

REPATRIATED STUDENTS IN CYPRUS AND THEIR PROSPECTS FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION

PAVLOS PAVLOU
NIKI CHRISTODOULOU

Abstract – *Tertiary education is highly valued in Cyprus and this is witnessed in the proportion of high-school graduates (69% in the academic year 1999-2000) that continue their education in tertiary level institutions both in Cyprus and abroad. As a result of this demand for higher education, there are numerous state and private institutions that cater to the needs of high-school graduates. The purpose of this study is to examine whether this plethora of opportunities for tertiary education is equally accessible to all social groups in Cyprus and in particular to repatriated students. The sample consisted of repatriated students at the secondary level of education and their parents as well as repatriated students at the tertiary level. Factors that can account for the fact that repatriated students do not enjoy equal access to certain institutions were identified and discussed. Repatriated students seem to be at a disadvantage, mainly due to their limited competence in Greek, which is the language of instruction in quite a few reputable institutions of tertiary education in Cyprus and Greece. This partial exclusion from higher education reflects the limited support that the state provides to this group, which in turn creates a feeling of discontent among repatriated Cypriots.*

Introduction

Since Cyprus became an independent nation in 1960 there has been a steady increase in the demand for a more highly educated and skilled workforce. According to Eliophotou-Menon (1998) the factors that led to this development are numerous. Firstly, the Cypriot government has always accorded paramount importance to tertiary education since it was regarded as a means to improve future employment prospects. This has been reflected in the government policies of the last forty years. Secondly, societal and economic changes, which have placed greater value on professional occupations have enhanced the pursuit of tertiary education. According to Vakis, (1990) there has been a shift from more traditional occupations such as farming, agriculture and industry related jobs to more service oriented occupations like tourism, banking and new technologies. Thirdly, the fact that the woman's role in the Cypriot society has grown significantly has led to the increase in the demand for education (Demetriades, 1994). Fourthly, young Cypriots (and their parents) believe that acquiring tertiary

education will enhance their opportunities to obtain higher social status (Papanastassiou & Michaelides, 1988). All the above factors have created a positive attitude among Cypriots towards tertiary education. This positive climate towards tertiary education is witnessed by the fact that 69% of high school leavers attend tertiary education in Cyprus and abroad (Department of Statistics and Research, 2001).

Given such promising educational developments in Cyprus, the present study investigates whether this plethora of tertiary educational opportunities is equally accessible to all social groups in Cyprus. More specifically, the present study examines repatriated students' opportunities for tertiary education in Cyprus and abroad since this group of students exhibits unique characteristics (see section on subjects) that set them apart from the rest of society. It should be noted that other countries have had to deal with repatriation issues (see Yashiro 1995 for Japan; Hadjithaki 2000 for Greece) but no studies focusing on repatriated students in higher education could be located.

The current study focuses on the following issues:

- repatriated students' intentions for attending a tertiary level institution
- the opinion of the subjects on the quality of education offered by various tertiary level institutions
- factors that would prevent them from studying in specific institutions
- the likelihood of attending various tertiary level institutions in Cyprus and abroad
- equal educational opportunities.

Tertiary education in Cyprus

Education in Cyprus is both private and state-run and is provided at pre-primary, primary, secondary (general and technical/vocational), special schools and tertiary level institutions. Education provided by the state at the primary level has been free and compulsory since 1962 whereas secondary education up to the third grade was made compulsory in 1985-86. Tertiary education is offered by state and private institutions alike. State tertiary education is provided by the University of Cyprus and non-university level institutions. The latter is divided into public educational institutions and private colleges. Tertiary education, in general, is highly valued in Cyprus and as a result a great number of high-schools graduates continue further studies in tertiary education. According to the Department of Statistics and Research of the Republic of Cyprus in the academic year 1999-2000, 69% of high school graduates chose to pursue tertiary education

either in Cyprus (28%) or abroad (41%). In that year the number of Cypriots enrolled in tertiary-level educational institutions in Cyprus was 8389. Among them 2589 were enrolled in the University of Cyprus and 12147 Cypriot students were enrolled in universities abroad. The main countries of study were Greece (6416), the United Kingdom (2816), the USA (1704), Hungary (227), Bulgaria (218) and the Russian Federation (152). In 1999/2000 there were 31 state and private institutions in Cyprus with a total number of enrolment of 10414 students, of which 8389 were Cypriots and 2025 foreigners.

