coming to the UK to study, and in this respect, the respondents indicated their need for a more appropriate preparation for studying abroad, that preparation to consist of good quality English language courses, and other training sessions in research skills and research methodology. Clearly, the students were hoping for some change to the Libyan educational culture since such courses have not featured in the Libyan education system precisely because there has been no encouragement for students to research on their own behalf and question what has gone before. At the same time, it was noted that by effecting such a change, money and time would inevitably be saved as the proper preparation would counteract the requests for extensions to study periods, with all the associated expenses these entail.

Another point raised was the need to advise students in the Humanities and/or with poor English language competence, to study in Arab countries to overcome their language difficulties. And as another suggestion, students said that there should be encouragement for individuals to remain in Libya to study for their PhDs if their field does not specifically demand that they have to go abroad to gain this qualification.

All the points in the third questions confirmed the findings that were identified and discussed in the factor analysis and the literature that have been gathered together under the 'PhD concern' and 'English language difficulties' components, which showed the need for the adequate preparation of students before sending them abroad so that they are given the best chance possible of success.

6.4 Summary

This chapter has focused on the results obtained from the survey questionnaire which were presented in the previous chapters, and it has considered these in the light of the literature reviewed earlier in the thesis. In doing this, the chapter has

discussed the test results of the challenges that affect PhD students, in order to gain an understanding of how Libyan PhD students are disadvantaged while studying in the UK.

The next chapter will discuss how the research aim and objectives have been met, the originality of the research and the contribution it makes to existing knowledge. Additionally, it discusses the overall research limitations and the recommendations for future work.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, the thesis is drawn to a close, as the natural conclusion is presented and recommendations offered in respect of the problems identified in Chapter One, and in respect of furthering the research stream. The chapter begins by revisiting the aim and objectives of the study, indicating how these have been met, and then highlights the specific contributions to the literature as a result of this achievement. Thereafter, the work that was undertaken is briefly reviewed, and the limitations of the study are highlighted. In particular, the difficulties encountered during the research, and the lessons learned from the exercise are considered. Arising from all of this discussion, recommendations as to how this area of research can be furthered are presented.

7.2 Meeting the Aim and Objectives of the Research

The main research questions were answered by achieving the aim of this study which was to investigate the challenges that Libyan PhD students face whilst studying for PhDs in the UK. Ultimately, this aim has been achieved successfully through the research objectives being fulfilled. The specific objectives of this research are defined accordingly as follows:

The first objective was: "To review the existing literature in order to identify the barriers faced by overseas students in their academic life, and produce a theoretical framework for the questionnaire and interview to be developed".

This objective was achieved through a comprehensive review of the literature relating to the various obstacles confronting overseas students in their academic life in the UK and in other developed countries. Chapter Two has presented this review, and from that a number of barriers were identified, developed into a conceptual model, and subsequently tested by means of a questionnaire survey

with PhD students themselves, and interviews with officials who have responsibility for monitoring those students.

The second objective was: "To investigate the opinions of Libyan PhD students at the University of Salford, the University of Manchester, and the Metropolitan University of Manchester, regarding the barriers they encounter when studying".

This objective was achieved through the questionnaire survey that was undertaken in the three universities in Manchester and Salford. The questionnaire was constructed to probe the issues generally identified in the literature and also to examine other issues that have received less attention, such as family commitment. In order to ensure the validity of the survey, a small pilot study was performed which confirmed the suitability of the instrument as a method of obtaining the type of information required. Once the survey was completed, the data were analysed using the techniques outlined in Chapter Five, and hence, the opinions of the students who participated were available. Additionally, the fact that all the students registered at the three universities for PhD programmes were included in the research sample, confirms the achievement of the objective, since 'the opinions of Libyan PhD students' included the full volume of opinions and not simply those of a few. Consequently, the barriers facing Libyan PhD students in particular at these three universities were identified.

The third objective was: "To investigate the difficulties that Libyan PhD students face in life in general whilst studying in the UK".

This objective has been achieved through the empirical study already mentioned, and also through receiving confirmation of the problems encountered from the officials in the Libyan Embassy with responsibility for monitoring these students. They were able to produce a bigger picture relating to the lifestyle issues, producing statistics relating to how these affected the need for study extensions in the vast majority of cases.

The fourth objective was: "To investigate the opinions of officials in the Libyan Embassy, who are responsible for monitoring Libyan PhD students in the UK regarding the difficulties that students face".

