

International tourists' motivations to choose homestay: Do their socio-demographics have any influence?

Elizabeth Agyeiwaah, Oheneba Akyeampong and Edem K Amenumey

University of Cape Coast, Ghana

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Abstract

The relationship between tourist socio-demographics and homestay use has received scant attention from researchers. Insights gained from this study will guide market segmentation and targeting by tourism planners. The main objective of this research was to examine the influence of socio-demographics on tourists' motivations for choosing homestay in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana. Data were collected from 151 international tourists in the Kumasi Metropolis who lived in homestay facilities. Results of *t*-test and one-way analysis of variance suggest that socio-demographics are influential factors on international tourists' motivations for choosing homestay. It is concluded that socio-demographics influence tourist motivations for choosing homestay.

Keywords

socio-demographic, homestay, motivation, international tourists, Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana

Introduction

Tourism attractions in Ghana have evolved from the country's natural beaches and traditional festivals in the pre-independence era (before 1957) to a myriad of attractions including national parks and accommodation facilities in the Laissez-faire era (1985 to date). The former epoch is known to be the turning point in Ghana's tourism history; as the era saw massive diversification including the privatisation of most state owned hotels, and the declaration of tourism as a 'priority sector' in Ghana. These exercises were made possible by the mid-1980s International Monetary Fund and World Bank's prescribed Economic Recovery and Structural Adjustment Programmes which had among its other objectives the liberalisation of Ghana's economy (Akyeampong, 2007).

The role of tourism in Ghana's economy cannot be overemphasised as the sector contributes 6.7% to the country's gross domestic product. Statistical report from the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) indicates

that in 2009 total international tourist arrivals were 802,779 with a corresponding receipt of US\$1615.2. These figures increased in 2010 to 931,224 total international tourist arrivals with a corresponding receipt of US\$1875.0. Specifically, the country attracts different international tourists from Canada, Germany, USA, UK, France and Netherlands, among others. However, records from the GTA indicate that Ghana's international tourism market is dominated by tourists from the USA and UK. For instance, in 2007, there were 76,900 tourists from the USA and 50,400 tourists from the UK. This number increased to 86,800 and 58,100 tourists, respectively, in 2008 with an average expenditure of US\$2010 in 2008 (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2010).

Corresponding author:

Elizabeth Agyeiwaah, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
Email: agyeiwaahelizabeth@yahoo.com

Ghana's attractiveness to the international market is as a result of its rich and authentic tourism forms/types including homestay tourism, volunteer tourism, rural tourism, heritage tourism, eco-tourism, agro-tourism, cultural tourism and business/conference tourism. Homestay tourism is one of the emerging but prominent forms of tourism in Ghana today due to the country's quest to promote local participation in tourism which has been made possible by the global quest to learn new cultures from different parts of the world to enhance global understanding and peace. As tourism beacon in West Africa, Ghana's homestay has attracted numerous tourists from different parts of the world. However, little empirical studies have been done to examine how consumers' socio-demographics influence their motivations for choosing homestay in Ghana. The thrust of this paper is to examine the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on the motivations for choosing homestay. Thus, the study seeks to examine the category of sex, age, education and income that patronises this type of accommodation. Moreover, it explores the extent to which these socio-demographic factors affect the motivations for choosing homestay. A thorough knowledge of demographic influence on the motivations for choosing homestay is relevant for market segmentation and targeting. Accordingly, the division of heterogeneous segments into homogeneous ones would be made possible through the knowledge of tourists' socio-demography (Kotler et al., 2010; Mill and Morrison, 1992) which, in the long run, will ensure effective marketing and promotion of homestay as part of Ghana's cultural and rural tourism. For instance, the demands of female clientele could be distinguished from males. Furthermore, an in-depth understanding of demographic segmentation will also inform homestay operators and intermediaries the appropriate media for advertising (Middleton, 2001). This is imperative to stay ahead of competition and build a brand image. Dubbed the 'culturally hearth' of Ghana, the Kumasi Metropolis was chosen as the study area.

In Ghana, the term homestay is used interchangeably with term home-lodge. However, there exists some distinction between the two terms. Whereas homestay refers to the phenomenon of guest residing with Ghanaian host families and learning about their culture, home-lodge refers to the facility/building. According to the New Harmonised Standards for Accommodation and Catering Establishments in Ghana by the GTA, homestay falls under 'Category C' of accommodation enterprises after Hotels (Category A) and guest houses (Category B). The management regulations under the above-named document require that homestay facilities provide basic services including bed, clean mattress, mosquito

nets, bath rooms, pillow, breakfast and security. Hence, the services and facilities offered by homestay are simpler than hotels. The regulations also require that homestay facilities are family units. The essence of family units is to enhance social and cultural interaction and create a sense of home. However, single host is accepted if only the operator is not below 25 years and retains an independent and solvent existence. Like other accommodation establishments, the GTA requires interested operators to pay a registration/license fee of 30 Ghana cedis (US\$15) which guarantees them a certificate of operation and publication in their annual list of accommodation establishments. Moreover, all registered homestay facilities are regularly inspected for improved service delivery (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2005).

