



The Decision to Study Abroad

-What Benefits are the Chinese Student Looking for?

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ABSTRACT

Title: The Decision to Study Abroad - What Benefits is the Chinese Student Looking for?

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Problem: To be able to be successful in attracting international students it is necessary to understand why students choose to study abroad. Students engage in international education because they are looking for certain benefits, but which are these benefits? Does different students want different things and how well does Sweden deliver the sought after benefits? Does the introduction of a tuition fee influence the students' decision?

Purpose: The study, both theoretically and empirically, investigates what lays behind the decision to take part in an international education with focus on what benefits associated with an international education that are important for students.

Methodology: A prestudy was conducted to create an understanding of the topic. The theoretical conclusions are tested with the help of questionnaires distributed at Hangzhou Dianzi University in China.

Conclusions: A conclusive summary is set up which lists the most important benefits with international education. The empirical study shows that improved English, culture experience, the university's reputation and that the country offers a safe environment are key benefits influencing Chinese students to study abroad.

Keywords: international education, decision making process, benefits

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the topic of the study and gives a background to the research field. The importance of the topic is highlighted. The problem discussion, the purpose of the study and limitations are explained and the chapter concludes with a disposition of the dissertation.

1.1 Background

International education has become an important industry and in many countries such as U.S., Canada and Australia international students contribute with huge sums to the country's economy and generate a substantive amount of work for the country's people. International students do not only contribute with tuition fees they also live in the foreign country and spend money there on accommodation, food and others (Mazzarol, 1998). There are of course other reasons than foreign students being an income source for countries and universities to be interested in being a part of the international education industry. For some universities admitting foreign students to their courses and programmes is a way to survive when the country's own students do not fill the places. The international students also bring the world to a local university without the local students having to go abroad and the presences of students with different nationalities create a good atmosphere at universities.

Today around two million students worldwide study outside their home country and this number is predicted to rise to around eight million by 2025 (Altbach, 2004; Svenskt Näringsliv, 2007). In other words: international education is an industry that is important to take into consideration. Sweden admitted 13 457 students from other countries in 2006 and 6 886 Swedish students studied abroad the same year (Högskoleverket, 2007). Even if Sweden today is a relatively small actor in the education industry international education is growing in importance and Sweden wants to be a part of this development.

Since international education has become an important industry it is vital to treat it as such. Countries and institutions have to think about education in the same way they think about other industries. With that comes marketing. Governments and universities need to offer international students what they are looking for but also

communicate and market it. The competition within the education industry is intense so the countries and institutions need to identify and maintain their competitive advantages and work with positioning themselves. International education is an interesting research field not only because of the importance for many people and countries but also because relatively little has been written on the marketing of education within international markets (Mazzarol, 1998).

21 percent of the foreign students that came to Sweden to study in 2006/2007 came from Asia and Asia is the region which shows the highest increase in sending students to Sweden to study. When it comes to countries outside the European Union, China sends the most students to Sweden. If all countries is included only Germany, Finland and France send more students to Sweden than China does. (Högskoleverket, 2008) Since China is an important source for Sweden when it comes to foreign students the focus in this study is on Chinese students. Kristianstad University, where this dissertation is written, has rather extensive experience of Chinese students, both through exchange programmes and through contract teaching. The university gives a programme in business administration with special emphasis on China and sees China as an important partner today and in the future. This has also contributed to the focus on Chinese students for this study.

1.2 Problem Discussion and Research Questions

An important principle of marketing is that the marketing should be focused on what the customers want. If you do not fulfil the requirements of the customer and he/she does not get what he/she needs and wants the marketing has failed. The customer focus is getting increasingly important also within the education industry. Researchers within the field state the following:

“In the past, the universities have determined what students want. Recently, however, the customers are being more vocal, thus indicating their dissatisfaction with the provision of the education sector.” (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003, p. 320)

Gurley et al (2005) concludes in their paper “Consumer Decision Process Modelling: How Leaders Can Better Understand Buyers’ Choices” that what enables the right allocation of resources and support actions is to identify which of the hundreds of elements that affects the consumer’s purchasing decision that are the key drivers. This study starts with an overview of consumer behaviour and how a consumer makes a purchasing decision. By looking at the buying decision process for international

education one understands that there are a lot of different fields which can be researched. Information sources are for example one interesting research field. What kinds of sources are available to a potential customer? What information source has the greatest impact on the decision? Do different information sources have different impact on different kinds of potential customers and on different stages in the decision process? It is also valuable to look closer at the different influencers and on what dimensions these influencers affects the decision maker. Earlier research highlights for example finance, information, expectation, persuasion and competition as areas where influencers such as family have an impact (Pimpa, 2003). The different external stimuli such as the marketing mix also constitute an interesting research field. An extended version of the four P:s where participants, physical evidence and process are included could constitute a good foundation for research concerning external influencing factors on a student's decision to participate in international education (Russel, 2005).

This study's main focus is however on what the customer, the international student or even more specific Chinese students, are searching for when they look for an international education. The study investigates why students decide to study abroad, with focus on what kind of benefits the students are seeking when they engage in international education.

Consumers generally buy things because they think that they will get a value from the product or service. Perceived value can be defines as the total benefits a product or service gives a customer less the costs associated with the purchase.

$\textit{Perceived Value} = \textit{Total Benefits} - \textit{Total Costs}$

Figure 1.1 Perceived Value

The benefits must be greater than the cost otherwise the customer will not be interested in the product. This study is focused on the sought-after benefits connected to international education which is the positive side of the equation, even if the cost is somewhat highlighted through the introduction of price in the study.

By understanding what benefits a student is looking for when going abroad to study one can understand a great deal about the decision to engage in international education. If a university knows what students are looking for it is possible to work on delivering just that and to highlight those aspects in the marketing campaigns. The first step in delivering value to customers is to understand what the customers perceive as value.

It is not likely that all students have the same view on the benefits and their importance on the decision to study abroad and an analysis is therefore conducted to see if segments can be identified. The idea is to conduct benefit segmentation and identify segments with different preferences concerning benefits.

One external stimulus is added to the study: price. Fee on education is under great debate in Sweden and it is therefore interesting to see how students would react if the education in Sweden would start to cost money. Since the cost would rise the perceived value would sink if the Swedish universities do not manage to increase the perceived benefits.

Finally, this study is conducted in China and on Chinese students since China is an important source for Sweden when it comes to sending students to our country. A part from identifying what benefits the students are looking for the study also shows how well the Chinese students believe that Sweden deliver the sought after benefits. This is of practical value for Swedish universities and it is of great interest to see how Sweden ranks when it comes to the benefits most important for students.

To summarise, the field of this study is consumer behaviour in the field of international education. The following research questions constitute the foundation of the study:

1. How is the decision to take part in an international education created and what factors influences the decision?
2. What are the main benefits connected to international education which make students desire an international education?
3. Using benefit segmentation, what segments can be identified?
4. Price is an important external stimulus. How does price influence the desire to engage in international education?

5. How is Sweden perceived to deliver the sought after benefits?

Research question one is answered theoretically, research question two is given an answer both theoretically and empirically and research questions three, four and five are given empirical answers.

1.3 Purpose

The main purpose is to get an understanding of the buyer decision process and what influences the decision to take part in an international education. The focus is on the positive part of perceived value and on what benefits that is important for students when they think about international education. If we know how students think about international education and what benefits that are important for them it is possible to, both at a country and a university level, work with this issue and take them into account in the marketing of education to international students.

In a more theoretical perspective this study aims at getting an understanding of what kind of research that has been conducted on the topic and to help to develop a field where relatively little research has been done: marketing and the education sector. The study highlights and shows the need for more research within this field. The study more specifically contributes to the research concerning international education by identifying benefits which are important when regarding the decision to take part of an international education.

1.4 Limitations

This study primarily focuses on the positive part of perceived value and by doing so the costs are given a secondary place in the study. This does however not mean that this is not important. Once we know what benefits that are wanted and how Sweden is perceived it is of course interesting to know how much the students are willing to sacrifice to get access to these benefits. The costs are only highlighted by introducing tuition fee as external stimuli however no deep analysis of the total perceived cost is made due to limitation in time and since it was believed to lead to a too wide study.

Other external stimuli than the price are excluded. Furthermore, since the main focus is the benefits associated with the decision to engage in international education the

rest of the decision process, for example information course and need recognition, is excluded from this study.

The empirical study is limited to include the Chinese students' view on international education. Limitations regarding the empirical study is further discussed in chapter six Empirical Method.

1.5 Disposition

An overview of the dissertation and its chapters with short introductions is presented below.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter introduces the topic of the study and explains what is being researched by setting up five research questions. The purpose and the general limitations are stated.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The choice of methodology and the scientific approach is presented. The data collection with focus on the secondary data is introduced and the methodology for the prestudy is presented as well as a brief presentation of the survey.

Chapter 3: Prestudy

Three interviews were conducted as a prestudy for the dissertation and the result of these interviews is presented.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Frame of Reference: Consumer Behaviour and the Buyer Decision Process

A wide theory chapter is presented with the purpose to put the study's focus in a wider context. The buyer decision process is the foundation and important influencing factors on the purchase decision are introduced.

Chapter 5: Theoretical Review: Benefits Connected to International Education

The chapter focuses on the part of the buyer decision process which includes the evaluation of alternatives and presents benefits that attracts students to an international education. A theoretical conclusion is made.

Chapter 6: Empirical Method

The link between the research questions, theory and the empirical study is clarified and the survey is presented. The questionnaire is analysed and the question design is discussed. The pilot tests are highlighted and a discussion concerning sample and response rate is included. Finally, validity, reliability and limitations concerning the survey are discussed.

Chapter 7: Analysis of Result

The result of the survey is presented. The result of the questionnaire is analysed with the help of SPSS and the respondents' profile is introduced. How the respondents value the benefits is explained and differences between the respondents are investigated. Furthermore, how the respondents view Sweden and their attitude towards tuition fees is presented.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The research questions are answered and conclusions are drawn. Practical implications are discussed and the chapter concludes by giving suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the choice of methodology and describes the scientific approach. A short description of the data collection, including both secondary data and primary data is included. The prestudy is described and the survey is briefly introduced.

2.1 Introduction to the Choice of Methodology

The area of this study is international education and the main purpose of the study is to get a better understanding of why students study abroad and what benefits connected to international education that drives students to studies abroad. Chinese students are used as an example in the study since China is one of the countries sending most students to Sweden.

The research started with an inductive prestudy where Chinese students studying at Kristianstad University were interviewed concerning the reasons for how and why they became students at Kristianstad University. The purpose of the prestudy was to get a first insight into how international students reason and think concerning their international education and to see if the topic was worth investigating further. The prestudy is further highlighted later in this dissertation.

After the prestudy was conducted and analysed the purpose of the main study was established and research questions set up. Since the main purpose is to get a better understanding of what lies behind the decision to take part of an international education it was natural to start the investigation by reading and getting to know what kind of research on the topic that had been conducted before and what was already known. A deductive approach for the main study was therefore adapted. A rather comprehensive and widespread literature review was conducted which lead to that theoretical conclusions could be drawn. As an addition to the theoretical work an empirical quantitative study was conducted with the help of questionnaires with Chinese students studying at the School of Management at Hangzhou Dianzi University as respondents.

The research can be described as abductive in its way to relate to already existing theories since it started by an empirical prestudy before the literature review was conducted. The development of the research model was however mostly deductive, since existing theories and research within the area laid the ground for the model. The prestudy was not actively included in the production of the model; however the knowledge from the study may instinctively have affected the process. It is therefore most correct to label the study as abductive.

2.2 Scientific Approach and Philosophy

Research philosophy is important since it influences how the researcher views the world and in its turn it therefore has an impact on the research. Even though philosophy can seem irrelevant all researchers who carry out research make assumptions about how the world is and how it is possible to develop knowledge about it. The debate concerning philosophy within the marketing discipline goes back to the 1950s when marketing as a research field changed. It moved from being descriptive and qualitative to more emphasising quantification with the purpose to be perceived as a stricter and therefore a more acceptable discipline. With this transformation came a positivistic approach to research and theory development. (Easton, 2002) A positivistic view is common among natural scientists since it means that researchers “*prefer working with an observable social reality and that the end product of such research can be law-like generalisations...*” (Saunders, 2007, p. 103)

In the 1980s and early 1990s the question concerning the most appropriate research philosophy for the marketing discipline was given new attention and views such as realism and relativism were heavily debated. Hunt wrote the article “Truth in Marketing Theory and Research” (1990) which was given a lot of attention in the debate. Hunt concluded that many marketing researchers are guided by scientific realism and even though he did not want to go as far as saying that all marketing researchers should adopt scientific realism he provided strong grounds for accepting some form of realism as the philosophical way forward. (Hunt, 1990). Realism can be seen as the winner in the debate and offered an alternative to the previous positivist paradigm in marketing (Easton, 2002).

The theory of realism is founded on “*that what the senses show us as reality is the truth: that objects have an existence independent of the human mind.*” (Saunders,

2007, p. 104) Realism has connection to positivism since both philosophies assumes a scientific approach to the development of knowledge.

There exist different forms of realism. Critical realism is argued to offer a good alternative to the positivistic view in marketing (Easton, 2002). Critical realists take realism one step further. Instead of experiencing the world simply by the sensations the research object conveys, as direct realists, critical realists believe that there exists a mental processing that goes on sometime after that sensation meets our senses (Saunders, 2007).

This research is founded on the principles of critical realism. This means that it is believed that the knowledge of the reality, for example why students engage in international education, cannot be understood independently of the actors involved in the knowledge process and that the picture of the reality is a result of previous experiences and knowledge. It is possible to understand a phenomenon only if we understand the social structures that have given rise to it. It is argued that “*the critical realist’s position...is much more in line with the purpose of business and management research...*” (Saunders, 2007, p. 106)

2.3 Data Collection

Data and knowledge have been collected both through secondary sources and primary sources. The primary data has been collected both through a qualitative prestudy using interviews and through a quantitative study using questionnaires.

2.3.1 Secondary Sources

The literature review for the study can be divided into two parts. In the first step the focus was on consumer behaviour and the buyer decision process. The purpose of this first part of the literature review, presented in chapter four Theoretical Frame of Reference: Consumer behaviour and the Buyer Decision Process, was to get a general understanding of what influence a customer and the decision making process to then be able to apply this on the decision for students to take part of international education. This part of the review constitutes a background to the second more narrow and deep literature review. The second part is focused on the buyer decision process for international education with special focus on the positive part of the perceived value which is sought after benefits.

For the first part, the theoretical frame of reference, books highlighting consumer behaviour and the buyer decision process constituted the foundation. The area is well established and since the purpose of this part of the study was to present an introduction and overview of the research field books constituted an appropriate source. The books was complemented by research articles with the purpose to bring new and up-to date knowledge to the review as well as offering a greater depth when judged necessary.

The second part of the review, which is focused on international education and influencing factors on the decision to study abroad and presented in chapter five is mainly founded on research articles published in acknowledge journals. The research area is rather new and specific and since the purpose of this review was to get a deep understanding of the phenomenon research articles constituted a good source. The articles were mainly found using online databases such as ELIN and Emerald. The lists of references of relevant research articles constituted a good source for the search for further articles. The articles included in the review had to meet the following criteria: the researches had to be contemporary, written in English or in Swedish, directly related to international education and listed in references of other studies with similar character and focus.

When you use secondary sources it is important to critically evaluate its credibility and relevance (Malhotra & Birks, 2003; Saunders, 2007). One way to secure the credibility of the secondary sources used is to use articles published in acknowledge journals such as European Journal of Marketing and Journal of Services Marketing. It is also important that you base your research on information and factors which several researchers have came up with independent of each other's studies. This means that the likelihood for the research result to be true is increased. These rules functioned as guidelines when conducting the theoretical review for this study.

2.3.2 Primary Sources

There are several different methods to choose from when you wish to conduct an empirical study and collect primary data. Some of the most common are interviews, questionnaires and observations. The different methods have both advantages and disadvantages however depending on the purpose of the study and the topic certain

methods are more appropriate than others in certain circumstances. In this study two empirical studies were conducted. A prestudy was made with the help of interviews and the main study was conducted through a questionnaire.

2.3.2.1 The Prestudy

The prestudy was conducted by using interviews. Interviews can help you to gather reliable data which help you to answer your research questions or, as in this case, help you to formulate and develop clear research questions and objectives. Interviews can be planned and carried out in different ways. For this prestudy semi-structured interviews were used. This means that an interview guide was created in advance consisting of a list of relevant questions; however the interview guide was not strictly followed (see appendix 1 for interview guide). The order of the questions varied from interview to interview depending on the flow of the conversation and sometimes some questions were added to bring more value to the interview. Non-standardised interviews such as semi structured interviews are used to gather data which normally is analysed qualitatively. (Saunders, 2007)

Three interviews with Chinese students who studied international business at Kristianstad University were carried out. The selection of the interviewees can be seen as purposive sampling which often is used when working with very small samples and when you wish to reach particularly informative cases (Saunders, 2007). The three students selected to participate in the study were students at Kristianstad University who were writing their master dissertation and who were willing to participate. All interviews were in the form of respondent interviews where the interviewer directs and control the interview and the interviewee responds to the questions of the interviewer. The interviews were short, lasting for around 20 minutes each and were recorded. Transcripts of the interviews can be found in appendix 2.

When conducting interviews there is always a risk that the interviewer influences the interviewee. In a worst case scenario the respondent will not answer the questions truthfully; instead he/she will give the answers which are believed to be the answers the interviewer is looking for. To avoid this situation it is important that the interviewer tries to be as objective as possible and not influence the interviewee in any way. (Saunders, 2007) This was the ambition when the interviews for the

prestudy were conducted. The interviewees were allowed to elaborate their answers with out being interrupted and the interviewer tried to stay as neutral as possible.

2.3.2.2 The Survey

After the theoretical review was conducted certain conclusions could be drawn. These conclusions were further analysed and researched with the help of a survey. The survey consisted of questionnaires and was conducted at Hangzhou Dianzi University. The method of the survey is in detail presented in chapter 6 Empirical Method.

CHAPTER 3.

PRESTUDY

This chapter presents the prestudy consisting of three interviews which were conducted with Chinese students. The interviews focused on why the students decided to go abroad to study, why they decide to go to a specific country and why they decided to go to a specific university.

3.1 The prestudy

Three interviews with Chinese students who studied international business at the Centre of Business Studies at Kristianstad University were conducted. The interviews were semi-structured in the sense that questions were created in advance but the questions and the interview plan was not strictly followed. The interviewee and the specific interview situation that occurred was allowed to influence the questions which lead to that some questions were excluded in some of the interviews, the order of the questions changed and some additional questions were added. (Saunders, 2007)

All interviewed students were Chinese and came from Ningbo University. Even if all students ended up at the same university at the same department and on the same course the students were asked to talk about the entire decision making process and not only include information about how and why they ended up in Kristianstad. This meant that they for example included their first thoughts about which country they wanted to go to, which not necessarily were Sweden. In this way a more complete picture of what is going on in the mind of students looking for international education could be created.

The interviews centred on three topics: why the student decided to go abroad to study, why they decided to go to a specific country and why the decided to go to a specific university. A number of questions were created under each specific field which aimed at getting the interviewee to paint as a complete picture as possible. The interview plan with formulated questions can be find in appendix 1. Transcripts of the interviews can be found in appendix 2.

3.2 The Decision to Study Abroad

It was possible to identify two main reasons to why the students decided to go abroad to study. The first reason is connected to future career opportunities. All interviewees highlighted that studies abroad improves their English which is a great benefit for them. If you are good at English it will be an advantage when you are looking for work. Two of the interviewees also highlighted that doing business is very popular in China to day and that a lot of the good positions in China are within the field of international business. If you have experience from living and studying in other countries it gives you an advantage when it comes to applying for these kinds of positions. To study abroad also helps you understand other cultures and how people think, work and act in other countries. These experiences can be useful in future work situations. One student also mentioned the possibility for foreign education to lead to an international career with work abroad.

The second main reason for getting an international education seems to personal development. Two of the interviewees emphasised that the style of teaching and education methods are different in China compared to Western countries. One student put it like *“In China the style of studying, the teachers, are very different from other countries. For the first the students will only focus on the examination and they will do the work on by the individual...”* (Prestudy Interview 3). By taking part of a different view on education and knowledge the students felt personal development. One of the students also stressed that it was possible to learn things that were not accessible in China. This has an impact on the personal development but also constitutes an advantage when it comes to finding a good work since it increases the person’s knowledge. Getting to know different cultures do not only constitute an advantage when it comes to work opportunities. It also contributes to ones personal development.

The students were also asked to describe who influenced them in their decision to study abroad. The interviewees stressed that it was primarily their own decision. Two of the students did however mention that their parents had had an impact on their decision. Former students, so called alumnus, who have studied abroad seem also to have an impact on the students’ decision to take part of international education. Two of the interviewees talk about friends with positive experiences from international education as an influencing element.

