



RESEARCH ON THE FOREIGN STUDY INTENTIONS OF LU'AN NATIVES

Thesis

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Abstract <p>The research was conducted in the field of foreign study industry in Lu'an city in China. The phenomenon of studying abroad has become an interesting society topic. Many Chinese students develop an interest in improving themselves through international studies. There are nearly 200 thousand students in China who have gone to study in foreign countries in the year 2008. Compared with previous years it was a fast-growing year and it has been a highest number record through the history of China. Therefore, the research on the students who have the desire and willingness to study abroad is necessary in a medium sized city like Lu'an.</p> <p>The research was conducted as three interviews and a questionnaire survey, one interview is from foreign affair department of Lu'an government representative, one is a typical local family interview and the third is a professor interview. The questionnaire is specially created for collecting information from high school students, college students and a targeted working group. The purpose of the research is to conduct an analysis about the willingness of natives in Lu'an City (Anhui Province, China) who have interest in studying abroad. Through the collection of primary and secondary data, the research provides detailed information on potential intentions to study abroad.</p> <p>The conclusion part summarized the structure of the thesis, and evaluated the value of the thesis in relation to foreign study business. The results gave related recommends for foreign universities marketing in Lu'an according to findings through research for better promotion in the future. At the end of the study, the limitations of the thesis results are also pointed out. The foreign study industry will have a bright future in Lu'an city if education institutions promote properly.</p>		
Keywords Foreign study, students, studying abroad, foreign schools, oversea, respondents, willingness, interview, questionnaire, potential intention		

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	3
2 EDUCATION MARKETING	6
2.1 Marketing Environment – the Macro Environment of Lu'an	6
2.2 Educational Service Background in China	10
2.3 Elements Influencing Potential Education Marketing on Abroad Study	12
2.3.1 Customer Behaviour and Decision Making Process	12
2.3.2 Characteristics Affecting Customer Behavior	14
2.3.3 Local Demand and Analysis of Demand	17
2.3.4 Factors Influencing Customer Decision Making	18
2.4 Market Segmentation	19
2.5 Education Service Marketing Strategy	20
3 RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA COLLECTING PROCESS FOR FOREIGN STUDY RESEARCH IN LU'AN	29
3.1 Primary and Secondary Data Collection	29
3.2 Research Strategy and Sample Selection	30
3.3 Questionnaire for Students	32
3.4 Interviews in Related fields	32
3.5 Valuable Data Analysis	35
4 THE RESEARCH RESULTS ON FOREIGN STUDY INTENTIONS	36
4.1 The Findings from the Interviews	36
4.1.1 Interview of a Government Representative	36
4.1.2 Family Interview	38
4.1.3 Professor Interview	40
4.2 The Findings from the Questionnaire	42
4.2.1 Age and Gender of Respondents	42
4.2.2 Willingness to Go to Foreign Countries	44
4.2.3 Reasons Affecting Students' Willingness to Study Abroad	45
4.2.4 Favourite Countries and Degrees	47
4.2.5 Preferable Approaches to Going Abroad	49

4.2.6 Problems Concerning Studying Abroad	50
4.2.7 Family Support	51
4.2.8 Preferable Information Aspects on Foreign Study	54
4.2.9 Preferable Approaches to Getting Information on Studying Abroad	55
4.2.10 Importance of Factors Influencing School and Major Selection	56
5 CONCLUSIONS	61
5.1 Evaluation of the Research	60
5.2 Recommendations for Marketers	62
5.3 Limitation of the Research	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY	61
APPENDICES	

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. The education scale situation of China in 1985-2006.	11
Figure 1. Simplified model of customers' buying behavior.	13
Figure 2. Factors influencing consumer behavior.	15
Figure 3. Maslow's hierarchy of needs.	18
Figure 4. The marketing mix of service.	21
Figure 5. The proportion of gender and age in the sample.	43
Figure 6. Willingness of respondents to go and study abroad based on age groups.	44
Figure 7. Reasons for unwillingness to study abroad.	45
Figure 8. Reasons for willingness to study abroad.	46
Figure 9. Countries where respondents are willing to go studying.	47
Figure 10. Degrees respondents are willing to apply in a future foreign study.	48
Figure 11. The ways respondents prefer to go to study abroad.	49
Figure 12. Problems respondents are most worried about concerning studying abroad.	50
Figure 13. Family support foreign study situation according to the age groups.	52
Figure 14. Foreign study costs families can afford annually (Euro).	53
Figure 15. The aspects of information people hope to know before they plan to go abroad.	54
Figure 16. Preferable approaches to get information on possibilities to study abroad.	55
Figure 17. Importance evaluation of factors influencing the selection of school and major.	57
Figure 18. Average importance evaluation of factors influencing the selection of school and major.	58

1 INTRODUCTION

With the developing of economic conditions and education policies' support, education industry grows prosperous in China. Studying abroad has become a new booming industry in China especially in recent years. The phenomenon of Chinese students keen on studying abroad and rushing overseas has become a hot topic in contemporary Chinese society. As more students develop an interest in improving themselves through international studies, various demands on overseas studying are coming up, it is necessary to engage a marketing research on the intentions of studying in foreign countries.

The number of foreign study agencies shows that large demands on studying in foreign countries from big cities in China like Beijing, Shanghai etc. which have a larger population and better economic condition. Nevertheless, less developed and rather isolated areas like Lu'an city also start increasing foreign study cases, which should be paid attention to, researched and analyzed for better marketing. As Lu'an is in the top 10 list of population cities in Anhui province and emphasizes education, it has quite a few potential demands on studying abroad.

The purpose of the thesis is to conduct a research analysis of students in Lu'an City (Anhui Province, China) who are willing to pursue studying abroad. The first part of the thesis systematically presents the theoretical framework related to education marketing and stresses the elements influencing potential education marketing. The second part is the empirical part which describes the processes of research methods used in the thesis and valid data collection. Then the research result part provides findings from interviews and questionnaires. After that, a final conclusion part of the thesis makes a self evaluation, raises recommendations for marketers, and points out limitations of thesis research.

In the empirical research process, the foreign affair department of Lu'an municipal government accepted the interview on foreign study situation of Lu'an and provided

useful information for further research. After that, a telephone interview with a local family was held for collecting the attitudes of family members and influence on children's study plan. At last, a professor from West Anhui University pointed out her own opinion of studying abroad and gave useful recommendations to students who have willingness on foreign study. Toward target segmented market, questionnaires specially created in English and Chinese versions were spread out for local 230 respondents who come from Lu'an No.1 Middle Schools, West Anhui University and local enterprises. The data gathered in the study from a realistic empirical survey is valid and could help to reflect the local basic market situation.

This study systematically analyzed the factors about local potential demands in Lu'an. The objective of the study was to find out the capacity of local market, specific demands on studying abroad and finally give exact recommendations to interest groups on abroad study field, such as agencies, foreign schools and faculties which will be able to get general related knowledge before marketing. Foreign schools which are seeking for more Chinese students will be able to improve recruitment processes by adjusting their marketing strategies to meet the requirements of target students and applicants better. Students in China will be able to make more informed choices about studying abroad, helping them to cultivate themselves and participate in the growth of understanding between different nations.

2 EDUCATION MARKETING

In this chapter, a theoretical framework is built up related to the chosen research problem. It begins with an introductory theory about the macro environment of marketing and potential marketing assessment according to the real situation in Lu'an city. Then the theory of service marketing - educational marketing is presented. Theories about marketing strategy and relevant marketing tools are indicated as well. Finally, regarding the research problem, the concepts of segmentation and customer behaviour are introduced.

2.1 Marketing Environment – the Macro Environment of Lu'an

The macro environment includes all factors that influence an organization but are out of its direct control. Market environment and environment in general is continuously changing and the organization must be able to adapt. There may be aggressive competition or rivalries in the market. The trend towards globalization means that there is always the threat of substitute products and new products. The wider the environment is for marketing, the more it is needed to compensate for changes in culture, politics, economics and technology. (Milen 2005-2008)

Demographic Environment

Demographic environment is the first element of marketing. Population decides the marketing volume and potential capacity directly. The gender, age, nationality, marital status, career and occupancy etc. of population will have a deep impact on market structure. These factors will influence marketing activities. Organizations should stress the research about demographic environment, pay close attention to customer behaviour and its developing trends, and timely adjust marketing strategies to adapt to changes of demographic environment. (He Wei 2005, 12)

The total population of a country, its growth rate, the distribution of age groups within the population and the degree of urbanization are of interest to many international

marketers. After all, the size of a potential local market is a key element in its viability. The distribution of age groups in a country is closely related to the demand for certain products, and the degree of urbanization represents concentrations of potential consumers. (Muhlbacher et al. 2002, 87)

According to second hand statistics, at the end of 2008, the population of Lu'an increased to approximately 7 million. The population of Lu'an inhabitants is 6.09 million. The birth rate of the whole city is 11.23 %, mortality rate is 7.37 %, and the natural increase rate is 3.86 %. At the end of 2008, the ratio of urban residents is 35.4 %, which is 1.9 % higher than last year. Government implemented the slogan "delayed marriage, giving birth to fewer but healthier children" in population control work. Population reproduction structure changes to "low birth, low dead and low growth." (Tian Zhou 2009, 7)

The Economic Environment

The economic environment refers to type of production system, consumption and exchange of goods and services that exist in the area, and how well it is functioning. "Micro-economic factors deal with the way people spend their income. As income has risen over the past 40 years or so, the average standard of living has risen and spending patterns have altered drastically. The proportion of income spent on food and housing has fallen, whereas the proportion spent on entertainment and education has risen. Information on the economy is widely publicised, and marketers make use of this information to predict what is likely to happen to their customers and to demand for products." (Blythe 2002, 24) As statistical data from the government's official website, the general GDP of Lu'an was 58.4 billion in 2009, a 13.3 % rise compared with previous year which has high amplitude.

Studying abroad is a large investment on education for a Chinese student. It is also certain to have a close relationship with the local economic environment. With the economic crisis, the depression of employment market and the development of

educational market both appeared. It is not difficult to understand: If students cannot find a proper job after graduation, they will choose to continue their studies to improve themselves and get better chances to get jobs. Of the new coming 100 thousands overseas students in the year 2009, 75 % were aiming at an academic certification, work opportunities in future, studies preparing for immigration while the rest 25 % were aiming at job promotion or career transition. At the time of an economic depression, it is intelligent and worthwhile to invest on self promotion in the period compared with an economic boom period because of less economic loss, lower education fees and because it is easier to get visa. Thousands of Chinese on-the-job personnel who have gone abroad have been influenced by the change of macro-economic environment in recent years. (Qian Jin 2009, 2)

Political and Legal Environment

The political systems of the countries served or being considered by an international marketer are an important part of macro-environment. Most companies or organizations are not able to influence their political and legal environment directly but their opportunities for successful business activities largely depend on its structure and content. A marketer serving international markets or planning to do so therefore has to assess carefully the political and legal environments of the current or potential markets to lead to successful managerial consequences. (Muhlbacher et al. 2002, 129)

The first step in assessing the political and legal environment of target markets is to determine which parts or characteristics of the political and legal environment are relevant to the market. Having determined the relevant factors on influence of the political and legal environment, the marketers may analyze their current state under consideration. (Muhlbacher et al. 2002, 129)

As the constant deepening of China's reform and opening to the outside world in these years, educational international cooperation and communication are

developing. So policies and rules on studying abroad issued by government and relevant educational departments are in relaxed conditions meanwhile. Information from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China and the attitude of relative departments who are holding newest laws and rules published will be the basic consideration for those who are doing abroad study business. Generally, different countries have different policies to treat overseas students. The main guideline of government is to support overseas study, encourage graduate students come back to China.

Social and Cultural Environment

For international marketers it is important to understand their customers' personal values and accepted norms of behaviour in order to market to them properly. (Muhlbacher et al. 2002, 176) People have specific cognitions and cognitive structure based on their learning experiences. These cognitive systems make consumers perceive their environment, evaluate alternative sequences of behaviour, interpret actions of others and behave in individual ways. But all humans are social individuals. That is, to survive they need social contacts with other humans. As a consequence they gather in groups. (Muhlbacher et al. 2002, 172)

The social cultural environment definitely plays an important role in a macro-environment. For better marketing of overseas studying, the local social environment must be studied more detailed. Analyzing the local social cultural environment is mainly made based on sections like religion, work, achievement and wealth, risk taking and changes, the consumption level of local people. As a typical inland city, Lu'an has limited foreign affairs with outside world and co-operation projects with foreign countries did not start until recent years. Local people still have a conservative attitude towards studying abroad.

2.2 Educational Service Background in China

International service marketing is becoming a major component of world business. Services tend to be more intangible, personalized, and custom-made than goods. Services are also often marketed differently from goods. While goods are typically distributed to the customer, services can be transferred cross borders or can be originated from overseas, and the service provider can be transferred to the customer or the customer can be transferred to the service territory. Buyers have more complicated problems in observing and evaluating services than goods. Service offerings are not directly comparable which makes quality measurements quite challenging. Therefore, the reputation of the service provider plays an overwhelming role in the customer choice. (Michael 1998, 566-571).

Educational service industry is a mainstay industry of modern service industry. As an important component part of modern service industry, China has more competitive advantages to develop a modern educational service industry for higher demand. (Gao Xinmin 2009, 8) The table below indicates China's educational scale situation during the years 1985 - 2006. The number of school institutes decreased from 1,440,000 in 1985 to 630,000 in 1996 because of a reform of education policies and co-operation or merger of decentralized schools. The following four rows show the numbers of students, numbers of teaching and administrative staffs in schools, numbers of educated population, ratios of educated population. The education population increases approximately by 10,500 and the ratio of educated population in 2006 compared with the year 1985 has risen approximately by 3.6 %. The data reveals a dramatic increase of educated people during the last 21 years and the citizens and society attach importance to school education.

Years	Numbers of schools (thousand)	Numbers of enrolled students	Numbers of faculty members	Numbers of educated people	Ratios of educated population (%)
1985	1440	21753	1261	23014	22.0
1990	1360	23654	1432	25086	22.2
1996	1550	30401	1549	31950	26.2
1997	1570	31076	1577	32653	26.7
1998	1550	31809	1580	33389	27.0
1999	1590	32672	1596	34268	27.5
2000	1490	32093	1592	33685	26.8
2001	1350	32135	1574	33709	26.6
2002	1170	31873	1579	33452	26.2
2003	960	31989	1610	33599	26.2
2004	680	32558	1597	34155	26.4
2005	650	31621	1624	38528	25.6
2006	630	31860	1652	33512	25.6

Table 1. The educational population scale of China in 1985-2006. (Unit=10,000)

In educational service management China has a larger disadvantage compared to other developed countries for its lower efficient management in some management departments. Especially after entering the WTO, it is a new topic for educational administrative department to adapt the rules of WTO and educational laws or regulations to regular developing and managing the educational market. Another disadvantage is that China has lower quality based infrastructures to improve the competitive strength of education. That also reflects on educational service. The technical facilities for a border across providing industry are the necessary internet technology and information system. As the educational service industry is developing in developed countries, it obviously shows that a mature marketing culture has a pushing effect on educational service industry. China is in the process

of building a sound marketing economy system and cultivating marketing culture to adapt to the marketing demands and learning basic knowledge of educational service.

At present, China's educational brand names still need to be developed and improved. On one hand, educational service enterprises cannot provide steady high-quality services. On the other hand, it is short of completed evaluating system in educational service marketing, short of flexible quality on service brand names and low reliability are the common existing problems in domestic educational service brand operation process.

2.3 Elements Influencing Potential Education Marketing on Abroad Study

Marketing potential is a set of consumers who express some kind of interest in a designed market offer. So, it will be of vital importance on commercial trend of development. (About.com 2008) Practically, a researcher should focus on marketing segments and determines which group of consumers probable could bring largest profit to them. They also need to analyze some relevant factors which can help the company to serve marketing potential to reach customer's spending behaviors. It shows all relevant theoretical influencing factors concerning marketing potential for educational service as follows.