More importantly, the GTA is not the only intermediary of homestay in Ghana as some NGOs and travel institutions have homestay facilities running under their regulations. It is worth mentioning that the growth of these NGOs have been sped by increased volunteerism and study abroad programmes in Ghana. During these adventures, the NGO intermediaries as part of the travel package arrange for homestay accommodation to enhance tourists' experience. Hence, the local NGOs have homestay programmes throughout the year. The advantage of working with NGOs is that there is no need for publicity as operators are provided with international guests by the intermediary throughout the year. That is, whereas licensed homestay facilities have to be known to the public for increased patronage, those operating with NGOs do not need public awareness. The disadvantage of the NGO-operated homes is that unlike their fellow licensed operators who are at liberty to decide the prices of their services, homestay operators intermediated by NGOs have their prices determined by the NGOs, making the NGOs very 'powerful' in homestay arrangement in Ghana akin to the case of Malaysia as reported by Liu (2006).

The concept of homestay: Characteristics and motivations of users

The recent demand of homestay accommodation has been tremendous as evident in the increased empirical studies on the phenomenon (McIntosh and Siggs, 2005). Although the concept of homestay is not new, it is perceived as a type of tourist accommodation which allows guests to stay in local homes at a destination (Gu and Wong, 2006). Thus, it involves guests paying directly or indirectly to stay with host families (Lynch, 2003). For Welsh (2001: 4), homestay refers to an accommodation option which includes full board and lodging for students studying in a foreign country

through which they may be exposed to the culture, language and social structures of that country.

A substantial body of literature has emerged recently on homestay. They include those that examined homestay tourism from the perspective of host families only (Amin et al., 2013; Brown and Lin, 2010; Engel, 2011; Gu and Wong, 2006; McIntosh et al., 2010; Osman et al., 2008; Richardson, 2004; Sweeney, 2008; Yusnita et al., 2012) and those from the perspective of guests only (Butcher and McGrath, 2004; Gutel, 2005; Hamzah, 2010; Hsu and Lin, 2011; Juveland, 2011; Musa et al., 2010; Seubsamarn, 2009). Some authors have also researched on both host families and guests (Campbell and Xu, 2004; Kayat, 2010; Kerdpermpoon, 2003; McIntosh and Siggs, 2005; Wang, 2007), whereas others studied both host families and coordinators of homestay (Bruederle, 2010; Liu, 2006).

However, among the numerous studies on homestay, very few have examined the influence of socio-demographics on stakeholders' involvement in homestay. In a study on residents' perception of tourism impacts in Dachangshan Dao (China), Gu and Wong (2006) used both factor and cluster analyses to examine the relationship between tourism's impacts and local respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. The study revealed that youngest local homestay operators who had a high educational level were more concerned with the general improvement in quality of life whereas the middle-aged homestay operators without education pay attention to economic benefits of tourism. Finally, the senior homestay operators had strong feelings about the deterioration of the physical environment.

However, the findings in the above study were limited to host families and did not extend to the guests of homestay. The present study is also concerned with homestay and socio-demographics but differs from former research as it focuses on one special kind of stakeholder – international tourists. Since international tourists differ in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics (age, sex, education, income, origin, etc.), their motivations are likely to be different. The current study seeks to fill this research gap by examining the influence of socio-demographics on the motivations for choosing homestay by international tourists.

Recent studies on homestay have focused on homestay experiences of both host and guests (Akbar et al., 2002; Campbell and Xu, 2004; Gu and Wong, 2006; Kadijk and Bourbon, 2010; Liu, 2006; McIntosh et al., 2010) with particular attention on qualitative experiences of homestay guests (Hamzah, 2010; McIntosh and Siggs, 2005; Musa et al., 2010). In an attempt to evaluate the QUT Homestay Program in

Australia, Akbar et al. (2002: 1) report that homestay as a support service emerged in response to the accommodation needs of growing numbers of students studying in Australian educational institutions. Hence, the characteristics of users are such that they are mostly international students studying in Australian institutions including both minors (<18 year old) and adults. A similar homestay study by Campbell and Xu (2004) in New Zealand which had Chinese students as the main target found that respondents' age ranged from 19 to 30 years. Moreover, of the 19 males and 21 females who participated in the study, about 30 students were studying at tertiary institutions, 15 of whom were graduate students. It could, therefore, be surmised from the previous studies that users of homestay are highly educated international students.