3.3 The Decision to Study in a Specific Country

When it comes to which country to go to all three interviewed students belong to an exchange programme which brought them to Sweden and Kristianstad University. Their home university offer only two such exchange programmes. One exchange programme which brings them to Sweden with the focus on International Business and one exchange programme which brings them to Australia with the focus on Finance.

All three interviewees emphasise that studies in Sweden are for free and the fact that the education was without fee was the most important reason that brought them to Sweden. The only other free of charges education offered to them was the exchange programme to Australia. The students chose Sweden over Australia because of the subject offered. International Business was regarded as more popular than Finance. Free of charges education and an attractive programme seems to be the main reasons for the interviewees to come to Sweden. One of the students did however also mention that he had heard nice things about Sweden before and that he thought about as a nice country with a good welfare system. Sweden was also regarded as a cheap alternative when it comes to living costs which was a contributing factor for the decision to come to Sweden. It is also relatively easy to get visa in Sweden and with that visa the student can travel all over Europe. Finally one of the students interviewed mentioned that many Swedish people can speak English and that there are not many Chinese people living in Sweden. Both of these factors had a positive influence on the student's decision to come to Sweden and study.

When the students were asked which country they at first wanted to go to before they knew anything about exchange programmes and fees none of them said that their first choice were Sweden. One of the interviewed students first wanted to go to Canada, one wanted to go to United States and one wanted to go to Australia. The common denominator for these three countries is that they are all English speaking countries. All the three interviewees stressed the benefits associated with studying in an English speaking country. Other factors contributing to their desire to study in Canada, United States and Australia were their positive image of these countries. It was also highlighted that the country in questions was in the front when it comes to research within field of business administration. Apart from giving the students a positive image concerning the country and its education it was also important for the students

what other people in China thought about their decision concerning international education. *“Chinese people think that education in America is very good. So it is good to study in America”* (Prestudy Interview 2). It should also be mentioned that if a country has famous universities it also gives the country advantages. The success of a single university rubs on on the country and gives the entire country a positive image when it comes to its education.

The amount of advertisement made by these countries was also mentioned by the interviewed students. According to one of the interviewee Canada has a lot of advertisement about education in China. The following was said about advertisement and Australian education: *“The Australian school make the education to an industry. They use education to make money and have many abroad students”* (Prestudy Interview 3). A lot of advertisement creates an awareness which has a positive impact on the students when it comes to the decision concerning which country to study in.

3.4 The Decision to Study at a Specific University

All three interviewed students come from the same university in China. This university only has contacts in Sweden with Kristianstad University. The students could therefore not choose which university within Sweden to go to. The interviewees were still asked some more general questions connected to the decision to study at a specific university. When it came to how important the university was to the interviewed students they were quite unanimous about that it was not very important. The country and the type of subject were more important to the students than to which university to go to. One of the students interviewed did however mention that the brand of the university is important in China. The common view seem to be that the brand is important if you can go to one of the world’s top universities but in other circumstances it is not so important. The brand of the university can have a positive influence if it is very well-known but if the university is unknown it does not has to have a negative influence.

None of the interviewed students knew much about Kristianstad University before they came here. They were however not nervous about the quality of the university since they got here by an exchange programme: *“Anyway I trust the university because there is an exchange programme”* (Prestudy Interview 1). All of them would

have liked to know more about the university beforehand even if it in this case probably would not have affected their decision to come to the university.

3.5 Summary of Prestudy

Three Chinese students from Ningbo University were interviewed concerning their thoughts and feelings about their studies abroad. When it came to why they decided to study abroad improved future career opportunities because of improved English, abroad experiences and improved understanding for culture differences were highlighted. Personal development because of different education methods and meeting with new cultures was also mentioned as a factor influencing the decision to go abroad to study. When it comes to which country to go to the questions of fees and cost of living are very important. The country's reputation both in general and concerning its education is important, the amount of advertisement and that the country is English speaking or has a population that is good at English is also important. The decision concerning which university to go to seem to be the least important decision. The brand of the university is only important if it is very well known.

CHAPTER 4.

THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE: CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND THE BUYER DECISION PROCESS

In order to be able to get an understanding of why students choose to study abroad and what and who that can influence that decision the first step is to understand how a purchase decision in general looks like. The theoretical frame of reference therefore starts by discussing the product and its impact on the decision making process. Focus is then turned to the buyer of that product and his/her impact on the decision and the impact of external stimuli such as the marketing mix and other environmental factors. The buyer decision process, especially for a complex buying decision such as international education is then presented.

4.1 Introduction

International education has become an important industry for many countries and even if Sweden today does not have tuition fees education and foreign students are very important for Sweden. The competition within in the education industry is intense which means that countries and institutions need to have a good strategy concerning how to attract foreign students. To be able to develop this strategy and to be successful in attracting international students governments and institutions need to understand the underlying reasons behind a student's decision to go abroad to study and the decision process when it comes to which country and which university to go to. When those questions are answered is it possible to use the information to develop a good strategy, work with positioning and attract international students.

Consumer behaviour is heavily researched which has lead to a myriad of theories. Theories of consumer behaviour can be divided into three main areas depending on their view of the consumer. The first group of researchers and theories where J.A. Howard, J.N. Sheth and Solomon M have played a substantive role assume that consumers are information processors who engage in different rational and deliberate processes which lead to a purchase choice (Sheth, 1979). The second group regards most of the consumer behaviour to be learned and that a consumer makes purchases much because of habits. The view is sometimes called the evolutionary explanation of

behaviour and is founded on that a response or consumer behaviour is determined by the prior consequences of similar behaviour (Foxall, 1993). The third and last group has a more post-modern perspective and assumes that consumers do not follow rules and cannot be predicted. They change their purchase strategy from occasion to occasion. (Bareham Richardson, 2004) There is of course not one of these views that is correct while the others are wrong however depending on the kind of product or service being purchased and the type of customer involved in the purchasing process one view can be more correct than another in certain circumstances. It is important to be aware of that the research field of consumer behaviour is extensive and that there exists more than one view of how and why a purchase is made. This study primarily sees consumers as information processors. To purchase an international education is a substantive decision which has an extensive impact on the purchaser's life. The type of product makes it reasonable to assume that the purchaser engages in information search before the purchase.

This first chapter of the theoretical review which is called Theoretical Frame of Reference: Consumer Behaviour and the Buyer Decision Process aims at giving a brief introduction to consumer behaviour. The content is wide and not very deep which serves the purpose of putting the study's focus in a wider context. The foundation of the chapter is the buyer decision process and how a buyer comes to a decision concerning a purchase of a product or service. Important influencing factors such as the type of product, the buyer and external stimuli are highlighted. Due to the purpose of the chapter mostly books are used as sources even if articles sometimes are added to bring deeper and more up-to-date information to the discussion. The focus is on international education and in the end of the chapter a model which presents the buying decision process and groups of factors influencing the international education decision is presented. The model then constitutes the starting point for the second part of the theoretical review which is focused on answering the main question of this study which is why students decide to engage in international education. This second part of the theoretical review enters more deeply into selected parts of the more general theoretical frame of reference and constitute an own chapter.

4.2 Product

The product is an important factor to highlight since the product in question has a great impact on the buyer decision process. Some products need careful consideration before a purchase while other products demand next to no consideration before purchase. Further there are differences between services and physical products and these differences have an impact on how we evaluate and how we *can* evaluate the product before a purchase. To be able to analyse why students are interested in taking part of international education we need to understand the product for sale and its specific characteristics and what effects these characteristics can have on the purchasing decision.

The word product is a wide term that includes both tangible and intangible products. Tangible products are products that we can touch for example books. Intangible products are services such as education. A product, no matter tangible or intangible, can be seen as consisting of four layers: the core product, the tangible product, the augmented product and the potential product. (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Jobber, 2007)

The *core product* represents the heart of the product and the main reason to why the consumer purchases the product is connected to this layer. Core benefits derive from the core product. Core benefits constitute the foundation of a purchase since consumers purchase a product or service because they are looking for certain benefits. Core benefits are therefore often more interesting to discuss than the core product. Generally we do not want to own a product for the mere pleasure of owning it, we want to have the benefits and value which owning the product gives us. The next layer is the *tangible product* and this is what the consumers see. Marketers put the core product or core benefit into a package and make it a real and visible product. The *augmented product* represents the extra attributes and functions such as guarantees or help with financing that are not a part of the basic product but increases the product's benefits or attractiveness. The final layer is the *potential product* which is not a part of the product today but represents what the product can be and should be in the future. (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Jobber, 2007)

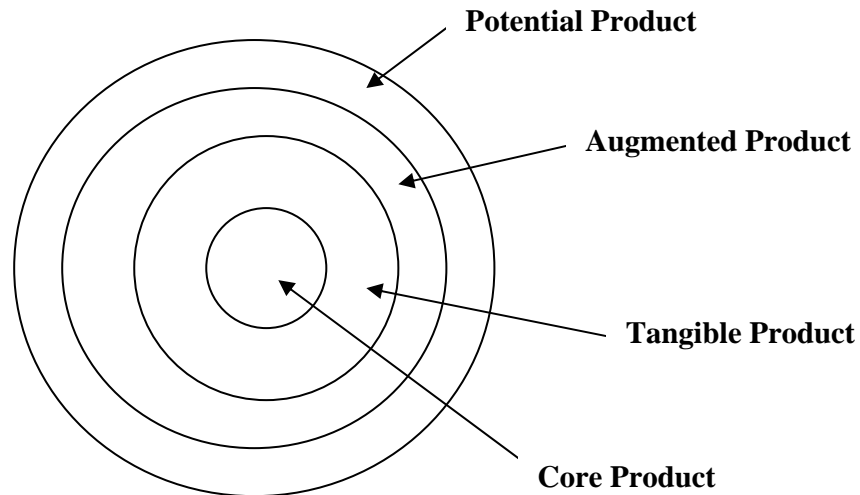


Figure 4.1 The Anatomy of a Product (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006)

From the information theoretic perspective products are consisting of many different information cues. Each cue helps the consumer to evaluate the product (Samiee, 1994). Information cues can be either intrinsic such as product quality or extrinsic such as brand name and price. Consumers use both types of cues when evaluating products. As a first choice consumers tend to evaluate a product by using intrinsic cues. However intrinsic quality is often difficult to detect and for example quality is seldom detectable prior to purchase. Further more studies have shown that consumers engage in relatively little information search, even when the financial commitment involved is substantial (Han & Terpstra, 1988). When intrinsic cues are absent or the buyer do not want to spend the time looking for the intrinsic cues consumers are likely to use extrinsic cues to evaluate the product. Different studies have shown that extrinsic cues then act as signals for intrinsic cues such as product quality (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1998). Market signals such as brand name, seller reputation, price and advertising therefore constitute important parts of the tangible product.

4.2.1 Value and Satisfaction

Consumers consider the entire product with all its different layers when making a decision concerning whether to buy or not to buy a product. The product must give the customer value and satisfaction for a purchase to be attractive. Customer value is defined as “*the consumer’s assessment of the product’s overall capacity to satisfy his or her needs*” (Kotler et al, 2008, p. 11). Customers don’t often judge product values

and costs accurately or objectively instead it is the perceived value that is important. Exceeding the value offered by competitors is the key to marketing success. Customer satisfaction is connected to the customer's expectations. If the product does not live up to the customer's expectations the customer feels dissatisfied. If the product on the other hand exceeds the customer's expectations the customer becomes delighted. Smart companies therefore aim to delight customers by promising only what they can deliver and then if possible deliver more than they promised. One can say that "*satisfaction of consumer needs is the ultimate goal for success in business*" (Nisel, 2001).

The Kano model, inspired by Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory and developed by Noriaki Kano, develops the concept of customer satisfaction and perceived quality. The theory explains how the relationship between the degree of sufficiency and the satisfaction with an attribute is different for different kinds of attributes. In the model characteristics are separated into those that for example cause dissatisfaction, those that cause satisfaction and those that cause delight. *Must be characteristics* are expected to be present and are taken for granted by the customer. Lack of these characteristics causes annoyance and dissatisfaction but their presence can only avoid dissatisfaction and not cause satisfaction. *One-dimensional characteristics* or *more is better characteristics* results in satisfaction when fulfilled and in dissatisfaction when not fulfilled. These are the kind of attributes that the company markets and which they compete with. *Delighters* or *attractive quality* are unexpected characteristics that surprise the customer. If they are not there the customer do not experience dissatisfaction but their presence create delighted customers. *Reverse quality* expresses a situation where the higher the state of fulfilment of an attribute the more dissatisfied is the customer. Finally *indifferent quality* does not influence the degree of satisfaction at all. (Jobber, 2007; Kotler et al, 2008; Nilsson-Witell & Fundin, 2005; Robinson, 2009)

4.2.2 Services

Service marketing is a research field which dates back to around 1953 even if the field got its breakthrough first in the 1980s. The history of the research field of service marketing can be divided into four periods (Brown et al, 1994): The crawling out period where the first services marketing scholars published their work and where the debate concerning the fundamental question if services marketing was different

from product marketing or not took place. The scurrying about stage when the research field rapidly developed and where different topics and interest within services marketing started to be visible. The walking erect stage when services marketing was an established field within the marketing discipline and when many topics matured considerably and where there was a rapid growth in journal publications. The present fourth period has yet no name but the research field is continuing to develop and specific areas within services marketing such as service quality, service satisfaction, service encounters and services design is growing. Service marketing is forecasted by experts within the research field to focus more on services in manufacturing contexts, the growing interplay between services and information technology and services marketing in a global context. (Brown et al, 1994; Grove et al, 2003)

The definition and characteristics of services is still today up for debate. Even if the wide term product includes both tangible and intangible products it is wrong to see service just like physical products except for their intangibility (Shostack, 1977). Services such as international education have particular unique characteristics compared to a physical product. Pure services do for example not result in ownership. No amount of money can buy physical ownership of intangible products such as the time of a consultant or the process for the dry cleaning.

Four main characteristics are commonly used to describe what a service is and what makes it different from tangible products. The four characteristics are intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability common summarised as the IHIP characteristics (Edvardsson et al, 2005).

That a service is *intangible* means that services cannot be seen, tasted, touched or smelled before they are bought. A service cannot be tried on for size. The intangibility leads to difficulties when evaluating services before purchase. The provider of a service must convince potential consumers of the quality of the offer. Tangible cues are therefore often added to services with the purpose to act as quality indicators. Brochures, pictures and recommendations from satisfied customers can act as such tangible cues. (Jobber, 2007) Research has shown that service firms often regard the tangible aspect of the service as being most important when consumers evaluate their service when in fact the customer thinks that reliability, responsiveness,

assurance and empathy are more important factors. This shows that a service provider cannot rely only on tangible cues as indicators for quality. (Douglas & Connor, 2003) *Heterogeneity* is another factor that traditionally is seen as being a distinct characteristic that set services apart from all physical products. It is however possible to standardise certain kind of services, for example machine intensive service operations such as ATMs. (Edvardsson et al, 2005) A part from the issue of intangibility and heterogeneity services are also characterised by *inseparability* (Shostack, 1977). Consumption and production are partly simultaneous activities when it comes to services. This means that a service firm such as a university has no products instead it has interactive processes (Grönroos, 2001). Consumption of physical products can be described as outcome consumption while the consumption of services can be seen as process consumption. The service provider, in the case of international education the lecturer, is therefore very important. In the eyes of the customer the service provider very often *is* the company. The service quality can be subject to considerable variability since the quality is dependent on the service provider. One lecturer can make a course in international business interesting and enjoyable while another lecturer makes the same course a nightmare. Inseparability is often seen mainly as a problem and not an opportunity. Finally *perishability* also a characteristic of services. The perishability means that the service cannot be stored on a shelf which makes it crucial to match supply and demand for services. (Edvardsson et al 2005; Mazzarol, 1998)

A review regarding the service definition and service characteristics was carried out in 2005 and a part from an extensive literature review 16 of the most recognised scholars within the field of service research participated in the research. The review lead to the conclusion that the common definition of service is too narrow and that the service characteristics are outdated as common generic service characteristics. It is suggested that services should not any more be defined out from services' differences compared to products. Service is an own research area and it is therefore not longer necessary to defend services as being different from goods. Still the IHIP characteristics are used in teaching and in much research. (Edvardsson et al, 2005). The concept of services marketing is also sometimes seen as too limiting since services are increasingly a part of physical products and physical products are more and more a part of the service experience. The traditional characteristics can in this sense be too simplistic to capture the nature of service today. (Grove et al, 2003)

The core service can be seen as being accompanied by a variety of supplementary elements. It is not only services that come with supplementary services also manufacturing businesses often offer their customers a package which includes a variety of service-related activities. These extra elements add value and provide differentiation that separated firms from each other. The flower of service model, seen in figure 4.2, developed by the recognised researcher Christopher Lovelock groups these supplementary services into eight categories: information, consultation, order-taking, hospitality, caretaking, exceptions, billing and payment. (Lovelock, 1999)

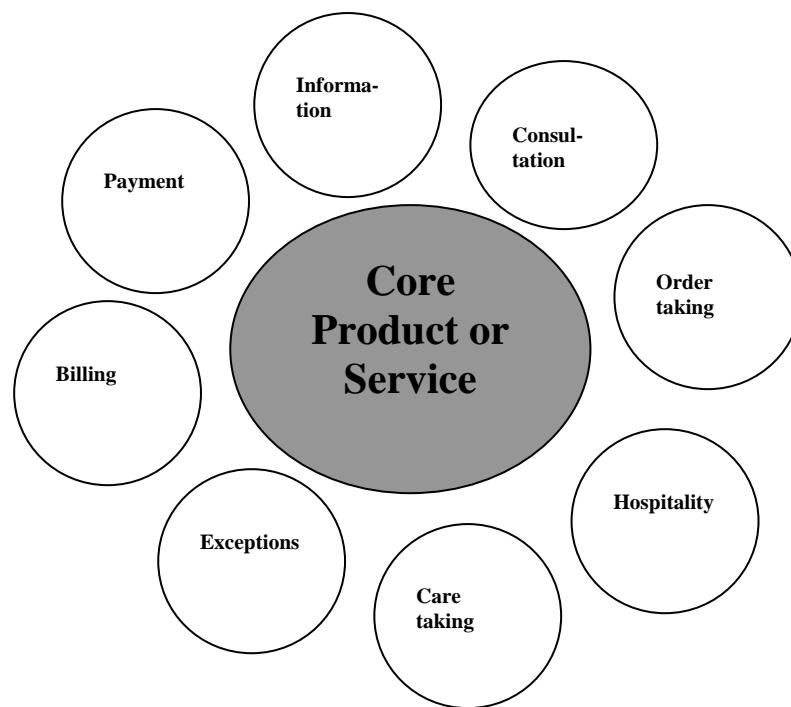


Figure 4.2 The Flower of Service Model (Lovelock, 1999)

Not every core service or product is surrounded by all these eight supplementary elements. It is the nature of the product, the customer and the business environment which determines which of the supplementary services that should be offered and which might enhance the value.

4.2.3 Buying Behaviour depending on Product

A consumer's decision making process depends greatly on which type of buying decision he/she faces. The decision process behind a purchase is very different if you buy a soft drink or an international education. Bigger and more complex decisions usually mean more time and effort for the decision. One way to divide consumer buying behaviour is to look at the degree of buyer involvement needed and the degree of differences among brands and alternatives. There are four types of buying behaviour based on the type of products that intends to be purchased: variety-seeking buying behaviour, dissonance-reducing buying behaviour, habitual buying behaviour and complex buying behaviour.

	High Involvement	Low Involvement
High perceived brand difference	Complex Buying Behaviour	Variety- Seeking Buying Behaviour
Low perceived brand difference	Dissonance- Reducing Buying Behaviour	Habitual Buying Behaviour

Figure 4.3 Four Types of Buying Behaviour (Kotler et al, 2008)

Variety-seeking buying behaviour is undertaken in situations characterised by low consumer involvement but significant perceived brand differences. This means that the consumer is likely to shift between brands. The consumer does not really care about what kind of product he/she buys but since the difference is substantial between the alternatives this can motivate the consumer to try the different alternatives. The consumer likes to shop around and try different kinds of products. *Dissonance-reducing buying behaviour* occurs when a buyer is highly involved in the purchase of

the product for example because the purchase is expensive or infrequent. There is however little difference between existing brands. In this case buyers may shop around to learn what is available but buy relatively quick since the options are few. *Habitual buying behaviour* is where the customer buys a product out of habit for example groceries. The differences between the products are few and the customers' involvement low. *Complex buying behaviour* occurs when the customer is highly involved in the decision and there are significant differences between the alternatives available. The customer then seeks a lot of information before the purchase is made. (Kotler et al, 2008)

For this study the complex buying behaviour is most interesting since international education must be considered to lead to a complex buying behaviour. The decision is substantial and affects the customer greatly. The alternatives are many and the different countries and university differ a lot.