2.3.1 Customer Behaviour and Decision Making Process

Through Kotler's illumination, customer's buying behavior is a systematic study about customer's choice, use and purchase of products or service which are usually a benefit to the company or commercial organization. Customer's buying behavior can provide experiences or ideas to satisfy customer demand and get awareness about customer's buying processes in a given market. Analyzing customer's buying behavior can give some tangible answers about customers' characteristics, roles, and motivations, times of purchase and exact predictions of future buying. (Kotler

1999, 160)

Understanding customer's behavior is crucial if company is striving for an excellent competitive situation in the market. But analyzing customer behavior and getting awareness about customers' characteristics usually have many obstacles due to the reason that customers may have gaps between their words and actions. So, customer's buying behavior needs to be concerned by deep analyzing and collecting information, it requires company targeting on customers carefully and divides consumers into some specific marketing segments. (Solomon et al.2002, 7)

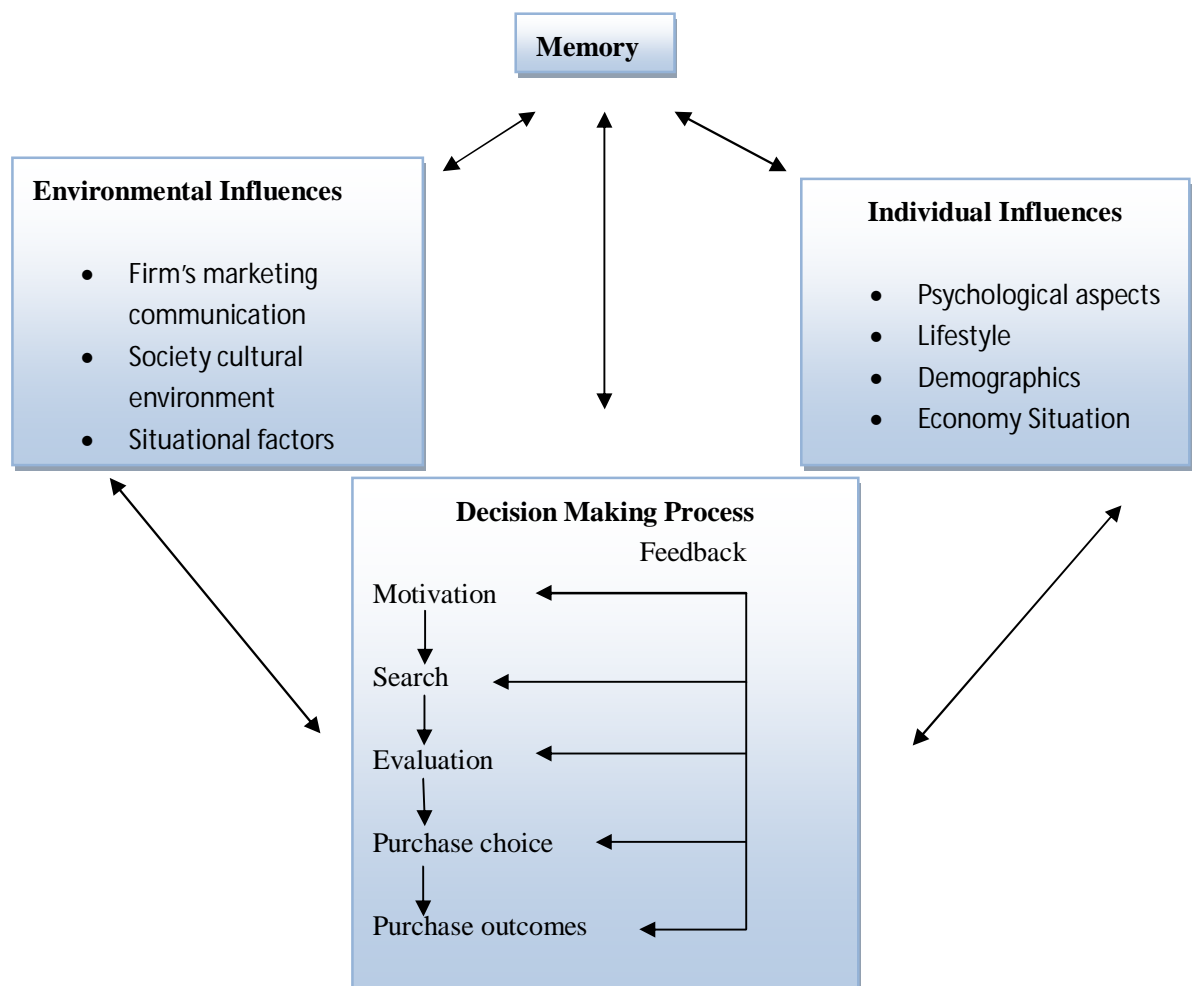


Figure 1. Simplified model of customers' buying behavior. (Lancaster & Massingham 1993, 90)

Figure 1 shows a clear structure about consumer's buying behavior and some influencing factors about customer's decision making. It has rationally showed that

environmental influencing factors and individual influencing factors are available issues for each other, which are influencing the most of consumers' buying behavior. (Lancaster & Massingham 1993, 89)

At the bottom of the picture, the decisions making processing steps of individual customers when they make a purchase are shown. At the same time, the diagram can help to understand clearly the relationships between customer's buying behavior and customer's decision making process. The feedback lines express that different information can be reflected back to customer in any part of the customer's buying process. So consumer buying behavior can be changed or stopped in any step if they acquire a good reason to spur stopping buying behavior. (Lancaster & Massingham 1993, 89)

The buying process has actually started long before the customer makes a buying act. Not all customers have completely same steps when they make a decision. Through the diagram parsing it is helpful to translate the five different decision making steps of customer's buying behavior for choosing a school for foreign studies:

1. Identifying demand. (What do they need?)
2. Seeking information. (What can satisfy their demand?)
3. Comparing each influencing aspect. (Which one should they choose?)
4. Picking the best choice.
5. Purchase decision.

2.3.2 Characteristics Affecting Customer Behaviour

Marketers could understand consumers well through the experience of selling to them. But as firms and markets have grown in size, many marketing decision makers are physically, demographically or socially remote from their customers and so must now turn to consumer research. Consumer purchases are influenced strongly by cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics, as shown in

Figure 2. For the most part, marketers cannot control such factors, but they must take them into account

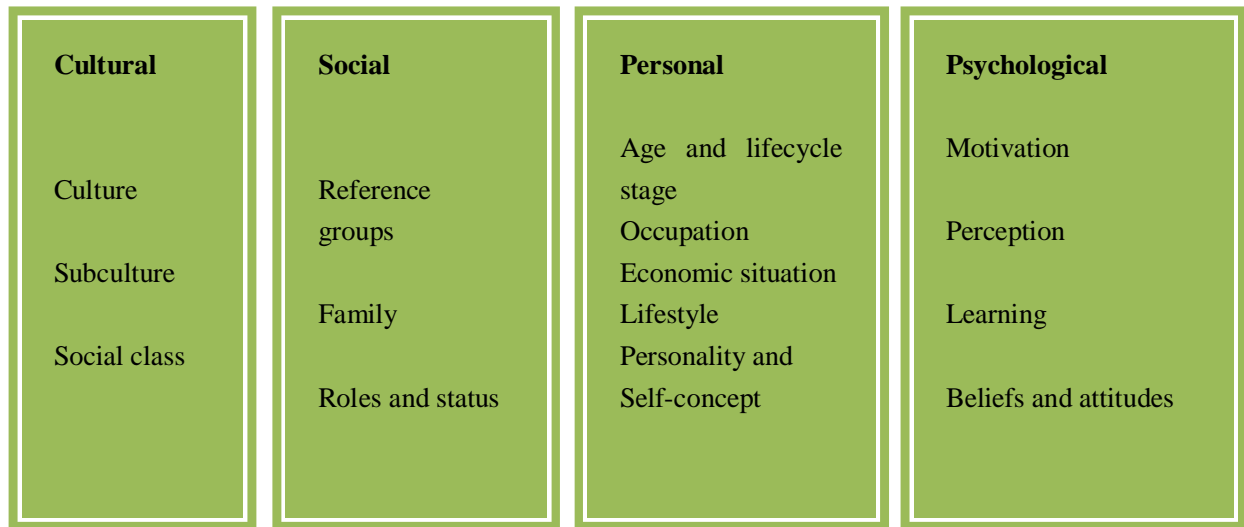


Figure 2. Factors influencing consumer behavior. (Kotler et al. 2008, 238-240)

Cultural Factors

Cultural factors exert the broadest and deepest influence on consumer behavior. The marketer needs to understand the role played by the buyer's culture, subculture and social class. Culture is the set of basic values, perceptions, wants and behaviors learned by a member of society from family and other important institutions. Each culture contains smaller subcultures or groups of people with shared value systems based on common life experiences and situations. Many subcultures make up important market segments and marketers often design products and marketing programs tailored to their needs. Almost every society has some form of social class structure. Social classes are society's relatively permanent and ordered divisions whose members share similar values, interests and behaviors. (Kotler et al. 2008, 240-242) Especially for abroad study, the cross-cultural activity will hardly be totally taken in consideration and accepted by traditional concept of local people. However, it will be easier accepted by higher educated people who can perceive the value of studying abroad and who have higher spiritual pursuit in their lives.

Social Factors

Consumer's behavior is also influenced by social factors, such as the customer's small groups, family, and social roles and status. Because these social factors can strongly affect consumer responses, companies must take them into account when designing their marketing strategies. Groups have a direct influence on a person's behavior and what a person belongs to are called membership. Family members can also strongly influence buyer behavior. Parents provide a person with an orientation towards religion, politics and economics, and a sense of personal ambition, self-worth and love. In countries where parents continue to live with their children, their influence can be crucial. (Kotler et al. 2008, 246-248) Especially in China, every family has only allowed to have one child by policies issued by government since 1990s. Parents play an important role in family to make decisions for their children in educational issues.

Personal Factors

Buyer's decisions are also influenced by personal characteristics such as the buyer's age and stage of lifecycle, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle, and personality and self-concept.

It is obvious that abroad study choices will be made mainly by students themselves who independently take their own responsibilities for their future life. Economic circumstances would be another important part for the marketer to think over because abroad study is a rather expensive consuming behavior. For a generally lower GDP of Lu'an compared to large cities in China, it is better marketing to higher income groups who can afford the higher tuition fees and costs of living in another country. People coming from the same subculture, social class and occupation may have quite a different lifestyle. It profiles a person's whole pattern of acting and interacting in the world. (Kotler et al. 2008, 250-252)

Psychological Factors

A person's buying choices are further influenced by four important psychological factors: motivation, perception, learning, and beliefs and attitudes. A motive is a need that is sufficiently pressing to direct the person to seek satisfaction. People are largely unconscious about the real psychological forces shaping their behavior. A motivated person is ready to act while the person's acts are influenced by his or her perception of the situation. Perception is the process by which people select, organize and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the world. When people act, they learn. Learning describes changes in an individual's behavior arising from experience. Learning theorists say that most human behavior is learned. Through doing and learning, people acquire their beliefs and attitudes which influence their buying behavior. Kotler mentioned in his study that all marketers should collect available research results about customers' memories of commercial products or activities to enhance relevant competitive strength in the market.

(Kotler et al. 2008, 255-260)

2.3.3 Local Demand and Analysis of Demand

Customers' potential demands are predictions about consumers' total demand in a specific period of time and in a specific market. Analyzing the current demands in a given market can forecast the main trend about potential demands. Generally current market demands need to be gained by data collection through different research methods. Customers would like to purchase different products due to different demands. Such a successful marketer usually collects information before customers reach their demands, and research reliable information about what they need or want at the beginning of a purchase process.

Maslow's pyramid describes different hierarchical demands of human beings.

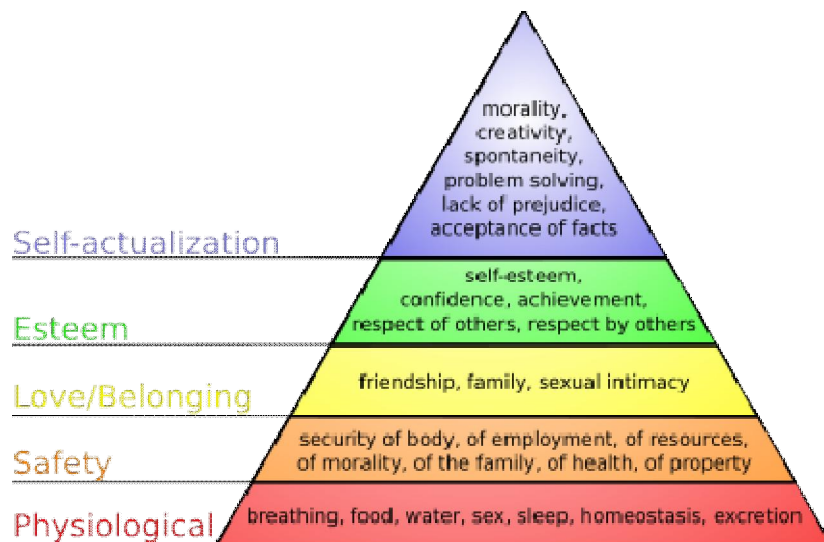


Figure 3. Maslow's hierarchy of needs. (Palmer & Hartley 1999, 8)

Figure 3 shows that consumer's needs include five different stages and every next stage must be built on the previous stage. Through observing the pyramid of demand, it can be notified that first stage describes most basic and important human physical need. (Palmer & Hartley 1999, 8)

Estimating customers' market demands is a complicated and important process. The main purpose of customer demand measurement is to know customers' future demands in specific markets. Usually a market forecast will bring success to business. In any stage, market demand forecasts can help marketers to adjust their marketing strategy and adapt acceptable new products in target markets. There are usually three stages to forecast a demand. First researchers should prepare a macroeconomic forecast to know all background and history about the market. Secondly, it includes information of the relevant industry and thirdly a sales forecast. (Kotler 2003, 151)

2.3.4 Factors Influencing Customer Decision Making

A successful marketer must know some key factors about customers in order to determine whether, what, where and why consumers buy their products or services. There are three different aspects to describe the influencing issues between

customer demands and spending behaviors. There are buying power, willingness to purchase and spending patterns. (Dibb et al.1994, 45)

The major financial sources of buying power include varies aspects such as customer's income, credit and wealth. For an individual consumer, income is the amount of money they can receive through wages, rents, investments, pensions and subsidy payments for a period. Exact buying power information can be commercially or none commercially collected from available government sources, trade associations and research agencies. Generally, consumers are willing to buy a product when they have enough buying power. If conditions of buying power expand, consumer's willingness to spend would increase. (Dibb et al.1994, 45-51)

If marketers want to know the factors that influence consumer's ability and willingness to spend, they must analyze how consumers exactly spend their disposable income. So the marketer can use consumer spending patterns to express some relative information about annual family or personal expenditure or invest in some specific goods or services. A successful marketer uses consumers' spending patterns to acquire awareness about general trends to know in which way the family or person spend their disposable income. At the same time consumer spending patterns are widely used by marketers if marketers want to gain a prospective prediction for marketing strategy decision making. (Dibb et al. 1994, 51)

2.4 Market Segmentation

If marketers want to know customers' potential demands, researchers should choose first the customer groups to target on. Market segmentation can help the company to aim at its specific target. Market segmentation refers to the marketing planning process and target groups division. Through different marketing activities, marketers can categorize different products or services to each of different groups and this process will bring large chances to reach sales and profit targets. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 1994, 40)

The segmentation concept is concerned with grouping consumers in terms of their needs. The aim of segmentation is to identify a group of people who have a need or needs that can be met by a single product, in order to concentrate the marketing firm's efforts most effectively and economically. (Blythe 2002, 57)

After an available marketing segmentation, targeting and positioning the product will be the next point, which means customer's wants and needs must be translated into a product, service, price, promotion and distribution.

There are four requirements that need to be considered when the markers segment. Firstly, the number of customers in each segment must be measured in an accurate and reliable manner so that marketing operations for the segment can be determined. Secondly, the size of segmentation should be large enough for companies' future benefits. Thirdly, the segmented group should be easily reached. Fourthly, different segments should be obviously separated and isolated.