The Study

The subjects

The following three groups participated in the study:

- (a) repatriated students graduating from secondary education
- (b) parents of repatriated secondary education students and
- (c) repatriated students currently enrolled in institutions of tertiary education in Cyprus.

A clarification of the term ‘repatriated’ in this context is necessary. The term ‘repatriated’ refers to persons of Cypriot nationality or of Cypriot descent who returned to settle in Cyprus after a rather long stay abroad. Cypriots have traditionally emigrated to the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia and South Africa. In recent years, however, there has been a high immigration flow of Greek-Cypriot immigrants returning to Cyprus due to many reasons. The main reasons for the return were a prospering economy and economic and political problems in the host countries. With regard to the number of repatriated Cypriots there is no reliable data. The Department of Statistics and Research, which is responsible for providing statistical information reports only on numbers of short term (less than a year) and long term (more than a year) immigrants. These statistics include repatriates but do not specify their exact number because these numbers include people of various nationalities who chose to reside in Cyprus for a longer period. According to Paschalis (2000) in 1992 there were 1014 declared repatriated Cypriots. However, the 1992 national census reveals a significant discrepancy between the official numbers and the actual numbers of repatriated Cypriots. More specifically, 4351 persons of Cypriot nationality or Cypriot descent had returned to settle in Cyprus in 1992 (Paschalis, 2000). This discrepancy leads to the conclusion that the actual numbers of repatriates are at least four times higher than those reported officially. In fact, the

government figures contradict the unofficial figures quoted by the associations of repatriated Cypriots, which estimate the number of repatriates to be approximately 25000 for the years 1981-1992.

Instruments and procedure

The survey method was used for this study. Primary data was collected from questionnaires administered to the subjects. A total of 37 questionnaires were collected from repatriated students attending the three major private English-speaking secondary schools in Cyprus. Questionnaires were also distributed to the parents of the 37 students but only 16 were returned. Finally, questionnaires were administered to 14 students attending one of the two major private colleges in Cyprus. Even though the number of the subjects is small, it is nevertheless representative of the group under study. Unfortunately, there is insufficient statistical information (such as real numbers, year of repatriation and country of origin) on repatriated Cypriots and consequently on repatriated students. Therefore, due to the lack of available data by the government, the participants in the study were students attending English medium schools and colleges at the time.

The subjects were asked to respond to 16 questions pertaining to their intentions for further education, their opinion on the quality of education in various institutions, factors that would restrict their decision to attend certain institutions, the possibilities of attending various tertiary level institutions in Cyprus and abroad and their opinion on whether educational opportunities are equally available to them as compared to other Cypriot students. The discussion of the issues was based on the responses to ten of the 16 questions. The remaining six questions were of biographical nature.

Results

Previous research (Pavlou *et al.*, 1999) has shown that repatriated students face problems with regard to their education at both primary and secondary level. The major problem, however, pertains to the fact that because of their limited proficiency in Greek, repatriated students cannot attend public schools. Therefore, they have no choice but to attend institutions where the medium of instruction is English, which are often very costly. In view of this, the possibility of whether a similar situation exists at the tertiary level was examined. Therefore, the opinion of both secondary and tertiary students as well as the opinion of secondary students' parents was obtained.

Students in secondary education

The majority of the students stated their intention to attend a college or a university after graduation. Very few students said that they have no intention to do so. Table 1 shows the students' preferences with regard to tertiary level institutions. More precisely, the majority of those who intend to pursue tertiary education are going to study at a university in an English-speaking country, ten out of them will study in the country they lived before coming to Cyprus whereas very few will attend a college in Cyprus where the medium of instruction is English.

TABLE 1: Students' intentions to pursue tertiary education

University of Cyprus	
College in Cyprus – English medium	3 (8.8%)
University in Greece –English medium	
University in Greece – Greek medium	
University in an English speaking country	28 (82.3%)
University in country of origin	10 (29%)

It is apparent that the overwhelming majority of the subjects intend to study in a university in an English speaking country. The second most preferred choice is attending a university in their country of origin. Knowing that the majority of repatriated students come from the U.K., Australia, South Africa, Canada and the USA and given the fact that English is their dominant language, (see Table 4) it is not surprising that these students opt to study in an institution where the medium of instruction is English. Even when for any reason the subjects choose to stay in Cyprus, they still prefer an institution where the medium of instruction is English.