In complex buying decisions the customer passes through a learning process. The customer first develops beliefs about the product in question, then develop attitudes towards the product and then makes a thoughtful purchase choice. The consumer decision process is especially important to consider for products belonging to this group of complex buying behaviour. It is therefore important that marketers understand the information gathering and the evaluation behaviour of the consumer which takes place in these situations. (Kotler et al, 2008)

4.3 Buyer

To understand what lies behind the decision to take part of international education it is not enough to understand the characteristics of the product being purchased and its features impact on the decision making process. It is also important to get an insight into who is buying the product and how his/her personal characteristics can influence the decision making process.

4.3.1 People Involved in the Decision Making Process

A consumer makes many purchasing decisions everyday. The small and relatively unimportant purchases are made by the individual without much consideration. The case of international education which leads to a complex buying behaviour demands however careful consideration and it is common that others than the actual customer

is involved in the buying process and interact with the customer with the purpose to influence the purchase decision. People take different roles in the decision making process such as initiator, influencer, decider, buyer and user.

The *initiator* is a person who begins the process of considering a purchase. This person often participates in the information gathering. The *influencer* tries to influence and persuade the decision maker and often take various kind of information to his/hers help to try to impose his/hers choice criteria on the decision. The *decider* is not necessarily the consumer of the product. The decider has the power, maybe because of the control of the money, to make the ultimate choice regarding which product to buy. The *buyer* is the person who conducts the transaction while the *user* is the actual consumer and user of the product. (Jobber, 2007)

4.3.2 Buyer Characteristics

Purchases are influenced by the consumer and his/her personal characteristics such as cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics. For the most part marketers cannot control such factors but it is very important to be aware of them and to take them into account. A student's social characteristics will for example greatly affect his/hers decision to go abroad to study and to which country and university to go to. If you know who your potential customer is you can adjust your product and marketing accordingly so that it better suit that customer or segment. Studies also show that consumers with different personal characteristics are looking for different kinds of benefits which means that the variation of the consumers' characteristics shows itself in the decisions they take during purchasing a product or service. (Nisel, 2001)

Culture factors include issues such as culture, subculture and social class. *Culture* refers to the traditions, taboos, values and basic attitudes of the whole society an individual lives in. The culture in a society helps to define who a person is and is the determinant of the wants and behaviour of a person. Culture is a complex phenomenon but shows itself in a person's values, perceptions, preferences and behaviours. Each culture consists of smaller *subcultures* that have more specific effects on its members. Subcultures include nationalities, religions and radical groups. For example people in one country differ from people from another country and this

has an effect on how they make purchases and how they react on different market stimulus. Another part of culture is the *social class* and how belonging to a specific social class forms people. Customer from the same social class show for example distinct product and brand preferences in many areas. (Jobber, 2007; Kotler & Keller, 2006)

The consumer's behaviour is also influenced by social factors. People who are close to the consumer and by that can influence the consumer's attitudes and behaviour, so called reference groups, is an important social factor. The reference group normally consists of family, friends and work colleagues. For some products the group influence is strong and it is then important for a marketer to take the reference group into account and not only focus on the actual customer. The family is the most important influencer when it comes to a purchase and for expensive products and services it is common to talk about joint decision making where for example the husband to the consumer has an equal part in the decision making as the actual consumer. Family size and marital status can also be factors influencing a customer's behaviour in a purchase.

A person's role and status also affects his/her purchasing behaviour. A role consists of the activities a person is expected to perform and each such role carries a status. People choose products that reflect and communicate their role and actual or desired status in society. Work status is one important social factors. (Jobber, 2007; Kotler & Keller; 2006, Nisel, 2001)

Personal characteristics are for example age, occupation, gender, economic situation, personality and lifestyle. All these factors influence the buyer's decision and many of them have a direct impact on the consumer behaviour. People for example buy very different goods and services over a lifetime. Some products are sold and marketed to young people and other to older people. Another example is our occupation. What we do for a living is a big part of our lives and consequently it has a great impact on what kind of goods, for example clothes, we buy. (Kotler & Keller, 2006; Nisel, 2001)

The psychological factors that influences a consumer's buying behaviour are motivation, perception, learning and beliefs and attitudes. *Motivation* is connected to need, however not all needs will be strong enough to motivate the person to act on the

need. For a need to become a motive it has to reach a certain level of intensity which forces the person to seek satisfaction. Motivation constitutes a strong factor for a behaviour.

Two people experiencing the same thing can often perceive the situation quite differently and this in its turn leads to quite different outcomes of the situation. *Perception* is: “the process by which people select, organize and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the world” (Kotler et al, 2008, p. 247). The perception a consumer has influences the way he/she reacts on stimulus and his/her consumer behaviour.

Learning is connected to experience. Our past experiences influence how we interpret new situations and affects the way we think. *Beliefs and attitudes* is the final part of the psychological factors that influence our purchasing behaviour. Beliefs are thoughts people hold about something and can be based on real knowledge, opinions or faith and will of course influence the way consumers think and act. Attitudes are a person’s consistent evaluation and feeling towards something which often leads to a feeling of liking or disliking things. Attitudes are difficult to change which means that companies and marketers need to take existing attitudes into account when planning for example a marketing campaign. (Kotler et al, 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2006)

4.4 External Stimuli

A consumer is not often offered a product and then left alone to make up his/her mind. Companies use various marketing stimuli to try to persuade consumers to buy their products. With the help of the Product, Price, Place and Promotion, also called the four P:s, the company try to win the consumer over. Other external stimuli in the buyer’s environment such as economic, technological, political and cultural factors also influence the consumer and the decision making process. To be able to understand what lies behind the decision to engage in international education it is not enough to know the product and the person buying the product we also need to know what kind of stimulus they meet.

The marketing mix is one of the world's most famous marketing terms. It consists of four factors: product, price, place and promotion and marketers make decisions within these areas to influence the consumer. The idea is that the company use the marketing

mix to create a combination of the four elements which attracts the most customers to its company. A company can for example choose to put emphasis on the promotion to create a high profile brand and then put less focus on the price or you can choose to have a low price on your product and then put less effort into promotion. The marketing mix constitutes external stimuli which influence the consumer buying behaviour.

The *product* decision involves deciding what product or service that should be offered to the customers. An important aspect is customer value and the benefits given to the customer. If the customer do not experience any benefit from the product he/she is unlikely to buy the product. The company must make decisions concerning issues such as brand, brand name, guarantees, packaging and extra services and product features. *Price* is another key element of the marketing mix which directly affects the value that customers perceive they get from buying a product. The company needs to consider what pricing method to use, the pricing objectives and the factors that influence the price setting. The company has many alternatives when it comes to *promotion*. Advertising, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing can be used to make sure that the customers are aware of the product. *Place* which also is known as channel or distribution is the mechanism that is used to move the service or product from the manufacturer to the customer and user. All these factors, product, price, promotion and place influence a student's decision concerning international education. (Jobber, 2007)

The *economic* environment can have a critical impact on consumer buying behaviour because of its effect on supply and demand. China is a good example of a country experiencing an amazing growth, a growth which has a positive affect on buying behaviour. Interests and exchange rates are other economic factors that influence the consumers. *Technology* can have a substantial impact on people's lives and for example technological breakthroughs can change an industry completely and thereby the consumer behaviour. *Political and legal forces* can influence decisions by changing the rules by which business must be conducted. State subsidies for environmental friendly products is one example of an uptodate political force which influence the consumer. Finally such a thing as *culture* can act as an external stimuli affecting the consumer behaviour. Trends come and go and people get affected by these trends. (Jobber, 2007)

4.5 The Buyer Decision Process

International education is a service that is for sale. For countries and institutions to be able to sell it successfully they do not only need to understand the buyer, the product and the external stimuli affecting the decision they also need to have an general understanding of the entire buyer decision process and how a purchase is made.

There exist several different models that try to capture how a purchase is made and what factors that influence a decision. The models want to provide a theoretical framework which can help to structure observations of consumer behaviour. The practical value of a model increases when it is adapted to a specific circumstance or product field but more general models can still offer an insight and an overview of the decision making process. Researchers within the field of marketing have developed a very well known stage model of the buying decision process. The model shows that the buying process is complex and that a consumer starts to think about a purchase long before the actual purchase happens. Originally John Howard and Jagdish Sheth developed the Five-Stage Model of the Consumer Buying Process in 1969. The model show that a consumer passed through five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behaviour. Important to highlight is that the consumer can end the process at any stage. The consumer can also backtrack at any time if he/she feels the need for it. The time the process requires change depending on both the type of product or service and the consumer. In some circumstances the decision making process can take months, in other cases the entire process can take only seconds.

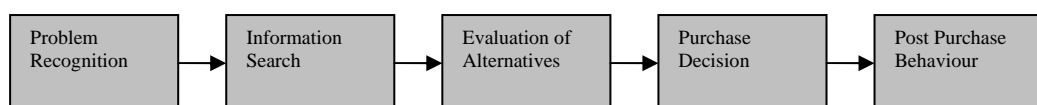


Figure 4.4 Five-Stage Model of the Consumer Buying Process (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006)

Although other models explain the decision process in some what a different way the different steps are often visible in one way or another. For example in a model developed for the consumer decision process for hospitality services (Teare, 1998) one can identify steps where the consumer shows a preference in the pre-purchase

stage, conducts information search, makes an assessment of the products, makes a purchase and then experience some kind of post consumption. The stage model of the consumer buying process seems to be the foundation for how the buying process is viewed and also constitutes the foundation in this study when it comes to the discussion concerning the decision making process. (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Kotler & Keller, 2006)

The first step in the buyer decision process is the problem recognition phase. The buying process starts when the buyer recognises a problem or need. Different things can create the feeling that you are not completely happy with your current situation and that you want to change it by obtaining a new product or service. In some circumstances the consumer identifies or recognises the problem without any input from marketers. The need is then triggered by internal stimuli such as peoples' normal needs for example food, drink and sex. In other circumstances the consumer's need is triggered by marketers. Companies use the marketing mix to make the consumer aware of that there is a need to satisfy. These kinds of external stimulus can also come from friends and family.

Consumers have many latent needs. That a problem or need is recognised does not necessarily mean that the consumer decides to act on the need and satisfy it. For the consumer to take the next step in the decision making process he/she must have the willingness to act on the desire and also the ability to fulfil the emerging need. (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Kotler & Keller, 2006)

The second step is the information search phase. Consumers look for information in different ways and more or less energy can be devoted to the process. One search state is the heightened attention which means that the consumer is more receptive to information about a product or service without actually actively searching for information. For some products this is the only type of information search that occurs. In other situations the consumer moves on from heightened attention to an active information search. In this stage the consumer goes looking for written material about the product, search online for information, visit stores and talks to friends. (Kotler & Keller, 2006) It is also possible to divide the information search into ongoing search and purposeful search. Ongoing search occurs all the time. You read and hear things all the time and you store information for future references. You conduct a more

purposeful search when you have a particular objective in mind. (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006)

The different information sources the consumer turns to and their relative influence on the consumer varies with types of products and on the consumers and his/hers characteristics. There are four main types of information sources available for a consumer: personal, commercial, public and experiential. *Personal information* comes from family and friends and is based on their experiences of the product. *Commercial information* consists of traditional advertising, Web sites and contact with salespersons. *Public information* comes via mass media such as newspapers and television. *Experiential information* refers to information you get by examine or using the product. Even if the different information sources' impact differ from situation to situation people are generally more like to trust oral information since the source is assumed to be unbiased and more trustworthy. Unofficial sources of information are today seen as important and the impact of word of mouth is an interesting and up to date research field. (Bareham & Richardson, 2004)

Information overload, the state of having too much information when making a decision is not uncommon for consumers to day. There is a limit for how much information a person can process and for how much information a person need to make an informed decision. Too extensive information may actually lead to poorer buying decisions. There is a fine balance to be achieved between too much information and not enough information. (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Kotler & Keller, 2006)

The third step is the phase of the evaluation of alternatives. After the consumer has recognised that there is a need to please and has searched for information it is time to evaluate the different alternatives available. It is not unusual that consumers' today have hundreds and sometimes thousands of alternatives to choose from. It is not possible to do a qualitative evaluation of all the alternatives available so the consumers first need to narrow the alternatives down to a number that is possible to handle. The consumer conscious or unconscious constructs a list of performance criteria and then assesses the different alternatives against it. This first assessment can be based on objective criteria such as price, service or distance or on more subjective criteria such as status or trust of a supplier. This initial method of evaluation helps the consumer to narrow down the alternatives to a number possible to handle.

(Brassington & Pettitt, 2006)

After having narrowed down the alternatives to a manageable amount the evaluation process for different consumers and for different products looks different. The foundation of most evaluation processes is however the same. The consumer has a need to satisfy. The consumer then looks for certain benefits in the product or service that will satisfy this need. The different alternatives consist of series of attributes that varies in their ability to deliver the benefits that the consumer is looking for. The consumer will pay most attention to the attributes that gives the wanted benefits. Different consumers look for different benefits which mean that the different attributes vary in importance for different kind of people.

Most buyers consider several attributes in a purchase situation. The Expectancy-Value Model is based on that consumers evaluate the product or service in question by looking at the different attributes that gives them the sought after benefits and the different attributes relative importance. To choose between the different alternatives the consumer must list the different benefits and connected attributes he/she is looking for and then give the alternatives a grade for each category. The consumer must then rank the different benefits and attributes according to their relative importance. Knowing the alternatives' grade on the different attributes and the attributes importance means that it is possible to calculate which of the alternative that will give the highest combined benefit. (Kotler & Keller, 2006)

Not all benefits and attributes are visible before purchase. One can divide the attributes into *search attributes* which are attributes that are observable prior to purchase and *experience attributes* which only can be evaluated after purchase and consumption. It is not only that some benefits and attributes are impossible to find before purchase customers also tend to consider somewhat different attributes and consequences when purchasing versus when using a product. (Nilsson-Witell & Fundin, 2005)

In the evaluation stage the consumer has formed a preference among the alternatives available. In the next stage, the purchase decision phase, the consumer executes the purchase intention and in doing so the consumer has to make several smaller sub-decisions. The consumer must perhaps choose brand, dealer, quantity, timing and payment method.

The decision may be a natural outcome of the evaluation stage however even if the consumer has made up his/her mind after evaluating the alternatives at least two factors can intervene between purchase intention and the purchase decision. One factor is the attitudes of others. The extent to which another person can influence the decision in this stage depends on that other person's intensity of attitude and the consumer's motivation to comply with the other person's wishes. The other factor is unanticipated situational factors that may change the purchase intention. Such unanticipated factors can be an unpleasant sales person or a decrease in the consumer's income.

The consumer's decision to change a purchase decision is influenced by the perceived risk associated with the decision. There are many types of risks that consumers can experience for example functional risk, financial risk, social risk and time risk. The amount of perceived risk varies with things like the consumer's self-confidence and the amount of money at stake. (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Kotler & Keller, 2006)

The last stage is the post purchase behaviour phase. The consumer's involvement with the product or service does not end at the purchase. No matter which product that is purchased there is likely to be some kind of post-purchase feelings.

Post purchase satisfaction is connected to the expectations. If the performance of the product or service falls short of expectations the consumer feels disappointed but if the product or service exceeds the expectations the consumer feels happy. In that way satisfaction is a relative term depended on expectations. This means that it is very important that the information given about the product or service before the purchase is truthful. If the product cannot live up to the expectations the experience will be negative even if the product as such is not bad.

The post purchase satisfaction in its turn affects the post purchase behaviour. A satisfied consumer is likely to purchase the product again and to recommend it to others. Dissatisfied consumers on the other hand may abandon or return the product. Since it is more difficult and more expensive to gain new customers than it is to keep the present customers it is very important that the consumers feel satisfied with the product or service even after the actual purchase. (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Kotler

& Keller, 2006)

4.6 Summary with Focus on International Education

The buying decision process and important connected factors such as the product, the buyer and external stimuli have been presented. The focus is now turned to international education with the purpose to present the decision process for this service.

One important part in identifying the decision process for international education is to highlight and clarify the product and what is really under consideration in the decision process. When a student wants to take part of international education he/she must take several large decisions for the education to be able to become a reality. Three large questions that need to be answered are (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002):

1. Should I or should I not study abroad?
2. What country should I go to?
3. What school and institution should I go to?

It is possible to divide the decision into even more sub questions. One can for example also see the questions concerning which city to go to and which courses to study as different dimensions of the decision (Pimpa, 2003). However in this research the division into three sub questions is regarded as sufficient. The three questions are interlinked and all three questions need to be answered to make the purchase of the service possible. Since the questions are linked to the same purchase decision is it natural to regard it as the student is going through one decision making process in which three questions need to be answered.

The product and the characteristics of international education influence the buying decision process. It has been concluded that international education is a service which among other things means that it is difficult to evaluate the quality in advance since the product is consumed at the same time as it is created. Education is a professional service and even if not much research has been done on education as a specific marketing problem education remains a service capable of treatment as any other in terms of marketing theory. (Mazzarol, 1998)

If international education is seen as consisting of different layers one of the core benefits for most consumers can for example be good work opportunities in the future

(Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003). By participating in international education and earning a specific degree the student gains knowledge and experience that are valuable for their future employers. The tangible product that offers this core benefit is the education for sale. The knowledge is packaged into courses and programmes with syllabus and programme descriptions. The campus and library are physical evidence of the service provided. The augmented product can consist of an international office that arranges fun activities for international students. This is a bonus benefit but not the main reason for purchasing an international education. The potential product can be new courses that are on their way to be developed or new services being introduced at campus.

When you are looking for an international education the options are many and the differences between the options are substantial. It is also an important decision for you which mean that you are involved in the decision. This leads to a complex buying situation which often leads to a long a carefully evaluated decision process.

The consumer buying process is also influenced by the consumer and people in its surrounding. The initiator in the case of international education can for example be the parents or a teacher. It is not unusual that also the decider is the parents since international education is big purchase associated with high costs and the parents often have the control of the money (Pimpa, 2003). In the case of international education is the issue of who is the buyer and who is the user a bit complicated. The prospective employers can be regarded as the real user of the service since they get a part of the benefit of the education (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003). However the student is not without advantages and enjoys benefits as a result of the service purchased. The decision is also influenced by the consumers' personal characteristics and external stimuli such as marketing mix stimuli and other environmental stimuli. One environmental stimuli is the political and legal forces in a country. When it comes to international education there is a debate going on in Sweden concerning if Swedish universities should be allowed to take an education fee from foreign students coming to Sweden to study. If there will be a change in the law concerning fees for international students this would surely affect the decision process for international students regarding Sweden as an alternative for an international education.

The decision to go to another country and to another school to study is created during

the consumer buying process. A part from the buyer, the product and external stimuli there are other factors and circumstances connected to the different steps in the buying decision process that influence the decision. To be able to understand the decision made it is necessary to look closer at these circumstances and influencing factors. Figure 4.5 summaries the buyer decision process for international education and the influencing the factors.

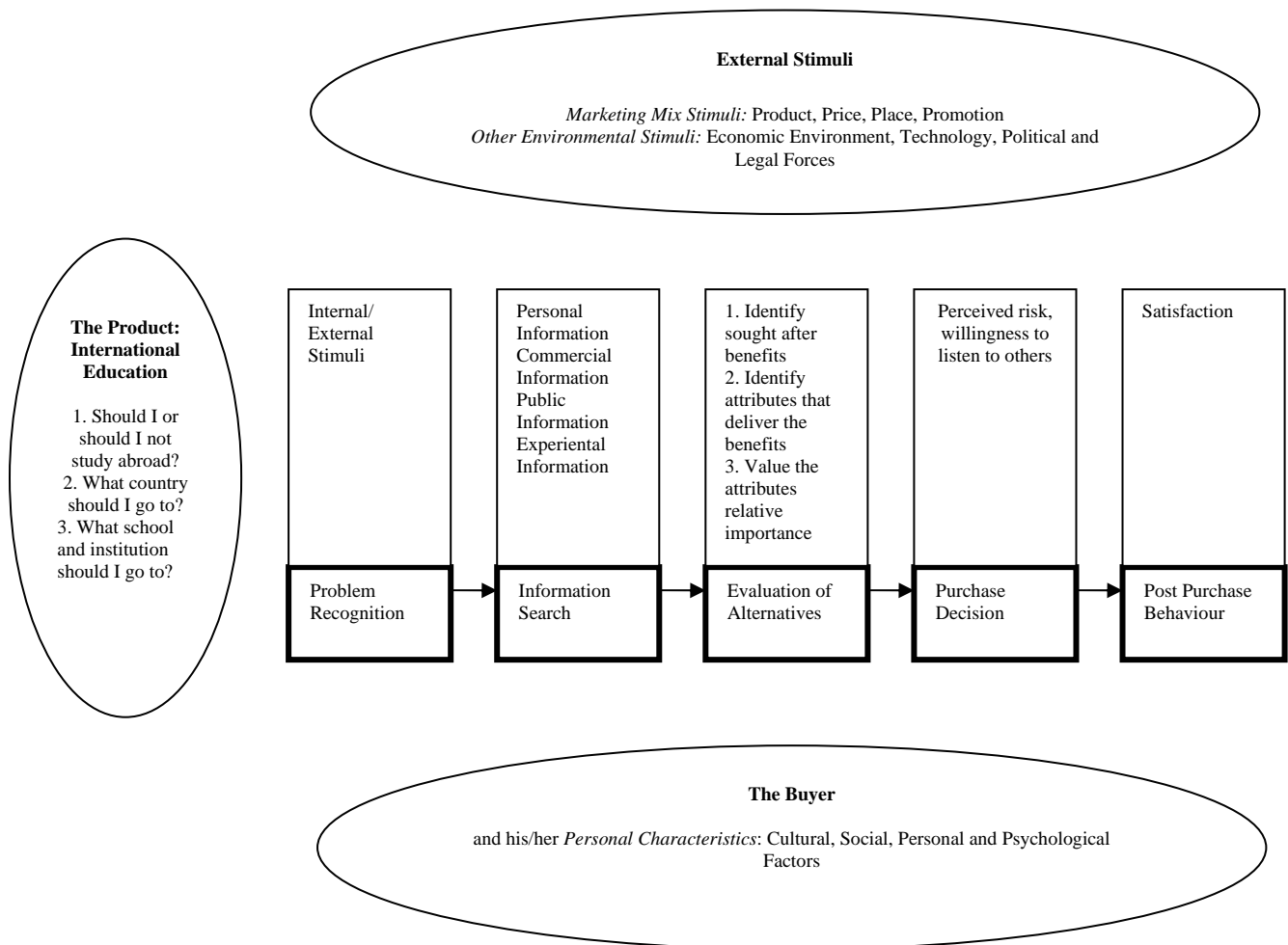


Figure 4.5 The Consumer Buying Process for International Education

In the problem recognition phase the consumer becomes aware of the desire to get an international education and to study abroad. The need can be triggered by either internal stimuli which means that the consumer feels the need without any influence from others or by external stimuli from either marketers or family and friends.