2.5 Education Service Marketing Strategy

The traditional marketing mix consists of 4Ps, which are product, price, place and promotion. For education service, however, additional elements of the marketing mix are necessary to reflect the special characteristics of services marketing. These are as follows:

- People: either service providers or customers who participate in the production and deliverers in the service experience
- Physical evidence: the tangible cues that support the main service product. These include facilities, the infrastructure and the products used to deliver the service
- Processes: the operating processes that take the customer through from ordering to the manufacture and delivery of the service.

Any of these extra marketing mix elements can enhance or detract the customer's

overall experience when consuming the service. The marketer is still trying to create a differentiated, attractive proposition for customers, ensuring that whatever is offered meets their needs and expectations. All seven of the services marketing mix elements will be considered in turn. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 466-467)

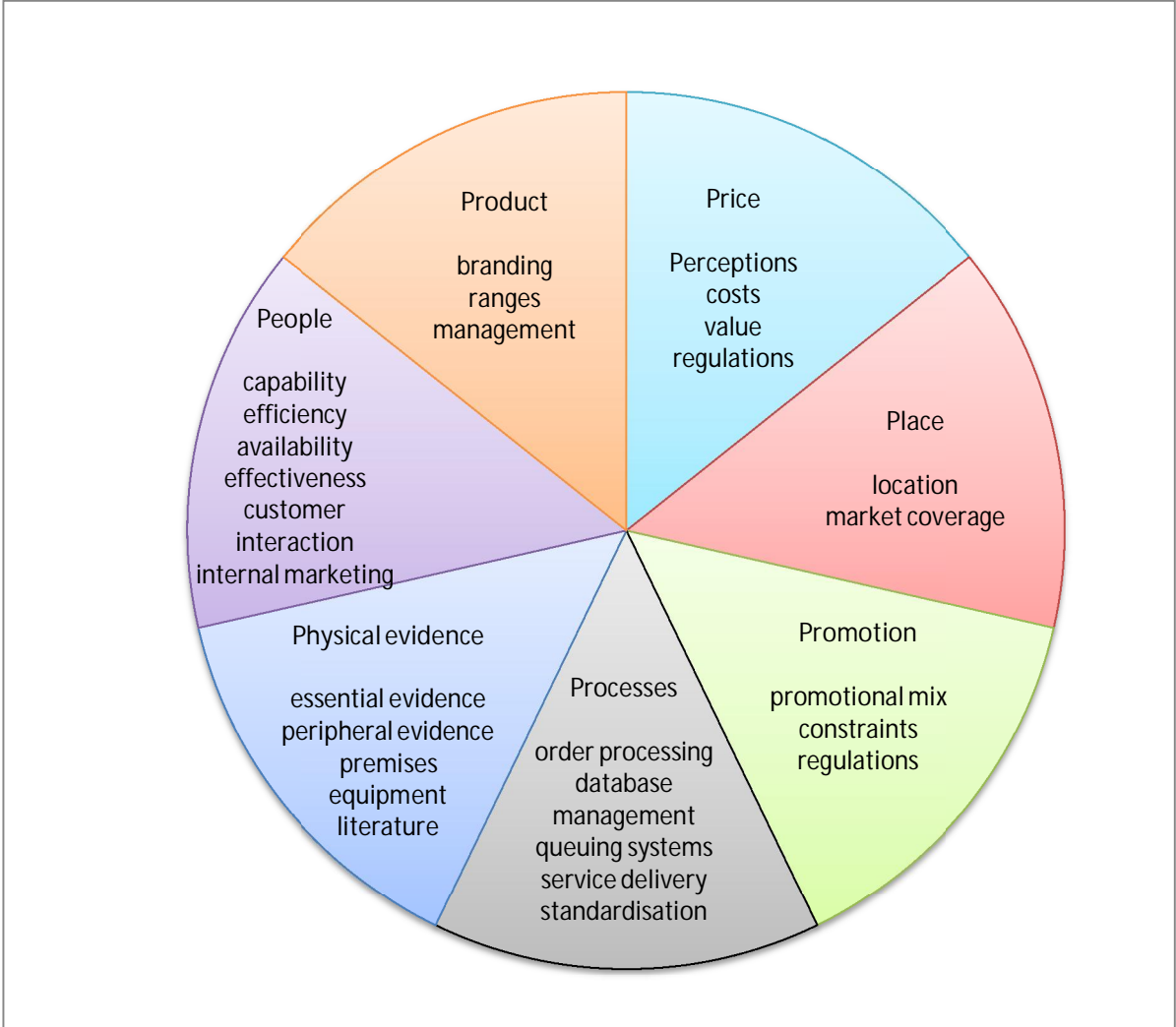


Figure 4. The marketing mix of service. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 466-467)

Product

Form a supplier’s perspective, many services can be treated like any other physical product in a number of ways. Many of the product concepts and the decisions concerning them apply equally to services and physical products. Positioning, branding, developing a mix, designing new services and managing the product lifecycle are all relevant. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 467)

In general, what students can get from foreign higher education should be professional knowledge and technology which can be used in practical, degrees which could be confirmed through educational certifications issued by foreign schools and studying abroad experience. In addition, considering the study-oriented elements in schools, students also measure the professors and financial sufficiency of the faculty, quality of education, teaching facilities, language environment etc. of schools as their selection criteria. To conclude, academic attainment and substantial study life at school are main products the schools should provide their applicants. (Zhang Hongwei 2010)

Branding is an important element of product and particularly in consumer markets. It is a means of linking items within a product line or emphasizing the individuality of product items. The prosaic definition of brand is that it consists of any name, design, style, words or symbols, singly or in any combinations that distinguish one product from another in the eyes of the customer. Product managers operate across all functional areas, especially marketing, but also liaise with R&D, production and logistics to ensure the best opportunities and treatment for their product. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 467)

Rankings of universities have initially been set up for choosing schools for degree students and their parents. Actually, international research result shows that excellent students think top ranking universities would bring special benefits, actively affect their vocational opportunities and quality of life. Front universities could receive more students' applications. What's more, top ranking universities and new-born universities all over the world always got sufficient educational financial support from government. Some of international universities have a long history on education that gradulators and national resources contribute a lot to schools. Some universities are keeping strengthen their advantages in scientific research status and updating their position in ranking list of world universities year by year. In a word, the ranking list of world universities affects many applicants' decision making on schools' selections, which also become

the goal of many international universities. (Ellen Hazelkorn 2009.3)

Price

Because services are intangible, their pricing can be very difficult to set and to justify. The customer is not receiving anything that can be touched or otherwise physical experienced, so it can be hard for them to appreciate the benefits they have gained in return for their expenditure. The prices of some services are controlled by bodies other than the service provider, other services prices are on a commission basis. Other service providers are completely free to decide their own prices, with due respect to competition and needs, wants and perceptions of customers. In setting prices, the services providers can find it is very difficult to charge from the value of professional or specialist skills. Perishability might also affect the pricing of professional services. A training provider, for example, who has little to work on at the moment might agree to charge less than the normal daily rate, just to generate some income rather than none. In service situations, price can play an important role in managing demand. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 468)

As an educational service, the tuition fees of higher education should follow the rules of government charging systems. Governments are interfering with higher educational tuition fees charging systems by standardizing and verifying. It can be found directly from the official web site (<http://gkcx.eol.cn/z/sfbz.html>) which shows composited items included the charged fees. As the research results, the tuition fee of the public universities in the developed education countries occupied around 10 % of general average GDP. However, the ratio of tuition fees to average GDP in China is approximately 30 % which is far exceeding the world's standard level. (The Beijing News)

The charging systems of foreign universities are generally divided into two categories. One is a credit-based system, where total tuition fee equals to the credits that students need to fulfill during the study period multiple by tuition fee each credit

costs. A typical credit-based charging system country is the U.S.A. Another system is an academic year-based system, which is according to the fixed tuition every year paid once or paid by installments. A typical academic year-based charging system country is U.K. The tuition fees of private universities are higher than in public universities. (Chen Hua 2010.1)

At "Foreign University Presidents Forum" held by Fudan University Centenary Celebration, lots of famous presidents and professors from international famous universities said that there are problems in charging tuition fees. As it was reported from their speeches, it should consider the students' family economic conditions when charging tuition fees. Completed scholarship systems could help to cut down the high tuition fees. The fees should also be based on the financial background of the students. Private universities charged more because they could not get financial support from governments. The financial capital of private universities is not only from students' tuition fees, but also from all interest groups of the whole society especially from donations from enterprises and support from sponsors. Private universities also issued securities of welfare lottery for collecting capital from the society. The capital is mainly used for constructions in various parts of universities like the costs of faculties' infrastructures, laboratory, library, scientific research etc. (China News Net 2007.03.02)

As the global economic crisis, the exchange rates are fluctuating dramatically. Foreign study costs have been reduced because RMB raised its value in China. From the questionnaires research result of top foreign study agencies, the costs decreased by 30,000 yuan to 90,000 yuan in general. The annual costs on studying abroad are listed in the following (RMB): (Liberation Network, 2009.3)

U.K	180-250 thousand
U.S.A	140-280 thousand
Japan	124-145 thousand
Australia	115-158 thousand

Canada	110-220 thousand
New Zealand	65-110 thousand
Singapore	53.5-115 thousand
Korea	45-100 thousand
France	42.6-52.6 thousand
German	30-60 thousand

Place

According to Cowell (1984), services are often supplied directly from the provider to the customer because production and consumption are simultaneous. Direct supply allows the provider to control what is going on, to differentiate through personal service, and to get direct feedback and interaction with the customer. Direct supply can take place at business premises. Some services can also be supplied by other ways like internet. Direct supply can cause problems for the service provider. It limits the number of customers that can be dealt with and the geographic coverage of the service. Other service businesses might opt to expand by franchising, while others will decide to move towards indirect supply through intermediaries paid on a commission basis. The main benefit of using an intermediary is spreading the coverage of the services, which is convenient for customers in other areas. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 469)

When marketing in China for a foreign university, there are not any complicated shipping ways like other business transfer process. Setting agencies in local place and by inter-schools' cooperation will be efficient methods which help to reduce the costs in information communication, for personnel exchanges by plane take the largest cost in marketing process.

Through the secondary data, it is shown that America is still the most attractive country for its higher educational quality, devaluated dollars and reduced study costs. Australia owns 39 universities and 230 poly technology colleges, and its academic

qualifications are admitted by the whole world, which has rather lower study costs, a good nature and a humanistic environment. Top national study countries are ranked as follows: U.S.A 23.4 %; Australia 21.6 %; U.K 13.2 %; France 12.5 %; Canada 10.1 %; Japan 5.7 %; Korea 4.9 %; Switzerland 2.2 %; Italy 1.6 %; Singapore 1.4 %.

Promotion

Marketing communication objectives, implementation and management for services are largely the same as for any other product. As with pricing, some professional services are ethically constrained in what marketing communication they are allowed to do. Service products face a particularly difficult task on communication because of the intangibility of the product. Testimonials from satisfied customers can be an extremely effective tool, because they reassure the potential customer that the service works and that the outcomes will be positive. It is important to remember that customers are likely to use marketing communication messages to build their expectations of what the services are likely to deliver. Because of the intangibility, the judgment on the quality of the service is much more subjective. It is based on a comparison of prior expectations with actual perceived outcomes. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 470)

In China, direct promotion activities like educational exhibitions at an assigned place are organized systematically by educational ministry of government. All the activities should be regulated and officially authorized by local related department. The local educational department of the government has the highest organs of state power to manage school's promotion rules and regulation at local place.

School's brand promotion gets more and more attention from the presidents of the schools and becomes an important influencing factor in the recruitment process. When the standard qualities of the universities' hardware tend to be similar, the applicants cannot identify the educational quality's levels from school's external features or properties and therefore it is hard to make a decision. School's brand

differentiation is replacing conventional differentiation of schools in a sense. (Li Yuming 2008 No.8)

People

Services depend on people and interaction between people, including the service provider's staff, the customer and other customers. As the customer is often a participant in the creation and delivery of the service product, there are implications for service product quality, productivity and staff training. The ability of staff to cope with customers, to deliver the service reliably to the required standard and to present an image consistent with what the organization wants is of vital concern to the service provider. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 472) For educational marketing, related people in the recruitment process would be presidents of school, working staff of agencies, teaching faculties and students of departments.

Physical Evidence

Physical evidence comprises the tangible elements that support the service delivery, and offer clues about the positioning of the service product or give the customer something solid to take away with them to symbolize the intangible benefits they have received. Shostack (1977) differentiates between essential evidence and peripheral evidence. Essential evidence is central to the service and is an important contributor to the customer's purchase decision, like layout and facilities offered by a supermarket or a university's lecture theatres and their equipment as well as IT and library provision. Peripheral evidence is less central to the delivery of the service and is likely to consist of items that the customer can have to keep or use. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 472)

Processes

Because the creation and consumption of service are usually simultaneous, the

production of the service is an important part of its marketing as the customer either witnesses it or is directly involved in it. The service provider needs smooth, efficient customer-friendly procedures. Systems that allow the service provider to send a postcard to remind customers that the next dental check-up or car service is due certainly help to generate repeat business, but also help in a small way to strengthen the relationship with the customer. Other processes are also “invisible” to the customer, but form an essential part of the service package. Well-designed processes are also needed as the service is delivered to ensure that the customer gets through with minimum fuss and delay and that all elements of the service are properly delivered. This might involve the design of forms and the information requested in payment procedures, queuing systems or even task allocation. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 472)

3 RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA COLLECTING PROCESS FOR FOREIGN STUDY RESEARCH IN LU'AN

A successful marketing research should be guided by proper marketing research method theories. (Sudman and Blair 1999, 5) The research was conducted as interviews and a questionnaire survey. The objective of the research was to analyze the willingness and different demands of Lu'an natives on foreign study. In this chapter, the theory of marketing research was to support the use of research method for empirical study. In this study, for the research purpose, primary data such as which countries students are most willing to go, affordable purchase price and factors influencing their decision making etc. was collected. The data mostly came from the questionnaire, interviews and observations which support the final conclusions. All important procedures are illustrated in this chapter.

3.1 Primary and Secondary Data Collection

Primary research is undertaken or commissioned for a specific purpose. The required information does not already exist in any available form, so the research has to be undertaken from scratch. The advantage of primary research is that it is exactly tailored to the problem in hand, but it can be expensive and time consuming to undertake. Whatever method is chosen as most appropriate to the client's information needs, researchers have to think about defining a sample of individuals or organizations from the total population of interest. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 153-155) The detailed primary research methods are explained in this chapter.

Secondary data is data which has been collected previously by someone else, and consequently has been collected for a different purpose. Although all data is intended to provide information for analysis and decision making, secondary data can be used in several ways in the context and conduct of a research project. The following are the ways in which secondary data can be used in the management

research process: (Crowther & Lancaster 2009, 90-91)

- Identifying the problem setting/objectives
- Developing an approach to the problem
- Formulating the appropriate research design
- Answering certain research questions
- Helping interpret primary data

In the empirical part of this research, mass information of Lu'an citizens' educational situation was collected, which includes populations of different educated groups from latest secondary data and some systematic awareness about related policies of foreign study.

3.2 Research Strategy and Sample Selection

The survey was designed to evaluate the opinion of the target group, who is interested in abroad study in Lu'an city. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this study. According to John Creswell, the purpose of an exploratory mixed method design is the procedure of first gathering qualitative data to explore a phenomenon and then collecting quantitative data to explain relationships found on qualitative data. (Creswell, 2002, 78)

As with any complex, and potential costly activity, it is essential to plan and design how the activity will be completed. The key elements of the consultancy research plan are listed as follows: (Crowther and Lancaster 2009, 68, 77)

- Research/consultancy objectives: To figure out the intentions of Lu'an students on overseas study and the developing trend of local willingness to foreign educational industry.
- Data and information requirements: Careful and professional planning of the

consultancy project up to this stage should enable the consultant to have a very good idea about the types and nature of data required.