This objective has been achieved through the interview exercise conducted with the three officials based in the Libyan Embassy mentioned already. Questions were asked of these officials who had responsibility for monitoring and supporting the PhD students involved, regarding their opinions of the barriers those students encountered during their registration. Chapter Five has reported the responses. It can be seen that by speaking with these officials, the researcher was able to gain their opinions regarding the general situation of <u>all</u> Libyan PhD students in the UK, and at the same time was able to gain statistical information regarding completion times which in itself supported the notion that these students encounter barriers that are sufficient to prevent them from working within the prescribed deadlines for a PhD programme. So, these interviews presented a greater opportunity for generalisation of the results, as the officials, whilst aware that the researcher had undertaken a survey with those students at the three universities in Manchester and Salford, gave their opinions, and statistical information relating to all Libyan PhD students in the UK. Chapter Five has presented the outcomes of the interviews.

The fifth objective was: "To make recommendations to address those barriers that were identified".

This objective is achieved within this chapter, and has been realised after taking into consideration the discussion on the findings.

7.3 Contribution to Knowledge

The essential contribution to knowledge comes in the form of an addition to the literature, since as indicated in Chapter One, there have been no other empirical studies that identify and analyse the challenges facing Libyan PhD students whilst studying for their PhDs in the UK. Hence, this study is characterised by its originality, and in this way it has formed a foundation from which a stream of research might follow. Whilst there have been studies about the problems encountered by overseas students generally, this one has specifically identified students at a particular level of higher education, and coming from a very particular culture. This represents a contribution to the literature and adds to the

knowledge available in this area. At the same time, because the Libyan culture is similar to Arab culture, the contribution to knowledge can be generalised to some extent to PhD students from other Arab World countries. Moreover, because the results of this study confirm the findings of other studies about overseas students generally, there is a contribution to knowledge in this particular area.

Another contribution to knowledge lies in the degree of specificity provided by the results which have identified four specific challenges that face Libyan PhD students while they are studying in the UK, and the relationship between those challenges. These challenges are: English Language Difficulties, English Courses – Preparation, PhD Concern, and Family Commitment. There has been no identification of these challenges in any of the previous literature regarding Libyan students, as demonstrated in Chapter Six.

Finally, there are two contributions made to practitioners by the findings of this study. Firstly, the Libyan government, and particularly the Ministry of Higher Education, is presented with concrete evidence of the need to better prepare students who are sponsored for PhD studies in the UK. Secondly, the students themselves have developed greater awareness of their own circumstances and arguably, in becoming more aware of the intrusions on their time, they may become more proactive in their time management practices.

7.4 Limitations of the Research

As with all research studies, this one suffered from a number of limitations. In particular, these were as follows:

1- The study was limited to three universities in the UK (University of Salford, the University of Manchester, and the Metropolitan University of Manchester), and arguably, the findings cannot be generalised. However, and this is an important point, the officials at the Libyan Embassy were responsible for the monitoring of all PhD students in the UK and their responses made it clear that they related to this wider body of students.

2- The allocated time for the PhD programme was also considered as one of the limitations of the study. If the researcher had had more time, she would have

attempted to interview the supervisors of Libyan PhD students to explore the issue from their angle, and hence, provide a more in-depth picture.

3- Due to the lack of information about higher education in Libya, and due to the unstable situation resulting from the recent revolution, current information regarding higher education in general and the department involved in sending students abroad in particular, was very difficult to obtain and sometimes impossible to find.

7.5 The Research Experience – Lessons Learned

During the conduct of the study, and especially the empirical work, several lessons were learned by the researcher. In other words, problems arose that she did not foresee, and in any future research attempt, the researcher would be more knowledgeable in advance and more able to field some of the issues that surfaced.

One major problem was the fact that it was very difficult to get the commitment of the officials at the Libyan Embassy because they were working to very busy schedules and really had no time to offer for the interviews. In particular, they were difficult to pin down because their schedules were continually changing and their commitments were all of a higher priority than their participation in academic research. Consequently, interviews were arranged only to be cancelled by the officials on many occasions due to the need to travel to Libya unexpectedly, or other reasons associated with their jobs. So, interviews had to be re-arranged on many occasions. Furthermore, the general unavailability of these officials meant that they were unwilling to devote the requested amount of time to the interviews, and in fact, although it had been envisaged that the interview would last 45 minutes, the officials all decided that they could only spare 25-30 minutes, which precluded all but essential discussion. Nonetheless, once they were actually in the interview situation, the officials concerned were more than happy to help. The lesson learned by the researcher as an outcome of this experience, was to always allow much, much longer for an empirical interview exercise than would seem necessary.