In a qualitative study of the experiential nature of boutique accommodation with 19 hosts and 30 guests in New Zealand, McIntosh and Siggs (2005) found five key dimensions of the boutique accommodation experience as described by both hosts and guests, namely, unique character, personalised, homely, quality and value added. More importantly, the authors highlighted some demographic features of respondents who participated in the in-depth interviews. According to the authors (p. 76), the 30 guests interviewed were predominantly international tourists aged between 50 and 64 years, and most had, at minimum, a tertiary qualification. Another study by Musa et al. (2010) also identified three broad phases of tourists homestay experiences, namely, anticipatory, experiential and reflection phases based on tourist experiential model (Craig-Smith and French, 1994) and the multi-phases of tourism experience (Hammit, 1980). The anticipatory stage refers to tourists' experiences prior to the trip. The experiential dimension refers to the actual experience during the homestay programme, and the final reflection phase has to do with tourist memory of the past homestay experiences. A diary method was adopted by the authors in identifying the three broad experiences. Despite the usefulness of this method in providing rich narrative experiences among students of homestay holiday (p. 29), its intrusive nature hampers respondents' participation. However, relevant to the present study is the brief highlights on respondents' demographics. According to Musa et al. (2010), females (88.2%) dominated the homestay guests. The dominance of females, perhaps, relates to the fact that they perceive the home environment as a haven from the alienating world (Darke, 1996). Hence, homestay offers them 'a home away from home' (McIntosh et al., 2010). Moreover, majority (94.1%) of the respondents were aged 21–23 years and were mostly Chinese (58.8%).

Aside the different results of the above studies in terms of socio-demographics which, perhaps, relate to the different settings and tourist groups, the above studies do not yield themselves to generalisation and comparison due to their qualitative nature. As confirmed by McIntosh and Siggs (2005: 76) in their study in New Zealand, comparison of the personal characteristics of the study respondents with those in other types of specialist accommodation in New Zealand was not possible due to paucity of data on guests' profile in New Zealand coupled with the qualitative nature of the study. As such, quantitative research is called for to provide baseline data with which comparative analysis may be conducted. It is evident in the above review that the motivation and demographic characteristics have not, however, been the focus of previous homestay studies.

In her quest to explore the anthropological study of tourism in Lijiang through homestay by dissecting the concept of authenticity through three interrelated concepts of object, self and home, Wang (2007) found that one main motive for choosing homestay was to experience authentic local culture. Statistically, the author found that about 45% of the respondents chose homestay because of 'Naxi culture/lifestyle'. As Lynch and Tucker (2003) tersely write, one of the main motives for choosing specialised accommodation like homestay is to 'have a relationship with local people'. This socio-cultural motivation has been confirmed by Ibrahim and Razzaq (2010). Other motivations worth mentioning include lower prices, comfort and convenience in guest houses, architecture of Naxi homes and a sense of being at home (Wang, 2007). Moreover, environmental preservation is among the motivations for choosing homestay facilities (Ibrahim and Razzaq, 2010; Roberts and Hall, 2001).

Using the push and pull model by Dann (1977), Hsu and Lin (2011) identified nine key push and pull homestay motivational factors: activities arrangement, quality of services, scene attraction, social demands and facilities, prices, sanitation and comfort, specialty appearance, leisure and relaxation, and transportation. The authors believed that respondents are motivated by both internal (push) and external (pull) forces to stay in homestay facilities. According to the authors (p.198), the *Push factor* is when the travellers' physical demands, e.g. to relax, to escape, to get in touch with others, are the travellers' initial motivation and the pull factor *Pull* is when the outside marketing inspiration is caused by the B&B's products or owner's service and is caused by the travellers' recognised motivation. Based on the above explanation, six pull factors (quality of services, scene attraction, prices, sanitation and comfort, specialty appearance, and transportation) and three push factors (activities

arrangement, social demands and facilities, and leisure and relaxation) could be identified from Hsu and Lin's (2011) study.

However, one key flaw in both Wang (2007) and Hsu and Lin's (2011) studies is that the authors shed little light on demographic characteristics of respondents who participated in their studies. With the proliferation of homestay studies, in-depth demographic analysis is key to enhance comparison and, more so, position the homestay market for sustainability. In an attempt to fill this gap, the present study goes further by not just profiling homestay users but testing for the possibility of the influence of demographics on their motivations for choosing homestay facilities.