Since the product international education leads to a complex buying behaviour the consumer is likely to engage in an active information search. Four main types of

information sources are available: personal information, commercial information, public information and experiential information.

When it comes to the evaluation of the alternatives a consumer looks for certain benefits from international education and identifying these wanted benefits is the first step in understanding the evaluation process that occurs. The next step is to look at the different attribute that deliver the benefits that the consumer is looking for. The third and last step is to look at the different attributes and their relative importance.

In the purchase decision stage can the consumer depending on the level of perceived risk associated with the decision change his/her mind because of the attitudes of others and unanticipated situational factors. The likelihood for this to happen needs to be taken into consideration.

The post purchase behaviour and feelings are interesting since a satisfied consumer is likely to purchase the product again and to recommend it to others. Satisfaction is connected to expectations. If the education and experience does not live up to the expectations the consumer feel disappointed but if the product exceeds the expectations the consumer fell delighted.

The model The Consumer Buying Process of International Education in figure 4.5 summaries the discussion concerning what areas that needs to be considered when analysing what lies behind the decision to go and study abroad. The model identifies several interesting research areas and let us understands the complexity of the decision. The model constitutes the starting point for the next chapter, Theoretical Review: Benefits Connected to International Education, which focuses more on the buyer decision process for international education.

CHAPTER 5.

THEORETICAL REVIEW: BENEFITS CONNECTED TO INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The buying decision process with focus on international education has been presented in the theoretical frame of reference. With this as a foundation this chapter focuses on the part of the decision process which includes the evaluation of alternatives and presents benefits that attract students to international education and which constitute the underlying reasons to why the education is purchased. Different benefits are attached to the three dimensions of the decision: studying abroad, studying in a specific country and studying at a specific university. A theoretical conclusive summary with the purpose to explain which benefits a student regard when evaluating his/her options concerning international education concludes the chapter.

5.1 Introduction

To be able to be successful in attracting international students governments and institutions need to understand why students choose to go and study abroad. The consumer buying process presented in chapter four, Theoretical Frame of Reference: Consumer Behaviour and the Buyer Decision Process, constitutes a good foundation and helps to structure the discussion concerning factors and circumstances that have impact on the decision to take part in international education.

By looking at the buying decision process for international education one understands that there are a lot of different fields which can be researched. This study however focuses mainly on the perceived value and benefits connected to international education. The benefits of a product can be connected to the third stage of the buyer decision process, in the step of evaluation of alternatives. When a customer decides which alternative to purchase he/she regards benefits and connected attributes and weighs the options against each other. The option with most benefits will win and probably lead to a purchase.

Benefits of international education are an interesting research field since benefits constitutes the very foundation of the purchase. It is the core benefits of a product which normally make people buy it (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Jobber, 2007). A student is looking for value and satisfaction when purchasing international education.

Perceived value is a difficult concept to define and measure but can broadly be defined as the benefits received from purchasing the product relatively to the total costs. The total costs include the price paid plus other costs associated with the purchase. (McDougall & Levesque, 2000) This study aims at identifying the benefits searched for in international education, in other words the positive part of the perceived value. Understanding what the customer wants is the first step for universities and governments in developing a sustainable strategy for attracting foreign students. Universities need to deliver the benefits wanted by international students and also highlight these benefits in their marketing campaigns. (Schmidt, 2002)

5.2 The Push and Pull Perspective

A traditional way to look at the decision concerning international education is to use the push and pull perspective. This perspective is based on that there are one set of factors that pushes the student a way from their home country and makes them think about education in another country and another set of factors that pulls the student to certain countries and universities.

Push factors are factors connected to the domestic country, its education system and society which influences the student in the first phase where the students has to decide whether to stay home or to go abroad to study. Push factors can be the level of economic wealth in a country, a country's degree of involvement in the world economy, priority on education by the government and the availability of educational opportunities. (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002) Many bright students are not admitted to local universities because of the limit education places available and for many it is easier to be admitted to good foreign institutions than to local universities. This is especially true for studies at masters and doctoral levels. Furthermore there are very few world-class universities in developing countries and studies abroad is the only option for a student to study at these institutions of good repute. Finally all specialisations are not available in all countries and once again studies abroad can be the only option. (Altbach, 2004)

In the second phase where the student has to decide which country to go to the student base its decision on a series of *pull factors*. Countries pull the student into its educational system based on different characteristics and circumstances imbedded in

the nation and its educational system. Knowledge and awareness of the host country, recommendations from others, the cost issue, the environment, social links and geographic proximity constitutes common pull factors. Advanced research facilities and multinational classmates are also important pull factors which attracts students to international education. Additional pull factors then influence the student in the third phase where he/she has to decide which school or institution to go to within the chosen country. (Li & Bray, 2007; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002)

Even if the decision to study abroad is divided into three phases or dimensions in this analysis stage it is still important to see the decision process in its entirety. The push factors influencing a student to go abroad to study cannot by it self make a student to take the big decision to get an international education. Neither can the push factors by it self attract students to a specific country. It is the combination of push and pull factors that makes a student take the decision to go and study abroad. The push factors can be seen as creating a general interest in international education while the pull factors are specific to potential host countries and institutions.

There is a trend in for example China and India for the local governments to upgrade their education at all levels. Universities from foreign countries are establishing branch campuses in these developing countries. There is often little effort to adapt the programmes to the needs or traditions of the country in which the programmes are offered and it is common that entire programmes are exported intact to the branch campuses. Over time this trend is likely to reduce the impact of traditional push factors and the impact of the pull factors will grow in importance. (Altbach, 2004; Mazzarol et al, 2003)

The push-pull model is a valuable explanatory model but it has limitations. Both push and pull factors are external factors which only explains one part of why students choose to engage in international education. The other part is the individual and the personal characteristics of the students. Different groups of students respond differently to similar push and pull factors and are looking for somewhat different value and benefits from international education.

The traditional push-pull model focuses on negative push factors in a student's home country which pushes the student into international education. In reality there are also

positive factors embedded in a home country which keep the student at home. Similarly potential host countries do not only have positive pull factors which attract students to their country. Host countries also have negative aspects which repel students from coming to the country. (Li & Bray, 2007)

5.3 Benefits as the Foundation of Product Evaluation

One of the important goals for all firms including universities is to achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty by delivering superior value which is a source for competitive advantages. To create satisfaction a firm needs to deliver customer value. Value is created when a product or service satisfies a customer's needs. Since customers cannot judge the actual value a service will give them before purchase it is the perceived value that is most important. Perceived value is the total benefits a product or service gives a customer less the costs associated with the purchase (McDougall & Levesque, 2000). This study is focused on the positive part of the perceived value which the benefits associated with a product in this case international education. The benefits associated with international education are an important research area since it helps to answer the main question: Why do students engage in international education? (Schmidt, 2002) As concluded the foundation of consumer behaviour is that consumers are looking for benefits that will fill their needs.

Benefits connected to a product can many times be difficult for a company to market and to use to attract customers. Often attributes which are connected to benefits are communicated instead. Means-end theory, which can be traced back to the late 1970s and where Jonathan Gutman is seen as one of the main developer, clarifies the link between attribute, benefit and value and shows the link between means and end. The model tries to explain how a product selection can lead to the achievement of desired end states (Gutman, 1982).

The means-end theory tries to show the salient meanings that consumers associate with products and services. The central part of the theory is that there exists a chain which starts with the actual service and its attributes which then establish a link to personal values through the perceived benefits and consequences produced by the certain attributes. This forms a means-end chain where the attributes are the means and the value the ends and the ultimate source of choice criteria which drive buying behaviour. This means that products and service are bought for what they do for the

consumer and for the value that they create. Attributes are characteristics of products and services which may be preferred by consumers. However these attributes do not explain for what reasons the product or service is bought. The attributes do not help us to discover any underlying reasons to why a product is chosen. It is the benefits which people are seeking when consuming a product or service which explains why people are looking for certain attributes. From a customer's point of view it is not a product's attributes that are important it is the problem solution, it is the benefits which they derive from a certain combination of attributes that are important and which in its turn created value for the customer. (Botschen & Thelen, 1999; Thompson & Chen, 1998; Voss & Gruber, 2006)

The means-end theory is based on two assumptions: that values have an impact on buying behaviour and is important for the consumer and that consumers handle the situation of having to choose among hundreds, sometimes thousands, of products or services by classifying them in to groups with similar characteristics to make the decision process easier (Voss & Gruber, 2006). Both of these assumptions fit well into this study.

Even if benefit and attribute are two different things most empirical studies do not differentiate between product attribute and the benefit sought after. The reason can be that benefit and attribute often are closely linked which leads to that it is difficult to make a distinction between the two concepts. It is also common that in research where benefits are the main focus the empirical study is focused on attributes or on a combination of attributes and benefits. One should be aware of that if attributes are treated as benefits some benefits can be forgotten since one attribute can be linked to several different benefits. If the objective is to find out why consumers prefer products or services it is appropriate to focus on benefits and to perhaps use desired attributes to further describe the identified benefits. (Botschen & Thelen, 1999) In this study no clear distinction is made between benefit and attribute. The focus is on benefits but sometimes attributes are used to clarify a benefit. The sometimes unclear line between benefit and attribute can be seen as a weakness of this study.

As has been concluded the decision to participate in international education consists of three dimensions: the choice to study abroad, the choice of a specific host country and the choice of a specific university. In this study the benefits are grouped using

this division. There are different benefits connected to all three dimensions and it is these combined benefits which creates value for the international student and constitute the reason for the decision to participate in international education.

5.4 Benefits Associated with the Choice to Study Abroad

When a student is thinking about going abroad to study there are benefits that he/she is regarding and which constitutes the foundation of his/her decision. Researchers have found several general benefits which can be assumed to have an impact on the decision process. The benefits are presented below without any specific order.

5.4.1 Culture Experience

If students study in other countries than their home country they will of course meet people from other countries and get to know new cultures. The culture experience is an unique benefit associated with studies abroad and has a major impact on a student when it comes to the decision weather to engage in international education or not (United Minds, 2007). It is no surprise that it has been concluded that the experience of living in a different culture and meeting new people attracts student to international education (Cubillo et al, 2006; Li & Bray, 2007). Since students are interested in mixing with other cultures it is important that they are integrated with the local students and other international students. Good integration of international students leads to benefits both for local and international students (Russell, 2005). To give an example of the importance of culture experience a study made by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) found that the single most important influencing factor for Chinese student when it comes to the decision to study abroad is that the students wish to gain a better understanding of the West and western culture. Culture experience means that the student is well prepared to work in an international environment (Reisberg, 2004).

5.4.2 Access to Unique Knowledge

All countries and all universities do not offer the same programmes and courses and the quality is not perceived as being the same all over the world. The differences in the courses offered and in the knowledge taught constitute a factor in the decision concerning if to engage in international education or not. Students from particular Asia often choose to study abroad since the courses they are interested in are not available in their home country (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Russel, 2005). Research done by United Minds for Svenska Institutet and Högskoleverket (2007) supports this

and reviles the lack of a specific education in the student's home country as a motive for wanting to study abroad.

5.4.3 Higher Quality

For higher education quality is a core element which makes high quality perception an important motive for students when deciding where to study (Cubillo et al, 2006; Russel, 2005; Chen & Zimitat, 2006). One reason for students looking for education abroad is that they believe that they can get an education with a higher quality abroad than they can at home (Li & Bray, 2007). It has for example been shown that the majority of students in Asia sees overseas courses as better than local courses and sees this as an important factor that motivates them in their decision to participate in an international education (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

5.4.4 Possibility to Migration

A significant number of international students go abroad to study with the purpose to stay in the country also after finishing the studies. For especially Asian students immigration is an important factor which influences their decision to take part of international education (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). It is difficult to measure the amount of students motivated to international education by migration opportunities since few will admit that immigration is a major goal. However if one look at the non-return rates of students this indicates that migration is an important motivation factor for students when they choose to engage in international education. As an example 66 to 92 percent of Chinese students who have studied in U.S. have chosen to not return home after finished studies (Altbach, 2004; Altbach, 2005). That it is easy to immigrate can therefore be regarded as an important benefit that students look when engaging in international education (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003).

5.4.5 Improved Career Prospects

The core product international students are buying is not an education, it is rather the benefits a degree can give them in terms of for example employment (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003). Enhanced career prospects because of the international education or degree is one of the biggest benefits students are looking for when engaging in international education (Cubillo et al, 2006; Li & Bray, 2007; Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; Chen & Zimitat, 2006). To take it one step further it can be argued that it is the future employer of the student who is the real consumer of the international education

which means that future work opportunities really is the key factor for engaging in studies abroad (Schmidt, 2002).

757 international students studying in Sweden participated in a study focused on the choice of Sweden as a study destination. On the question what their biggest motive for studying abroad was did 36 percent answer that they wanted to improve the career prospects. This was the single most important motive showed in that study. (United Minds, 2007)

5.4.6 Personal Development

To study abroad means that you are far away from home and your family and friends. For many young international students this is perhaps the first time they must stand on their own. For many their time abroad as an international student leads to personal development and this is one of the reasons they engaged in international education to start with. (United Minds, 2007)

5.4.7 Status and Prestige

Higher status is implied in studying abroad, at least for students coming from developing countries to study in more developed countries (Cubillo et al, 2006). The prestige of a degree from a foreign university, especially an American degree, is greater than of one from a local institution and to study abroad can enhance a student's political status and power (Altbach, 2004; Li & Bray, 2007)

5.5 Benefits Associated with the Choice to Study in a Specific Country

There are some benefits associated with international education that are more connected to the decision to study in a specific country than to the general state of being an international education. These benefits are presented below without any specific order.

5.5.1 Positive Country Image and International Recognition

The country of origin effect can be regarded as any influence or bias that consumers may hold resulting from the country of origin of the associated product (Samiee, 1994). Country image is very close to the concept of country of origin however typically the concept of country of origin is used when the general effect of the origin of a product is discussed while the country image is more connected to the beliefs of

consumers. Country image refers to consumers beliefs about a specific country and can be defined as: “*Country image is the overall perception consumers form of products from a particular country, based on their prior perceptions of the country’s production and marketing strengths and weaknesses*” (Roth & Romeo, 1992, p. 480).

Research has shown that the country of origin affects customers’ evaluations of a product. Normally it is argued that customers consider the country of origin in their evaluation process if they lack other information about the product. When customers do not have much information about the product, the country of origin of the product can function as an important information cue (Samiee, 1994).

There is evidence for that country image plays an important role when a student selects which country to study in. Country image is generally assumed to be one of the first sources that consumers consider in product evaluation since customers form their opinion about a product or service based on their stereotypes about the country of origin. Due to the prestige image of certain countries in higher education students believe that education offered in these countries is of high quality (Cubillo et al, 2006). A reputation for quality is an important factor when a student chooses a country to study in (Li & Bray, 2007).

To study in a country with a positive country image brings international recognition. A study conducted in UK with the purpose to function as marketing intelligence inputs for the UK Government and academic marketing planners show that international students in UK see the international recognition as the first and most important reason in choosing a country to study in. Students highlighted that the rest of the world has trust in UK’s education system and this international recognition is a big benefit for them after their studies. (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003) One student put it like: “*UK qualifications are recognised all over the world and can open many doors*” (Russel, 2005, p. 73). It is not surprising that international recognition is an important part of the decision when students choose which country to study in. Few students would study in a host country from which qualifications were not recognised at home (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Li & Bray, 2007). To sum up a host country must have a reputation for quality education, its qualification must be recognised and it should have a high international profile.

5.5.2 Safety

For students and influencers such as the students' parents it is important that the study destination is a safe place to study in (Altbach, 2004). High levels of crime and racial discrimination have a negative effect on students when they choose which country to study in and students regard safety in the country in their decision making process (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). A good environment attracts foreign students to that country (Russel, 2005; Chen & Zimitat, 2006). A study made in Sweden show that Sweden is perceived to be a safe and secure country and that that was one of the motives for foreign students to choosing Sweden as study destination (United Minds, 2007).

5.5.3 Easy to Work during and after Studies

Many students hope to not only study while abroad but also to acquire work experience. The ease for students to work during and after their studies affects the choice of study destination. In some countries it is more easy to work than in other countries mainly because of laws concerning work permits. (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; Reisberg, 2004) It is however not only the laws concerning work permission that are important. The willingness to employ and to hire well-qualified foreigners in the country is of course also crucial for international students searching for a job (Altbach, 2004).

5.5.4 Improved English

English is the world's most widely studied foreign language and the most widely used second language. English is used at universities all over the world and many academic courses are given in English even in countries where English is not the official language. Most international students attend universities in English-speaking countries such as U.S. and Australia. Even if countries having small languages change the medium of instruction at their universities to English there is no doubt that English-speaking countries benefit from the increasing use of that language for science and scholarship. (Altbach, 2005) Improving language skills is an important part when non-English speaking students choose an English speaking country to study in (Cubillo et al, 2006). Improving and learning a language and the availability of English speaking lecturers must therefore be considered a wanted benefit when students evaluate different options concerning study destination (Russell, 2005; United Minds, 2007).

5.5.5 Easy to Enter Country

The ease of getting visas has a positive impact on attracting foreign students to a country. Stories and myths concerning difficulties in getting visas can discourage students from choosing a specific country while ease of getting visa can encourage student to choose a specific country (Altbach, 2004; Russel, 2005; United Minds, 2007). U.S. is an example of a country where it is perceived as difficult and relatively expensive to get a visa. Students outside U.S. believe that they face a high probability of being rejected for a visa and this can discourage them for choosing U.S. as a study destination (Reisberg, 2004).

5.6 Benefits Associated with the Choice to Study at a Specific University

There are some benefits that are not really connected to the overall decision to engage in an international education neither to study in a specific country. The benefits are more connected to the decision to study at a specific university. These benefits are presented below without any specific order.

5.6.1 Positive Institution Image and International Recognition

The institution image is the sum of opinions, ideas and impressions that someone has of an institution. This image can be formed by for example word of mouth, past experiences or marketing activities. Students are becoming more and more aware and analytical when choosing an educational institution which means that institutions need to maintain and develop a distinctive image in order to be able to attract students. (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003). The reputation of an institution has proved to be an important reason for students choosing a specific university as study destination (Li & Bray, 2007).

It is important that the home country of the student recognises the foreign institution's qualifications. This is both in the sense of informal recognition which can be connected to institution image but also in the formal sense that degrees can be translated and accepted in the home country. (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002) Furthermore it is important that also future employers recognise the institution and programme studied. Future employers can be seen as the true customers of international education since they will consume the finished product which is well-educated students. As consumers of the product employers therefore judge the validity of the studies according to their view of the university and the programme.

The reputation of the institution and institution image are therefore an important factor in evaluating international education. (Cubillo et al, 2006)

5.6.2 Good Facilities

The physical environment of a university can constitute an important element in the decision making process. If a university's facilities have a high standard this can be considered to be a relevant factor in influencing a student's selection of which university to go to. Good facilities which have an impact on the social life at the university are considered to be especially important. (Cubillo et al, 2006; Russel, 2005)

5.6.3 Easy to Enter the University

Ease of university entrance is considered to be an important factor when students are evaluating which university to go to (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003). In a country like China where there are a large youth who want to study at universities but where only a limit amount of that youth can enter higher education in the home country an international education abroad is the only option for many aspiring students. Because of the one-child policy which was initiated in China 1979 many young people looking for education are the only child in their family which mean an increased likelihood for the families to afford to send their children abroad for studies. If it is easy to enter a a university this constitutes a benefit for the students and their families. (Li & Bray, 2007)

5.7 Summary and Theoretical Conclusions

As concluded in the introduction of this chapter this study focus mainly on the benefits associated with international education which is connected to the decision making process concerning international education.