Another major issue was the general workload facing the PhD students themselves. It was found that all students were very helpful and had a true desire to help even more, but they were also busy with their daily lives and especially with their studies, and it was necessary to issue several reminders. Furthermore, data collection occurred during the recent revolution, when all Libyans were in a state of anxiety about their country, and their families who were still in Libya. Consequently, many students had switched off their studies and were simply not in the mood to prioritise their completion of research questionnaires. The lesson learned from this outcome was to factor into a data collection period, an amount of time to cover special circumstances, and to make it as easy as possible to complete and return the questionnaire. In this respect, the strategy of chasing up non-respondents is one to be learned but it must be noted that in the specific context of a female Libyan researcher approaching male Libyan researchers, there is a dynamic that is not encouraged in Libyan society. For example, it was relatively easy for the researcher to deal with female students since societal norms allow for, and encourage, contact between females. Thus, the researcher was able to telephone non-returners to remind them to complete, and in some cases could collect questionnaires directly from their houses. The same was not true, however, for male students, it being necessary for the researcher to deal with male participants through another male, that person either being her husband which happened most of the time, or a friend of her husband. Again, the lesson learned related to the need to acknowledge the cultural difficulties involved in a Libyan female trying to research with Libyan males and essentially being in a position where she needs to request participation and then follow that request through to a successful outcome. In recognising these difficulties, the time factor and the need to enlist the help of a male family member who can advocate on behalf of the researcher are both issues to consider.

7.6 Overall Conclusion to the Study – Summary of Work Undertaken and Conclusion

7.6.1   Work Undertaken

Drawing an overall conclusion to the study, it is appropriate to recall the aim and the research sample used, and in this respect it was the challenges encountered by PhD students during their PhD registration at three particular UK universities that were being investigated. In order to answer the research questions stemming from the aim and objectives, and to maximise the quality of the data obtained, it was necessary to consider which would be the most appropriate research approach and strategy to gather and analyse that data. The selection of a suitable methodology for the study was made after thoroughly reviewing the wider aspects of the research topic, since the precise research topic did not actually exist in the literature, and the literature on research methodology, where approaches and techniques for conducting empirical investigations were found.

The study was performed in connected stages which involved a survey strategy and the collection of quantitative data in the main. This was supported by qualitative data obtained from officials in the Libyan Embassy with responsibility for monitoring the progress and general well-being of PhD students in the UK. This data was sought in order to increase the validity of the survey, and to gather a wider perspective which, being responsible for students in the UK, rather than simply those in the three case study universities, would be available. Hence, this attempt at triangulation had two advantages – firstly, its ability to confirm what students themselves had stated, and secondly, to add to the picture gained by providing statistics relating to the bigger picture. Moreover, the interviews were conducted in the interviewees' native language of Arabic to ensure that they could effectively articulate their thinking, which also increased the validity of the study.

To operationalise the study, firstly, an intensive literature review was undertaken to understand the different issues that had so far been reported, concerning overseas students in the UK and in some other developed countries. From this, a collection of variables that represented challenges to these students was identified.

Secondly, the information required was consolidated, and the literature on research methodology was explored in order to establish the most suitable way to obtain that information. In this case, the questionnaire method was chosen, essentially due to the advantage that the questionnaire could be distributed to a large number of students (and thereby reach the entire research population in the three case study universities) and collected from them in a limited timeframe. In this respect, a total of 150 questionnaires were sent to the three participating universities, (University of Salford, the University of Manchester, and the Metropolitan University of Manchester).

The research questions were:
1. What challenges do Libyan PhD students face in their academic life whilst studying in the UK?
2. What attempts are made to alleviate these challenges by the Libyan authorities?
3. What attempts are made to alleviate these challenges by the UK universities participating in the study?

These three research questions were clearly articulated such that the researcher's own focus was direct and unimpaired by tangential issues.

All three questions were answered by the dual approach to data gathering, since the input from both the PhD students, and the officials at the Libyan Embassy was necessary to provide the full picture. Questionnaire data was analysed by using SPSS package Ver.17, and interview data was analysed by using content analysis.