- Methods of data collection: Besides the brief quantitative versus qualitative and primary versus secondary represent categories, there also secondary data collection, case studies, questionnaires and interviews will used in the project study.
- Methods of data analysis, interpretation and presentation: The client does not want data but rather an analysis of that data which makes sense and relates to the client's needs which have been identified earlier. Quantitative methods of data analysis may involve a variety of statistical techniques. In the case, more qualitative data, different methods of analyzing and interpreting data were used.

Particularly in markets of mass consumers, time and cost constraints mean that it is impractical to include every single target customer in whatever data method has been chosen. Based on a typical carefully chosen sample study of the target group, it will be enough for researchers to draw conclusions about the whole target market. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 163)

The overall research objective decides the sampling size of target groups. About foreign study affairs, it is obvious to target on students who intend to continue their higher education. So the defined population could be high school students and students in universities or colleges in Lu'an. Besides sampling frame, the sampling units are the actual individuals from whom researchers want to get responses. It is very important to identify the right individual from working group, who want to have a work promotion and realize the importance of self knowledge and skill improvement.

Lu'an is a small and medium sized city in China, which has an urban population of 7 million approximately. The research sampling approach was designed for 3 target groups: First are the high school students in Lu'an especially Grade 3 students who will take national entrance exam and will graduate soon or who are planning for their

further university lives after the entrance exam. There are better possibilities for them to put overseas study plan into their consideration. Second target group is the college students who are studying in colleges but not satisfied with the current study situation. Third one is the working groups who want to improve themselves by acquiring practical knowledge. The typical two representatives of educational organizations are Lu'an No.1 middle school and West Anhui University. The sampling size was chosen as large as 230 units, 100 units of them are from No.1 middle school, 100 units of them are from West Anhui University and another 30 units are working individuals.

3.3 Questionnaire for Students

Questionnaires are amongst the most widely used and valuable means of data collection in marketing research. It is one of the easiest ways to get information about attitudes, ideas, beliefs and habits from a respondent. A questionnaire is a series of questions designed to provide accurate information from every member of sample. (Crowther & Lancaster 2009, 151,153)

According to the appointed three different target groups, questionnaires were designed especially for those people's demands and appetites. The questions and answer alternatives should be easily understood and clear in the questionnaire. When the respondents give negative answers to one question, they are asked to write their own opinions. In this way, it is better to complete the answers of the whole questionnaire. In order to find out the potential intentions of respondents on overseas study in Lu'an, there are altogether 15 questions which are mostly in forms of clear multiple choices. The last question completely reflects the detailed demands of potential customers' willingness by bar chart according to different degree levels.

3.4 Interviews in Related Fields

Interviews and surveys involve the collection of data from the individuals. This may

be through direct face to face personal interviews, either individually or in a group, by telephone or by a mail questionnaire. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 155) Interviewing involves several key skills that can often only be gained through experience. Interviewers are not only need to be skilled at questioning but in particular need to be good at listening. Good interviewers use the techniques of interviewing including using silence, probing answers, using prompts to explore the responses further. (Crowther & Lancaster 2009, 151)

Additionally, there are generally four aspects the researchers must pay attention to: (Chisnall 1991, 55)

1. Confirming correct interviewers
2. Making proper interview questions
3. Collecting valid and reliable data
4. Recording correct responses.

In this study, the interviews include local government interview of foreign affairs office in Lu'an, one family interview and a teacher or professor interview. The three interviews as qualitative research helped to achieve the goal on attitudes research of different social aspects. Personal depth interview, group interview and telephone interview were used as interview approaches.

The interview questions were designed for the first interviewee Mr. Zhang who is the vice chairman of Lu'an municipal foreign affairs office as follows:

Question 1 was to ask for providing educational population of Lu'an citizens and distributed architecture of different degrees of educated population. Then the aim was to figure out the number of students that have been going abroad and the main approaches. It is much more convenient to collect secondary data through interviews to analyze the educational situation of local citizens and get knowledge of previous cases of studying abroad. The aim of these questions was to acquire relevant information about historical background of overseas study industry.

Question 2 started with the question “How did your organization complete collecting foreign study market information?” It helps to get to know the current co-operating organizations in different countries and gives information about the possibilities of going to foreign countries. Then it was continued with another question “What other countries the organizations would hope to co-operate with in the near future?” This question directly reflects the trends and stress of future foreign study industry.

Question 3 were “Have you ever been organizing any kind of public activities to spread information on abroad study in Lu’an before? What were they? What issues did the consultants mostly care about?” etc. Through these answers the aim was to analyze and balance the advantages and disadvantages of previous promote activities in Lu’an. On the basis of former promotion experience, we could possibly find suitable promotional activities for the local market and could get potential information on public activities which the local people are most interested in.

The question 4 about the direct enquiring and it was aimed at getting awareness on the trend of future foreign study industry in Lu’an, which could also help to get basic knowledge of local capability on the future potential development. Then it was asked Mr. Zhang to talk about the obstacles possible met in the developing process of local environment. The question helps to point out some primary issues that need to be focused on and conquered in the future when new relationships build up.

The study was also taking family into research. In the in-depth group interview of one normal family, firstly it is necessary to know the background information of the family, which involves the kid’s educational background, parents’ career and salary information, the educational fund stored for their children etc. In the research, both sides’ opinions were collected separately from children’s and parents’ angles towards overseas study and factors influencing decision making for them. The expectations of family members and issues they were worried about most during the study process were also brought up in the interview.

Thirdly, it is also necessary to interview a teacher or professor to express his or her opinions towards foreign study. Because students' behaviour are easily influenced by their teacher's suggestions, it is important to figure out teacher's opinions toward foreign study first. The interview started by the question "Do you support behaviour of overseas study and why?" It could also be encouraged discussing the topic of modern educational system problems in China. This interview provides information of different social angles, which helps to perfect the research results.

3.5 Valuable Data Analysis

After the three interviews and one questionnaire survey, the findings from two approaches were collected and analyzed. On one hand, the results from interviews were recorded literally on paper as the qualitative research. On the other hand, the results from the questionnaires collected into an EXCEL form which as a tool expresses the proportion of various demands. Data results were described and illustrated through charts and tables.

While the quality of the research data is essential, it is the analysis of data turning raw data into useful information. It is on the basis of the reports prepared from the data analysis that significant managerial decisions are likely to be made. The use of computer packages provides a powerful means of processing large quantities of data relatively easily. The researcher's expertise in identifying a trend or relationship or some other nugget hidden within the results, provides the key component for decision-makers and transforms the data and techniques used into valuable information. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 170)

Quantitative data has to prove its reliability when compared with a wider population, while qualitative data can never be claimed to be representative of what a wider sample of respondents might indicate. The main task of qualitative data, therefore, is to present attitudes, feelings and motivations in some depth, whether or not they are represent the wider population. (Brassington & Pettitt 2007, 171)

4 THE RESEARCH RESULTS ON FOREIGN STUDY INTENTIONS

In this chapter, all research results were concluded. The research findings from the interviews briefly introduce the previous situation of foreign study, present the actual market capability and preview of potential markets of different appointed target groups. The questionnaires from respondents were analyzed in Excel and all results are shown in number records by charts. All the research results preview and reflect the real situation of Lu'an foreign study market.

4.1 The Findings from the Interviews

All interviews of different typical target groups provided lots of useful information. Firstly, the vice director of the government foreign affairs department accepted the interview. He pointed out the current situation of local citizens and previewed the main future trends of overseas study in Lu'an city. In the second interview, some basic opinions from different family members and common local family attitudes toward foreign study were collected. In the third interview, the professor provided more professional opinions as a educational worker towards foreign study, which might have a profound impact on students' opinions.

4.1.1 Interview of a Government Representative

There is an overseas study agency in the foreign affairs department of Lu'an government which handles business on customer foreign study procedures transactions like visa commission etc. Firstly, the vice director of foreign affairs department of Government Mr. Zhang helped to provide current educational structure information of Lu'an city. There were 4,700 schools of all types at different levels in Lu'an as recorded at the end of the year 2003. Of the total 68,130 faculty members, the amount of full-time teachers was 48,033. The number of enrolled students in Lu'an was 1,408,147 which also include adults in training schools. As recorded in related material, there are 91 senior high schools in Lu'an city, and the

number of full time teachers is 5,425, the number of enrolled students is 133,572. There are 61 general high schools, which have 4,146 teachers and 96,117 students. Of them, there are 18 vocational high schools containing 798 teachers and 29,514 students. In 12 secondary specialized schools, there are 481 teachers and 7,941 students. These numbers show the developing trend of educational career on a small scale in Lu'an city. At present, Lu'an has 2 state-levelled key vocational high schools, 10 provincial model high schools, 5 key provincial vocational high schools and 22 city model high schools, 2 city model secondary specialized schools. The amount of enrolled students in province-levelled and city-levelled model high schools occupied 65 % of the total population in whole Lu'an city's high schools in 2003. It brought a batch of large scale schools which have students more than 2,500 in Lu'an. The planned high school admissions for applicants are also increasing year after year. High schools in Lu'an have given 69,638 planned admissions for students this year which is 29 % higher than accrual admissions last year. (Overview of Lu'an education, 2010)

In the interview, Mr. Zhang briefly introduced the general situation of local market on foreign study. There are already hundreds of people who have gone abroad to study and work, but no more than 50 annually would like to choose the government agency. Fortunately, the number of people who choose to go abroad annually is apparently higher than the previous year. The trend of year to year percentage increasing shows that foreign study industry is a promising career in Lu'an. The thought of studying abroad is being accepted by local students gradually, studying in overseas countries is starting to become one of their future choices. This optimistic growth cannot leave without the support from the local government. Most overseas students of Lu'an city were choosing to study in the U.S.A., U.K. and Australia. The co-operation projects between Northern Europe and Lu'an also start working in a couple of years. The government policies on overseas study in western countries are rather lenient to Chinese students for absorbing more international students. The foreign affairs department of Lu'an government has held two informative meetings about foreign study in Lu'an which have been displayed in the style of

personal speech presentations given by the professors who have been invited from some foreign co-operating universities. However, the effect of activities held by local government is not enough and still need to be improved. (Vice director Zhang Xu, Foreign affairs department of Government, interview 28th of July 2010)

Mr. Zhang mentioned that overseas study still has lots of obstacles in Lu'an such a half-opened immature market. Most local people did not trust the foreign study agencies locally because foreign study as a new coming industry has too short a history there and the sales and purchase market there is not mature enough either. So it is very difficult for them to do business in foreign study in Lu'an because lots of students who have foreign study intentions would like to choose famous institutions in large cities such as Beijing, Shanghai or Hefei which have a long history. He also predicted that foreign study industry market in Lu'an city still has a large capability and would increase to peak after ten years. Before the coming overseas study rush period in Lu'an, he suggested that students should rationally choose to go abroad according to their personal conditions. The agency would insist on customer-oriented business serviced for every local customer. (Vice director Zhang Xu, Foreign affairs department of government, interview 28th of July 2010)

4.1.2 Family Interview

In a typical three-member family of Lu'an, parents' opinions cannot be ignored for they have strong power on decision making for their child. Through the contact numbers of customers which recorded in governmental agencies' office, one local customer's family accepted the telephone interview. In this family, the father is the manager of a private enterprise, the mother is working as a governmental official and the son is Grade 2 science student of Lu'an No.1 Middle School. Parents support their child both mentally and financially to go studying abroad. The annual income of this family is around 9,200 euros which are significantly higher than the general per-capita GDP in Lu'an and the family also has an abundant educational fund which can afford child's foreign study costs. Parents expressed that they were

willing to spend 50 % of their savings on their child's educational fee. Compared with other families, the high tuition fee of overseas study is not a big problem for this family. The U.K. is the target country for the child to pursue studies after the child graduates from high school.

Parents believed that academic environment of foreign countries would bring higher educational quality, higher starting point and competitive advantages of future career for their child compared in the domestic environment because foreign studies emphasize practical study. They also thought that U.K. has a long educational background and a formal language environment. The father has a total optimistic attitude towards foreign study. He indicated that overseas study experience would enlarge the child's view, help him get in touch with international cultures and provide chances to develop independent ability without family's control. The mother said it was good to escape from the exam-oriented educational system and tensions caused by domestic entrance exams. However, she tended to have more worries on safety issues, adapting issues in foreign countries and their son's weak self control ability without parents' guarantee. Parents both insisted to respect the child's interests when choosing the major.

In the interview, the child in the family showed a big interest on financial and IT subjects. He was confident with long-term foreign travels and in living independently. He said the vital issues were the admission requirements of choosing the schools and majors and collection of limited information. That's the reason why they apply through agencies and still try to measure qualities of other Britain schools. He also expressed the worries on problems of friends making and diversified lives in foreign cities. However, he had no opinion on immigration so far and did not care about immigration policies at all. In a word, the most important problems for the child in the family are international study possibilities and the foreign living environment.

4.1.3 Professor Interview

The professor Mrs. Ma who is teaching Comprehensive English in West Anhui University foreign language department accepted the interview. She has worked in an educational career for more than 10 years and also has 3 years of foreign study experience in U.K. She held a partly supportive attitude towards foreign study for the youngest. Firstly, she pointed out some advantages of foreign study as follows:

- 1) Improving knowledge of English earlier. Two influencing factors on English learning are language environment and ability to learn. If living in English-speaking countries, all daily communication could be done in English like class teaching, daily purchasing affairs etc. Through previous professional research results, younger children have good talent in language imitation. It would also bring language advantages in children's future career in the native English speaking environment.
- 2) More chances to enter top levelled universities. Different with recruitment policies of national universities, high school gradutors have no strict national entrance exams in western countries. Chinese students can apply for appropriate universities according to their scores in the entrance exam and choose qualified schools and majors freely. Foreign enrol systems are rather equal, which take students' daily performances in high schools into account in the recruitment process. International universities added some more admission conditions like language orders for Chinese high school graduate applicants.
- 3) Students have the flexibility in the selection of courses according to their personal interests and career plans. Most western schools have a courses selection system and students can decide what they would like to study by themselves. In dozens of courses, students can reasonably choose classes they are most attracted to and jump out from the limited obligatory module.

Facing the obvious direction of future studies, clear aspiration with interests, students would be active to learn and easily get into aimed colleges.

- 4) Cultivate independent ability. After several years independent lives in foreign countries, students can cultivate the independent ability. Long term getting in touch with foreign friends, it is easier for them blend into western culture and be international. Some abroad returnees are more polite and they know how to respect others. The most important thing is they are brave enough to trust themselves and willing to express their own opinions. In the environment of self study, self living and respecting the personality development, overseas students are better at self-improvement.

During the interview, Mrs. Ma also pointed out a phenomenon that the overseas returnees have not been able to find suitable jobs in China during recent years for their higher expectations. Indeed, lots of normal families are saving or collecting money for their children's overseas study is not encouraged because different individuals have different choices for their future. According to the sampling research results of 1,500 overseas returnees, over 35 % of them have an employment problem which is becoming a serious social problem. That's not because there are too many overseas returnees, on the contrary, the whole society still is in short of overseas talents. If the motivation of foreign study is because they were rejected by the dreamed domestic universities, these attitudes will lead returnees to get problems in future work. So she pointed out everyone should know his or her goal, create his own study plan then take a serious attitude towards foreign study and not to go abroad just for "studying abroad". It is better to take both external conditions like family income, networking with others etc. and internal conditions like personal interest, advantages etc. into consideration. (Professor Mrs. Ma, West Anhui University Foreign language department, interview 12th of August 2010)

4.2 The Findings from the Questionnaire

The questionnaire research was conducted through numerable target population, specially created for students from two classes of Lu'an No. 1 Middle School, students from foreign language faculty of West Anhui University and working individuals from local significant companies like Pacific Ocean Advertisement etc. All information was collected from Lu'an area and precisely inflects local people's actual intentions.