These choices are probably the result of various considerations on the part of the students. Such considerations could be the quality of education in a given institution, the cost of attending such institutions, the affiliation to a certain country, the language of instruction at this institution (in this case English) and the feeling of being accepted at a place.

Table 2 shows the students' opinion of the quality of education in various institutions.

TABLE 2: Students' opinion on the quality of education

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
University of Cyprus	6 (16)	19 (51)	9 (24.3)	3 (8.1)
Colleges in Cyprus	1 (2.7)	16 (43)	18 (48.6)	2 (8.1)
Univ. in Greece (Greek medium)	5 (13.5)	21 (56.7)	10 (27)	1 (2.7)
Univ. in Greece (English medium)	3 (8)	11 (29.77)	20 (54)	3 (8.1)
Univ. in English-speaking countries	31 (83)	6 (16.7)		
Univ. in countries of origin	24 (64.8)	5 (13.5)	4 (10.8)	4 (8.1)

Education offered by universities in English speaking countries and in the subjects' countries of origin seems to be highly appreciated by the subjects. The majority of the subjects rated education in English speaking countries as *very good* and six as *good*. Quite a few rated education in their country of origin as *very good*, and five as *good*. In addition, the subjects' opinion of the quality of education at the University of Cyprus (henceforth UCY) is rather positive. Few consider it to be *very good* and slightly more than half as *good*. The subjects rate the quality of education offered at colleges in Cyprus as *satisfactory* to *good* but not as *good* as at the university of Cyprus. Approximately half of the subjects consider it to be *good* or *satisfactory*. With regard to education offered in universities in Greece the following picture emerges: education in institutions where the medium of instruction is Greek (henceforth GMIs) is considered quite good. English medium institutions (henceforth EMIs) in Greece are considered in general quite satisfactory.

Given that the subjects regard the quality of education at the UCY to be rather good (see Table 2) and the cost of studying at the UCY is minimal, it is surprising that nobody intends to study there (see Table 1). These facts point to the possibility that the subjects' limited command of the Greek language may be a major deterrent when it comes to studying at the UCY. Therefore, repatriated students have no choice but to attend an English speaking institution either in Cyprus or abroad. This conclusion is reinforced by students' comments as can be seen in the following examples.

'If exams were offered for repatriated students, I'd be able to get in [the University of Cyprus]'.

‘They should offer us different exams [for the UCY] and lessons’.

‘Afternoon classes of Greek and/or foundation courses should be offered’.

The students’ assessment of their language skills in both Greek and English was also examined. Tables 3 and 4 show that the subjects consider themselves to be much more competent in English than in Greek in all four skills. Also, twenty-six of the subjects state that their limited knowledge of Greek would prevent them from studying in a university where the medium of instruction is Greek. Eleven out of the thirty-seven students state that their knowledge of Greek would not prevent them from studying at a university where the medium of instruction is Greek. This provides support to the authors’ assumption that language plays a major role in their decision to choose an institution where the medium of instruction is English rather than Greek.

TABLE 3: Students’ self-assessment of their language skills in Greek

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor
Reading	9 (24.3)	9 (24.3)	16 (43.2)	3 (8.1)
Writing	3 (8.1)	4 (10.8)	20 (54)	10 (27)
Speaking	11 (29.7)	12 (32.4)	12 (32.4)	2 (5.4)
Listening	19 (51.3)	12 (32.4)	5 (13.5)	1 (2.7)

TABLE 4: Students’ self-assessment of their language skills in English

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor
Reading	27 (72.9)	8 (21.6)	2 (5.4)	
Writing	22 (59.4)	11 (29.7)	4 (10.8)	
Speaking	32 (86.4)	4 (10.8)	1 (2.7)	
Listening	34(91.8)	3(8.1)		

There are many factors that can prevent a student from studying at an institution of their choice. Such factors include academic qualifications, the financial situation, language competence and personal circumstances of the prospective student. With this in mind students were asked to state their choice of attending a tertiary institution assuming they were not restricted by grade-related, financial, linguistic and personal considerations. The results are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5: Students' intentions in the absence of restrictions

University of Cyprus	4 (10.8)
College in Cyprus – English medium	2 (5.4)
University in Greece –English medium	
University in Greece – Greek medium	1 (2.7)
University in an English speaking country	32 (86.4)
University in country of origin	6 (16.2)

The students could select more than one of these four factors. The majority of the students stated that they would like to study in a university in an English-speaking country, whereas very few opted to study in the country they lived before coming to Cyprus or at the University of Cyprus.