Fifteen benefits connected to international education have been identified; seven connected to the overall decision to study abroad, five associated with the choice to study in a specific country and three connected to the choice to study at a specific university. The three dimensions and the benefits connected to them give together a complete picture of the benefits which constitutes the positive part of the perceived value of international education. The benefits are stated in the conclusive summary in figure 5.1.

Benefits Associated with the Choice to Study Abroad	Culture Experience	<i>Li & Bray (2007), United Minds (2007), Cubillo et al (2006), Russell (2005), Reisberg (2004), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Access to Unique Knowledge	<i>United Minds (2007), Russell (2005), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Higher Quality	<i>Li & Bray (2007), Chen & Zimitat (2006), Cubillo et al (2006), Russell (2005), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Possibility to Migration	<i>Altbach (2005), Altbach (2004), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Improved Career Prospects	<i>Li & Bray (2007), United Minds (2007), Chen & Zimitat (2006), Cubillo et al (2006), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003), Schmidt (2002),</i>
	Personal Development	<i>United Minds (2007)</i>
	Status and Prestige	<i>Li & Bray (2007), Cubillo et al (2006), Altbach (2004)</i>
Benefits Associated with the Choice to Study in a Specific Country	Positive Country Image and International Recognition	<i>Li & Bray (2007), Cubillo et al (2006), Russell (2005), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Safety	<i>United Minds (2007), Chen & Zimitat (2006), Russell (2005), Altbach (2004), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Easy to Work during and after Studies	<i>Altbach (2004), Reisberg (2004), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003)</i>
	Improved English	<i>United Minds (2007), Cubillo et al (2006), Altbach (2005), Russell (2005)</i>

	Easy to Enter Country	<i>United Minds (2007), Russell (2005), Altbach (2004), Reisberg (2004)</i>
Benefits Associated with the Choice to Study at a Specific University	Positive Institution Image and International Recognition	<i>Li & Bray (2007), Cubillo et al (2006), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Good Facilities	<i>Cubillo et al (2006), Russell (2005)</i>
	Easy to Enter the University	<i>Li & Bray (2007), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003)</i>

Figure 5.1 Conclusive Summary of Benefits Associated with International Education

CHAPTER 6.

EMPIRICAL METHOD

This chapter focuses on the empirical method and presents the research design and research technique of the survey. Special focus is given to the clarification of the link between the research questions, theory and the empirical study. The questionnaire design is discussed and the pilot studies are presented. Issues such as sample and generalisability are highlighted and validity and reliability is discussed. The difference parts aims at together giving a complete and clear picture of the empirical study.

6.1 Link between Research Questions, Theory and Empirical Study

It is important to be clear about the information that is needed when the empirical study is designed. It is therefore essential to highlight and review the research questions and the result of the literature review to be able to use that as foundation for the design of the empirical study. In this way a clear connection between research questions, the theoretical review and the empirical study can be guaranteed.

6.1.1 Main Benefits with International Education

An important part of this study is to find the main benefits connected to an international education. This purpose is connected to the second research question:

2. What are the main benefits connected to international education which make students desire an international education?

The question has been given an answer through the theoretical review, however the topic should be further researched in the empirical study. The theoretical review led to the creation of a conclusive summary in the form of a table consisting of the benefits connected to international education. This summary constitutes the foundation for the empirical study.

The study is however searching for the *main* benefits connected to international education which means that the number of benefits to be further researched can be reduced. A decision is made to only include benefits which have been highlighted by

three or more researchers in the empirical study. This means that the following benefits will be further researched:

- *Culture experience* (Li & Bray, 2007; United Minds, 2007; Cubillo et al, 2006; Russell, 2005; Reisberg, 2004; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002)
- *Access to unique knowledge* (United Minds, 2007; Russell, 2005; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002)
- *Higher quality* (Li & Bray, 2007; Chen & Zimitat, 2006; Cubillo et al, 2006; Russell, 2005; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002)
- *Possibility to migration* (Altbach, 2005; Altbach, 2004; Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002)
- *Improved career prospects* (Li & Bray, 2007; United Minds, 2007; Chen & Zimitat, 2006; Cubillo et al, 2006; Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; Schmidt, 2002)
- *Status and Prestige* (Li & Bray, 2007; Cubillo et al, 2006; Altbach, 2004)
- *Positive Country Image and international recognition* (Li & Bray, 2007 ; Cubillo et al, 2006 ; Russell, 2005; Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002)
- *Safety* (United Minds, 2007; Chen & Zimitat, 2006; Russell, 2005; Altbach, 2004; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002)
- *Easy to work during and after studies* (Altbach, 2004; Reisberg, 2004; Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003)
- *Improved English* (United Minds, 2007; Cubillo et al, 2006; Altbach, 2005; Russell, 2005)
- *Easy to enter country* (United Minds, 2007; Russell, 2005; Altbach, 2004; Reisberg, 2004)
- *Positive Institution Image and international recognition* (Li & Bray, 2007; Cubillo et al, 2006; Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002)

The excluded benefits are personal development (United Minds, 2007), good facilities (Cubillo et al, 2006; Russell, 2005) and easy to enter university (Li & Bray, 2007; Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003).

6.1.2 Benefit Segmentation

Chapter four, Theoretical Frame of Reference: Consumer Behaviour and The Buyer Decision Process, states that the buyer and his/her personal characteristics influences the decision process. Different kinds of buyers tend to react differently on for

example external stimulus and also tend to base their decision on somewhat different grounds which mean that market segmentation can be a useful tool for universities.

Market segmentation is a well-known principle of marketing which can be defined as *“the identification of individuals or organizations with similar characteristics that have significant implications for the determination of marketing strategy”* (Jobber, 2007, p. 275). Since customers’ needs are becoming increasingly diverse it is difficult for firms to satisfy the entire market by a mass marketing approach. Organizations cannot normally serve all customers in a market and one way to cope with the diversity is to group customers with similar requirements and buying behaviour into segments. Segmentation enhances marketing effectiveness and helps firms to develop more suitable marketing programmes. Segmentation also helps firms to allocate resources more effectively and encourages businesses to do the most of their strengths. Segmentation can also mean that firms get a better understanding of what customers need and want and makes it possible for the firm to deliver the sought after product. (Dibb et al, 2002; Dibb 1998)

It is natural to assume that different people value the benefits associated to international education differently and in this study the buyer of international education is introduced to facilitate a specific kind of segmentation: benefit segmentation. Benefit segmentation constitutes the third research question, which should be answered with the help of the empirical study.

3. Using benefit segmentation, what segments can be identified?

Benefit segmentation has been used for successful product positioning, new product introduction, pricing, advertising and distribution. The idea behind benefit segmentation is to use benefits and their different importance for different people as segmentation criteria. This is founded on the belief that benefits which people are seeking in consuming a given product are the basic reasons for their purchase. It has been concluded that to satisfy the customers, benefits and attributes are the most popular variables for segmenting the market. When you use benefit segmentation it helps you to determine the benefits people look for in a product, identify what kind of people who are looking for each benefit and this in its turn makes it possible to evaluate if the existing products, yours and your competitors’, are meeting these

needs and see what segment you should target. (Botschen & Thelen, 1999; Wu, 2001)

Personal characteristics which help to separate consumers from each other can be divided into four subgroups: cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics. Segmentation is not the main purpose of this study and subsequently only a few personal characteristics are include in the study and will constitute the foundation of the benefit segmentation. The factors that will be used are age and maturity, gender, social class measured through parents' education background, plans for the future regarding work and capacity in school measured through average grade.

6.1.3 External Stimulus: Price

Firms and organisations use various kinds of marketing stimuli to persuade potential consumers to buy their products. As concluded in chapter four, Theoretical Frame of Reference: Consumer Behaviour and The Buyer Decision Process, external stimuli have an impact on the buyer decision process. External stimuli are not the main focus of this study however one stimulus is included and that is price. Research question four should also be given an answer with the help of the empirical study:

4. Price is an important external stimulus. How does price influence the desire to engage in international education?

The price of a product or service directly affects the value consumers perceive to get from a purchase. The price for higher education is debated in Sweden. Today higher education is free of charge for both Swedish and foreign students. The debate going on is focused on if Swedish universities should be allowed to take a tuition fee for foreign students coming from countries outside EES (EU and EFTA countries). It is argued that education is a global industry and for Sweden to become a real player in that industry it is necessary to introduce tuition fees. The introduction of fees would mean that the Swedish higher education would compete on the same terms as many other countries when it comes to attracting foreign students. Is Swedish higher education competitive enough to still attract students even if they have to pay a fee? An introduction of tuition fees would mean increased incentives for universities to raise the quality of their education. (Svenskt Näringsliv, 2007)

Even if price is just one out of many important external stimuli, price is included in

this study for two main reasons. First, tuition fees for foreign students is an up-to-date topic which is heavily debated in Sweden today and for that reason it makes an interesting angle to include in the study. Second, the introduction of a tuition fee would directly influence the perceived value of Swedish higher education since it increases the cost of the education. Since the study focuses on the perceived value of higher education in Sweden, more exact the positive side which is the benefits, issues with the possibility to affect the perceived value is of course of interest for the study.

6.1.4 Perception of Sweden as a Country for International Education

The fifth research question has not been highlighted in the theoretical review but should however also be answered through the empirical study:

5. How is Sweden perceived to deliver the sought after benefits?

It is interesting for Swedish universities to see how well foreign students think that Sweden deliver the sought after benefits connected to international education. This knowledge can help the universities in their work with marketing their courses and programmes outside Sweden as well as identifying areas where Sweden needs to improve their reputation.

6.2 Research Design

The research is characterised by an abductive approach which has been discussed in chapter two. Furthermore the research can be described as being both exploratory and conclusive by its nature. It is exploratory in the way that its main purpose is to get an insight to and a better understanding of why students study abroad and what benefits that are important for students when they think about international education. This kind of purpose fits well into the primary objective of exploratory research which is to provide insights and understanding of a marketing phenomenon. The study has however also a more precise aim which is to identify specific benefits that are important for Chinese students when they regard the decision to take part of an international education. This can be seen as conclusive research which is characterised by having as objective to describe a specific phenomenon and to examine specific relationships. Furthermore the research is descriptive which implies that the study is pre-planned and structured. It is not uncommon that marketing studies serve several purposes and thus involves more than one type of research

design. It can also be concluded that the study is cross-sectional which means that data is collected only once. (Malhotra & Birks, 2003; Saunders et al, 2007)

6.3 Research Technique

To be able to further research the theoretical conclusions and to find answers to the research questions different options concerning research technique were analysed. Common techniques for descriptive research are surveys and quantitative observations. After careful consideration it was decided that a questionnaire should be made. A survey is often used in business research and one of its strongest benefits is that it allows the collection of a large amount of data. The survey was conducted with the help of a structured questionnaire. The benefits with this technique are that it is rather simple to administer and due to the fixed-response questions the analysing and interpretation of data is uncomplicated. (Malhotra & Birks, 2003) It is however difficult to design a good questionnaire which is discussed later in this chapter.

The structured questionnaire was designed as a self-administered questionnaire and handed to the respondents in a printed version. The respondents were given oral instructions in how to fill out the questionnaire and the questionnaire was then conducted with the researcher in the room. The respondents were encouraged to ask questions if there was something they did not understand and were given a rather long time to complete the questionnaire.

6.4 The Questionnaire

Once the research technique is decided, in this case the use of a structured questionnaire, and the information needed is identified the creation and the design of the empirical study can start. It is a difficult task to develop good questionnaires that translate the information needed into specific questions but also motivate the respondent to answer the questionnaire in the same time as it keeps response errors to a minimum (Malhotra & Birks, 2003).

A main difficulty to overcome is the creation of good questions. It is important that the questions in the questionnaire contribute to the information needed and that there is a purpose behind all questions. You also have to make sure that the questions asked cover what you need and are sufficient to get the desired information. (Malhotra & Birks, 2003) To make sure that this is the case in this study this chapter started with a

review of the research question and theory and this review functions as the foundation in the creation of questions.

In this part the questions in the questionnaire is presented. The questionnaire can be found in appendix 3. The questionnaire can be divided into four parts. Part one is background information which contains seven questions concerning the respondent. This part can be linked to the research question concerning benefit segmentation.

Table 6.1 Questions in Part 1

<i>Factors to be tested</i>	<i>Question/questions</i>
Age and maturity	Question 1, 3
Gender	Question 2
Social class measured through parents' work	Question 5
Plans for future regarding work	Question 6, 7
Capacity in school measured through average grade	Question 4

All except one question in part one are structured questions which means that the response alternatives are set. The structured questions are multiple choice questions where the respondents are asked to choose one of the alternatives given. There are difficulties associated with multiple choice questions. To decide the number of alternatives to include, to give the alternatives the right order, to make sure that all possible choices are included and to make the response alternatives mutually exclusive are issues that were considered when the questions were created. (Malhotra & Birks, 2003)

Part two of the questionnaire is connected to the benefits with international education which were summarised in a table. The questions in part two were structured and a scaling technique was used. An itemised rating scale was set up which means that the measurement scale have numbers or brief descriptions associated with each category. The widely used Likert scale was used where the respondents are required to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with a statement. (Edling & Hedström, 2003; Malhotra & Birks, 2003; Saunders et al, 2007) On a scale of one to seven the respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements where “one” meant that they totally disagreed with the statements, “four” that they neither

disagreed nor agreed and “seven” meant that they totally agreed with the statement. Seven alternatives might seem as many alternatives to include however this was set since the factors tested were benefits which imply that the positive side of the scale are most likely to be used. By giving seven options it is easier to find differences in how the factors are evaluated compared to if only five options were given.

The respondents were asked to a) evaluate possible benefits with an international education and b) evaluate if the benefits are important for them personally. The a) questions were asked to find out if the respondent agreed with previous studies that had concluded that to study abroad were connected to certain benefits. The b) questions were then asked to find out how important the respondents found those benefits to be. In this way each possible benefit was given two questions instead of one in the questionnaire, this to ensure that sufficient information was collected. It was viewed as possible that respondents could recognise that international education is associated to a certain benefit but at the same time the benefit can be totally unimportant for them as a person. Both questions measure however the evaluation of the benefits and if no difference between the two questions can be identified the questions can be combined into one.

Table 6.2 presents the benefits found through the literature review and which questions in the questionnaire that is linked to the different benefits. This part is linked to the second research question concerning the main benefits connected to international education. An unstructured question concerning if there were any other reason or benefit that encouraged them to study abroad were included in the questionnaire (question 20) to see if the previous research had missed any important benefits.

Table 6.2 Questions in Part 2

<i>Factors to be tested</i>	<i>Question/questions</i>
Culture experience	Question 8a, 8b
Access to unique knowledge	Question 9a, 9b
Higher quality	Question 10a, 10b
Possibility to migration	Question 11a, 11b
Improved career prospects	Question 12a, 12b
Status and Prestige	Question 13a, 13b
Positive Country Image and International Recognition	Question 14a, 14b
Safety	Question 15a, 15b
Easy to work during and after studies	Question 16a, 16b
Improved English	Question 17a, 17b
Easy to enter country	Question 18a, 18b
Positive Institution Image and international recognition	Question 19a, 19b

The third part of the questionnaire deals with the perception of Sweden and is linked to the fifth research question. The perception of Sweden was tested by asking the respondents to value the benefits with international education found in the theoretical review in regards to how well they believe that Sweden would deliver the benefits. These questions are also in the form of a seven point Likert scale. Table 6.3 presents the questions in part three. Question 33 is an overarching question asking if the respondent overall believes that Sweden is an attractive country to go abroad to study in.

Table 6.3 Questions in Part 3

<i>Factors to be tested</i>	<i>Question/questions</i>
Sweden-Culture experience	Question 21
Sweden-Access to unique knowledge	Question 22
Sweden-Higher quality	Question 23
Sweden-Possibility to migration	Question 24
Sweden-Improved career prospects	Question 25
Sweden-Status and Prestige	Question 26
Sweden-Improved English	Question 27
Sweden-Positive Country Image and International Recognition	Question 28
Sweden-Safety	Question 29
Sweden-Easy to work during and after studies	Question 30
Sweden-Easy to enter country	Question 31
Sweden-Positive Institution Image and international recognition	Question 32

The forth and last part of the questionnaire is designed to answer the remaining research question which needs to be answered with the help of the empirical study. The forth part deals with the external stimuli price. Question 34 and 35 aims at finding out if price would influence the likelihood for a student to go to Sweden to get an international education.

It is important that the respondents do their best in answering the questions in the questionnaire and it is therefore vital to think about how to make it as easy as possible for the respondents to answer the questions. One issue is that respondents are unable to articulate their response to a question (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). To come around this mostly structured questions are used in the questionnaire. The use of structured questions also decreases the effort connected to participating in the survey which in its turn should motivate respondents to participate. If a legitimate purpose for the research can be shown this also motivates the respondents. The purpose of the study is therefore clearly stated in the beginning of the questionnaire as well as explained orally by the researcher.

The questionnaire was conducted during a lecture at the university and therefore took no personal or free time from the respondents. This is also likely to motivate the respondents to take the time to participate in the research.

6.4.1 Pilot-Tests

Pilot-testing means that a questionnaire is tested on a sample of respondents to be able to identify and eliminate potential problems with the questionnaire before the main study is conducted (Saunders, 2007). The questionnaire for this study is relatively extensive and tries to capture a lot of aspects. It was there for important to spend a lot of time in designing the questionnaire to avoid misunderstandings and make the questionnaire as easy as possible to answer and to reduce response errors. Pilot-testing therefore got an important role for the study.

Two separate pilot-tests were conducted. The first test was conducted on two respondents and a dialog concerning the questionnaire took place. The second test was conducted on respondents very similar to those who were included in the actual survey and on a larger sample. The result of this pilot-test was analysed with purpose to draw conclusions concerning the design of the questions and if the questionnaire could give useful result.

6.4.1.1. Pilot-Test One

The purpose of the first pilot-test was to see if the questions were easy to understand and if they were suitable designed for the Chinese society. Especially questions concerning issues such as grades and parents' work position must be asked in such a matter so that they don't offend anyone and are possible for the respondent to answer. Two former students at Kristianstad University were selected to assist in this pilot-test. The respondents are Chinese and live and work in China and are regarded as open and straightforward people that would be honest in its evaluation of the questionnaire. The two test people gave feedback through e-mail and as a result of the pilot-test small adjustment were made, for example an additional alternative for tuition fees was added since the original alternatives was regarded as too low. The questionnaire was then sent a second time to the test people and this time it was approved.

6.4.1.2. Pilot-Test Two

As second pilot-test was conducted after the first adjustments. This time the questionnaire was tested on Chinese students studying English at Ningbo University. Due to good cooperation between Kristianstad University and Ningbo University the Faculty of Foreign Languages agreed to let 45 students answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire was published online and the link to the questionnaire was distributed during class at Ningbo University. The respondents have similar background and can be assumed to be equally familiar with the topic as are the respondents in the main study and can therefore be said to be a good sample for the pilot-test.

The responses from the pilot-test was analysed to see if the information obtained through the questionnaire was adequate and that all necessary data to answer the research questions was captured. To analyse the responses of the pilot-test was very important for this particular study since a major concern for the success of the study is if it will be possible to see a difference between the benefits when it comes to their impact on the decision to participate in an international education. The questionnaire design makes it possible for the respondents to rate all the benefits equal and even if this would be an interesting result the hope is to be able to find a difference between the importance of the benefits. If the pilot-test showed that no differences could be measured an option would be to redesign the questionnaire to force the respondents to grade the benefits. This could rather simply be done by asking the respondent to place the benefits in the order of importance for them.

Analysing the result of survey done at Ningbo University could help to decide if a redesign of the questionnaire was necessary. Table 6.4 show the result for part two in the questionnaire and the mean values for how the respondents graded the benefits with international education. Even if the response from the pilot-test is not statistically analysed it is possible to see that there exists a variation in how the respondents value the different benefits connected to international education. This meant that the existing questionnaire was viewed as giving enough data to work with and it was decided that the design of the questionnaire did not have to be reworked.