4.2.1 Age and Gender of Respondents

There were totally 230 respondents who participated in answering the questionnaire during two weeks. Figure 6 shows the different gender and age proportion of sample. The gender proportion of research target is almost in balance. The number of male students is 108 which occupied 47 % of total sampling size while the number of female students is 122 and takes 53 % of total sampling size.

The age of respondents ranged from 16 to 35. There were divided into three different target groups. The chart below illustrates that the age group from 16 to 20 in bottom column occupies approximately 58 % of total respondents, which become the primary research object. The lightest dark column mostly stands for people aged from 21 - 25 which occupies 32 % of the whole respondents, while the topped over 26-year-old group has 24 responses which takes 10 % of total target people.

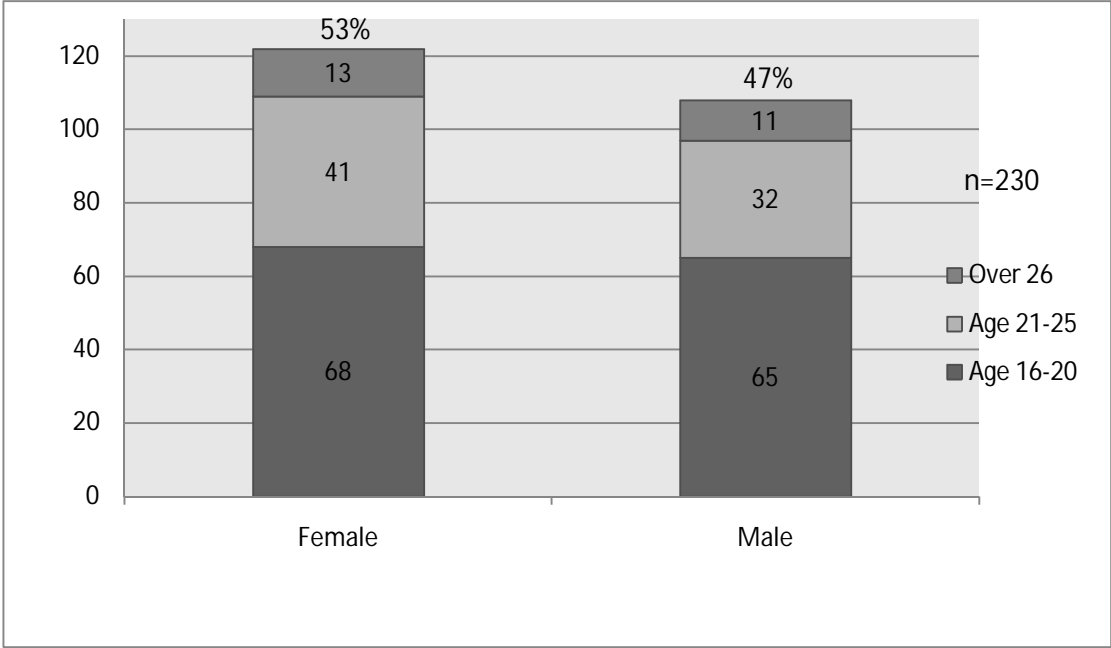


Figure 5. The proportion of genders and ages in the sample.

The research considered genders of respondents in the whole sample, while the purpose was only to ensure the balance of genders in different existing three age groups. When collecting answers, it did not give available records based on genders in other questions of questionnaire because the gender effect is not a strong distinction in the foreign study research. The choices in questionnaire related to foreign study were mainly made according to different individuals and the questionnaire only recorded in the numbers of options from respondents. Therefore, that is also one limitation for the research results of the whole thesis. However, the following research results were partly analyzed based on different age groups.

In the questionnaire research, the respondents in age group 16-20 almost belong to high school students except 33 respondents of them have been into college already. The respondents aged from 21 to 25 mostly stand for college students while over 26-year-old respondents certainly fall into working group which also has 6 exceptions. The average age of high school respondents was 19, the average age of college students was 22 and average age of working staff was 26. The following results depended on age groups rather than different educational groups.

4.2.2 Willingness to Go to Foreign Countries

The following diagram shows the number records of students who would like to go study overseas among 230 respondents based on the three target aged groups in Lu'an. It is apparent that a bit more natives have interests and willingness to go studying abroad. The research mainly targets to students who become the majority of respondents, so the research results mostly reflect the aspirations of students.

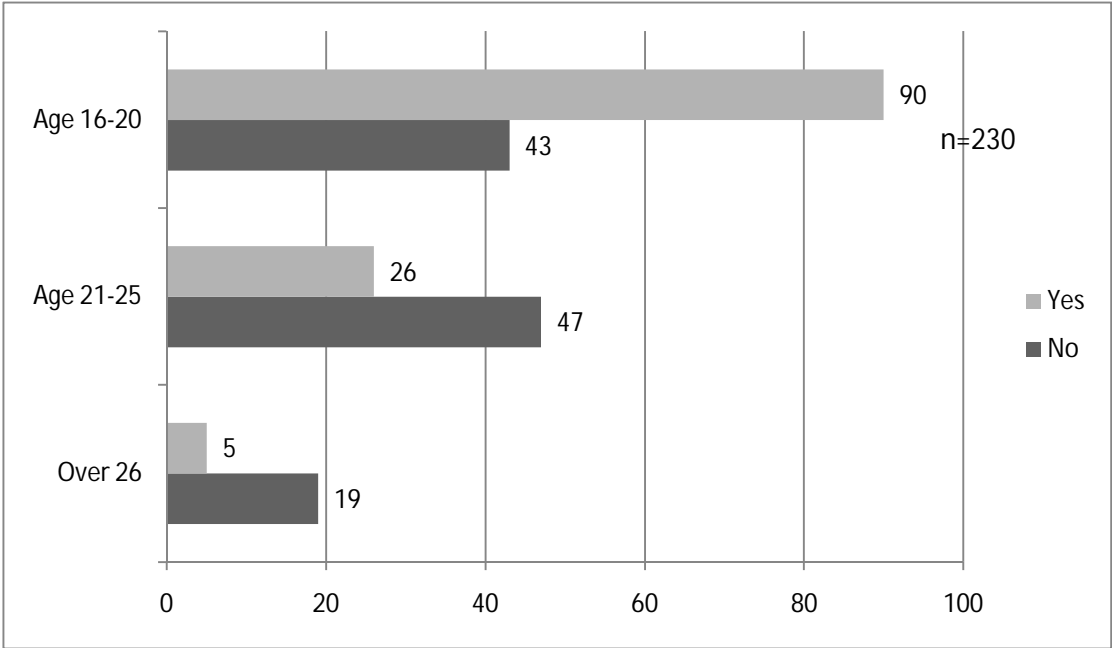


Figure 6. Willingness of respondents to go and study abroad based on age groups.

Figure 6 reveals that there are 121 respondents (53 %) who are willing to go and study abroad while 109 (47 %) of them don't want to go. Of the whole 121 who are willing to study abroad respondents, 74.4 % are from age group 16 - 20 and 21.5 % is from age group 21 - 25 while the age group older than 26 only accounts for 4.1 %. It displays that abroad study is more welcomed by the lower age group, which is mostly accepted by high school students compared with university students and employees. To conclude, the younger people are more willing to accept foreign study while older students have lower intentions on foreign study.

There are 90 respondents who accept studying abroad in the age group from 16 to 20, who account for 68 % of total respondents. There are 26 respondents in the age

21 - 25 group (35.6 %) and 5 respondents in the age group of over 26 years(20.8%) who would like to go studying abroad. The share of the respondents who answered “yes” was 6 % higher than respondents in “No” answers. There are more respondents interested in foreign study only shown in the age group 16 to 20, which accounts for 36%. While 28.8 % more unwillingness in age from 21 to 25 and 58.4 % more people refused foreign study in age group over 26. In a word, the youngest respondents aged from 16 - 20 are more keen on overseas study rather than other age groups.

4.2.3 Reasons Affecting Students’ Willingness to Study Abroad

Because 109 unwilling respondents stopped answering when they finished the question 5 in the questionnaire, the rest of the questions were fully completed only by 121 respondents who have willingness on foreign study. About the question of the main reasons of willing and unwilling to go abroad for study, Figure 7 describes answers of the 109 unwilling respondents which will be ignored during the following research questions and Figure 8 shows the 121 willing respondents’ answers which will become the main target group during the following thesis study. There was no choice limitation in this question for respondents, so respondents could individually choose proper options according to their real situation.

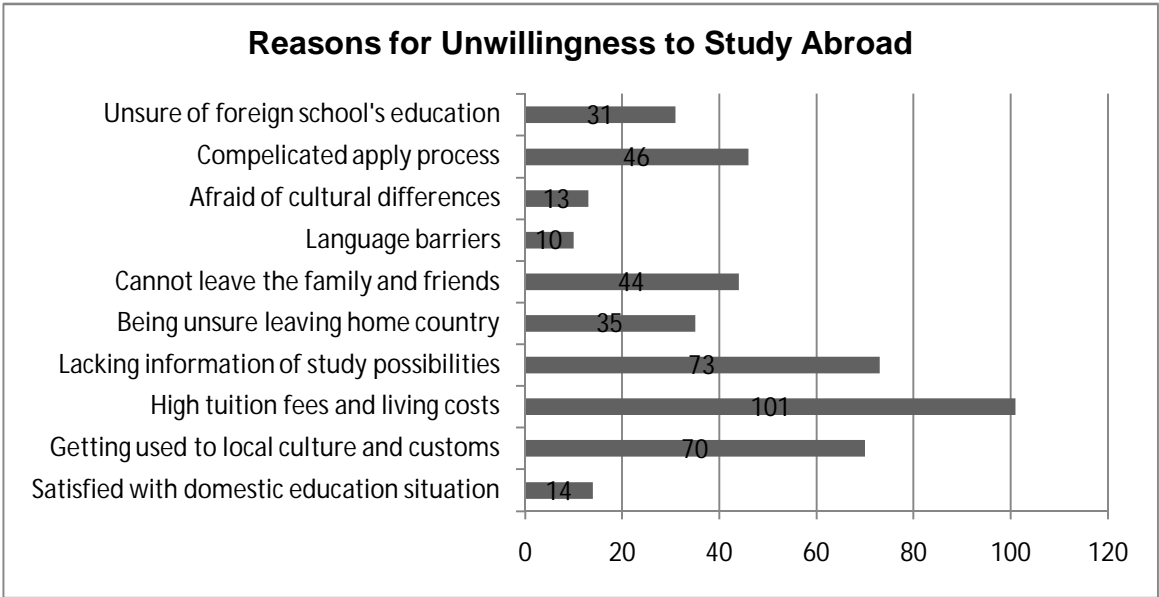


Figure 7. Reasons for unwillingness to study abroad (n = 437).

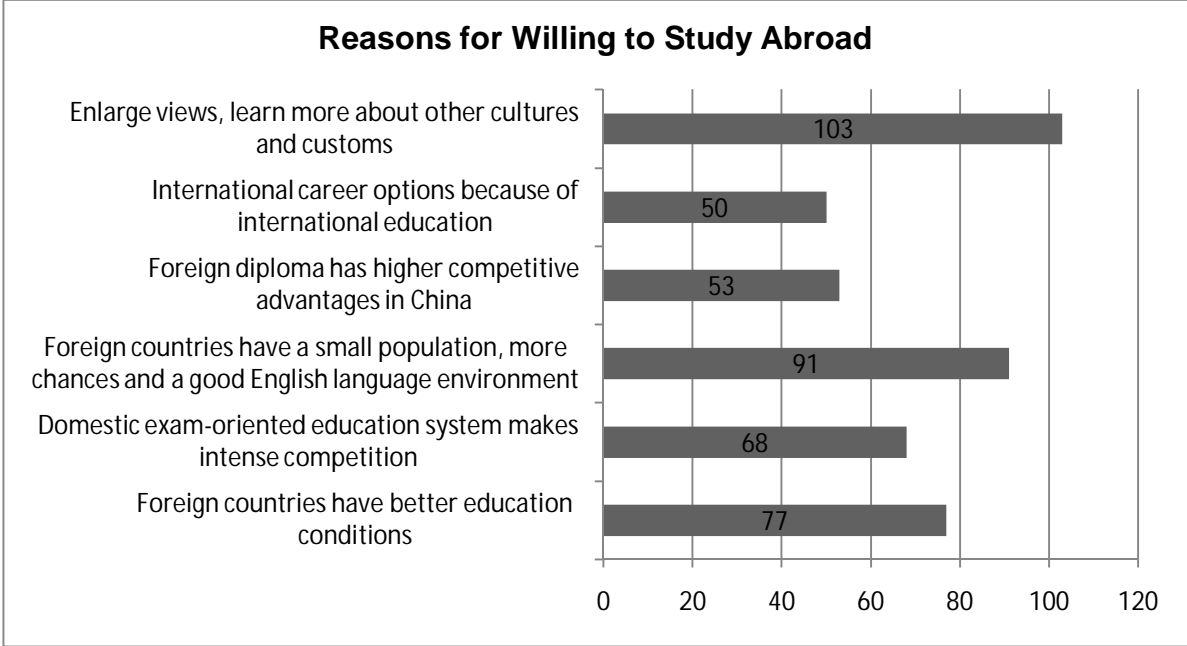


Figure 8. Reasons for willingness to study abroad (n = 442).

From the research results above, each summarized reasons all play an role in affecting the willingness and unwillingness. According to the diagram in figure 7, it can be seen that 92 % of the respondents would not like to go abroad because of expensive tuition fees and living costs. That is the primary reason which limits the local willingness. The following two important affecting reasons are lack of information on study possibilities and getting used to local culture and customs. For Lu'an is a typical land-locked developing city, citizens cannot easily change their conservative attitudes towards studying abroad and information on studying abroad is also limited. Because of a rather low GDP, Lu'an natives cannot afford high tuition fees or high living costs in general. Foreign study industry should be targeted at high income families rather than low income families in Lu'an city. Through the research, it also can be found out that as many as 87 % of Chinese students are not satisfied with the domestic educational situation in China, which should draw the attention of related educational departments. Of the whole respondents' age, there is no one more than 35 years old and 100 out of 109 respondents are still studying at schools. Language barrier and being afraid of culture difference seems not very important for younger students because they can easily adapt themselves and are willing to get in touch with new things.

According to figure 8, 103 respondents (85 %) are willing to go abroad for study and choose “enlarging views, learning more about other culture and customs” as a reason to go abroad. The following important reasons for students are “foreign country has a small population”, “more chances and good English language environment” which accounts for 75.2 % and “foreign countries have better education condition” takes 63.6 %. 56 % respondents are willing to study abroad because they are not satisfied with domestic exam-oriented education system, which really should raise concerns of government’s educational department. Future career advantages also make students choosing going abroad. 6 % more people are concentrating on competitive advantages in domestic career rather than getting an international career chance.

4.2.4 Favorite Countries and Degrees

Figure 9 shows the desired foreign countries where 121 respondents would like to go for overseas studying. There is no limitation of choices for responses in this question. Figure 10 illustrates the degrees that respondents in different age groups are willing to get for foreign study.

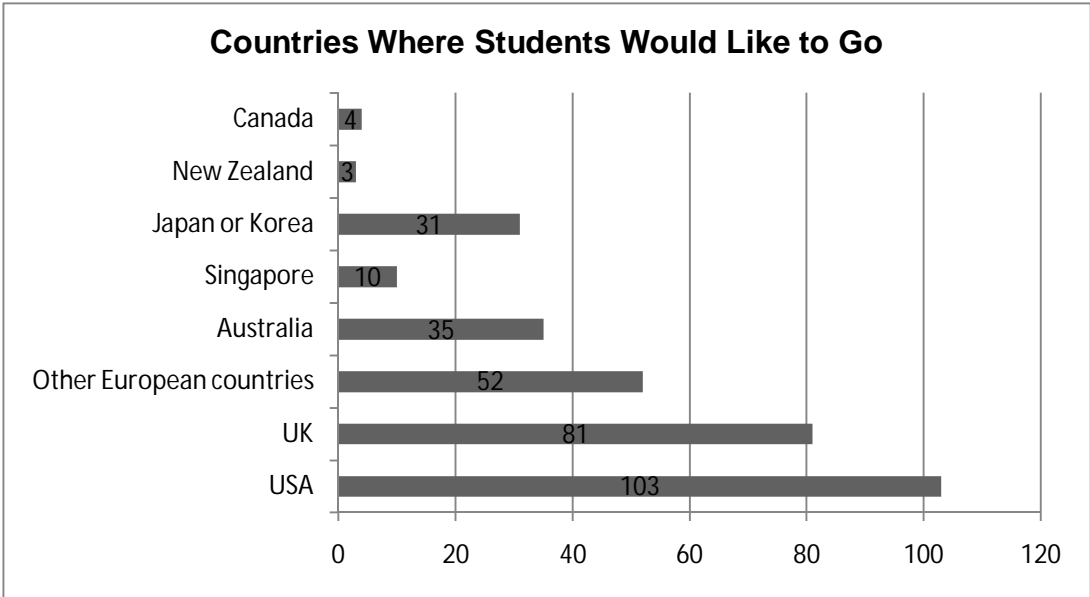


Figure 9. Countries where respondents are willing to go studying (n = 319).