By comparing Table 5 and Table 1 it can be established whether the subjects' choices of tertiary institutions correspond to their actual wishes when there are no restrictions as the ones stated above. Generally speaking, their choices appear to be congruent in both cases, i.e. the subjects appear to pursue studies in tertiary education at an institution regardless of whether they were restricted by any factors. There are, however, a few discrepancies we would like to comment on. When asked where they *intend* to study, none of the subjects chose the UCY, whereas when asked where they *would like* to study if they were not restricted by any factors, four of them chose the UCY.

What factors prevent these subjects from attending the institution of their preference? Since education at the UCY is free and education abroad could be quite costly, financial considerations cannot be a factor. Therefore, the other possible determining factors are grades, language and the parents' impact on their children's decision with regard to their choice of institution. It is difficult to speculate much on the factor 'parents' since this probably varies in each individual case. Therefore, the two possible factors that could explain this situation are

grades and language. The factor ‘grades’ affects all students (repatriated or not) when deciding to pursue tertiary level education. However, the language factor affects repatriated students exclusively.

Moreover, the students were asked to rank the factors that would prevent them from studying at a university of their choice. Table 6 shows their responses.

TABLE 6: Factors according to importance

	1st most important factor	2nd most important factor	3rd most important factor	4th most important factor
Grades	12 (10.8)	5 (13.5)	5 (13.5)	
Parents	1 (2.7)	5 (13.5)	4 (10.8)	2 (5.4)
Financial	17 (45.5)	3 (8.1)	1 (2.7)	
Language		1 (2.7)	2 (5.4)	9 (24.3)
Other	2 (5.4)			

The most frequently cited factors that would prevent the subjects from studying at a university of their choice were financial constraints and grades. Language was never cited as the first most important factor. Only one subject ranked it as the second most important factor, two as the third most important factor and nine as the fourth most important factor. It seems that language is not a major obstacle to their future educational plans and this is not surprising since the majority of the subjects (Table 1) intend to study in an English speaking country. The subjects rank financial constraints as the major obstacle to their future plans. Theoretically, this should not have been a consideration since they have the option of studying at the UCY without having to pay tuition. However, this seems to be no option for most of them. At the same time the subjects consider the quality of education at the UCY to be high. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that language is a major obstacle in their educational plans since this excludes them from studying at an admittedly reputable and inexpensive institution such as the University of Cyprus.

The subjects were asked explicitly to state whether they feel ‘disadvantaged’, in any way, as far as their university education prospects are concerned. The majority of the students stated that they do not feel disadvantaged and very few of them feel that they are disadvantaged in that respect. On the contrary, with

regard to their future educational plans the students seem to consider themselves to be in an advantageous position over Cypriots who have lived all their life in Cyprus. The major advantage they mention is the fact that they are bilingual with English being their dominant language. Their excellent knowledge of English will make it easier for them to be admitted at a college or university abroad. Quite a few subjects adopt this position. Another advantage that students mention is their ability to easily adapt to various environments such as that of Cyprus and that of the host country. This is mostly due to their exposure to and wider understanding of other cultures.

Another issue that was investigated was the repatriated students' perception of the state's obligations towards them. It is interesting to note what repatriated students thought the state should do in order to eliminate the inequality between repatriated students and local students in the case that repatriated students considered themselves to be disadvantaged. As the students themselves state:

'We feel disadvantaged because we cannot get into Greek secondary institutions even though we would prefer...'

'Opportunities should be equal for all Cypriots'

Even though, in general, they do not think that they are disadvantaged, the majority of repatriated students believe that they should be offered financial or other help regarding their university/college education. Repatriated students feel 'there should be more information, more counsellors to help with decisions regarding further education' and 'more insight into actual university/college life in Cyprus so that we can decide whether or not to apply'.

Parents

Since personal considerations (such as parents' opinion) can influence the repatriated students' choice of tertiary level institution, it was deemed crucial to establish the view of the repatriated students' parents on the issue.

The overwhelming majority of the parents of repatriated students state that they intend to send their child to a college or university after graduation. Quite a few parents intend to enrol their children at a university in an English-speaking country while less than half will send their children for further studies to the country they lived before coming to Cyprus. Finally, three of them intend to send their children to a college in Cyprus where the medium of instruction is English.