Table 6.4 Result from the Pilot-Test, Part 2

<i>Evaluation of Benefits</i>	<i>Mean Value</i>
To study abroad would give me culture experience	6.6
To study abroad would give me culture experience and this would be an important benefit for me	6.3
To study abroad would give me access to unique courses and knowledge which would be difficult to get in my home country	4.8
To study abroad would give me access to unique courses and knowledge which would be difficult to get in my home country and this would be an important benefit for me	4.7
To study abroad would give me courses and an education with higher quality	4.3
To study abroad would give me courses and an education with higher quality and this would be an important benefit for me	4.4
To study abroad would give me, if I so wanted, the possibility to migrate to another country	4.7
To study abroad would give me, if I so wanted, the possibility to migrate to another country and this would be an important benefit for me	4.8
To study abroad would lead to improved opportunities for me after finishing my studies	5.3
To study abroad would lead to improved opportunities for me after finishing my studies and this would be an important benefit for me	5.0
To study abroad would give me a higher status and a certain prestige	4.4
To study abroad would give me a higher status and a certain prestige and this would be an important benefit for me	4.5
To study abroad would improve my English	6.4
To study abroad would improve my English and this would be an important benefit for me	6.3
To study abroad in a country with good reputation would constitute a benefit	6.0

To study abroad in a country with good reputation would constitute a benefit and this would be important for me	6.2
To study abroad in a safe country would constitute a benefit	6.2
To study abroad in a safe country would constitute a benefit and this would be important for me	6.2
To be able to work in the new country during and after my studies abroad would constitute a benefit	5.7
To be able to work in the new country during and after my studies abroad would constitute a benefit and this would be important for me	5.6
To study abroad would improve my English	6.4
To study abroad would improve my English and this would be an important benefit for me	6.3
That it is easy to enter the country for my studies abroad would constitute a benefit	5.7
That it is easy to enter the country for my studies abroad would constitute a benefit and this would be important for me	5.6
To study abroad at a university with a good reputation which is recognised and famous would constitute a benefit	6.4
To study abroad at a university with a good reputation which is recognised and famous would constitute a benefit and this would be important for me	6.3

6.5 Sample, Response Rate and Generalisability

Since the purpose of the empirical study is to analyse how Chinese university students feel about international education it is obvious that not the entire population can be tested. Hangzhou Dianzi University and students at the School of Management was selected and the more precise purpose of the study is to explain these students' attitudes towards international education. Hangzhou Dianzi University was selected since the university is interested in developing their international contacts and because the university is a part of a Linnaeus-Palme project with the purpose to explore possibilities for student and teacher exchange with Kristianstad University. Since a visit to Hangzhou Dianzi University was scheduled due to the Linnaeus-Palme project it was suitable and convenient to conduct the study at that time. The university is situated in the province of Zhejiang about two hours from Shanghai. It

was founded in 1956 and has around 15 000 students and 1300 employees. The School of Management is one part of the Hangzhou Dianzi University and this department was selected since these students are in the same field as the researcher. The students study business administration and belong to a field where the university is interested in developing their international contacts and facilitate student exchange.

Around 2000 students study at the School of Management and these students are regarded as the population to be tested. The study was conducted during a lecture held at the School of Management on the topic “ Kristianstad University and possibilities to study in Sweden”. Students at the School of Management were invited to this lecture through their internal information system and the lecture was voluntary. 163 students took part in the lecture and the questionnaire was distributed to these students in the end of the lecture. A sample of 163 students was regarded as sufficient. The larger the sample the greater the likelihood for the sample to be representative for the population. A large sample is however expensive to work with and time consuming so the benefits with a large sample need to be balanced with the drawbacks (Saunders, 2007). 163 students represents around 8 percent of the population.

The sampling method used can be seen as a non-probability convenience sampling method since the respondents were selected due to that they were in the right place at the right time. The sampling method has many advantages. It is time-saving and the respondents are accessible and cooperative. However it opens the door for different kinds of selection bias and generalisations are difficult to make. (Malhotra & Birks, 2003) The students that took part in the lecture are likely to be more interested in international education than the rest of the population since the topic of the lecture was connected to studies abroad. It is therefore not suitable to draw conclusions concerning the entire population. The purpose of the study is to get an insight to how Chinese student view international education and not to establish a generalisable theory. The study tells us something about how students who studies business administration at a specific Chinese university and who are interested enough in studies abroad to join a lecture on the topic thinks about international education.

Out of the sample consisting of 163 participants in the lecture 154 handed in their questionnaires. This leads to a response rate of 94.5 percent. Out of these 154 two

questionnaires was not completed and therefore excluded from the analysis. This leaves us with 152 respondents.

6.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity examines the causal relationship between two variables and is concerned with if the findings are really about what they appear to be about and can be defined as: *“The extent to which a measurement represents characteristics that exists in the phenomenon under investigation”* (Malhotra & Birks, 2003, p. 770). A good research is of course characterised by high validity. The questions in the questionnaire are there to measure certain factors and it is important that the questions are not misleading or wrongly formulated. To avoid problems with validity a lot of effort was put into formulating the questions and chapter 6.4 deals with the creation of the questionnaire. If a question is not relevant or designed in a way which leaves room for interpretation it is possible that systematic errors will occur. Systematic errors mean that the questionnaire will not give the type of answer we are looking for. No matter how many cases that are included in the study the error will remain since the fault is in the question design. (Saunders, 2007)

The questionnaire was tested by conducting two separate pilot tests. The first test was conducted with the help of two former students at Kristianstad University. The purpose was to get feedback on the suitability of the questions and have a dialog concerning the questionnaire. This type of pilot test can help to improve and establish content validity (Saunders, 2007).

The reliability of the collected data is concerned with whether or not the measures will yield the same results on other occasions and if a similar result would be reached by other researchers and can be defined as: *“the extent to which a scale produces consistent results if repeated measurements are made on the characteristic”* (Malhotra & Birks, 2003, p. 767). There exist several threats to reliability. Participant error are errors that appear due to the participant and can be linked to that sometimes the participant will not answer the same questionnaire exactly the same if he/she would conduct the questionnaire more than once. Depending on the current mood of the participant he/she can answer the questionnaire differently. (Saunders, 2007) To avoid these kinds of mistakes it is good if the questionnaire can be done at a rather neutral time. The questionnaire for this study was conducted at a Tuesday around 2

pm, which can be considered to be a neutral time. This however does of course not mean that it is possible to completely rule out participant errors.

Another threat to reliability is participant bias. The participants maybe with purpose gave misleading answers to questions that can be considered as sensitive. In this study a question concerning grade was for example included. It is possible that this is a sensitive question for some and that you don't answer this question completely truthfully. Furthermore, one part of the questionnaire was to evaluate Sweden and if Sweden can be considered as a good country when it comes to studies abroad. Since the study is conducted by a Swede this could influence the participants and some could find it sensitive to give Sweden a bad evaluation. To avoid these kinds of participant bias it was important to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

Observer error and observer bias are not as important as respondent error and respondent bias in this study since a questionnaire with mostly standardised questions were used which leaves little room for interpretation for the observer.

6.7 Limitations

The study has some limitations which are important to highlight. The limitations should be kept in mind when evaluating the result of the study. First, the sample is limited to Chinese students who study at one specific university in China, the Hangzhou Dianzi University. The sample is further limited to included students at the School of Management. The sample was a convenience sample selected due to that it offered a good opportunity to collect data in China, which otherwise is difficult. The sample is however a limitation and means, as concluded earlier, that it is not possible to generalise the result.

Another limitation which is connected to the sample is that the sample is quite homogenous. All respondents were Chinese, between 18-25 years old, studied the same subject at the same university and chose to participate in the same voluntary lecture on the topic "Kristianstad University and possibilities to study in Sweden". The homogeneity of the sample lead to that it was difficult to see any differences between the respondents and in its turn it was not meaningful to due benefit segmentation, which was one of the purposes with the study. A final limitation

connected to the sample is the number of respondents. 152 questionnaires were completed correctly. A higher number of respondents would improve the reliability.

One limitation is the language barrier. The questionnaire was conducted in English and even if the respondents were university students who had studied English and who just participated in a lecture held in English there can still have existed problems for the respondents to completely understand the questionnaire. The respondents were encourage to ask questions if there were something they did not understand, however the language barrier must still be considered as a limitation in this study.

The difference between benefit and attribute was highlighted in chapter five, Theoretical Review: Benefits Connected to international Education. It was also concluded that even if benefit and attribute are two different things most empirical studies do not differentiate between product attribute and the benefit sought after and in this study no clear distinction is made between benefit and attribute. The focus of the study is on benefits but sometimes attributes are used to clarify a benefit. The sometimes unclear line between benefit and attribute can be seen as a weakness of this study.

CHAPTER 7.

ANALYSIS OF RESULT

With the help of SPSS the result of the survey is presented. The respondents' profiles are presented with descriptive statistics. The benefits with international education are highlighted and differences between the respondents when it comes to how they value the benefits are presented. The perception of Sweden as a country for international education is analysed and the influence of tuition fees is presented.

7.1 Statistical Analysis

A structured questionnaire was used as research method to help to answer the research questions. Quantitative data was collected and due to the fixed-response questions the data can be analysed through a data editor programme. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 16.0 for Windows was used. The data from the questionnaires was entered into the programme manually.

7.2 Respondents' Profiles

The data was collected at Hangzhou Dianzi University and in total 152 respondents gave complete answers. All respondents study at the School of Management and took part in a lecture on the topic "Kristianstad University and possibilities to study in Sweden". In this part descriptive data presenting the respondents is presented with the purpose to get a picture of the respondents. This data is later used as a foundation in the work to find segments with different feelings regarding international education.

Tabel 7.1 shows the respondents grouped by age. Most respondents are in the age 21-23 years old. Only four respondents are older than 23 years old and 25 respondents are younger than 21 years old.

Table 7.1 The Respondents Grouped by Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
18	3	2,0
19	10	6,6
20	12	7,9
21	33	21,7
22	46	30,3
23	44	28,9
24	3	2,0
25	1	,7
Total	152	100,0

Table 7.2 shows the respondents grouped by gender and it shows that more women than men took part in the survey. Tabel 7.3 is a crosstabulation between age and gender where it is made visible that the female respondents tend to be slightly older than the male respondents. The variation in ages is however not very large and it is unlikely that the difference in age between men and women should have an influence on the result.

Tabel 7.2 The Respondents Grouped by Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Female	96	63,2
Male	56	36,8
Total	152	100,0

Tabel 7.3 Gender - Age Crosstabulation

Age	Female	Male	Total
18	2	1	3
19	4	6	10
20	6	6	12
21	21	12	33
22	28	18	46
23	33	11	44
24	2	1	3
25	0	1	1
Total	96	56	152

The respondents were also asked how many years they had studied at the university and table 7.4 shows that most of the students were in their third year. Another large group was in their first year, representing 19.7 percent of the respondents. Only in total five students were in their second or fourth (or higher) year. This can be explained by that the lecture during which the survey was done was held at a time during which some classes had other lectures.

Table 7.4 The Respondents Grouped by the Number of Years Studied at the University

Years at Univeristy	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0-1 years	30	19,7	19,7
2 years	3	2,0	21,7
3 years	117	77,0	98,7
4 years or more	2	1,3	100,0
Total	152	100,0	

A part from the basic demographic questions additional questions was included in the questionnaire with the purpose to find out more about the respondents to facilitate the creation of segments. These questions measured for example the respondents' academic result through a question concerning grade. Table 7.5 shows that students listed themselves as having average or above average grades but seldom as having

grades under average. This can have many reasons. One explanation can be that the survey was done during an optional lecture and students with grades under average chose not to attend the lecture and thus missed the survey. It can also be explained by that the respondents were asked to judge their grades themselves and did not want to list them selves as having grades under average.

Table 7.5 The Respondents Grouped by their Grades

Grade	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Under Average	12	7,9	7,9
Average	75	49,3	57,2
Above Average	65	42,8	100,0
Total	152	100,0	

Another personal characteristic is the respondents' social class which in this survey is measured through their parents' work positions. Table 7.6 shows that 75.7 percent of the respondents did not have parents who had positions as managers. 20.4 percent have one parent working as a manager and only 3.9 percent have both parents working as managers.

Table 7.6 The Respondents Grouped by Parents' Work Position

Work Position	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Both parents are managers	6	3,9	3,9
One parents is manager	31	20,4	24,3
No parent is manager	115	75,7	100,0
Total	152	100,0	

The respondents' plans regarding work for the future were also included in the survey. Table 7.7 helps to identify three main groups after what they give highest priority when searching for future work: those who give highest priority to find a job as a public official (26.3 percent), those who want to work in a private firm (30.9 percent) and those who have as a primary goal to work with international issues (37.5 percent).

Table 7.7 The Respondents Grouped by Plans Regarding Work in the Future

Work	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Public official	40	26,3	26,3
Private firm	47	30,9	57,2
International issues	57	37,5	94,7
Outside China	8	5,3	100,0
Total	152	100,0	

Finally the group can be divided after what they think symbolises a good work. Table 7.8 shows that the largest group regards a good work as a work that is fun and enjoyable. The second largest group believes that a good work develops them as a person and the third largest group think that a good work is a work which pays a lot of money. A smaller group regards a good work as a work that gives them power.

Table 7.8 The Respondents Grouped by what They Think Symbolises a Good Work

Work	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Personal development	45	29,6	29,6
Money	36	23,7	53,3
Power	15	9,9	63,2
Fun	56	36,8	100,0
Total	152	100,0	

7.3 Parametric or Non-Parametric Statistical Technique

There exists a wide range of statistical techniques and tests which can be helpful in the analysis of the result of the survey. The techniques can be divided into two main groups: parametric and non-parametric tests. Parametric tests are more powerful and

can easier find differences and similarities in the data however the technique requires more from the data since it makes make more stringent assumptions. One important assumption the technique makes is that the underlying distribution of scores is normal. (Pallant, 2007)

The Kolmogorov-Smimov Test helps to determine the distribution of scores and normality. Tabel 7.9 shows the Komlogorov-Smimov Test for the benefit “culture”.

Table 7.9 Test of Normality in the Benefit “Culture”, Kolmogorov-Smirnov

	Statistic	df	Sig.
Culture	,297	152	,000

Since the significance value in the Kolmogorov-Smimov test shows a significant result (value lower than .000) this suggests that the result does not show normality. This is actually rather common in social science research and especially in larger samples. In this specific case this was in fact expected and reflects the fact that it is benefits that are measured and respondents are likely to be on the positive scale when valuing the benefits. (Pallant, 2007)

A histogram for the benefit “culture” is presented in figure 7.1 to show a typical case of how the normality for the different benefits looks like.

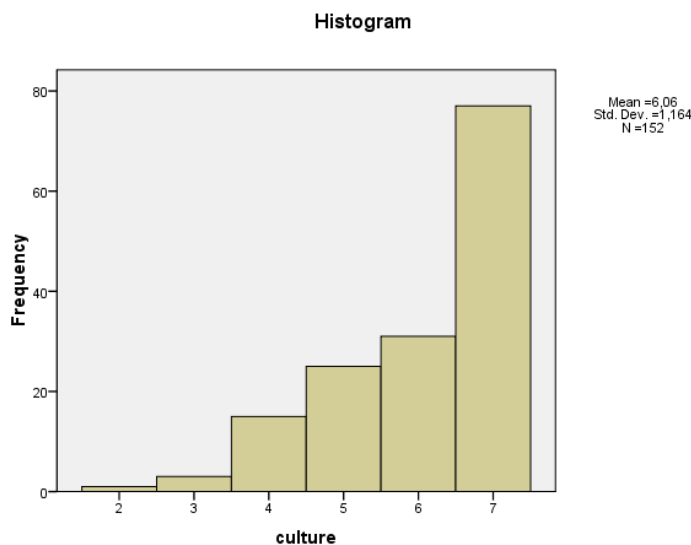


Figure 7.1 Histogram for the Benefit ”Culture”

By analysing the distribution of scores for the different questions it is possible to conclude that there does not exist normal distribution in the data. Non-parametric statistical technique is therefore more appropriate. Parametric tests can still be used however it is important to be aware of potential problems.

7.4 Benefits with International Education

7.4.1 Correlations between the Questions Connected to the Benefits

An important purpose with the study is to value the different benefits with international education to find out if Chinese university students value some of the benefits found in the theoretical review higher than others. Two questions were used to test each benefit. The first question was formulated to test if the respondent connected the benefit to studies abroad and the second question was formulated to find out if the benefit was important to the respondent. To find out if the questions correlates and thus measure the same issue the difference in answers between the two questions was analysed by using Spearman's correlation test. Spearman's test is a non-parametric statistical technique suitable for this kind of data.

Table 7.10 shows the correlation test for the benefit "culture". The test shows the direction of the relationship between the two variables which in this case is positive. This means that the higher they value the benefit the higher they value the benefit for them personally. The Spearman rho value for the benefit "culture" is .668 which indicates a strong relationship between the two variables. A correlation of 0 indicates no relationship at all and a correlation of 1.0 represents a perfect positive correlation. Over .50 is often viewed as having a strong correlation (Pallant, 2007). The level of statistical significance does not indicate how strongly the two variables are associated but it indicated how much confidence can be put in the result. The significance in this case is very strong which means that we can have strong confidence in the correlation test.

Tabel 7.10 Spearman's Correlation Test for the two Questions Connected to the Benefit "Culture"

		Culture	Culture
			important for the respondent
Spearman's rho	Culture	Correlation Coefficient	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,668**
		N	152
	Culture important for the respondent	Correlation Coefficient	,668**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1,000
		N	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

By using Spearman correlation test on all benefits included in the questionnaire it is possible to conclude that a correlation exists between the two questions connected to the separate benefits. In appendix 4 all the Spearman correlation tests are stated.

Since the two questions that are linked to each benefit correlates we do not have to deal with these questions separately. We can focus on the different benefits rather than the questions in the questionnaire. Question a) which deals with the benefit more in general are used in the further analysis.

7.4.2 Mean and Medians for the Benefits Connected to International Education

The mean value and the median for the benefits are presented in table 7.11. The mean value is the most commonly used central measurement to show how data is distributed. The mean value is the sum of all observations value divided with the number of observations. The median is the value in the middle of the group, which means that the same number of observations is above and under this value. The mean value and the median differ normally for the same date. This is connected to that the distribution is not symmetrical. (Eggeby & Söderberg, 1999)

The mean values and the medians show how important the respondents view the different benefits. The benefits that ranked the highest (mean values over 5.5) can be viewed as extra important and are highlighted in table 7.11.

Tabel 7.11 Mean Values and Medians for the Benefits Connected to International Education

	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>Culture</i>	2	7	7	6,06	1,164
Knowledge	1,00	7,00	5	4,7697	1,70496
Quality	1,00	7,00	5	4,7829	1,43244
Migrate	1,00	7,00	4	3,5461	1,48207
Opportunities	1,00	7,00	5	5,1382	1,57820
Status	1,00	7,00	4	3,9934	1,38820
Reputation	1,00	7,00	5	5,0000	1,56112
<i>Safe</i>	2,00	7,00	6	5,6842	1,29401
Work	1,00	7,00	5	4,8289	1,58125
<i>English</i>	2,00	7,00	7	6,0987	1,28548
Easy to enter	1,00	7,00	4	4,1579	1,52292
<i>University's reputation</i>	1,00	7,00	6	5,7434	1,32972

A Likert scale consisting of seven alternatives was used. On a scale of one to seven the respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements where “one” meant that they totally disagreed with the statements, “four” that they neither disagreed nor agreed and “seven” meant that they totally agreed with the statement. To test the result to find out if it is possible to statistically prove that the respondents have a different attitude toward the benefits than simply neither disagreeing or agreeing with the statement that the benefit is important and connected to international education One Sample T-Tests were conducted. The test value is set to four since the purpose is to find out if the result differs from the middle value which is four and which simply means that the respondents neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

Table 7.12 shows the result for the One Sample T-Test. If the value in the Sig. (2-tailed) column is equal or less than 0.5 there is a significant difference between the test variable four and the mean score for the benefit (Pallant, 2007). All accept the benefits status and easy to enter a country differs from the test value four. The mean difference show if the mean value is higher or lower than the test value. It is possible to conclude that all benefits have mean values that are significant over the middle of the scale accept the possibility to migrate which has a significant lower mean value than the middle value which is four.

Table 7.12 One Sample T-Test, Test Value=4

	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Culture	21,817	,000	2,059
Knowledge	5,566	,000	,76974
Quality	6,738	,000	,78289
Migrate	-3,776	,000	-,45395
Opportunities	8,891	,000	1,13816
Status	-,058	,953	-,00658
English	20,128	,000	2,09868
Reputation	7,897	,000	1,00000
Safe	16,047	,000	1,68421
Work	6,463	,000	,82895
Easy to enter	1,278	,203	,15789
University's reputation	16,164	,000	1,74342

7.5 Segments

One purpose with the study is to investigate the respondents with the purpose to create segments with different preferences concerning international education. For this to be possible a difference between the respondents must be found. A first step in this is to analyse the respondents divided into different groups and see if it is possible to find significant differences in how these different groups value the benefits.

Non-parametric tests have to be used since the distributions of scores did not show a normality. The Mann-Whitney U test compares the medians between male and female

to see if there is a significant difference between how they view and value the benefits (Aronsson, 1994; Pallant, 2007). It is possible to conclude that concerning some benefits there is a significant difference in how important men and women find the benefits. Only the differences between the groups are presented in this part, and not the similarities, since the differences in this case are more interesting.

Table 7.13 shows that there is a difference in how important men and women find the benefit that international education gives access to unique knowledge. The Mann-Whitney u Test shows a probability value (p) of 0.009 which is less than 0.5 so the result is significant. By looking in table 7.14 at the medians for the different groups it can be concluded that men value access to unique knowledge significant higher than women.