7.6.2 Conclusions

The findings enabled the conclusions to be drawn, and as shown in the thesis, these are indeed that Libyan PhD students face a range of challenges, the main one being the lack of time they have available to them for the purpose of following their PhD studies. The UK PhD is a research programme that demands attention on a full-time basis (if a student is enrolled as a full-time student) but it does not require actual attendance in classes as does an undergraduate or even

Master's programme. The requirement placed upon students is that they exercise the necessary discipline to research, to guide their own actions, to work in a library situation, and to engage in empirical activity, and the business of writing. In the absence of a definite requirement to present themselves in a physical location and remain there under close supervision, Libyan PhD students prioritise their family responsibilities in accordance with their cultural traditions, and this action impinges totally upon the very reason for them being in the UK, that being to study. Consequently, the attention to these obligations damages their ability to profit from the PhD programme.

Very closely associated with this problem is the students' lack of ability in the English language. This is a big source of frustration to Libyan students, which serves to hinder and demoralise them, thereby making the choice of spending time attending to family responsibilities an easy one to make over the choice of working in a library and struggling with texts in another language.

Moreover, the difference in educational culture, whereby Libyan PhD students have different expectations of the role of the supervisor from the reality in the UK where supervisors expect students to exercise critical approaches to their PhD studies, stands as another substantial challenge as students need time to realise what is expected of them, and again, struggle to meet these as they may not possess the requisite skills, especially if their Masters' programmes have been undertaken in Libya.

Clearly, the UK PhD is a product which is desired by the Libyan market just as much as by other overseas markets, and as a product it is not going to change in character. The only conclusion to be drawn therefore, is that Libyan students themselves must change, they must be better prepared before they register for PhDs and recommendations regarding this preparation are now given in the next section.

7.7 Recommendations

1. The Libyan Ministry of Higher Education and the Libyan universities providing undergraduate and Masters' programmes should examine their curricular to ensure that they prepare all students to progress to PhD study abroad if they wish, by increasing students' analytical and critical abilities and encouraging the spirit of research. This entails requiring dissertations (long pieces of academic writing) at undergraduate and Masters' level, and providing modules in research methodology so that the opportunities are provided to engage in empirical investigations at both these levels.

2. The Libyan Ministry of Higher Education and the Libyan universities should improve their teaching of English language and in addition to delivering parts of the curriculum in English, should also provide intensive academic courses in English language to properly prepare students for reading and analysing academic texts in English.

3. The Libyan Ministry of Education should focus on teaching the English language throughout all levels of education to help remedy the problem that has accumulated over the Gaddafi period when English language was removed from the curriculum. In doing this, the hours allocated for the teaching of English should be increased, and the way in which it is taught should be reformed. This has implications for the training of teachers of English, and hence for the teacher training colleges.

4. In order to demonstrate to the Libyan universities how to teach English language at an appropriate level, the Libyan Ministry of Education should consider inviting staff from the universities in the UK that take Libyan PhD students (i.e. Salford and Manchester) to join the English courses that they launch in Libya. That would help in providing the right direction of those courses, and orienting them towards the activities demanded of a PhD, such as summarising academic articles, and thesis writing.

5. The Libyan Ministry of Higher Education should improve the chances for students it decides to sponsor for PhD study in the UK by providing intensive acculturation courses in which life in general in the UK is made clear, including all the expectations of PhD students and the potential clashes these might have with their own traditions and culture. These courses should impress upon students the need for them to make a personal commitment and take responsibility for their studies.

6. Being itself aware of the requirements of PhD students in UK universities, the Libyan Ministry of Higher Education should impose stricter criteria relating to sponsorship for Libyan students and should fund only those who are distinguished and can provide evidence of being able to profit from those studies. As a general rule, students over 35 years of age should not be sponsored because of the infringement on their personal study time caused by too many family responsibilities. There should always be room for the exception, however.

7. The Libyan Embassy in London should be more proactive in supporting PhD students in the UK universities, by following up their academic progress on a more regular basis with their universities, and accelerating the time it takes to deal with requests from students for administrative assistance.

7.8 Recommendations for Further Research

From the limitations identified, and as a general progression route from this study, some opportunities for further research are identified as follows:

1. The challenges affecting Libyan PhD students in other universities in the UK could and should be explored since there may be variations with geographic location which have not been highlighted by this study.