It was also important to find out where the parents would like their children to study if the latter were not restricted by grades, money and language. One in three parents stated that they would like their children to study in a university in an English-speaking country, and an equal number in the country they lived before coming to Cyprus, three of them in a college in Cyprus where the medium of instruction is English.

In addition, the factors that would prevent parents from sending their child to the institution of his/her choice were identified. We suggested three possible factors: grades, financial constraints and language while the parents were also to free to supply additional factors. The parents were also asked to rank these factors in order of importance. The results of the ranking are presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7: Factors according to importance

	1st most important factor	2nd most important factor	3rd most important factor	4th most important factor
Grades	2 (12.5)	4 (25)	2 (12.5)	
Financial	8 (50)	2 (12.5)	4 (10.8)	2 (5.4)
Language	1 (6.25)		1 (6.25)	
Other			1 (6.25)	

The most important factor that would prevent parents from sending their children to a tertiary level institution is financial constraints. Half of the parents state that this is the first most important factor. Grades seem to be the second most important factor. Two parents state that grades are the first most important factor and four rank grades as the second most important factor. Finally, language comes third in order of importance.

‘Language’ as a determining factor in the parents’ choice of tertiary education was further investigated. The majority of the parents believe that their child’s knowledge of Greek *would* prevent him/her from studying at a university where the language of instruction is Greek. One in four do not consider that their child’s limited knowledge would hinder them from attending a Greek-medium university.

Another issue that concerned us was whether the parents felt that their child is in any way advantaged or disadvantaged compared to other Cypriot students as far as his/her university education prospects are concerned. Slightly more than half of the parents do not feel that their child is in any way disadvantaged and

slightly less than half feel that their children are in fact disadvantaged with one parent stating explicitly that the child's Greek is 'not good enough for her to attend a university where the medium of instruction is Greek'. Another parent states that 'the child is limited only to English-speaking universities' and finally a third parent states that the child 'cannot attend a Greek university' most probably due to the language factor. Finally, a parent points to the fact that 'Cypriots have more advantages regarding further education than repatriates'.

Parents were also asked to indicate the advantages that their children have over Cypriots who have lived all their lives in Cyprus as far as their future educational plans are concerned. The majority mentioned the fact that their child's command of English is better. Two of them consider the fact that their child had had at some point in the past the opportunity to experience various cultures and different lifestyles as another advantage. It was mentioned that since repatriated children were born in another country, they enjoy the same rights as the citizens of those countries. One of the most important benefits that these children have is that they can attend an institution of tertiary education with reduced or no tuition fees.

Table 8 shows the parents' opinion on the quality of education in various institutions.

TABLE 8: *Opinion on the quality of education*

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
University of Cyprus	3 (18.7)	8 (50)	3 (18.7)	
Colleges in Cyprus	1 (6.25)	10 (62.5)	3 (18.7)	
Univ. in Greece (Greek med.)	9 (56.25)	1 (6.25)	2 (12.5)	3 (18.7)
Univ. in Greece (Engl. med)	1 (6.25)	8 (50)	4 (25)	1 (6.25)
Univ. in Eng. Speaking countries	15 (93.7)	1 (6.25)		
Univ. in countries of origin	7 (43.7)	3 (18.7)	3 (18.7)	2 (12.5)

Education offered by universities in English speaking countries and in the subjects' countries of origin seems to be highly appreciated by the subjects. The overwhelming majority of the parents rated education in English speaking countries as *very good* and one as *good*. Almost half of the subjects rated education in their country of origin as *very good*, three as *good*, three as *satisfactory* and two

as poor. In general, the subjects' opinion of the quality of education at the University of Cyprus is rather positive.

With regard to education offered in universities in Greece, education in GMIs is considered very good and EMIs in Greece are considered in general good.

Finally, the parents were asked to state whether they thought that their child should be offered any help regarding his/her college education. Quite a few parents think that since their child is a member of a repatriated family s/he should be offered help regarding their university/college education. Parents make a distinction between concrete financial help and provision of psychological support and guidance. In terms of financial aid they believe that their children should be offered grants and scholarships. Moreover, repatriated students' studies should be subsidized since the students' limited competence in Greek forces them to attend private schools which are often quite expensive. Besides financial aid, the parents suggest that their children are provided with ample and useful information about the colleges and universities they are considering attending. This form of counselling would enable them to make a more solid decision. In addition, they offer a very concrete suggestion with regard to the UCY. Since the current university entrance exams are held in Greek and therefore exclude repatriated students from taking them, the parents suggest that these exams should be given in English as well. One in four parents do not think that their children need any kind of help.