From the diagram above, it is obvious that America is the most popular choice, the following countries are UK, other European countries, Australia, Japan or Korea, Singapore and New Zealand. Of all options, 85 % of respondents are willing to go studying to America. Willingness on other European countries occupied 43 %, Australia is 29 % while Japan and Korea is 26 %. They are medium welcomed by local citizens. It cannot be ignored that 4 people chose Canada and 3 people chose New Zealand in added answers of the questionnaires.

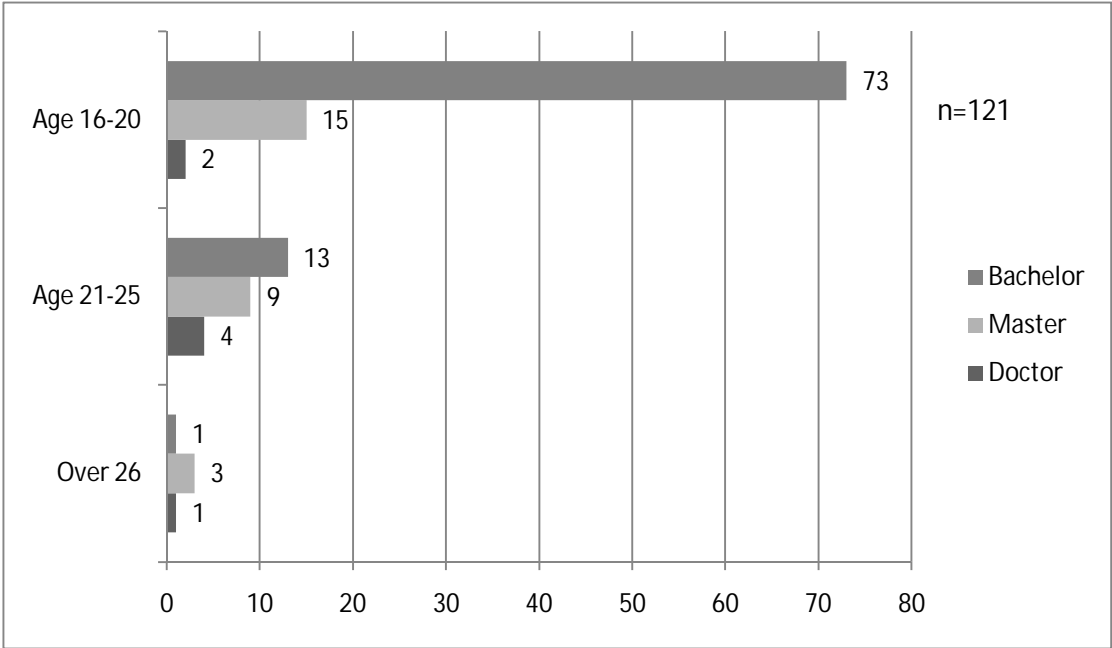


Figure 10. Degrees respondents are willing to apply in a future foreign study.

In the chart of degrees that respondents are willing to apply in their foreign study plan based on different age groups, we can find out that 72 % applicants of bachelor’s degree which are dramatically higher than ratios of master’s and doctor’s degree applicants. For the limitation of the research, all respondents are educated beyond junior high schools so that no abroad study intentions of junior high schools in the research. 27 master degree applicants only occupied 22 % of whole willing respondents while doctor degree willingness is only 7. According to age groups, it shows students aged from 16 to 20 are more interested in applying for a bachelor’s degree which takes 84 % of whole bachelor applicants. In master degree applicants, the number of people aged from 16 to 20 students decreases to 15 which occupied

56 % of the whole master applicants and still plays the main role in different age groups. However, there are only 2 doctor applicants in the young age group 16 to 20. In the age group from 21 to 25, respondents are more interested in doctor's degree which takes 57 % of all respondents who are interested in doctor's degree. It is evident that more over 26 years old respondents are willing to apply for a master's degree rather than bachelor's and doctor's degree but these still account only for 7.5% of the whole age groups. Of 87 applicants in abroad bachelor degree study, only one is from age group over 26. To summarize, the higher education of bachelor's degree is most welcomed by younger students, master's degree takes the second place for older target group, while doctor's degree or higher have less market in Lu'an city. However, it is not only according to the ages of respondents but also mainly depends on the educational level of each respondent.

4.2.5 Preferable Approaches to Going Abroad

There are four main approaches which the respondents choose from. Each ratios is shown in the pie chart below in figure 11.

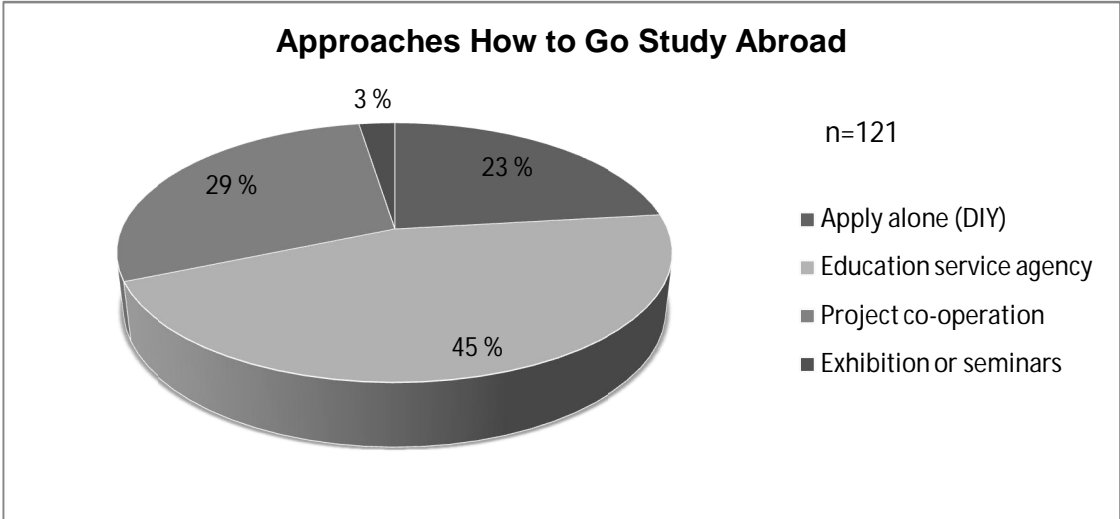


Figure 11. The ways respondents prefer to go to study abroad.

The four abroad study approaches chosen in questionnaires are applying schools and other processes by students themselves which is also called DIY foreign study,

using education service agencies, participating in co-operation projects between domestic and foreign schools and participating in exhibitions or seminars. Of 121 willing respondents, 55 respondents are choosing to apply through educational service agency which accounts for 45 %. 35 respondents are willing to apply through co-operate projects of schools to go abroad, which holds the second large occupancy of 29 %. There are 23 % of students who choose applying for schools by themselves what is the cheapest way. Exhibitions or seminars are for higher educated scholars or specialists, so only 3 people (3 %) are willing to go abroad through participation in exhibitions or seminars.

4.2.6 Problems Concerning Studying Abroad

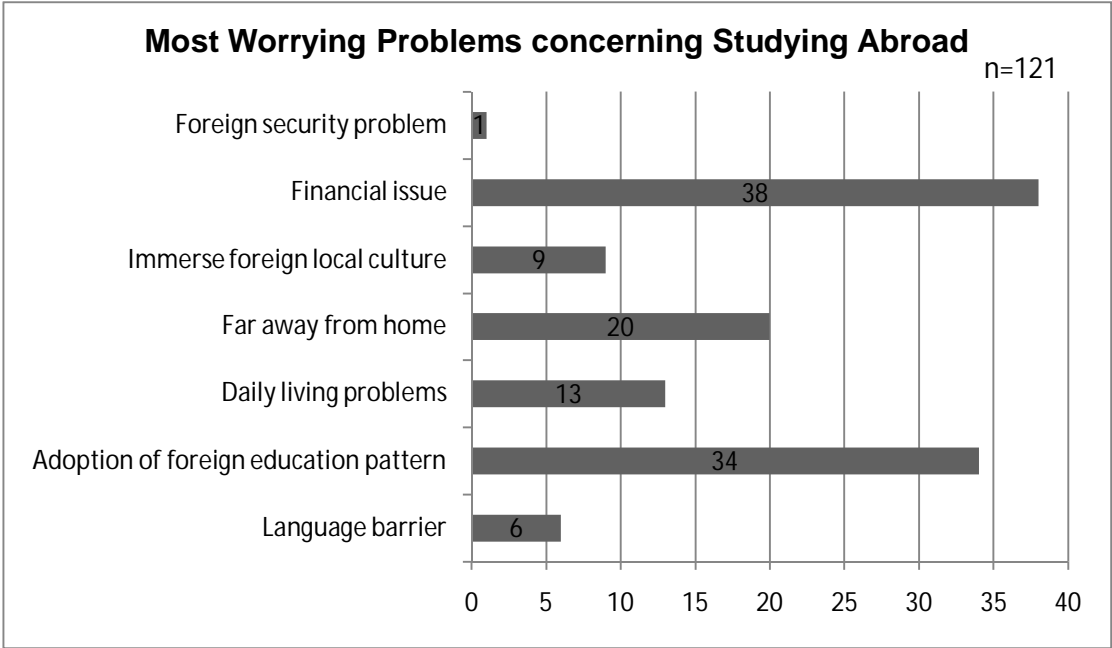


Figure 12. Problems respondents are most worried about concerning studying abroad.

The above diagram displays the choices of 121 respondents of the most worrying problems in future abroad study life. There are 31.4 % of them who worried financial issues most, which is a main restriction for local people to go overseas and a vital factor influencing potential intentions. 34 respondents (28 %) think most difficult problem for them is to adapt to foreign educational pattern, which is more focus on practical studies and extremely different from Chinese exam-oriented educational

pattern. The following less important factors for local potential foreign study willingness are far away from home (16.5 %), food and accommodation daily living problems (10.7 %), afraid of immerse to local culture, language barrier (5 %) and worries about foreign security problems (0.8 %).

In the research results, local citizens mostly care overseas study costs in future overseas lives of different countries. The difference on education or culture, daily life adaption problem are less important in local potentials' mind. Investigated people also started worrying security issues in foreign countries what was added into questionnaire list.

4.2.7 Family Support

In the former research results of unwillingness reasons on foreign study in Figure 7, the top one reason of unwillingness to study abroad is high tuition fee of foreign schools and overseas living costs, so financial issue became the most worried problem in local respondents reply. Generally saying, children's foreign study costs cannot be solved without financial support by parents who is having a strong decision making power and it is a necessary prerequisite of foreign study. That's the reason why we should take parents' opinions on foreign study seriously into account. Figure 13 illustrates the family support towards foreign study based on age groups. Figure 14 shows how much families can afford on their children's foreign study costs annually.

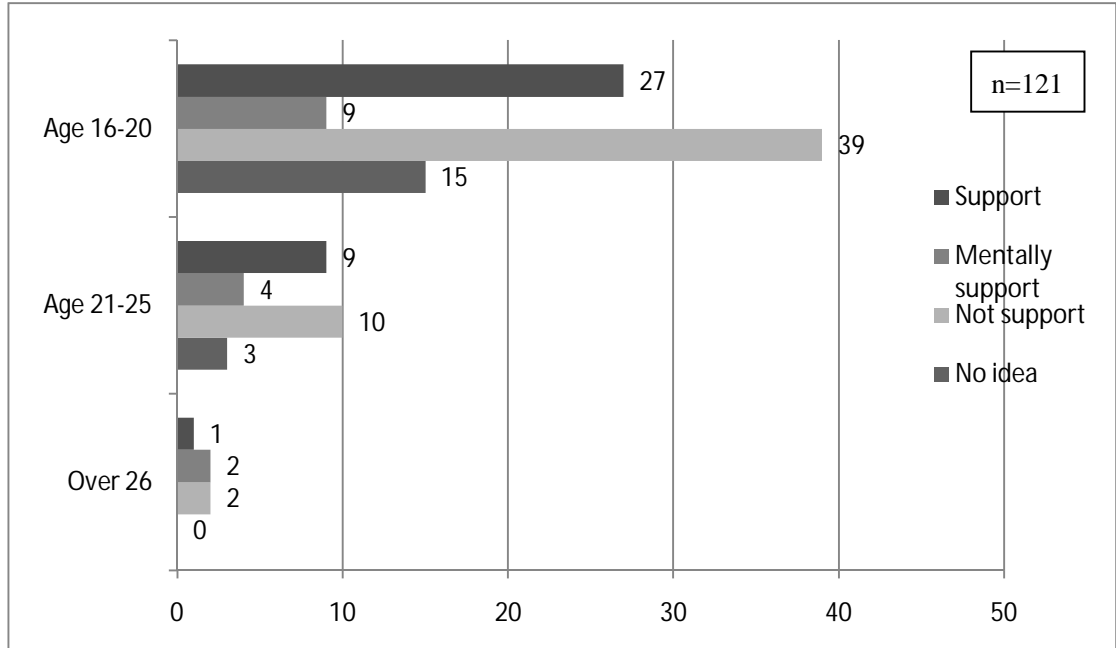


Figure 13. Family support towards foreign study situation according to the age groups.

In the research results, of total 121 respondents who were willing to study abroad, 37 families (30.6 %) both mentally and financially support their children’s foreign study which is shown as top column “support”, 15 families (12.4 %) only mentally support without financially support, 51 families (42.1 %) do not have willing to send child abroad for studying and the rest 18 of them (14.9 %) have no idea of their parents’ opinions. In the 90 samples in age group 16 to 20, 39 families refused to let children go overseas, 27 families fully support it which is 13.3 % less than the number of disagreed families on foreign study in age group 16 - 20.

To summarize, the ratio of fully support family in the age group 16 - 20 is 30 %, 34.6 % in age group 21 - 25 and 20 % in age group over 26. There are higher family against ratio than supportive ratio in every different age group, which could cause the main obstacle on foreign study affairs. From the large numbers of refused overseas study families which also including the numbers of only mentally support families, it is necessary to take foreign study costs that family can afford annually into consideration.