2. Other variables might be considered in greater depth in a subsequent study. For example, whilst cultural and religious aspects were highlighted as causing problems in this study, the religious aspects were not considered in any great

depth, and it may be that a deeper exploration of these might bring new information of importance to light.

3. A study of the opinions of the providers of UK PhD programmes would be appropriate since this study has taken the opinions only of the 'buyers' (i.e students). It would be worthwhile to establish the opinions of academics who supervise Libyan PhD students in the three case study universities, or indeed in any universities where both students and supervisors could be involved since those supervisors would be in a position to make a comparison between the preparedness of their PhD students coming from different home backgrounds.

7.9 A Final Word

This PhD has been conducted during a period of great turmoil in the history of Libya. After a long time when English was not taught in the country, the younger generations of Libyans have emerged as disadvantaged in their ability to profit by study opportunities offered to them by overseas universities. In combination with the recent revolution and the genuine fears for individual survival, this situation has served to impact negatively upon the potential of Libyans to commit to PhD studies and to be successful in completing within the required period of time. It is sincerely hoped by the researcher, that the findings of this study will help to remedy this disadvantageous position of Libyan PhD students in the future, and that as the country settles, reforms can be made throughout the Libyan education system that help the postgraduate chances of all those who aspire to learn at this level. However, the findings of this study need to be brought to the attention of policy-makers in the government system, and this is a responsibility placed up the researcher. To this end, therefore, the researcher intends to summarise the study into a report for Libya's policy-makers in government, and for officials in the Libyan Embassies in English-speaking countries where Libyan nationals are registered for PhD programmes so that the challenges encountered by those individuals are minimised by effective preparation before departure for those programmes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR LIBYAN PHD STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD, THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER, AND THE METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

This questionnaire is intended to provide information concerning the actual experience of PhD students from Libya, who are studying at the University of Salford, the University of Manchester, and the Metropolitan University of Manchester. The aim is to identify any difficulties encountered by the students and to make recommendations to the Libyan authorities so that the causes of such difficulties might be addressed at a strategic level.

The questionnaire is anonymous, and the answers provided will be entirely confidential, and used only for the purpose of the study. Participants can choose not to answer any particular question or questions without withdrawing from the study.

The questionnaire is structured in five parts. These different parts are intended to obtain:

- Information about your personal situation
- Information concerning how you prepared for your PhD studies both at home and here in the UK
- Information about your expectations of your PhD studies before you registered
- Information about your experiences on your PhD studies
- Information about how your experiences might be improved

PART ONE

1. Age: 26-30   31-35   36-40   41-45   46-50   51-55   56-60
   61+

2. Sex: Female/Male

3. place of previous achievements:

………………………………………………………………………………………………
…

………………………………………………………………………………………………
…

………………………………………………………………………………………………
.

4. Marital Status: Single/Married

5. Children: Yes/No

6. Are your spouse and children here with you in the UK?

                                                        Yes/No

7. Do your children go to school?   Yes/No

8. Sending my children to Libyan schools puts lot of pressure on me
   and on my children.

                                        Strongly agree

                                        Agree

                                        Do not agree

Do not agree at
all

9. I speak English with my family?   Always
                                                   Most of the time

                                                   Occasionally

                                                   Never

Thank you for your responses to these questions

PART TWO

This section is about the type and amount of preparation you had for your PhD
course before you registered.

10. Did you begin your PhD course in the UK immediately after
    completing a Masters' programme in the UK?

Yes/No

11. Did you begin your PhD course in the UK immediately after
    completing a Masters' programme in another English-speaking
    country, and if so, which country?

Yes/No   Country …………………………………

12. Did you begin your PhD course in the UK immediately after completing a Masters' programme in Libya or another Arabic-speaking country, and if so, which country?

Yes/No   Country …………………………………

13. Did you take any special English language course in Libya before you came to the UK for your PhD programme?

Yes/No

If so, give details of the length : ………………………………………..

14. Did you take any special English language course in the UK before you began your PhD studies?

Yes/No

If yes, give details of the length :…………………………………………..

15. Do you think the length of time specified by the Embassy is enough to study English language?
Yes/No

If no , how long should it be:……………………………..