We were also interested to see how parents feel other Cypriots regard their children. Almost half of the parents think that their child receives the same treatment as other Cypriots while very few parents believe that since members of repatriated families are partly foreigners, and naturally are in some ways different from other Cypriots, they are treated differently.

Another comment was that 'some Cypriots look down on repatriated children because of fear of the unknown', something the parents consider as a form of racial discrimination either experienced by themselves or by other repatriates. According to one parent, 'it [discrimination] occurs everywhere; in schools, colleges even on the streets'. The subject who made this comment identifies jealousy as a factor contributing to this kind of behaviour. Another parent recognizes that Cypriots are trying to help but at the same time she pessimistically states 'that these children will always be outsiders'. According to one parent 'Cypriots are friendly towards them but not many have attempted to become good friends'.

Students in tertiary education

Another aim of the study was to establish whether the subjects were attending the tertiary institution of their choice and if not what were the factors that prevented them from doing so with special reference to linguistic problems. The

subjects were asked to evaluate the standard of education in various institutions in Cyprus and abroad and what had been the possibilities of studying there upon graduation from high school. Finally, the subjects stated their opinion on whether they should receive any help with regard to their university or college education.

All subjects were enrolled at a college in Cyprus where the medium of instruction was English. It was deemed useful to establish whether this institution constituted the subjects' strongest preference. A small number of subjects stated that attending a college in Cyprus was their preferred choice. They explained that they made this choice because of the fact that their Greek was not good enough to study in a GMI. Another factor was that they wanted to study in such an institution so that they can study, work and be with their families in Cyprus. Finally, attending an English medium college in Cyprus was the only feasible solution because of unstable circumstances in some of the subjects' countries of origin (e.g. South Africa, Zimbabwe).

Slightly more than half of the subjects stated that their first choice was to attend a university in an English speaking country because of the fact that they felt more competent in English than in Greek and because they believed that they would receive a better quality of education there, something that would secure them greater career opportunities. Another issue that concerned them was the realization that some degrees offered by Cypriot colleges were not accredited by the Cypriot authorities.

The fact that the subjects showed a strong preference towards institutions in English speaking countries can be further explained by their evaluation of the standard of education offered in various institutions.

The responses of the subjects show that the overwhelming majority consider education in English speaking countries to be *very good*. The fact that universities in English speaking countries are quite reputable in Cyprus and the fact that repatriated students' dominant language is English could possibly explain the high rating these institutions received by the subjects.

As it can be seen in Table 9 EMIs in Cyprus also received high ratings possibly because of the fact that the subjects are already students in such institutions and have had the opportunity to experience and evaluate the level of education in these schools. It is surprising that although the subjects are excluded from Greek universities due to their limited competence in Greek, they still have quite a high opinion of such institutions. Another interesting result is that in a number of cases where the students had no opinion on the standard of education in certain institutions, they chose not to rate the institution in question or declared that they had no opinion. The subjects mostly seemed reluctant to evaluate the institutions in the cases of the UCY and Greek speaking universities. In the seven cases that the students evaluated the UCY and the nine cases that the subjects evaluated

TABLE 9: *Opinion on the quality of education*

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
University of Cyprus	4 (28)	2 (14.2)	1 (7.1)	
Colleges in Cyprus	2 (14.2)	11 (71)	1 (7.1)	
Univ. in Greece (Greek med.)	8 (57.1)	1 (7.1)		
Univ. in Greece (Engl. med)	2 (14.2)	6 (42.8)	3 (21.4)	
Univ. in Engl. speaking countries	13 (92.8)			
Univ. in countries of origin	7 (50)	2 (14.2)	3 (21.4)	

Greek universities, the ratings were quite positive. The subjects regard the education in these institutions to be of high standard despite the fact that they cannot attend these schools.