Methods

Ashanti Region is among the 10 regions in Ghana. The region's high standing in the tourism sector is based on its large stock of tourism resources which range from cultural resources to historical heritage. Kumasi which is the official capital of the region has a population of 2,035,064 people according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The Kumasi Metropolis is located in the transitional forest zone which spreads from latitudes 6.35°N to 6.40°N and longitudes 1.30°W to 1.35°W with an elevation range between 250 and 300 metres above sea level and an area of about 254 km². The average minimum temperature of the city is about 21.5°C and a maximum average temperature of 30.7°C. Moreover, the metropolis has an average humidity of about 84.16% at 0900 GMT and 60% at 1500 GMT. The moderate temperature and humidity and the double maxima rainfall regime (214.3 mm in June and 165.2 mm in September) have a direct effect on population growth and the environment as it has precipitated the influx of people from every part of the country and beyond its frontiers to the metropolis. This is as a result of the convenient climatic conditions. The major sectors of the economy fall under Trade/Commerce/Services which accounts for about 71%, Manufacturing/Industry which takes up of 24% and the Primary Production sector which takes only 5% (Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly, 2006).

Kumasi has been described as the 'cultural heart beat' of Ghana. Its investment and tourism attractiveness can be attributed to its being the country's most conspicuous nodal city as well as its enviable history and culture. The striking Ashanti culture is well demonstrated in their language, chieftaincy and festivals. Although the metropolis is dominated by the 'Asante' ethnic group who speak a local language known as 'twi', almost all the other ethnic groups in Ghana are represented. Ethnic and cultural diversity

abounds tremendously in the metropolis and they are closely knit together in a harmonious relationship. The diversity of culture implies that international tourists who visit the city get the chance to meet different ethnic groups.

The Kumasi Metropolis was chosen because of its popularity as a destination for international tourists and evidence of a high concentration of both registered and unregistered homestay facilities in the city. That is, some of the homestay establishments have been officially registered with the Kumasi office of the GTA, and this makes it easy to locate them.

The study was based on data collected in 2011. In order to reach the target group (international tourists), there was the need to locate the various homestay facilities within the metropolis. Two groups were very crucial in this identification. First was the GTA which is officially mandated to register homestay facilities, and second, private institutions (NGOs) which were coordinating activities within unlicensed homes within the metropolis. Interview with the GTA and the private institutions revealed that homestay in the metropolis was highly patronised by international tourists. Previous studies by Akyeampong (2007) have also attested to the fact that travelling for leisure domestically is not common among Ghanaians. This revelation made international tourists the appropriate target group for the study. Five registered homes were identified with the GTA and over 50 unlicensed with private institutions (NGOs). The difference between the license and the unlicensed is a matter of price and services offered. Most of the unlicensed homes are deemed cheaper than the licensed one. That is, whereas unlicensed homes charge 400 Ghana cedis (US\$200) for a month including food, shelter and cultural entertainment which is approximately GH¢14 (US\$7) per night. The registered ones charge a minimum of 20 Ghana cedis (US\$10) per night including breakfast.

There are various methods for conducting homestay studies. Among them are ethnography (Wang, 2007), quantitative (Hsu and Lin, 2011) and diary methods (Musa et al., 2010). According to McIntosh and Siggs (2005), quantitative method is excellent for comparison and generalisation. The authors explained that there is lack of baseline data on homestay users and, hence, a quantitative demographic study is crucial to aid comparisons. For Walle (1997: 525), quantitative method helps reduce bias and increase rigour in tourism research. As a result, a quantitative approach was adopted for the current study. To help obtain a larger sample size useful for statistical analysis, all the homes were included in the survey and tourists were conveniently sampled. Questionnaires were the main data collection tool. The use of

questionnaires in such an instance has been confirmed by Hsu and Lin (2011).

Questionnaires were designed based on previous studies by Wang (2007), Musa et al. (2010) and Hsu and Lin (2011). The above studies guided the researcher to tease the relevant themes of homestay motivations and demographics. Based on that five motivational factors (three pull and two push factors) including authentic socio-cultural experience (push), security and warmth of home (pull), economic (cheap price) (pull), environmental (pull) and knowledge acquisition/educational (push) were carved as constructs for homestay motivations. The questionnaire for the study had three sections. The first explored the demographic characteristics of international tourists who use homestay in the metropolis. The second section examined the motivations for choosing homestay using a three-point Likert scale. The third examined the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on homestay motivations using the independent *t*-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The questionnaires were self-administered which took a maximum of 15 min to complete. Whereas some questionnaires were collected after completion, others were left with international guests who felt they needed ample time to complete the instrument. Often, the questionnaires had been misplaced by respondents the following day and needed to be replaced.