16. Did you take any special course in study and research skills before you began your PhD studies?

Yes/No

If so, give details of the length: …………………………………………

17. Have you ever done any serious prolonged reading of academic articles in English?

Yes/No

18. Have you ever lived abroad before coming to study in the UK?

Yes/No

19. Before you came to study in the UK, was your accommodation arranged for you?

Yes/No

If so, by whom?
………………………………………………………………………………….

If not, how did you find suitable accommodation?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
…

20. Were you properly settled before you began your PhD studies?

Yes/No

If no, what were the issues that prevented you from being properly settled?

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…

21. Did you have any concerns about studying abroad before you
actually left Libya?

Yes/No

If so, describe those
concerns:…………………………………………………

Thank you for your responses to these questions

PART THREE

This section is about your expectations of PhD study at your University.

22. Did you expect to be studying for your PhD at your current
University
Yes / No

If Yes,
why……………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………
……..

23. I had a firm plan of my studies in terms of what to do and how long it would take

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

24. I thought the educational culture would be as different as it is from the Libyan one

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

25. I thought I could easily fit into the local culture

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

26. I thought my family would fit into the local culture

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

27. I thought my religious background would be a concern

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

Thank you for your responses to these questions

PART FOUR

This section is about your actual experiences whilst undertaking your PhD studies. Where a scale is provided, please answer by indicating the strength of your response to each statement.

28. What year of your PhD programme are you currently in (September 2011-June 2012)?

29. I found it difficult to receive an offer of registration from my current University

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

If you did agree, what do you think the reason for this was?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

30. I think the low level of English is an obstacle for many students to get an offer in UK

Strongly agree

Agree
Do not agree
Do not agree at all

31. I think the low level of English is an obstacle for many students to get a visa to the UK

Strongly agree

Agree
Do not agree
Do not agree at all

32. My level of English language is good enough for a PhD programme

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

………………………………………………………………………………………
…..

33. How have you tried to overcome these difficulties?

………………………………………………………………………………………
…..

34. I will finish my PhD studies on time.

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

If you do not agree, what is the obstacle?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

35. I have not experienced any problems in getting a visa extension.

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

If you do not agree, what are the circumstances?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

36. My experience in terms of my family life is:

Good

Very good

Bad

Very bad

37. Do you have private medical insurance for yourself and your family?

Yes/No

38. I have managed my financial affairs (monthly salary) effectively whilst I have been studying for my PhD.

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

39. I have a part time job which is helping me to manage my financial problems

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

40. Returning to the issue of your fluency in the English language, and taking into account all aspects of your life here in the UK as a PhD student (at university, at home, at work, socialising with friends), which are the most difficult aspects of the language for you (Please indicate 4 as the most difficult and 1 as the least difficult)

Writing

Reading

Speaking

Listening & Understanding

41. I found the teaching methods are problematic for me as it differs from what I learnt previously

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

42. I am satisfied with the level of the academic support available by the University

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

43. I found the role of my supervisor is completely different from my expectations

   Strongly agree

   Agree

   Do not agree

   Do not agree at all

44. I feel burdened by domestic responsibilities

   Strongly agree

   Agree

   Do not agree

   Do not agree at all

45. I feel isolated while I am studying in the UK

   Strongly agree

   Agree

   Do not agree

   Do not agree at all

46. Having English friends makes me socialise and improves my language

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

47. From my personal experience I would recommend the UK to other Libyan PhD students as a place to gain their qualifications

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

48. From my personal experience I found the Libyan Embassy helpful in resolving any problems I may have

Strongly

Agree s

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

49. From my personal experience I found tutors at my current University helpful in resolving any problems I may have

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

50. In my social life, I socialise with Libyans or other Arabic speakers

All the time

Most of the time

Only sometimes

Hardly ever

51. How important to you is your local Libyan community in supporting you through your PhD studies?

Important

Very important

Not very important

Not important at all

52. I have Libyan friends studying for PhDs at other universities in the UK, who experience the same problems

Strongly agree

Agree

Do not agree

Do not agree at all

Thank you for your responses to these questions

PART FIVE

This section is about the circumstances that would improve your PhD experience.

53. Could your University do anything to improve your overall PhD experience, and if so, How?

………………
………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………………………
…..