Having established that for some subjects the institution they currently attend does not represent their first choice, the likelihood of attending various tertiary level institutions, in Cyprus and abroad, upon graduation from high school was determined. The students were presented with a list of schools and they were asked to state how likely it was to attend these schools. The results are shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10: *Likelihood of attending tertiary education*

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
University of Cyprus		1 (7.1)		
Colleges in Cyprus (Engl. med)	11 (78.5)	2 (14.2)	1 (7.1)	
Univ. in Greece (Engl. med.)	2 (14.2)	1 (7.1)	2 (14.2)	9 (64.2)
Univ. in Greece (Greek med)				14 (100)
Univ. in Engl. speaking country	5 (35.7)	4 (28.5)	3 (21.4)	2 (14.2)
Univ. in country of origin	3 (21.4)	7 (50)		4 (28.5)

It is evident that the overwhelming majority of the subjects consider it impossible to attend the University of Cyprus. In addition, all subjects indicated that there was no possibility to attend any other Greek speaking university in Greece.

The possibility of attending a college or university in Greece where the medium of instruction is English is also quite low. More than half of the subjects deemed this impossible. It seems that the subjects see greater possibilities of studying in universities in English speaking countries and in universities in their countries of origin (the majority of them being English speaking).

One in three of the subjects believed that there was *great possibility* to study in a university in an English speaking country, four thought it was *fairly possible* while three considered it *impossible*.

With regard to attending universities in their countries of origin, half thought that there was *fair possibility* of doing so.

The subjects were asked to rank the factors that prevented them from studying at the institution of their choice. Their responses are displayed in Table 11.

TABLE 11: Factors according to importance

	1st most important factor	2nd most important factor	3rd most important factor	4th most important factor
Financial	3 (21.4)	2 (14.2)		2 (14.2)
Grades	1 (7.1)	1 (7.1)	3 (21.4)	
Parents	3 (21.4)	1 (7.1)	1 (7.1)	1 (7.1)
Language	1 (7.1)	2 (14.2)	1 (7.1)	1 (7.1)
Other*	4 (28.5)			

* *safety(2), location(1), different entrance requirements(1).*

According to the subjects, financial constraints and parents were equally ranked i.e. three subjects identified these two factors as the first most important factor that prevented them from attending the institution they preferred. Even though these two factors (financial constraints, parents) were equally cited as the first most important factor, financial constraints are the most crucial factor, overall, in their choice of tertiary level institution. Financial constraints was

identified as the first most important factor three times, twice as the second most important factor and twice as the fourth most important factor.

The factor 'parents' is the second most important factor overall. It was identified three times as the most important factor, once as the second most important factor, once as the third and once as the fourth most important factor.

The factors 'grades' and 'language' are equally ranked as the third most crucial factors overall but with different frequency of assigned importance. Grades were ranked once as the most important factor, once as the second most important factor and three times as the third. On the other hand 'language' was ranked once as the most important factor, twice as the second most important factor, once as the third and once as the fourth most important factor. Safety also seems to be an important factor. The students who indicated this factor commented on the high crime rate in the countries they grew up in namely South Africa and Zambia. The limited safety that exists in their countries of origin often deters them from studying in these countries.

Factors such as grades and financial constraints, which were mentioned above, could be of concern to any individual who would like to pursue tertiary education. However, in the case of repatriated students the language factor was identified as a significant constraint that would play a decisive role in their plans. According to the subjects' self-assessment of their language skills in Greek and English, it is obvious their skills in English are far better than their skills in Greek.

As mentioned earlier, repatriated students attend EMI private schools. Consequently, repatriated students are excluded from state institutions of tertiary education (where the language of instruction is Greek) since private English schools do not prepare them for the entrance exams, which are in Greek. Moreover, the students' limited Greek would make it extremely difficult for them to attend classes taught in this language. A subject commented that 'It is difficult to get into the University of Cyprus because I do not know Greek well enough' and another one that 'I had limited choices because of my Greek. I do not know Greek well enough.'

However, repatriated students are not excluded from studying at the UCY since special provisions for admitting repatriated students exist. Repatriated students who wish to be admitted to the UCY are required to have 3 GCE A Levels with grade 'A', an aim which is difficult to attain. As one subject indicates 'when I graduated from high school, the UCY required 3 A levels with grade 'A'. Abroad, a grade C' and above is required'.