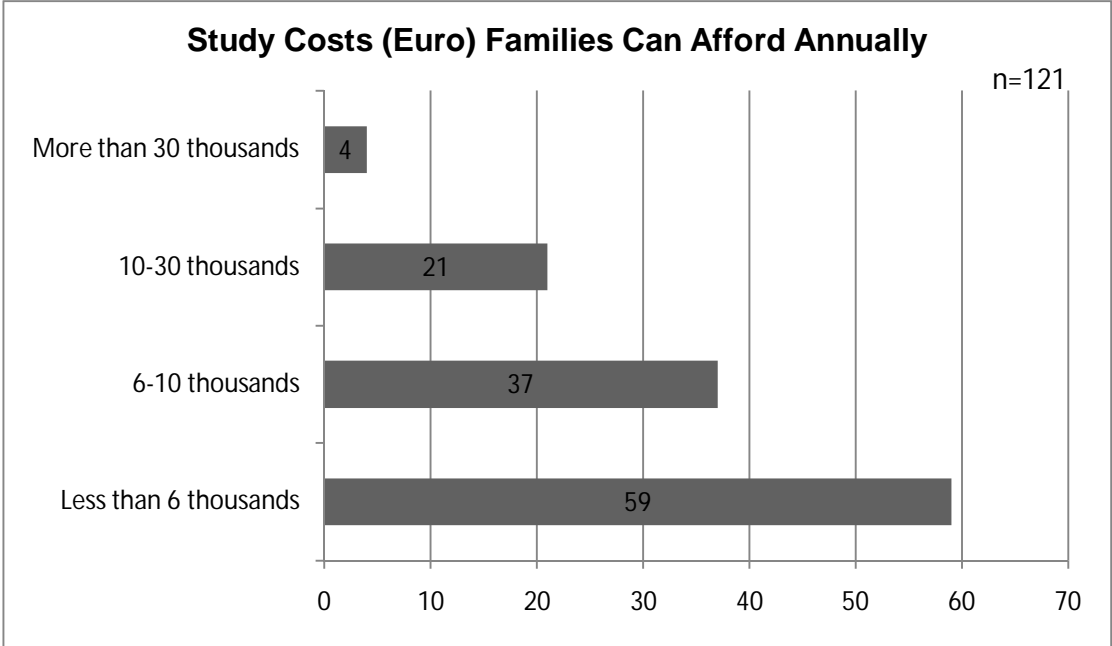


Figure 14. Foreign study costs families can afford annually (Euro).

Figure 14 gives exact numbers of families can afford different abroad study costs every year. In general, the number of families is decreasing almost in same gap approximately 15 % when the tuition fee rises to another step. It is obvious that 59 of 121 respondents' families (48.8 %) could afford tuition fee less than 6 thousands euro annually and only 4 families (3.3 %) could spend more than 30 thousands euro every year on foreign study costs. It shows that low income people still comprise a large part in social groups and only seldom families could afford more than 30 thousands euro annually.

According to existing research results (Liberation Network, 2009.3.16), the foreign countries where study costs are less than 6 thousands euro are several European countries such as France, Germany and northern European countries where there have no tuition fees. South Korea, Singapore and New Zealand could be target courtiers if family could afford 6-10 thousands euro annually. Other countries like Australia, U.S.A., Canada, Japan etc. need cost more than 10 thousands euro annually. Local people could choose their target countries by tuition fees they can afford according to the family economic situation.

4.2.8 Preferable Information Aspects on Foreign Study

There are various aspects of information on study abroad what students hope to figure out before they go overseas. Through the research results on the top three aspects of information that respondents mostly hope to know on foreign study, it is helpful for agencies and foreign schools to provide relative aspects of information on studying abroad according to local students' demands. For 121 respondents who has willingness on foreign study, and each one has 3 options on aspects' selections, there are totally 363 responses exist in the questionnaire collection.

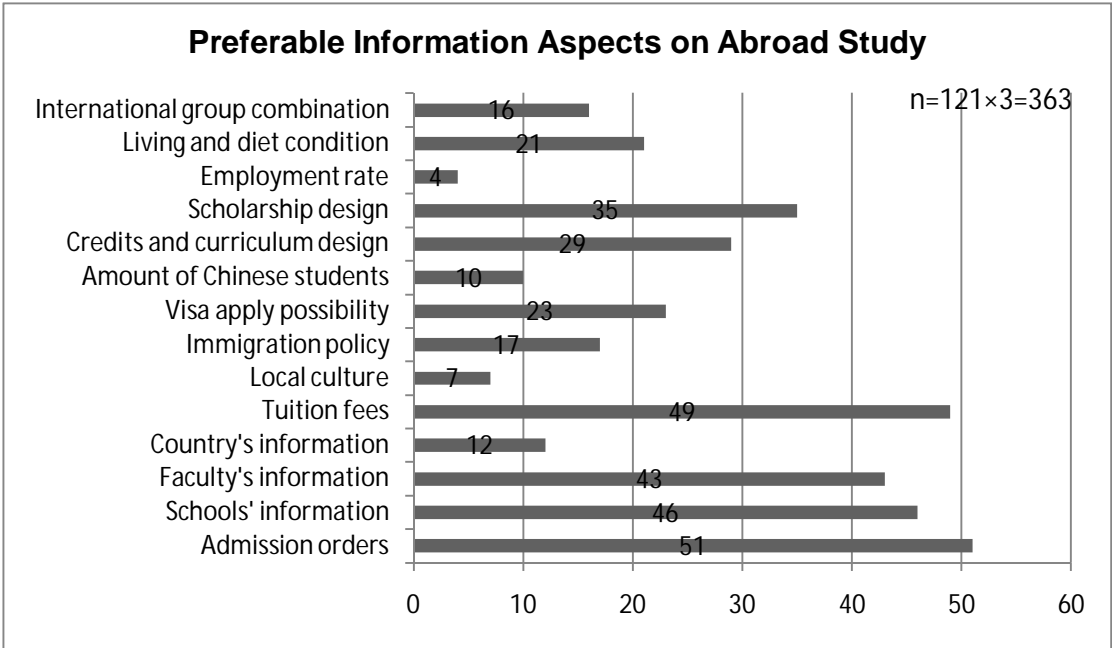


Figure 15. The aspects of information people hope to know before they plan to go abroad. (n = 121, number of responses/respondent = 3, number of answers is 363.)

The above diagram shows the 14 foreign study information fields which are important related to foreign study. In general, aspects which respondents are over 40 (11 %) are admission orders, tuition fees, school and faculty's information that are the most desirable information aspects for respondents. The following less important information people cared about are scholarship design, credits and curriculum design, visa apply possibility and condition of living and diet. Less than 20 respondents think important information aspects that we could treat them as

unconsidered information are immigration policies, international group combination, countries' information, number of Chinese students, local culture and employment rate which only have 4 voters. In a word, besides the tuition fee on abroad study which becomes the most desirable information for people, they prefer to know information on detailed micro area like school and faculty rather than large scaled general knowledge like country. Local students also prefer getting study oriented information rather than knowing living, work and immigration condition in macro environment.

4.2.9 Preferable Approaches to Getting Information on Studying Abroad

Toward various aspects of necessary information referred above, it raised 6 preferable options about approaches to get information on foreign study which are shown in Figure 16 below. It helps to know acceptable marketing promotions locally for foreign schools and agencies, which plays an important role in overseas study marketing. Of 121 respondents who have willingness go abroad, every respondent is ordered to choose three preferable options on approaches to get information during the research. So there are 363 responses in total to be analyzed as well.

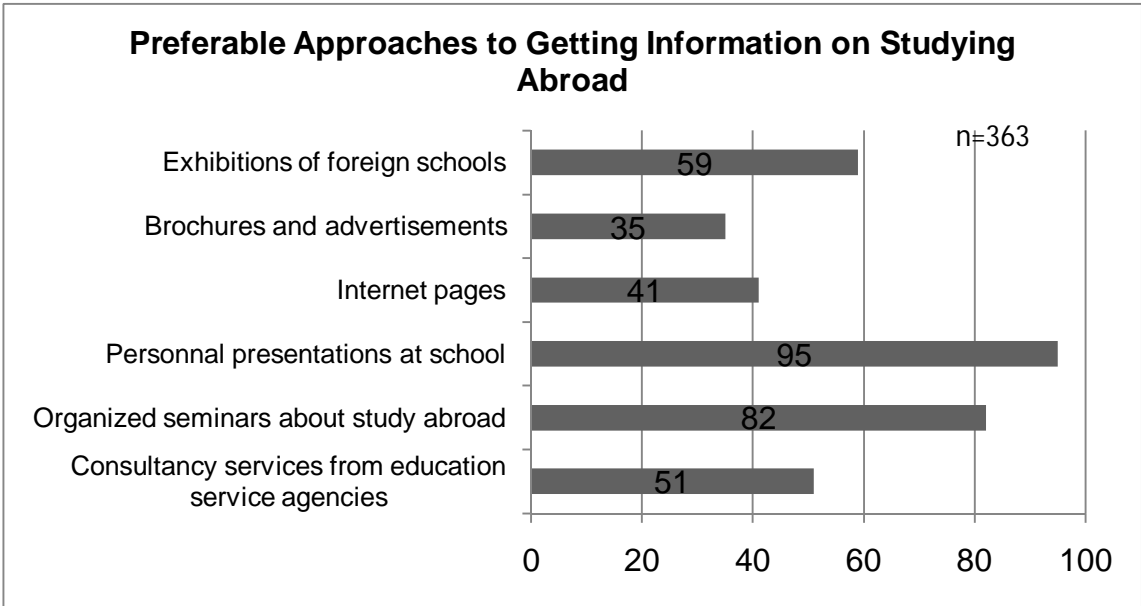


Figure 16. Preferable approaches to get information on possibilities to study abroad. (n = 121, number of responses/respondent = 3, number of answers is 363).

From the data above collected by the questionnaire, it is not difficult to find out that personal presentation at school is the most welcomed way for students to get foreign study related knowledge. It has 26.1 % appreciators. The second preferable approach is organized seminars about studying abroad, which has only 3.5 % less support ratio than personal presentation. Approaches of foreign schools exhibitions and consultancy services from educational service agencies also have more than 50 supports. Fewer respondents would like to get information through internet pages, brochures and advertisements. There is no extreme disparity between preferences for channels to get information. In the research, people in Lu'an city tend to incline to accept active promotion methods rather than dig out information by themselves and would love to get rounded detailed information by one shot.

4.2.10 Importance of Factors Influencing School and Major Selection

In research process, there are 17 factors listed which have possibilities influencing students' selections of schools and majors. It also provides 5 levelled importance evaluation of each possible influencing factor in questionnaire. 121 respondents selected each influencing factor's importance by their instinct evaluation. Taking the research result into consideration, it could help to know every factor's impact power on foreign study in local people's minds, help foreign school's sales promotion on target factors and also help conditional improvement of schools when target to Lu'an students' potential intentions on studying abroad.

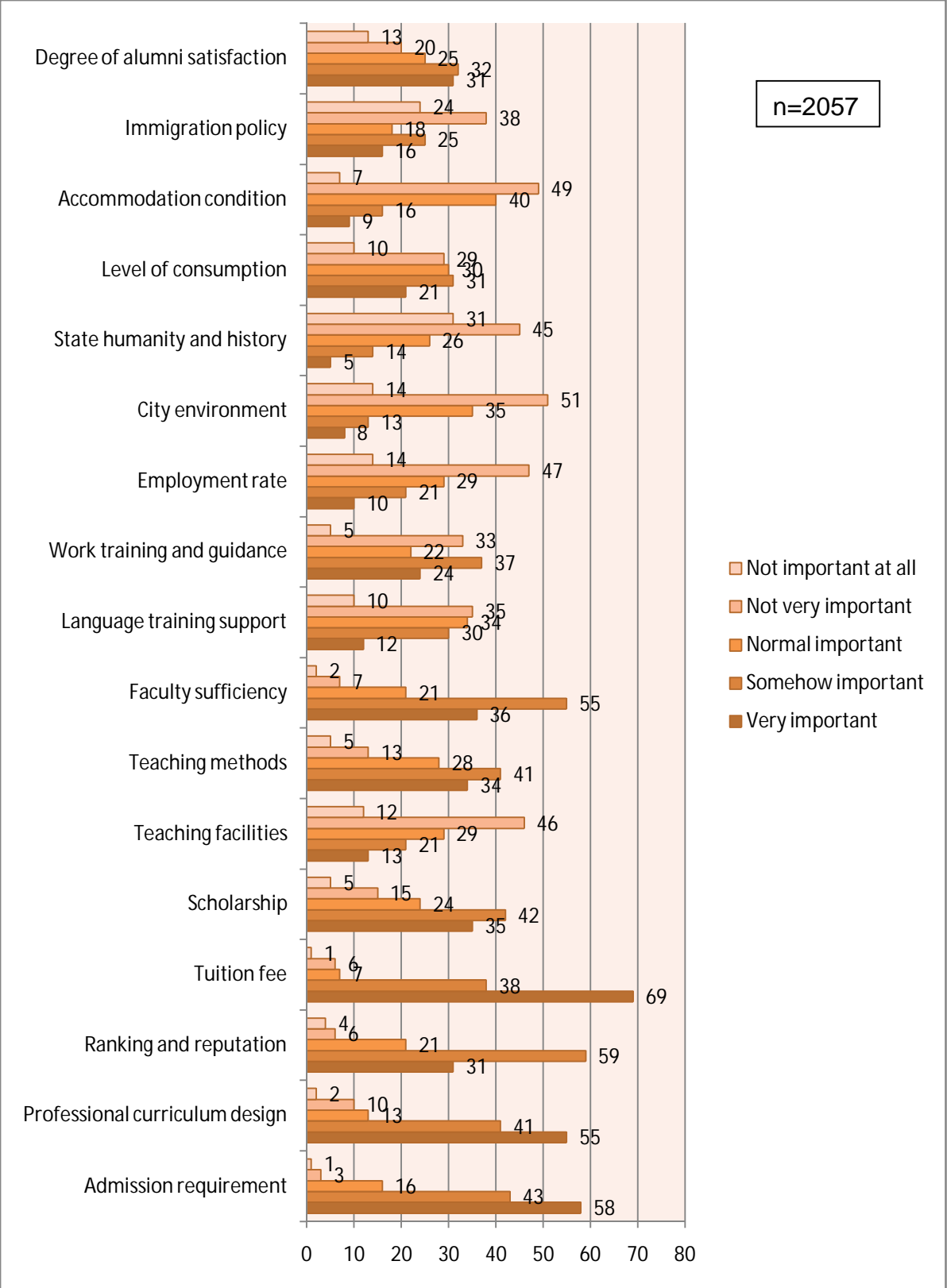


Figure 17. Importance evaluation of factors influencing the selection of school and major.

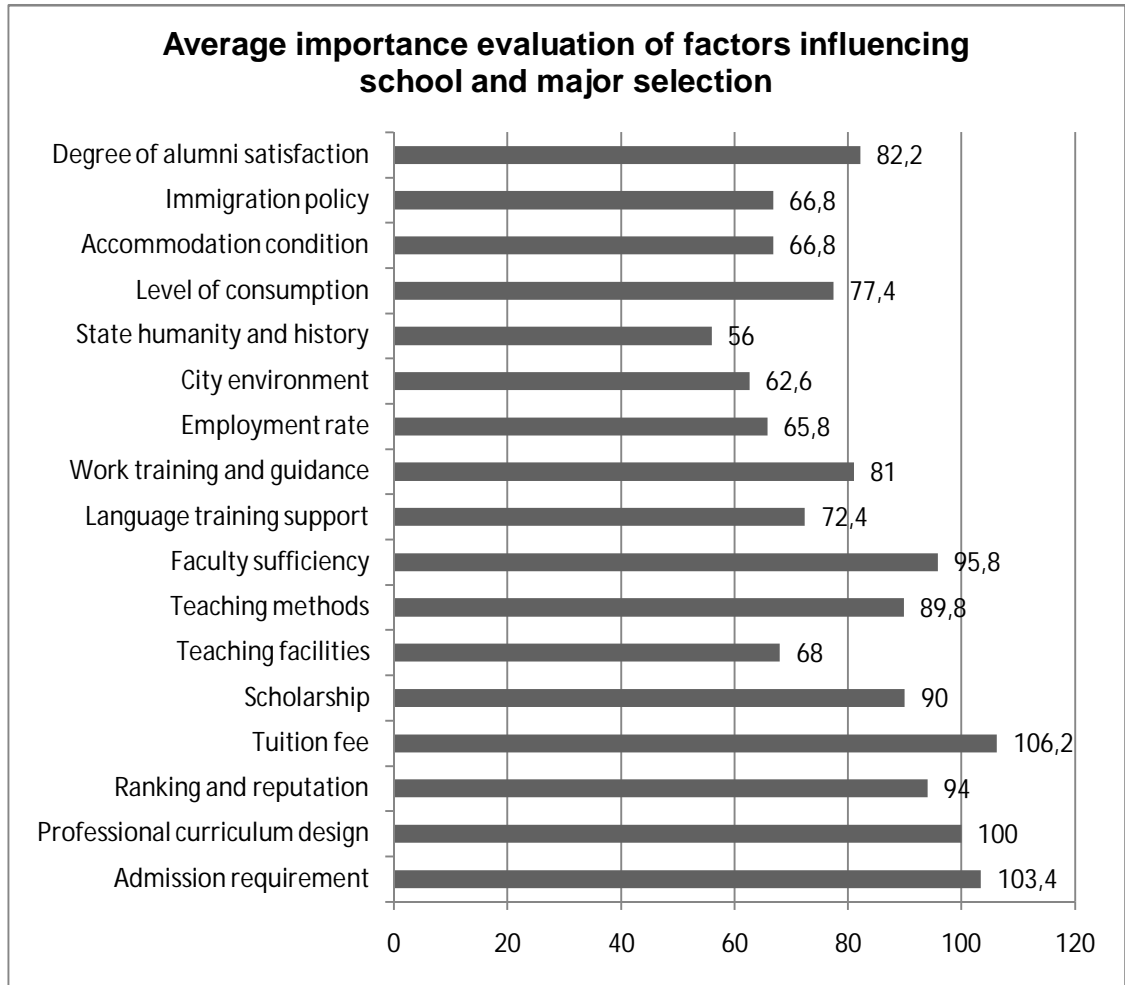


Figure 18. Average importance evaluation of factors influencing the selection of school and major.