Prior to the data collection, earlier interview with four notable NGOs revealed a total yearly arrival of 287 homestay tourists in 2010. The NGOs included Projects Abroad, Light for Children, School for International Training and Students and Youth Travel Organisation. About 151 international tourists participated in the survey during the peak season of June and July 2011. In all, 98 out of the 151 were females and the remaining 53 were males. On their part, Hair et al. (1995) assert that there is lack of consensus on the maximum sample size. However, it is influenced by statistical methods adopted for the study in question. They argue that, a minimum sample size between 100 and 150 is valid for statistical analysis. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data presentation.

Results

Socio-demographics characteristics

The results of the study revealed that more than half (61.6%) of the respondents were females with the remaining 38.4% being males. The dominance of

female guests perhaps relates to natural attachment of females to the home environment. According to Darke (1996), one significant component of the relationship of females to the home environment is the perception of the home as a haven from an alienating world. Hence, they perceive homestay to offer ‘a home away home’ (McIntosh et al., 2010). The attractiveness of homestay to female guests has also been confirmed by Akbar et al. (2002) and McIntosh and Siggs (2005) in their homestay studies in Australia and New Zealand, respectively. Majority of the respondents were unmarried (96.7%) with more than half aged 18 and 19 years (55.0%). This finding deviates from that of Musa et al. (2010) where respondents were mostly in their early twenties (21–23). Thus, the Ghanaian homestay market is dominated by teenagers unlike the Malaysian homestay market (Musa et al., 2010). Given the dominant age group in the present study, it was expected that majority of respondents were unmarried. About 83.4% of the respondents were students who have obtained a higher level of education (51.7%) with an annual income range of US \$2000–4000. The recent choice of homestay accommodation by international students has been well elaborated by Akbar et al. (2002). Moreover, the sudden surge of exchange programmes and volunteerism has made homestay an attractive accommodation for international students. Given the fact that most students do not have paid jobs, an alternative cheaper accommodation is always, perhaps, preferable. The finding that users of homestay have higher level of education has been confirmed by McIntosh and Siggs (2005) and Campbell and Xu (2004). Christians (64.2%) dominated on the whole with 53.6% of the respondents originating from Europe (Table 1).

Like the case of Akbar et al. (2002), the Ghanaian homestay market is attracted to the international market than the domestic market.

Motivations for choosing homestay

Table 2 presents the motivations of homestay facilities using a three-point Likert scale of 1–1.49 = *Disagree*; 1.50–2.49 = *Neutral*; 2.50–3 = *Agree*. Five motivations were identified, namely, authentic socio-cultural experience, cheap price/economic, educational/knowledge acquisition, security and warmth of home and environmental motivations (Table 2). Generally, respondents were of the view that they choose to stay in private homes for authentic socio-cultural experiences ($M = 2.77$; $SD = 0.28$). This finding suggests that authentic socio-cultural experience is the main drive for homestay. As Wang (2007) found in her study of homestay facilities in Lijiang (China), tourists perceive homestay as platform for experiencing

Table 1. Socio-demographic description of international tourists.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Female	93	61.6
Male	58	38.4
Age		
<20	83	55.0
20–24	53	35.1
25–29	10	6.6
30+	5	3.3
Marital status		
Unmarried	146	96.7
Married	5	3.3
Educational attainment		
Tertiary (degree)	78	51.7
Secondary	44	29.1
Tertiary (non-degree)	29	19.2
Occupation		
Student	126	83.4
Teacher	16	10.6
Banker	4	2.6
Travel advisor	5	3.3
Income (US\$)		
<2000	23	15.2
2000–4000	90	59.6
>4000	38	25.2
Religion		
Christianity	97	64.2
Atheism	44	29.1
Judaism	8	5.4
Buddhism	2	1.3
Generating region		
Europe	81	53.6
North America	58	38.4
Asia	8	5.4
Oceania	4	2.6

authentic Naxi culture. Aside socio-cultural motivations, respondents were interested in the safety atmosphere of the home environment ($M = 2.50$; $SD = 0.46$). That is, homestay offers ‘a home away from home’ and assures tourists of a secured homely experience (McIntosh et al., 2010). Likewise, respondents agreed that they had chosen homestay because of its cheap price ($M = 2.50$; $SD = 0.51$). Given the dominant occupation of respondents, it was, perhaps, expected that the cheapness of homestay drives tourists to choose it. However, respondents on the whole were in doubt whether they choose the

Table 2. Motivations for choosing homestay.