54. Could the Libyan Embassy do anything to improve your overall PhD experience, and if so in what way?

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55. Could Libyan universities do anything to improve the overall PhD experience of future Libyans coming to the UK to study, and if so in what way?
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56. Is there anything else not covered in this survey that might help you to study at PhD level in your University any better, and if so, what?
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Thank you for your co-operation throughout this questionnaire. Your responses are invaluable and are gratefully accepted.

Appendix B: Interview

Suggested Interview Questions for Libyan Officials at the Libyan Embassy in London

1- How many Libyan PhD students are now studying in UK Universities?

2- Do Libyan PhD students encounter difficulties in obtaining offers to register at UK Universities ?

- To what extent do you think that low scores in English language cause such difficulties?

- How do you think this problem might be solved?

3- Do Libyan PhD students report any problems to you in respect of their studies in UK universities?

What are these problems?

Why do you think they exist?

4- Do these problems cause Libyan PhD students to require additional time to finish their studies and graduate?

5-How do you think these problems might be solved?

6- Do you think there is sufficient liaison between the Embassy and UK Universities that register Libyan PhD students?

7- Do you think there is sufficient academic support from the UK Universities for the Libyan PhD students?

Academic Audit and Governance Committee

College of Science and Technology Research Ethics Panel (CST)

To	**Salmah Aldoukalee**
cc:	**Prof Mike Kagioglou, Head of School of SOBE**
From	**Nathalie Audren Howarth**, College Research Support Officer

Date	**28th March 2012**

<u>**Subject:**</u>	**Approval of your Project by CST**
<u>**Project Title:**</u>	**An investigation of the problems faced by Libyan PhD students in Britain: a case study of the universities in Manchester**
<u>**REP Reference:**</u>	**CST 12/06**

Following your responses to the Panel's queries, based on the information you provided, I can confirm that they have no objections on ethical grounds to your project.

If there are any changes to the project and/or its methodology, please inform the Panel as soon as possible.

Regards,

Nathalie Audren Howarth
College Research Support Officer

Appendix D:

Invitation Letter

School of the Built Environment,
The universty of salford

Salmah Aldoukalee, PhD Student
Room 413,
School of the Built Environment
4th Floor, maxwell Building,
University of Salford,
M5 4WT,
Greater Manchester, UK.

E-mail: S.aldoukalee@edu.salford.ac.uk

Dear Sir/Madam
Invitation to participate in research study
We would like to inform you, as well as ask your permission, for the research being
undertaken by the PhD student identified below:

Permission Letter

Student   :   Salmah Aldoukalee
Supervisor   :   Prof. Mike Kagioglou
Student ID   :   @00042924
Topics   :   An Investigation of the Problems Faced by Libyan PhD Students
in

Britain: A Case Study of the Universities in Manchester.

According to the data collection process requirements of the research, we would like to
request your assistance in oder to enable the researcher to undertake the research in
relation but not limited to the following instruments:
- Archival data and other references
- Interview with members of your organisation
- Interview with experts attached to this organisation

For further information on how to participate in this study, please see the attached
Participant Information letter. If you have any questions or concerns about the study
please contact the PhD Candidate at s.aldoukalee@edu.salford.ac.uk

Your participation and co-operation is highly appreciated.

_____   _____   _____

  Supervisor Signature   Print Name
Date

_____

School/University Stamp

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Appendix E:

Consent Form

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School of the Built Environment,
The University of Salford
Participant Consent Form

Research Title   : An investigation of the problems faced by Libyan PhD students
in   Britain: A case study of the Universities in Manchester.
Student (researcher) : Salmah Aldoukalee
Supervisor   : Mike Kagioglou

<div align="right">

Please read and
tick the boxes

</div>

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Participation Information
   Letter explaining the above research study and I have had the opportunity
   to ask questions about the project. ☐

2. I understand that my anonymity is assured as only The University of
   Salford researcher involved in this study will use the data, and I give
   permission for these individual to do so. ☐

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw
   at any time without giving any reason and without there being any
   negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any
   particular question or questions. I am free to decline. ☐

4. I understand that, if I decide to withdraw from this study, or if the
   researcher withdraws me from this study, then any collected data
   would be retained and used in this study only if I give my permission. ☐

5. I understand that, if I decide to participate in this study, then the
   anonymised results (i.e. not your specific answers) obtained from this
   study, will be made available through the PhD thesis in the public domain
   which might be used in future studies. ☐

6. I agree to take part in the above research study. ☐

   Participant Signature   Print Name   Date

   Researcher Signature   Print Name   Date