Because it is complicated to compare importance of related different factors by Figure 17, there is an average importance evaluation of school and major selection shown in Figure 18. It is given different credits on the scale of 1 to 5 to different levelled importance, as very important gets 5, somehow important gets 4, like so on. Accumulate all scores of each influencing factors and divided by 5 and get an average score for every factors which take account in the list for better analyzing and comparing as follows.

In figure 18, it is clear that tuition fee is the top 1 issue that respondents mostly cared, and admission requirement followed with it, then professional curriculum design takes the third important factor. The top 3 most cared issues have scores more than 100 which can be concluded as the most important factors influencing school and

major selection. State humanity and history only has 56 score which has the lowest score and becoming respondents' least cared issue. City environment and employment rate also hold low scores which respondents do not care as well and becoming the second and third most unimportant issues for local people. It is also easy to figure out importance of other related options through figure 18.

In figure 17, the factors that more than 50 respondents think very important which also only less than 4 % respondents think not important at all are tuition fee, admission requirement and professional curriculum design, Except the top three influencing factors, the items that voters think are very important and somehow important totally reach 50 % are ranking and reputation, scholarship, teaching methods, faculty sufficiency, working training and guidance and degree of alumni satisfaction which are all direct school-oriented elements. The items that voters think are not very important and not important at all added together reach to 50 % of whole respondents are immigration policies, state humanity and history, city environment and employment rate which are all related to state environment without direct connection to study. Other neutral important conditions like level of consumption, accommodation condition, language training support and teaching facilities generally have close relationship with daily life which owns certain attention from students.

In rather important study-oriented factor group, tuition fee is still the top 1 issue people care most, which more than 57 % of respondents think as very important. Then admission requirement follows, which as "very important" voters take almost 48 % while professional curriculum design has 45.5 % respondents think it is very important as the third important affect element. The rest conditions are more "somehow important" voters compared to "very important" voters what can conclude as the "somehow important" influencing factors.

In general, people think that factors directly related to schools and majors are more important than other living and state environmental information. Students in Lu'an

city also care study issues more than working and immigration possibilities of a country when they are choosing schools and majors for future foreign study. So it is necessary for schools and faculties to improve teaching quality and design recruitment, curriculum and custom-made tuition fee system rationally.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Since foreign study is obviously increasing in big cities in China, it is necessary to do a research about the overseas study intentions in medium or small sized cities nowadays. The study's objective was to find out the potential market of foreign study prospects, acquiring related information of local abroad study intentions, and analyzing foreign study acceptance in Lu'an city of Anhui province for better educational marketing.

5.1 Evaluation of the Research

In the theoretical part, a specific study which relates to local environment and potential educational marketing on studying abroad was done. In correlation with the theories, the marketing research was done in order to collect primary data of customers' potential demands. At the same time, it was also supported by some secondary researches.

In the interview part, the research findings briefly introduced the previous foreign study situation in Lu'an and presented actual market data and potential markets from different target groups. Mr. Zhang Xu from foreign affairs department in Lu'an government introduced general information of local foreign study market. He pointed out that there is optimistic future development but also some obstacles of foreign study market in Lu'an. By interviewing a typical family in Lu'an city, it also raised attention to parents' opinions toward abroad study, since the main financial support comes from parents. The interview also illustrated the foreign study related issues each family members most care about. Through the last professor interview, Mrs. Ma from West Anhui University analyzed the advantages and disadvantages towards foreign study and gave suggestions to those students who have willingness on abroad study. The interviews from different social angles collected data to analyze the local potential market situation.

In the questionnaire part, information was collected from the 230 respondents who are coming from Lu'an No.1 Middle School, West Anhui University and working individuals in some local enterprises. The data was analyzed in Excel to point out all the demands shown in number records. The numbers obviously illustrated local potential customers' willingness to go to foreign countries, reasons affecting students' choice, favorite countries and degrees, preferable approaches to going abroad, worrying problems, family support situation, affordable study costs, preferable information aspects, preferable approaches to get information and importance evaluation of factors influencing the selection of schools and majors. All the research results realistically reflect the situation of Lu'an's potential abroad study market.

5.2 Recommendations for Marketers

Through the findings from the interviews and the questionnaire research, several points can be summarized which attract marketers' attentions for better marketing in Lu'an. Lu'an has a large population, so there are many high schools and abundant enrolled students' resource. The number of the people who go overseas keeps increasing year by year. However, compared with the huge amount of enrolled students, the exact outgoing number seems rather limited. So Lu'an has a new coming market of foreign study industry, which still has a long life cycle and also has large capability. What's more, with the government policies that support foreign affairs, Lu'an could be a good market for foreign schools.

Marketers should take the family's economic situation into account and target on high income families for direct promotion. During the research results, high tuition fees and living costs became the main factor of unwillingness on abroad study and financial issue is the biggest problem concerning foreign study. Most potential families in Lu'an can only afford the study costs less than 6 thousand euros annually. For foreign schools, it is necessary to cut down high tuition fees properly according to local lower average GDP compared with general international level. It is also

necessary to consider the issues the parents are worried about because parents are the main financial support for students. Safety, accommodation and diet issues came up in the family interview and foreign schools could improve in these matters.

According to the findings from the questionnaire, the lower age group from 16 to 20 is more interested (as high as 58 %) in foreign study. Bachelor is the most popular degree for local students especially in the age group 16 - 20.

For foreign schools, it would be more efficient to target for bachelor's degrees to the age group 16 - 20 which falls into the high school group. On promotion approaches, admission orders, tuition fees and school and faculty information are the most preferable information. Personal presentation at school, organized seminars about studying and exhibitions of foreign schools would be the most acceptable approaches in marketing locally. It is also obvious that the better the teaching quality, the more applicants, and professional curriculum design needs to be paid attention to in foreign schools. The most welcomed approach that the respondents prefer is through educational service agencies. Since there are only a few abroad study agencies handling the oversea study business in Lu'an, so it is necessary for the government's foreign affair department to authorize educational institutions to set up related agencies locally.

5.3 Limitation of the Research

Although the target of this study was achieved, there are also some limitations which influence the reliability of this study.

Firstly, in the interview process, the foreign affairs department of Lu'an government could not provide the exact number of abroad study cases but it only gave an approximate number. Secondly, most research analyses are based on different age groups but they are not divided by the educational levels of respondents, which could not clearly identify working group's intentions. What's more, all respondents

are educated beyond junior high schools, so no foreign study intentions of junior high schools are considered in the research, which is another limit of sampling frame. Thirdly, lots of questions in questionnaire research were completed by 121 respondents who have willingness on foreign study from 230 respondents in total. Compared with the huge amount of enrolled students in Lu'an city, the number of respondents seems limited so the convincing power of the whole study is not strong enough for Lu'an foreign study intentions in reality.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT INTENTION TO STUDY ABROAD

As part of the development of education quality level and various education requirements, abroad study plans are gradually considered by lots of students thought it is a hard decision for students because of diversity of abroad study choices and huge amount of information. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect potential demands from students and do research on potential local abroad study trend.

The questionnaire is a very important method during the thesis research on intentions toward target group for collecting information precisely and realistically. Please tick the appropriate choices and add your answer on the given lines if it is necessary.

1. Your age:

- A. Under 16 B. 16-20 C. 21-25 D. 26-30 E. 31-35 F. Over 35

2. Your gender:

- A. Female B. Male

3. Your social distinction:

- A. High school students
B. University students
C. Working group

4. Are you willing to go to foreign countries for study?

- A. Yes →continue to question 6
B. No→continue to question 5.

5. What is the main reason not willing to go abroad for study? (Multiple choice)
- A. Satisfied with current domestic education situation
 - B. Getting used to local culture and customs
 - C. Higher tuition fees and living costs abroad
 - D. Lacking information about study possibilities abroad
 - E. Being unsure leaving home country
 - F. Cannot leave from family and friends
 - G. Language barriers
 - H. Afraid cultural differences
 - I. Complicated apply process
 - J. Unsure foreign school's education quality
 - K. Other (Please write down)_____

Your answer has been finished right here. Stop answering following questions.

Thank you for your answering!

6. What degree would you want to get in study abroad?
- A. Bachelor degree
 - B. Master degree
 - C. Doctor degree or further
7. The reasons why you willing to go foreign countries for study: (Multiple choice)
- A. Foreign countries have better education conditions (different education pattern)
 - B. Domestic exam-oriented education system makes intense competition
 - C. Foreign countries have small population, more chances and good English language environment
 - D. Foreign diploma has higher competitive advantages in China
 - E. International career options because of international education
 - F. Enlarge views, learn more about other cultures and customs
 - G. Other_____

8. Which country do you want to go? (Multiple choice)
- A. USA B. Great Britain C. Other European countries D. Australia
E. Singapore F. Japan or Korea G. Other_____
9. Which way you would choose to go to study abroad?
- A. Applying by yourself
B. Using education service agency
C. Participating project co-operations between schools
D. Participating in exhibitions or seminars
E. Other_____
10. What aspects of information will you hope to know when you plan to go abroad?
Choose 3 most preferable options
- A. Admission orders B. Schools' information C. Faculty's information
D. Country's information E. Tuition fees F. Local culture
G. Immigration policy H. Visa apply possibility I. Amount of Chinese students
J. Credits and curriculum design K. Scholarship design
L. Employment rate M. Living and diet condition N. International group combination
O. Other_____
11. What is the problem you are most worried concerning study abroad?
- A. Language barrier
B. Foreign education pattern adaption
C. Food and accommodation living problems
D. Far away from family and friends
E. Immerse foreign local culture
F. Financial issue
G. Other_____
12. Do your parents support your study abroad?
- A. Yes. Both mentally and financially

- B. Mentally support but cannot support financially
- C. Not support
- D. No opinion

13. How much study costs (euro) your family can afford annually?

- A. Less than 6 thousands
- B. 6-10 thousands
- C. 10-30 thousands
- C. More than 30 thousands

14. What kind of information or ways of marketing would you wish about study abroad possibilities? Choose 3 most preferable options.

- A. Consultancy services from education service agencies
- B. Organized seminars about study abroad
- C. Personal presentations at school
- D. Internet pages
- E. Brochures and advertisements
- F. Exhibitions of foreign schools
- G. Others_____

15. Please evaluate factors influencing you in choosing schools and majors, and give different importance degrees for every factor.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Normal important	Not very important	Not important at all
Admission requirement					
Professional curriculum design					
Ranking and reputation					

Tuition fee					
Scholarship					
Teaching facilities					
Teaching methods					
Faculty sufficiency					
Language training support					
Work training and guidance					
Employment rate					
City environment					
State humanity and history					
Level of consumption					
Accommodation condition					
Immigration policy					
Degree of alumni satisfaction					

Thank you for your answers!

APPENDIX 2

The Questionnaire in Chinese

六安留学意向问卷调查

面对日益发展的教育水平和多变的教育需求,出国留学也逐渐被纳入学生的计划范畴。但是由于留学选择的多样性和信息浩荡而难于抉择,此次调查目的在于研究六安潜在的留学需求,探求六安潜在留学动向。

问卷调查是针对目标群体留学意向调查研究真实准确的收集信息的方法,请在以下合适的选项下打勾,如果有必要请在横线上补充回答。

16. 您的年龄段是

- A. 15 岁以下 B. 15-20 C. 21-25 D. 26-30 E. 31-35 F. 35 以上

2. 您的性别

- A. 男 B. 女

3. 您的社会身份是

- A. 高中生 B. 大学生 C. 已工作

4. 是否愿意出国留学

- A. 愿意—到第 6 题
B. 不愿意—到第 5 题

5. 不愿意出国留学的主要原因是什么? (多选)

- A. 满意目前在国内受教育状况
B. 习惯本地风俗文化
C. 过高的学费生活费
D. 缺少留学信息
E. 离开祖国的不确定性陌生感
F. 离不开家和朋友

- G. 语言障碍
- H. 害怕文化差异
- I. 复杂的留学申请过程
- J. 不确定国外的教育水平质量
- D. 其他（请写出）_____
6. 打算在国外取得什么学位
- A. 本科 B. 硕士 C. 博士及以上
7. 你愿意出国留学的原因：（多选）
- A. 国外有比国内好的教育条件（不同的教育模式）
- B. 国内应试教育造成一考定终身的激烈竞争
- C. 国外人口少，机会多，良好的语言环境
- D. 国外文凭在国内更有竞争力
- E. 国际教育更有可能活得国际工作机会
- F. 拓展眼界，了解另一个国家的风俗习惯
- G. 其他（请写出）_____
8. 你更倾向于去哪个国家留学？（多选）
- A. 美国 B. 英国 C. 欧洲其他国家 D. 澳大利亚 E. 新加坡 F. 日韩
- G. 其他_____
9. 你会选择哪种渠道出国留学？
- A. 自己申请 B. 利用留学中介 C. 加入学校项目合作 D. 展览或讲座
- E. 其他_____
10. 出国前你最希望了解哪方面的问题（选择三项）
- A. 申请要求 B. 学校信息 C. 专业信息 D. 国家信息 E. 学费问题
- F. 当地文化 G. 移民政策 H. 签证申请 I. 当地中国留学生数量
- J. 学分和课程安排 K. 奖学金设置 L. 就业率 M. 食宿条件

N. 国际化环境 D. 其他_____

11. 出国留学你最担忧什么？

A. 语言障碍 B. 国外教育方式的适应 C. 住宿饮食等生活问题 D. 远离家人朋友
E. 融入国外当地文化 F. 经济问题 G. 其他_____

12. 家长是否支持出国留学？

A. 精神上财力上都支持
B. 精神上支持，财力不支持
C. 不支持
D. 无所谓

13. 家庭能够承受的留学费用（按年计算）

A. 6 万元以下 B. 6-10 万 C. 10-30 万 D. 30 万以上

14. 你最希望通过何种方式取得留学信息？（选择三项）

A. 教育中介咨询服务
B. 留学组织研讨会
C. 学校的个人报告
D. 网页
E. 广告和宣传册
F. 留学专题展览
G. 其他_____

15. 请评价影响你选择学校及专业的因素，请给出各因素你认为不同重要程度

	很重要	比较重要	一般	不太重要	完全不重要
录取要求					
课程设置和专业分布					

排名和声誉					
学费					
奖学金政策					
教学设备					
教学方法					
师资力量					
语言培训的支持					
就业培训和指导					
就业率					
校园环境					
学校所在城市环境					
国家的人文和历史					
城市的消费水平					
住宿条件					
移民政策					
毕业生满意度					

感谢您回答问卷!