Motivation	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Authentic socio-cultural experience	151	1.67	3.00	2.77	0.28
Security and warmth of home	151	1.00	3.00	2.64	0.46
Economic/cheap price	151	1.00	3.00	2.50	0.51
Educational/knowledge acquisition	151	1.33	3.00	2.32	0.48
Environmental preservation	151	1.00	3.00	2.18	0.68

facility for educational ($M=2.32$; $SD=0.48$) and environmental motivations ($M=2.18$; $SD=0.69$). Hence, most of the tourists were not necessarily driven by knowledge acquisition in Ghana and the quest to preserve the local environment but rather the need to experience local authentic culture in a cheap but safe homely environment.

Influence of socio-demographic on the motivations of homestay

Table 3 presents the influence of respondents' socio-demographics on the motivations of homestay using the independent samples *t*-test and one-way ANOVA. The results indicate that international tourists' motivations for choosing homestay were influenced by their socio-demographic characteristics. For instance, the independent samples *t*-test detected significant differences in sex across economic ($p=0.012$), educational ($p=0.011$) and environmental ($p=0.000$) motivations for choosing homestay facilities. The results confirm an observation by Wang (2007) and Hsu and Lin (2011) that tourists are motivated to choose homestay because of the cheap price it offers. In the present study, male ($M=2.41$) and female ($M=2.55$) respondents shared varied opinions. Specifically for the female respondents, the cheap price of homestay was a key motivating factor. A similar pattern was recorded for environmental motivations for choosing homestay. According to Ibrahim and Razzaq (2010), environmental preservation is among the motivations for choosing homestay facilities. This observation was evident in the present study. However, not all respondents (males and females) were motivated by environmental preservation. Female international tourists ($M=2.53$) were motivated by the need to preserve the local environment (Table 3). However, the male respondents ($M=1.94$) were not sure they were motivated by the need to preserve local environment.

To explore the influence of age on the motivations for choosing homestay, the ANOVA was employed. With exception of socio-cultural and environmental motivations for choosing homestay, respondents differed significantly in terms of economic ($p=0.000$),

security and warmth of home ($p=0.014$) and educational ($p=0.034$) motivations across the different age categories. Age is very influential in stakeholders' involvement in homestay as confirmed by Gu and Wong (2006). Dwelling on economic motivations for choosing homestay, respondents who were 18–24 years were in agreement whereas those found above 24 years were uncertain of their motivations for choosing homestay (Table 3). Thus, for international tourists aged 18–24 years, the cheap price of homestay is among the key motivations for its choice. The choice of homestay by young adults has been highlighted in the literature by Musa et al. (2010), although no underlying motivations were mentioned. In the current study, it is evident that young adults are motivated by the cheap price of homestay. Moreover, the comfort and security of the home environment as stated by Wang (2007) was among the key motivations for opting for homestay. However, not all respondents agreed to this observation. Whereas some respondents (18–29 years) were motivated to choose homestay due to its ability to offer a more secured and comfort environment, others (30+ years) were in doubt.

Furthermore, the marital status of respondents was an influential factor on respondents' motivation for choosing homestay. Results of the independent samples *t*-test showed significant difference in unmarried and married respondents. The unmarried respondents were in agreement ($M=2.65$) that staying in homestay provided the means to enjoy the security and warmth of home although their married counterparts were not certain ($M=2.33$). In opposition, respondents' level of education had no significant influence on their motivations for choosing homestay facilities with the exception of environmental motivations. Unlike Gu and Wong's (2006) study where the senior educated host were concerned about the environment, the present study found a different pattern as respondents with secondary education qualification had environmental concerns as a major motivation for choosing homestay than their higher educated counterparts.

The study also revealed that socio-cultural, economic and environmental motivations were influenced by the originating region of international tourists (Table 3). Thus, respondents from different

Table 3. Motivations for choosing homestay by respondents' profile.