A consequence of these quite demanding admission requirements coupled with the students' limited competence in Greek (especially at the academic level) is that repatriated students are forced to study abroad, mostly in English speaking countries, a fact which poses substantial financial burden on their families. One of the subjects stated that 'local students have an advantage of not having financial constraints and getting a degree without going out of Cyprus'. The financial aspect

is also broached in the following comment: 'Yes [we have limited choices] because of the language; and we pay; they [local Cypriot students] don't'.

Overall, the students stated they felt they had limited choices compared to other Cypriot students as far as their university prospects were concerned. Six students stated that they did have limited choices whereas seven thought that this was not the case. Those who thought that they had limited choices provided justification for their opinion some of which is presented here.

'Cypriot students have opportunities to study in local and Greek universities as well as the Higher Technological Institute building upon material they learned in government school whereas private schools only focus on GCEs for the UK'.

From the students' comments a feeling of discontent is evident since they feel that the current system is not completely fair towards them. As they characteristically state 'we are regarded as strangers and outsiders' or 'we are regarded as foreigners with an attitude when we are just different culturally'. Therefore, the students had a lot of suggestions when asked whether they felt they should be offered any help regarding their university/college education. The subjects stated that they should receive financial help from the state since, as one of them claimed, 'it is difficult to start your life over in another country'. This may imply that these students are forced to go abroad for their studies or since repatriation is a very costly ordeal (both psychologically and financially) the state should help these families by providing financial support for the children's education. Another statement that clearly alludes to the unfairness of the current system is that 'Cypriots are not excluded by English Speaking Institutions because of their English but repatriated students are excluded from Greek Universities because of their limited Greek' which is a form of discrimination. A subject suggested that 'examinations taken to enrol in the university should also be given in English' as a measure to counteract the restrictive admission requirements. Finally, repatriated students feel they should be given the basic guidance with regard to their education like any other Cypriot student. As they point out 'repatriated students should be given basic guidelines about higher education'.

Conclusion

It is evident that tertiary education is highly valued in the Cypriot society and that the prospects for pursuing tertiary education are abundant. This is witnessed in the great number of students studying both in Cyprus and abroad. The current study indicates, however, that, to a certain degree, repatriated students do not

have equal access to opportunities for tertiary education when compared to other Cypriot students especially with regard to the University of Cyprus and state universities in Greece. This is the case despite the fact that the UCY is not only the most reputable institution of tertiary education on the island but also the least costly. Moreover, Greek universities are of high standard and do not charge tuition fees.

The study has revealed certain factors that account for the fact that repatriated students do not have equal access to certain institutions of tertiary education. Academic qualifications, financial constraints, personal circumstances and limited competence in the Greek language are such factors. The first three considerations apply to both repatriated and non-repatriated students. However, limited competence in Greek is a factor that affects repatriated students only since it prevents them from taking the national exams for the UCY and the state universities in Greece.

The limited opportunities for tertiary education presented to repatriated students have led to a feeling of discontent among them since they feel that the current educational system does not adequately address their needs. This further exacerbates the overall feeling of not being accepted in the Cypriot society and not having received any substantial help from the government.

It is hoped that this study will draw the attention of the authorities to the special needs of this group. The state should, in turn, consider ways of providing equal educational opportunities to these students. More specifically, the state should inform repatriated students and their families on educational issues before and after their repatriation. Such timely guidance may influence the decision of Cypriot immigrants' to return home since being aware of the problems they may face will allow them to prepare better while still in the host country. Such preparation could include the improvement of their skills in Greek and the choice of primary or secondary school.

Upon repatriation the state should subsidize the education of repatriated students in the same way other minority groups in Cyprus are assisted in this domain. Also, the Ministry of Education and Culture should either administer university entrance exams in the language in which repatriated students are more competent (in this case English) or offer preparatory courses in Greek for the universities in Cyprus and Greece that would be specially designed for these students. Such courses would facilitate their admission in the UCY and state universities in Greece.

Cyprus is a country which has witnessed great waves of repatriation in the last decades. Repatriation has often been problematic for those Cypriots who decide to return to their homeland. Many of these problems could have been eliminated or minimized provided that there was more communication and information

between Cypriot immigrants and the state regarding issues of repatriation. It is hoped that other countries with repatriated populations may also benefit from the situation in Cyprus and the findings of this study.

Pavlos Pavlou teaches in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Cyprus, and can be reached at ppavlou@ucy.ac.cy

Niki Christodoulou is senior lecturer at Intercollege, Nicosia, Cyprus.

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