Table 7.13 Mann-Whitney U test for the Benefit “Knowledge”, Grouping Variable Gender

Knowledge	
Mann-Whitney U	2013,500
Z	-2,618
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,009

Table 7.14 Medians for the Benefit ”Knowledge”, Grouping variable Gender

Gender	N	Median
Female	96	4,5000
Male	56	6,0000
Total	152	5,0000

The benefit that it is easy to enter a specific country is also valued differently between men and women. Table 7.15 shows that there is a significant difference in how the benefit is valued and table 7.16 shows that men value the easy access to enter a country higher than women do.

Table 7.15 Mann-Whitney U test for the Benefit “Easy to Enter”, Grouping Variable Gender

	Easy to Enter
Mann-Whitney U	1804,000
Z	-3,454
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,001

Table 7.16 Medians for the Benefit ”Easy to Enter”, Grouping variable Gender

Gender	N	Median
Female	96	4,0000
Male	56	5,0000
Total	152	4,0000

When it comes to the category grades we have three different groups to compare and it is therefore necessary to use a statistical test which allows the comparison of multiple groups. The non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test is used and similar to the Mann Whitney U Test the mean rank for each group is compared. (Aronsson 1994; Pallant, 2007) The test shows that the respondents divided into different groups depending on their grades only shows one significant difference in how they value the benefits associated to international education. Table 7.17 and table 7.18 shows that there is a statistically difference in how the groups view the benefit to have migration as a possibility. For students with grades above average the benefit is less important than for the other groups.

Table 7.17 Kruskal-Wallis Test for the Benefit “Migration”, Grouping Variable Grade

	Migrate
Chi-Square	6,550
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	,038
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	

Table 7.18 Medians for the Benefit "Migration", Grouping variable Grade

Grade	N	Median
Under average	12	4,0000
Average	75	4,0000
Above Average	65	3,0000
Total	152	4,0000

The group can be divided depending on how many years they have spent at the university so far. The respondents belong to two main groups: those who only have spent 0-1 year at the university and those who have spent three years at the university. The non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test is used and with its help it is possible to conclude that there is significant difference in how the different groups value two of the benefits associated with studies abroad.

Table 7.19 and 7.20 shows that there is a significant different in how they view the possibility to migration. The longer the respondents have studied at the university the less important is the benefit to be able to migrate.

Table 7.19 Kruskal-Wallis Test for the Benefit "Migration", Grouping Variable Years at University

	Migrate
Chi-Square	11,836
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	,008
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	

Table 7.20 Medians for the Benefit "Migration", Grouping Variable Years at University

Years at University	N	Median
0-1 years	30	4,0000
2 years	3	4,0000
3 years	117	3,0000
4 years or more	2	2,5000
Total	152	4,0000

It is also possible to see a difference in how the different groups value the benefit that to study abroad leads to improved opportunities after finishing their studies. Table 7.21 and table 7.22 show that it is statistically proved that the longer you have studied at the university the less do you believe that studies abroad would give you increased opportunities after you studies.

Table 7.21 Kruskal-Wallis Test for the Benefit "Opportunities", Grouping Variable Years at University

Opportunities	
Chi-Square	10,571
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	,014
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	

Table 7.22 Medians for the Benefit "Opportunities", Grouping Variable Years at University

Years at University	N	Median
0-1 years	30	6,0000
2 years	3	5,0000
3 years	117	5,0000
4 years or more	2	4,5000
Total	152	5,0000

A question concerning the respondents' parents' work position was included in the questionnaire with the purpose to measure social class. It is not possible to find any difference between the respondents based on what their parents do for a living. There

is no statistical difference in how they value the different benefits associated to an international education. The same is true if we divide the respondents after what they think symbolises a good work. No significant differences can be found.

Using non-parametric tests it is not possible to find any significant differences between the respondents depending on their plans for the future regarding work. As can be seen in table 7.23 it is however possible to see a difference which is close to being significantly proved when it comes to the benefit that it is easy to enter a country. Table 7.24 shows that those who wish to work with international issues view the easy access to a country as more valuable than other groups.

Table 7.23 Kruskal-Wallis Test for the Benefit “Easy to Enter”, Grouping Variable Plans Regarding Work

	Easy to Enter
Chi-Square	7,501
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	,058

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

Table 7.24 Medians for the Benefit ”Easy to Enter”, Grouping Variable Plans Regarding Work

Plans regarding work	N	Median
Public official	40	4,0000
Private firm	47	4,0000
International	57	5,0000
Outside china	8	5,0000
Total	152	4,0000

7.6 The Perception of Sweden as a Country for International Education

One purpose with the study was to see how well the respondents thought that Sweden as a country deliver the stated benefits with international education. To get a picture of how Sweden was ranked table 7.25 shows the mean values and medians for Sweden on the different benefits. In the bottom of the table the mean value and median for the overall judgment of how well Sweden deliver the benefits with international education is shown.

Table 7.25 Mean Values and Medians for Sweden concerning the Benefits connected to International Education

	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Std. Deviation
Culture Sweden	1,00	7,00	6	5,4342	1,50791
Knowledge Sweden	1,00	7,00	5	4,9737	1,43719
Quality Sweden	2,00	7,00	5	4,9605	1,32166
Migrate Sweden	1,00	7,00	5	4,6447	1,57130
Opportunities Sweden	1,00	7,00	5	4,9276	1,52290
Status Sweden	1,00	7,00	5	4,7500	1,35808
Reputation Sweden	1,00	7,00	5	4,9737	1,46910
Safe Sweden	2,00	7,00	6	5,5395	1,24423
Work Sweden	1,00	7,00	5	5,0921	1,31399
English Sweden	1,00	7,00	6	5,4342	1,54693
Enter Sweden	1,00	7,00	5	4,5526	1,41323
University reputation Sweden	1,00	7,00	5	4,9408	1,40592
Overall judgement Sweden	1,00	7,00	5	5,0592	1,47488

By looking at the mean values it is possible to see that all mean values are over four. Since a scale of one to seven was used where four represented a neutral standpoint, “I neither disagree nor agree with the statement”, it is interesting to compare the result with the middle value of four. A One Sample T-Test is used to see if the mean values Sweden received are significantly higher than four. Table 7.26 shows that all mean values are significantly over the middle value of four since the Sig (2-tailed) is less than 0.05 for all benefits which means that there exists a significant difference between the test value which is four and the mean values for the benefits.

Table 7.26 One Sample T-Test, Test Value=4

	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Culture Sweden	11,726	,000	1,43421
Knowledge Sweden	8,353	,000	,97368
Quality Sweden	8,960	,000	,96053
Migrate Sweden	5,059	,000	,64474
Opportunities Sweden	7,510	,000	,92763
Status Sweden	6,809	,000	,75000
English Sweden	11,430	,000	1,43421
Reputaion Sweden	8,171	,000	,97368
Safe Sweden	15,254	,000	1,53947
Work Sweden	10,247	,000	1,09211
Enter Sweden	4,821	,000	,55263
University reputation Sweden	8,250	,000	,94079
Overall judgement Sweden	8,854	,000	1,05921

The Kruskal Wallis test is used to see if there is a link between how the respondents regard Sweden to deliver the benefits with international education and if they are interested in studies in Sweden. Tables 7.27 and 7.28 show that respondents who are interested in studies in Sweden give Sweden as a study destination a better overall judgement than those who are not interested in studies in Sweden.

Table 7.27 Kruskal-Wallis Test for the Overall Judgement of Sweden, Grouping Variable Interested in Studies in Sweden

Overall Judgement Sweden	
Chi-Square	8,798
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	,012
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	

Table 7.28 Medians for the Overall Judgement of Sweden, Grouping Variable Interested in Studies in Sweden

Interested in Studies in Sweden	N	Median
Yes	95	5,0000
No	24	4,0000
Don't know	33	5,0000
Total	152	5,0000

It is not only the overall judgement of Sweden as a study destination that is interesting. It is also of value to see how well Sweden does on the benefits that the respondents view as being most important. Table 7.29 shows the four benefits that were given the highest mean values and can be viewed as being extra important for the respondents. The table also shows the ranking for the benefits, where one means that the benefit was given the highest mean value. The table shows how Sweden was viewed to deliver these important benefits and their internal ranking.

Table 7.29 The Most Important Benefits and How Well Sweden is Believed to Deliver these Benefits

Benefit	Mean value	Ranking	Mean value for Sweden	Ranking for Sweden
Culture	6,06	2	5,43	2
English	6,10	1	5,43	2
Safe	5,68	4	5,54	1
University's reputation	5,74	3	4,94	8

7.7 The External Stimulus Price

The effect of the external stimuli price is researched in the study. Table 7.30 shows that 62.5 percent are interested in studies in Sweden and 37.5 percent do not want to or do not know if they want to study in Sweden. With this as a starting point it is interesting to see how many respondents that are interested in studies in Sweden if a tuition fee is introduced. Table 7.31 shows that 51.3 percent are not interested in studies in Sweden if there were a tuition fee. As the tuition fee get more expensive more and more respondents get discourage from studies in Sweden.

Table 7.30 Students Interested in Studies in Sweden

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	95	62,5	62,5
No	24	15,8	78,3
Don't know	33	21,7	100,0
Total	152	100,0	

Table 7.31 The Impact of Tuition Fees on the Interest in Studies in Sweden

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not interested if tuition fee	78	51,3	51,3
20 000 RMB	36	23,7	75,0
50 000 RMB	26	17,1	92,1
70 000 RMB	10	6,6	98,7
100 000 RMB	2	1,3	100,0
Total	152	100,0	

If the file is split so that only the group who from the beginning were interested in studies in Sweden is analysed it can be concluded that 40 percent of the group would not be interested in studies in Sweden if a tuition fee was introduced. Table 7.32 shows the impact of tuition fees for respondents who from the beginning were interested in studies in Sweden.

Table 7.32 The Impact of Tuition Fees on the Interest in Studies in Sweden for Respondents Interested in Studies in Sweden

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not interested if tuition fee	38	40,0	40,0
20 000 RMB	26	27,4	67,4
50 000 RMB	20	21,1	88,4
70 000 RMB	9	9,5	97,9
100 000 RMB	2	2,1	100,0
Total	95	100,0	

CHAPTER 8.

CONCLUSIONS

The research questions are answered and practical implications and suggestions for future researched are presented.

8.1 Research Question One

The first research question, *How is the decision to take part in an international education created and what factors influences the decision?*, is wide and general but giving it an answer, even if it is not possible to give a very detailed answer due to the characteristics of the question and time constrains, helps to the create an understanding for the complexity of the research field and to put this study in the right context. The question is answered with the help of a theoretical review.

Consumer behaviour is heavily researched which means that a substantive number of theories exists within the field. The buyer decision process is one such theory and it constitutes the foundation in answering the first research questions. The buyer decision process can be summarised by the five-stage model where the decision is divided into five steps or stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behaviour (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Kotler & Keller, 2006; Teare, 1998). The decision to purchase a product or service, such as an international education, is created through these steps.

As a first step the students recognise that he/she as a desire to get an international education and to study abroad. The need can be triggered by either external stimuli such as marketing or influence from family and friends or by so called internal stimuli which means that the student feels the desire without influence from others (Brassington & Pettit, 2006; Kotler & Keller, 2006).

Since the decision to study abroad is a complex decision the students can be assumed to engage in an active information search as a compliment to the heightened attention state where the student is more receptive to any information concerning international education around him/her. The students can search for information in many different ways, the main ways are personal information which comes from people close to the consumer with own experience, commercial information, public information via mass

media and experiential information which you get by examine the product. (Bareham Richardson, 2004)

After you have recognised the need and/or desire for an international education and collected information the next step is to evaluate your alternatives. The evaluation of alternatives can be very different from person to person and from product to product. The foundation of most evaluation processes is however that the consumer looks for certain benefits that will satisfy the need identified. Benefits and how well the alternatives deliver the benefits have a major impact on the buying decision.

In the evaluation stage the consumer forms a preference among the alternatives which he/she brings to the next step which is the actual purchase decision. In many circumstances the decision is a natural outcome of the evaluation stage however sometimes the attitudes from others and unanticipated situational factors can change the purchase intention in the last minute. The final step in the buyer decision process is the post purchase behaviour. The consumer's involvement with the product does not end at the purchase. Satisfaction with the purchase is very important and satisfaction is connected to expectations. If the education and experiences does not live up to the expectations the student feel disappointed but if the product exceeds the expectations the consumer feel delighted. (Brassington & Pettit, 2006; Kotler & Keller, 2006)

Different factors influence the decision making process. First of all the product with its characteristics has a great impact on the buyer decision process. International education is a service and since it is intangible it is difficult to evaluate the quality of the service in advance. A service has also other unique characteristics such as heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability (Edvardsson et al, 2005; Grönroos, 2001; Shostack, 1977). The characteristics of the service international education have an impact on how we can evaluate the product before the purchase. International education can be seen as consisting of four layers: the core product, the tangible product, the augmented product and the potential product (Brassington & Pettit, 2006; Jobber, 2007). The core product is the heart of the product and the main reason to why consumers purchase the product is connected to this layer. Core benefits is connected to the core product and benefits often constitutes the foundation of a

purchase. Core benefits are therefore often more interesting to discuss than core product.

Value and satisfaction can also be connected to product. International education must give the customer value and satisfaction for a purchase to be attractive. Consumers don't often judge products values accurately or objectively instead it is the perceived value that is important. Perceived value is the total perceived benefits minus the total perceived cost. (Kotler et al, 1999; Nisel, 2001)

Another factor that influences the decision making process is the buyer of the product. The purchase of an international education is influenced by the consumer and his/her personal characteristics such as cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics (Jobber, 2007; Kotler et al, 2008). It is not only the actual consumer of the product who is interesting. The consumer buying process can also be influenced by people in the consumer's surrounding. In the case of an international education the parents are often important influencers (Pimpa, 2003).

Another group of influencing factors is external stimuli. Companies, in this case universities and sometimes states, use various of marketing stimuli to try to persuade consumers to buy their products. With the help of the Product, Price, Place and Promotion the university try to win the consumer over.

To summarise, the decision to engage in international education can be explained by the decision making process where the benefits associated with the products play an important part. Many different factors influence the decision where the more important are the product and its characteristics, the buyer and people in his/her surroundings and different kinds of marketing stimuli.

8.2 Research Question Two

The answer to the first research questions helps us to understand that the decision to engage in an international education is complex and that many different factors influence the decision. It was concluded that one important part of the decision is the evaluation of alternatives where sought after benefits should be identified. Furthermore, students can be assumed to decide to study abroad due to that they think that they will get value from that decision. Perceived value can be defined as the total

benefits the international education is believed to deliver minus the total cost associated with the decision.

The second research question is to identify the main benefits connected to international education. The question was first answered by conducting a theoretical review. The review found 15 different benefits connected to international education which can be found in figure 8.1. The benefits is divided into three groups: benefits associated with the choice to study abroad, benefits associated with the choice to study in a specific country and benefits associated with the choice to study at a specific university. The division is interesting since it help to show which benefits that different stakeholders can influence. For a university the benefits associated to the choice to study at a specific university are especially important and the university should work to strengthen its position regarding these issues. This does however not mean that the other benefits are without interest but it can be more difficult for the university to directly influence these issues since they are of a more general characteristic.

Benefits Associated with the Choice to Study Abroad	Culture Experience	<i>Li & Bray (2007), United Minds (2007), Cubillo et al (2006), Russell (2005), Reisberg (2004), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Access to Unique Knowledge	<i>United Minds (2007), Russell (2005), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Higher Quality	<i>Li & Bray (2007), Chen & Zimitat (2006), Cubillo et al (2006), Russell (2005), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Possibility to Migration	<i>Altbach (2005), Altbach (2004), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Improved Career Prospects	<i>Li & Bray (2007), United Minds (2007), Chen & Zimitat (2006), Cubillo et al (2006), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003), Schmidt (2002),</i>
	Personal Development	<i>United Minds (2007)</i>

	Status and Prestige	<i>Li & Bray (2007), Cubillo et al (2006), Altbach (2004)</i>
Benefits Associated with the Choice to Study in a Specific Country	Positive Country Image and International Recognition	<i>Li & Bray (2007), Cubillo et al (2006), Russell (2005), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Safety	<i>United Minds (2007), Chen & Zimitat (2006), Russell (2005), Altbach (2004), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Easy to Work during and after Studies	<i>Altbach (2004), Reisberg (2004), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003)</i>
	Improved English	<i>United Minds (2007), Cubillo et al (2006), Altbach (2005), Russell (2005)</i>
	Easy to Enter Country	<i>United Minds (2007), Russell (2005), Altbach (2004), Reisberg (2004)</i>
Benefits Associated with the Choice to Study at a Specific University	Positive Institution Image and International Recognition	<i>Li & Bray (2007), Cubillo et al (2006), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002)</i>
	Good Facilities	<i>Cubillo et al (2006), Russell (2005)</i>
	Easy to Enter the University	<i>Li & Bray (2007), Binsardi & Ekwulugo (2003)</i>

Figure 8.1 Conclusive Summary of Benefits Associated with International Education

The theoretical findings are in accordance with the pre-study that was conducted. Three interviews with Chinese students were made with the purpose to get a picture of why Chinese students choose to study abroad and why they go to certain countries and certain universities. The interviews showed that the students had decided to study abroad mainly due to improve their future career opportunities, to improve their English and to get an understanding for culture differences. All of these reasons can be found in the theoretical conclusive summary. When it comes to the reasons to choose a specific country issues such as a country's reputation and the conditions for

learning English was highlighted, also this in line with the theoretical findings. The students however also highlighted the questions of fees and cost of living as being important but since this belongs to the negative side of the perceived value and not to the benefits this is not a part of the theoretical conclusion. The cost is however briefly introduced in this study, but treated as a separate question.

The research question concerning the main benefits associated to an international education is not only given an answer based on theory but the findings were also further researched by a survey. Since the purpose is to find the *main* benefits connected to international education the number of benefits was reduced and only benefits highlighted by three or more researchers were included in the empirical study. This led to that the benefits personal development, good facilities and easy to enter university was excluded and that twelve benefits remained to be further researched.

The theoretical findings were tested by conducting a survey at Hangzhou Dianzi University. The purpose was to test if the benefits found through the theoretical review were important for the Chinese students and to see if some of the benefits were more important than others. The survey showed that the students connected most benefits to international education, however one benefit did they not find important. The benefit that international education offered the possibility to migration got a mean value of 3.55 which is significantly lower than four which stands for that the respondents neither disagree nor agree with the statement. We can therefore conclude that the issue of migration is of less importance for the Chinese students.

The survey also showed that two other benefits were not very important for the students. The students neither agree nor disagree with that status and that a country is easy to enter are important benefits connected to international education.

The rest of the benefits were viewed as being important and connected to international education. A difference in importance between these benefits could also be identified. The top four benefits (which all had a median of 6 or higher and a mean value higher than 5.5 on scale of 1-7) were: improved English, culture experience, the university's reputation and that the country offers a safe environment. One can note

that the benefits improved English and culture experience were also highlighted as important in the pre-study.

It is also possible to conclude that the benefits that ranked the highest belong to all three kinds of groups of benefits. Culture experience is connected to benefits associated to study abroad. Improved English and the safety aspect are associated to the choice to study in a specific country and the university reputation and positive institution image s is connected to the choice to study at a specific university. This means that the all dimensions of the benefits is important in the decision making process. This also means that Sweden as a country can have an impact on whether or not a student in China engages in international education and that the university also plays a role in the decision and that it is not only the more general benefits connected to study abroad that are important.

To summarise, the main benefits connected to international education are improved English, culture experience, a university's reputation and a safe environment. It is also a benefit that you get access to a education with higher quality and unique knowledge, that your studies abroad leads to better carrier opportunities, that you can work during and after your studies and that the country has a good reputation. That studies abroad give a certain status and prestige and that the country is easy to enter is viewed as being neither important nor unimportant. That an international education offers a possibility to migration is viewed as being relatively unimportant.

8.3 Research Question Three

The third research question is if it would be possible to identify segments by suing benefit segmentation. Based on the theoretical frame of references it was assumed that different people would value the benefits associated to international education differently and that the benefits and their different importance for different people could function as segmentation criteria. Certain personal factors were therefore included in the study: age and maturity, gender, social class measured trough parents' work, plans for future regarding work and capacity in school measured through average grade.

The survey showed some differences between these groups when it comes to how they valued the different benefits, however it was not possible to find many

difference. This can be because the group included in the study was too homogenous and too similar to each other. They were all Chinese, in the same age, studied at the same university and the same topics. If the population was compared to students studying for example another major or compared to another nationality it is believed that larger differences could be found and benefits segmentation could be made as planned for this study.