Profile of tourists	N	Authentic socio-cultural	Economic (cheap price)	Security and warmth	Educational/knowledge acquisition	Environmental preservation
Sex						
Male	58	2.71	2.41	2.62	2.20	1.94
Female	93	2.80	2.55	2.65	2.50	2.53
		$p=0.057$	$p=0.012^*$	$p=0.716$	$p=0.011^*$	$p=0.000^*$
Age (years)						
<20	83	2.75	2.50	2.72	2.22	2.23
20–24	53	2.79	2.64	2.57	2.47	2.19
25–29	10	2.74	1.95	2.57	2.33	1.63
30+	5	2.91	2.15	2.13	2.40	2.40
		$p=0.562$	$p=0.000^*$	$p=0.014^*$	$p=0.034^*$	$p=0.055$
Marital status						
Unmarried	146	2.76	2.52	2.65	2.33	2.16
Married	5	2.89	1.95	2.33	2.00	2.80
		$p=0.328$	$p=0.014^*$	$p=0.031^*$	$p=0.129$	$p=0.038^*$
Education						
Secondary	44	2.68	2.52	2.68	2.30	2.52
Tertiary (non-degree)	29	2.77	2.46	2.66	2.15	2.03
Tertiary (degree)	78	2.81	2.50	2.61	2.40	2.11
		$p=0.059$	$p=0.881$	$p=0.672$	$p=0.057$	$p=0.027^*$
Income (US\$)						
<2000	23	2.77	2.63	2.55	2.43	2.12
2000–4000	90	2.75	2.44	2.66	2.28	2.11
>4000	38	2.82	2.55	2.64	2.34	2.39
		$p=0.443$	$p=0.216$	$p=0.601$	$p=0.373$	$p=0.084$
Occupation						
Student	126	2.76	2.54	2.69	2.31	2.21
Teacher	16	2.80	2.42	2.19	2.29	2.29
Banker	4	2.89	2.13	2.67	2.83	1.50
Travel advisor	5	2.69	2.00	2.73	2.33	1.67
		$p=0.718$	$p=0.043^*$	$p=0.000^*$	$p=0.191$	$p=0.054^*$
Region						
North America	58	2.84	2.59	2.72	2.40	2.53
Europe	81	2.74	2.48	2.60	2.43	2.23
Asia	8	2.69	2.19	2.67	2.50	1.75
Oceania	4	2.39	2.00	2.57	2.50	1.50
		$p=0.005^*$	$p=0.029^*$	$p=0.085$	$p=0.111$	$p=0.046^*$

*Significant difference = 0.05; Scale of 1–1.49 = *Disagree*; 1.50–2.49 = *Neutral*; 2.50–3 = *Agree*.

geographical regions shared varied motivations for choosing homestay. The socio-cultural motivations for choosing homestay have been highlighted in the literature (Ibrahim and Rassaq, 2010; Lynch and Tucker, 2003; Wang, 2007). However, regional differences in terms of motivations are limited. In a study by Musa et al. (2010), respondents from Asia (Chinese) were in majority in terms of homestay use although the

authors did not state the key motivating factor for the choice of homestay. In the present study, respondents from three regions (North America, Europe and Asia) were motivated to choose homestay because of its ability to offer authentic socio-cultural experience. However, respondents from Oceania were not sure they were motivated by authentic socio-cultural experience.

Discussion

The study finding that most homestay tourists are females conforms to general travel patterns elsewhere. Thus, the findings coincide with findings by Musa et al. (2010) in Malaysia and a report by Campbell and Xu (2004) in New Zealand. As confirmed by Darke (1996), one significant component of the relationship of females to the home environment is the perception of the home as a haven from an alienating world. As a result, homestay offers 'a home away home' providing a more secured form of accommodation for international guests (McIntosh et al., 2010). Majority of the international tourists who choose homestay were from the Europe which contradicts official sources in Ghana.

The socio-cultural motivations for choosing homestay have been well elaborated by Wang (2007). Overall authentic socio-cultural motivations recorded the highest mean (2.77). According to Ibrahim and Razzaq (2010), the quest to eat, cook and engage in many activities together with host families are the key motivating factors of homestay. The result in the present study is not different as both males and females shared similar views. The cheap price of homestay is among the basic economic motivations for its choice ($M=2.50$). According to Gu and Wong (2006), homestay provides an inexpensive form of accommodation as well as a means to experience the local culture at firsthand. Perhaps, with Ghana tagged 'expensive destination' in West Africa (Akyeampong and Asiedu, 2008), homestay is a means to reduce travel costs. Other tourists are motivated to choose homestay due to its ability to offer warmth and security (Hsu and Lin, 2011). As Welsh (2001: 3) succinctly puts it 'home staying is not just about board and lodging'. It is also about providing an environment in which the guest is able to enjoy the security, warmth, informal friendships and support that only a family can offer.

In the present study, environmental preservation was among the motivations for choosing homestay even though international tourists did not lay much emphasis on it. According to Roberts and Hall (2001), homestay programmes contribute to the care and preservation of the environment through the control of logging activities that may affect the river water pollution. For Ibrahim and Razzaq (2010), the increasing demand of homestay, perhaps, could be attributed to the recent global social and cultural changes resulting in greater interest and appreciation in cultural heritage, lifestyles and environmental concerns.

Most importantly, respondents' motivations for choosing homestay are influenced by a myriad of

socio-demographic factors. The present study has revealed the influential role of six main demographic factors namely, sex, age, marital status, level of education, religion and originating region on homestay motivations. As confirmed by Gu and Wong (2006), age and level of education are influential factors on the motivations of homestay. Like host families in the case of Gu and Wong's (2006) study, young international tourists (18–24 years) were motivated by the cheap prices of homestay whereas the older international tourists (25+ years) were not bothered about prices of homestay. Choosing homestay for the purpose of its cheap price has been identified by Hsu and Lin (2011) as a one of the key motivational factors. This same motivation emerged in Wang's (2007) study of homestay in Lijiang; as 26.5% of respondents affirmed that they were motivated by the lower prices of homestay.

In the current study, environmental motivation was influenced highly by tourists' level of education. Significantly, respondents with secondary education ($M=2.52$) agreed, whereas those with a higher qualification felt otherwise ($M=2.11$). Religious and regional influences on the motivations of homestay were confirmed by the present study (Table 3). Although previous studies have confirmed the use of homestay by some group of tourists from different regions (Musa et al., 2010), the main motivation for choosing such facilities was not clearly dealt with. The present study has found that socio-cultural, economic and security are among the main motivations for choosing homestay. However, respondents shared varied views on the key motivations for choosing homestay in the Kumasi Metropolis.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to examine the role of international tourists' socio-demographics on their motivations for choosing homestay. Data were obtained from international tourists who have arrived in the Kumasi Metropolis between the months of June and July 2011. A self-administered questionnaire was used to gather primary data from international tourists. In all, 151 international tourists participated in the study. In order to reveal the influential role of socio-demographic factors on homestay motivations, the ANOVA and *t*-test were used.

The present study differs from previous homestay studies that concentrated on guests' motivations (Hsu and Lin, 2011) and experiences (Hamzah, 2010; McIntosh and Siggs, 2005; Musa et al., 2010); it identifies the basic socio-demographics of international tourists and further examines the influence of socio-demographics on guests' motivations for choosing

homestay. Using appropriate parametric statistical techniques (ANOVA and *t*-test), the study reveals that the authentic socio-cultural motivations as affirmed by Wang (2007) is influenced by respondents' originating region. Consequently, tourists from the originating regions that are concerned with authentic socio-cultural motivations could be exposed to Ghana's cultural heritage and could be hosted in a region like the Ashanti, whereas those with varied views could be hosted in coastal regions like Central and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana.

Significantly, whereas the married respondents were motivated by the care and preservation of the environmental resources through homestay, the unmarried respondents were not certain. Additionally, respondents' level of education played an influential role on environmental motivations for choosing homestay. That is, whereas those who have attained secondary education were motivated by the ability of homestay to preserve the local environment; those with a higher educational attainment were not certain. Based on these findings, tourism policy makers and planners can design different promotional strategies for different educational levels and marital statuses.

This study has examined socio-demographic influence on international tourists' motivations for choosing homestay and it provides useful information for tourism stakeholders in marketing homestay products. According to Kotler et al. (2010), the more attentive tourism marketers are to socio-demographic factors, the more likely they are to segment and target the appropriate market to satisfy the needs and wants of prospective customers. This current socio-demographic study is the starting point in targeting a particular niche in homestay tourism and developing appropriate promotional strategies. As evident in Ghana's 2006 Policy, the country lacks a target market, and this research is a stepping stone to identifying a sustainable market for its homestay product. Moreover, with the non-existence of a clearly defined image abroad as a tourism destination (Ministry of Tourism and Diasporan Relations, 2006), Ghana can promote its homestay product and create the image of the best homestay experience capitalising on one of its core attractions – cultural heritage.

The present study is limited by the use of non-probability convenience sampling. As a result, generalisations and further extrapolations based on the outcome of the guests' profile and its influence on motivations for choosing homestay facilities should be done with caution.

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Author Biographies

Elizabeth Agyeiwaah enrolled as a Master student at the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management in 2010 at the University of Cape Coast (Ghana). She currently holds MPhil in Tourism Management. She received her Bachelor degree at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Ghana). Her research interests include Tourist Accommodation, Sustainable Tourism, Leisure Studies and Agro Tourism.

Dr. Oheneba Akyeampong is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Cape Coast. His research interests include the Political economy of international tourism, Tourism education and Community participation.

Dr. Edem K. Amenumey is a Lecturer at the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Cape Coast. His research interests include hospitality, customer service, work environment, employee relations and customer experience.