Even if the group is homogenous some differences could still be found within the group. Men tend to value the access to unique knowledge and that it is easy to enter a country significant higher than women. It was also possible to see that students with grades above average think that the possibility to migration is less important than students with average grades or lower. When it comes to the benefits that migration is a possibility it is also possible to see that the longer the respondent have studied at the university the less important is the benefit to be able to migrate. It was also found that the longer you have studied at the university the less do you believe that studies abroad would give you increased opportunities after your studies. It was finally possible to see that those who wish to work with international issues view the easy access to a country as more valuable than other groups.

To summarise, benefit segmentation is unfortunately not possible to do on the respondents due to that the group is too homogenous which lead to that only a few difference between the respondents could be found. In a future research for example different nationalities could be included in the study which would increase the likelihood for differences to be found and thus facilitate benefit segmentation.

8.4 Research Question Four

Since tuition fees for foreign students are debated in Sweden the external stimulus price was introduced in the empirical study. Furthermore the pre-study suggested that the tuition fee is important when the students choose which country to study in.

The survey showed that the price is important for Chinese students. 95 out of 152 respondents were interested in studies in Sweden. When the same group were asked if they would be interested in studies in Sweden if Sweden took out a tuition fee 40 percent changed their mind and said that they were no longer interested in studies in

Sweden. The price had in other words a great influence on the decision to take part in an education in Sweden.

60 percent of the respondents who from the beginning were interested in studies in Sweden, and only 48.7 percent of all respondents, were willing to pay a tuition fee of 20 000 RMB. 37.6 percent were willing to pay 50 000 RMB, 11.6 percent 70 000 RMB and only 2.1 percent were willing to pay 100 000 RMB.

To summarise, the empirical study shows that price greatly influence the decision to engage in international education. When a tuition fee is introduced people who from the beginning were willing to study abroad changed their mind. This supports the assumption that both part of the perceived value, i.e. both the costs and the benefits, are important in analysing why a student decided to take part of an international education. Further research on the topic of costs associated to studies abroad would be of great interest.

8.5 Research Question Five

The final research question deals with how well Sweden is believed to deliver the benefits connected to international education. The question is answered with the help of the survey and thus can give a picture of how the Chinese students who participated in the survey view Sweden. It would be possible to investigate this question further by looking at previous studies; however this study is limited to investigate how the respondents in the survey view Sweden and to go give an empirical answer to the question.

The result of the survey show that the Chinese students give Sweden scores over the middle value concerning all of the benefits and this is statistically tested and supported. This means that the Chinese students do not disagree with the statements that Sweden delivers the mentioned benefits however the result could have been more positive for Sweden since although the students give Sweden positive scores they are relative neutral in their assessment of Sweden and no benefit get a mean value over 5.5 on a scale of one to seven.

The overall judgement of Sweden as a destination for international education is also relatively neutral. The students to some extent agrees with the statement that Sweden

is a good place to study in since they give Sweden a mean value of just over five where one means that they totally disagree with that Sweden is a good country for international education, four means that they neither disagree or agree with the statement and seven means that they totally agree with that Sweden is a good place to study in.

Not surprisingly it could be statically proved that the respondents who are interested in studies in Sweden give Sweden as a study destination a better overall judgement that those who are not interested in studies in Sweden.

When it comes to the benefits that the Chinese students viewed as being most important in the decision to engage in international education Sweden is relatively strong. The four benefits that were most important for the respondents were culture experiences, improved English, the safety issues and the university's reputation. Three of these benefits (culture experiences, improved English and the safety issues) were benefits were Sweden got its best evaluations. It is positive for Sweden that Sweden is relatively strong when it comes to the benefits that matters the most.

8.6 Practical Implications

This study has concluded that a number of benefits are important for students when they think about engaging in an international education. The knowledge of these benefits is important and has practical implications for stakeholders such as universities and governments. If a university has knowledge about what kind of benefits international students are looking for when they make a decision to take part in an international education the university can focus on those benefits in their work to attract more international students. As has been highlighted in this study international education is a growing industry and there already today exist competition between universities and countries concerning who attracts the most, and the best, international students. This contributes to the importance of understanding what a student perceive as value and what kind of benefits they are looking for in international education. This study has concluded that, among other things, culture experience, access to unique knowledge, higher quality, improved career prospects and improved English constitutes important benefits connected to international education. When stakeholders have this knowledge it is possible to work on delivering these benefits and to highlight these aspects in marketing campaigns. To be

able to deliver value to customers it is necessary to know what the customers perceive as value.

The empirical study indicates which of the benefits connected to international education that are most important for Chinese students. Improved English, culture experience, a good reputation of the university and a safe environment are issues that universities, and countries, that are interested in attracting Chinese students especially should work on and highlight in their information towards potential Chinese students. Since the study is conducted at a university where Chinese students constitute an important element and where an international business programme with special emphasis on China is run this knowledge has a direct practical implication. The study indicates that the safe environment of Sweden should be further highlighted in the marketing campaigns and that more resources should be put on strengthening the Chinese students' English ability during their time at the university.

The empirical study also indicates that Sweden does not rank very high when Chinese students value how well Sweden deliver the sought after benefits. This suggests that Sweden needs to work on improving its reputation and image.

Finally, the empirical study indicates that the introduction of a fee on Swedish education for Chinese students would have a great impact on the number of Chinese students that are interested in studies in Sweden. The debate concerning tuition fees in Sweden is important and this study supports that the introduction of fees and its effect should be carefully analysed.

8.7 Future Research

This study research the reasons behind the decision to engage in an international education and is focused on the benefits with studies abroad which is the positive side of the perceived value of international education. Another important part of the perceived value is however the total costs. The benefits must be greater than the cost otherwise the customer will not be interested in the product. The cost is only briefly introduced in the study and it would be interesting to investigate this aspect further.

Benefit segmentation is introduced in this study however due to a too homogenous population it was not possible to conduct the segmentation as planned. The population

consisted of students from the same university, studying the same subjects and in the same ages which lead to that only few differences could be found among the respondents. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study on a more heterogeneous population where probably more differences can be found among the respondents.

The decision process that leads to the decision to take part in an international education is complex and extensive. This study only focuses on a few parts of that process and other interesting fields are left to study such as the effect of different external stimuli and the influence different people involved in the process has on the actual decision. Chapter 4, Theoretical Frame of Reference: Consumer Behaviour and the Buyer Decision Process, identifies many such interesting fields to study.

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Background information

Age

Gender

How long have you been here?

To study abroad

Why did you decide to study abroad?

Influenced from who?

How did the process to study abroad look like?

For how long had you studied in Ningbo before you decided to study abroad?

Why in Sweden

Could you select the country yourself?

Why did you choose to study in Sweden?

Did anything specific influence your decision?

Any person that influenced you?

Is it important for you where you study?

What do you think is special by studying in Sweden?

What do you think it will have given you to have studied in Sweden? (when you go back).
Most important?

Why Kristianstad

Is the university important for you?

Did you choose Kristianstad by your self?

Why?

What do you think it will have given you to have studied in Kristianstad? (when you go back)

What is most important: country or university?

What did you say when you talked about going abroad: that you will study abroad or that you will study in Sweden.

Pre study: why do Chinese study in Sweden at Kristianstad University?

Interview 1

2007-10-01 at Kristianstad University 10.50-11.10

L: - How old are you?

- I am 25 now.

L: -For how long have you been in Sweden?

- I have stayed in Sweden for 4 years

L: - How many years of them have you studied?

-For business from last year. So now 3 semesters. Before that I studied some computer science.

L: -So you have studied for 4 years?

-Yes

L: -The emphasis of the interview is why you decided to study abroad and why you decided to study in Sweden. First question is why you decided that you wanted to study abroad?

-In the beginning: when I studied in China after two years of studies I think...we need a lot of English people and my father is doing business and then he want me to speak good English and having some experiences from going abroad because my family is doing international business. My father think about sending me to Canada to learn some English and get some experiences how to do the business abroad.

L: -So for future job: experiences and language.

-Yes.

L: -Who influenced you when you decided to go abroad? Your father?

-Yes my father.

L: -The university. Did they influence you in any way?

-The first is that my father influenced me....then I thought OK, maybe I can go abroad for some years to learn something and then I can go back to China to find a good job or continue my father's job.

L:-But how did the process look like when you decided to study abroad. The practical side of it. What happened? Did you got to the university and ask them to help you or?

-Yes, we go to university and the international relations and they gave me some suggestions to go abroad.

L: -You studied in Ningbo?

-In another university. Then they said that they have one programme together with Ningbo University, to go to Sweden and that there were really good systems and everything and that here the study is for free. It is much better for me. I can learn something here and it costs not so much money, I mean with no study fees.

L: - For how long had you studied in China before?

- 2 years at a university. I then studied one year here and went back and finished my bachelor in China. So I have two degrees.

L: -Could you select the country yourself? Where to go?

-In the beginning I planned to select a country, to Canada. But after I got to know this programme I changed to Sweden.

L: -But you could select Sweden yourself?

-It is possible.....

L: -Why was it Sweden? Why did you select Sweden?

-Because here I was..in the beginning when I was in China I heard that Sweden was a really nice country, the welfare everything is perfect and study here without any studying fee. This is most important. In Canada it would cost a lot of money. For living there, for everything much more expensive compared to Sweden. The school fee is the highest part for going abroad so here it is free and the courses was in an exchange programme so the university helps us . It was perfect for me.

L: -So most it was the fee and you had a good picture of Sweden.

-Yes.

L: -Anything else?

-In the beginning just like this. Because I don't know so much. So most important was those two things.

L: -Any person that influenced you when you selected Sweden?

-No. Noone.

L: -Was it important to you where you studied?

-Actually it was not that important. Because in the beginning I just thought I want to go abroad to learn something new. To learn some more English and to get some experiences from abroad. To find more friends and just try the new life. How to be independent. Because when I am in China I live with my parents.

L: -So it is not so important?

- Yeah.

L: -What do you think now when you are here. What is special by studying in Sweden? Typical Swedish, what is good by being here?

-I mean here the system is completely different from in China. Here you study your self. The teachers dos not give a lot of thins just brief information and we have to solve I by yourself but in China the teachers give everything on the black board. So you just copy and past. It is a totally different system. I can learn a lot from being here. A lot of analysing by ourself, that is more important than to learn how by my self. In China the teacher force you to learn something and then go to exam but here I learn by my self and then go to exam and it is not multiple choice questions. We have to write ourself. That is the most important things...

L: -Now when you have been in Sweden if you could select Sweden again, knowing what you know about Sweden would you select Sweden again?

-I probably would select Sweden again.

L: -The the rest of the questions are about “why in Kristianstad”. First question is: Is the university important for you?

-Yes. The university exchange programme, that is why I choose Kristianstad.

L: -Yes. The exchange programme. Did you know anything about Kristianstad?

-I knew nothing about Kristianstad. I only knew about Sweden, but nothing about Kristianstad. I only knew that Ningbo university hade a cooperation. Only when I arrived, now I arrived in Kristianstad in Sweden.

L: -But you could not choose yourself?

-No, no.

L: -But when you thought about this. Was it important for your. “Well I am going to Kristianstad, I wonder if that is good.” Or did you just think about the country or the university as well?

-The university not so much because I don't know anything. I just checked website. They don't put too much information, just something about international relations. Brief information about studying in Sweden. This kind of information. But I mean it is an important part when you are going abroad to think about the university. Anyway I trust the university because there is an exchange programme.

L: -Would you have liked to know more about the university?

-Of course. If I could have got more information I would have liked to know more.

L: -When you go back and think ten years in the future, you live in China and you think about your going abroad experience. What will you think about when you think about Kristianstad University?

...I think ten years later I will think about first when I arrived to Sweden and how I learned new things by my self, how to be independent, how to thin about your future, how to find a job. Does kind of things that I learned from Sweden. I will be much benefit for me in the future...

L: -It is a difficult question.

-Yes. I don't know.

L: -If you could select what ever you wanted, what is more important for you, your biggest decision. Which country to go to or which university to go to?

- First I would choose which country to go to. If I choose Canada, Australia or England it is English speaking countries. But in Sweden it is not really English. English is not a national language, so it is a second language. For the first thing I would think about which country to go to. And then university.

L: -Before you went here and you talked to your friends. Did you say "I am going to study abroad" or " I am going to study in Sweden"? What was most important: going abroad or going to Sweden?

-Going abroad.

L: -Going abroad?

-Yeah.

L: -You wanted to go to Canada at first. Why?

-Because for the first I had some friends that had studied in Canada and they told me that Canada is really nice. It is an English country. And then my foreign teacher also give me an image about life in Canada and how beautiful it is. Canada also has a lot of advertisement. Like in China to ask people to go and study there. And that is also important because that gives me a lot if images as to Sweden they don't have so much information to give in China

to ask students to come to study in Sweden. But later this maybe change but at the moment.

L: -But then you chose Sweden mostly because of practical things?

-Yes. I think advertisement gives me the first sight. This is most important thing. Otherwise I don't know so much about Sweden and not so much about universities in Sweden. Because not really, like Kristianstad is not famous in China but it gets more and more because if some more students come to study here and when they come back "I studied at Kristianstad University". This is most important thing. It becomes more and more famous in China.

L: -Do you think it is important what other people think about where you have been studying?

-Yes. It is impressive if you have studied in London at some famous university or Canada and Toronto University, but Kristianstad University at the moment none knows about the university. That is the most important thing... If I search for job in China if I come from Lund university someone knows maybe, from Harvard everyone knows. So university is also quite important.

L: -And that people think "Wow, he has been studying there"?

-Yes. If you have possibility to study there you have possibility to working everywhere.

Pre study: why do Chinese study in Sweden at Kristianstad University?

Interview 2

2007-10-01 at Kristianstad University 11.15-11.30

L: -Some background information first. How old are you?

-24

L: -And for how long have you been in Sweden?

-More than one year, in months maybe more than 13 months.

L: -OK. And of course you have decided to study abroad, study away from China. Why did you want to study abroad?

-I think it is a kind of way to exchange...to know how foreign people work... I think it is another way to learn the knowledge. Because the education method is different than Chinas and Chinese. We can learn the knowledge from different sources. It is another to learn more about foreign theories because there is not much foreign theories translated in

Chinese. So many of the theories we have to know in English. In China we do not have the chance to get this knowledge and theories.

L: -Did anyone influence you to go abroad. Maybe your parents or anyone at school?

-Yes my parents insisted that we should study abroad. They think that it is an experience you can get, learn more than you can get in China. And one of my teachers was studied doctors in Canada and she thinks it is good to study abroad because she thinks that when you study abroad you can learn a different way to work.

L: -And how did the process for you to study abroad look like. Did you go and ask at the university or how did it come that you study here?

-Yes, our university provided this exchange projects and it was published. We applied first at the university to see if we have the right qualities to apply to this project and they say yes and we sent in information and the university took contact with this university.

L: - For how long had you studied in Ningbo before you went to study abroad?

-Four years...

L: -And then you took this decision to study abroad. And then you had in some way have to have the discussion about where to go. And then, could you select the country yourself?

-Yeah. First I thought it is maybe better to study in America but if we want to study in America we should apply ourselves...And the visa in America is difficult to get and the Ningbo University provided this exchange project and we find that it is easy to get visa in Sweden.

L: -But didn't the university has more to offer than this university? Did you have some different to choose from or only Sweden?

-No, only Sweden. This project. They had another project in finance in Australia.

L: -Why did you choose this project in Sweden over the project in Australia?

-Because I like this project.

L: -The subject?

-Oh yes. The subject finance is difficult to study it need more professional knowledge.

L: So you decided Sweden most because of practical issues and topic. But how do you feel about studying in Sweden? What made you say "Well, I will go to Sweden"?....

-Subject is one reason and I think it was said that all Swedish people can speak English. And they say that there are not many Chinese people in Sweden. So it is the reasons.

L: -Is it important to you where you study? Was it a big decision to go to Sweden? Is it important which country?

-No.

L: -Country not important?

-Well, if it is not America I would say so. It is not different.

L: -But why did you want to go to America to start with?

-Because in business America is very much better. And America has a lot of good universities. Chinese people think that education in America is very good. So it is good to study in America.

L: -And then some questions about Kristianstad. Is it important for you which kind of university you study at? Is it important that you are here in Kristianstad? Because you are not only studying in Sweden you are studying at Kristianstad University. Is it important to you what university you go to?

- Oh. Important? I think it is ok to study in Kristianstad. But I think the subject is more important than the university.

L: -But is it important with the university? For example we have Lund University, more famous in Sweden. Would you rather go to Lund or Kristianstad?

- I think I more care about the subject not the university.

L: -Ok. If you have to choose country or university. We say you could study wherever you wanted in the entire world, would you look at the different universities, for example Harvard or would you look at the country?

- The university. Country is not so important. It is better to choose English countries, I mean they speak English but I think the brand of the university is much more important for me.

L: -But the subject is most important?

-Yes.

L: -And before you went here and you talked to your friends. Did you say you were going abroad or did you say that you were going to Sweden?

-I say I will go to Sweden.... I think Sweden have a high quality of education and Sweden is a beautiful country, Swedish people is very kind, so I think it is ok for me to study in Sweden so I came here.

L: -Even if you did not have much choice, you like Sweden, it is ok?

-Yeah.

Pre study: why do Chinese study in Sweden at Kristianstad University?

Interview 3

2007-10-01 at Kristianstad University 11.30-11.45

L: -We start with some background information. For how long have you been here?

- *One year.*

L: - Before that for how long did you study in China before you went here?..

- *Four years.*

L: -And how old are you?

- *24.*

L: -And you studied in Ningbo?

- *At Ningbo University.*

L: -And then as we can see, somewhere you decided to go to Sweden, to study abroad. And my question to you is why? Why did you want to go abroad?

- *The first reason is that we want to improve our English. And business is very popular now so maybe English is very important. And also in China the style of the studying, the teachers are very different from other countries. For the first the students will only focus on the examination and they will do the work only by the individual so it is totally different if you study in western countries like in group work you can interact with each other by different cultures.*

L: -So you want to develop your self and your view of the world or was it for career for work?

- *The work of course. Maybe you can have a chance in the outside countries, maybe you can get jobs. And I think that abroad work experience would be better when you go back to China. It is a very good experience.*

L: -Did anyone influence you in you decision to go abroad?

- *Maybe some of my classmates when I were in senior school applied for many abroad schools in Australia. And when I attend my university, Sidney university is a very good school I think in the world. Before my graduation I have also applied to Sidney and the gave me the offer but I had another chance I could be an exchange student to be here. So I have balanced these two chances and at last I chose here, this university. The main reason I*

think is the study in Australia is very expensive and the fee here is free. I think it is a very good bridge for me to go abroad. And this is a vet good chance and I can travel in the whole Europe.

L: - So you got influenced by some schoolmates than have went abroad and you thought "well, I also want to go". And then when it was time to choose where to go, you could select the country yourself?

-Yes.

L: -You had two choices? Sweden or Australia? Only two choices?

-Yes, only in my mind. Because you know that if I apply for an American or Canadian school the school need me to have the test if GAI (?) and I need to take more examinations. Maybe I am lacy so I din't want to take that examination ao I apply for Australia and also the Australian school make the education to an industry. They use education to make money and have many abroad students.

L: -So then you ended up with Australia or Sweden. And you chose Sweden mostly because of the fee?

-Yes.

L: -What other reasons where there?

-Other reasons?

L: Yes.

-The visa. If I get a visa I can travel all over Europe.

L: -Did you now anything about Sweden?

-Before ?

L:- Yes, before you came here.

-Yes, little. Just that it is a neutral country and very peaceful and very clean. And the people is very warm hearted... and also the Nobel.

L: -Was it important to you where you studied? Was it an important decision, which country to go to?

- Yes. Personally I would say that most important was that I want to learn English. Of course like England or America where the mother tang is English is better. But I think many people think that the Swedish people have a very good English so I think it is ok.

L: -Was there any person that influenced you to chose Sweden?

- From some students who have come to Sweden before when they came back to China they find a very good job and I think that maybe it is a good choice also. The people in China, if they want to go abroad, maybe they will choose the North America or Australia, fewer people will choose the north European. So I think this that fewer people choose is good.

L: -Because it makes you unique?

-Yes.

L: - And then I just have some questions about Kristianstad. The first question is, is it important for you which university you attend?

-Actually in China this is very important for the brand of the university. But if I think this is ... before I studied abroad I think this is very important bur now I think it is ok because the study, many employees have the quality, not the brand of the university. They have their own ability. Maybe you can work after three months practise then you can know what is your characteristics, what is your background and maybe not so much about the brand of the university.

L: -What did you think when you started to make research about Kristianstad University? It is not a big university. What were you feelings and your thoughts?

- When I searched this university in google only the information is about this is a relation school to Ningbo University, some school, some students has been here as an exchange student, very few information. Maybe the first time it is a little frustrated.

L: -If you could choose between Lund University and Kristianstad University?

-I would choose Lund University.

L: -Why?

- Of course first is that it is a top range of the world university. And also I think that the teachers there are more ...many professors. Something like that.

L: -What is most important to you? Which country to study in or which university to study at?

- Which country I think.

L: -Why?

- ...ehh, how to say, maybe a good country will apply more jobs or. If the country is a more intercultural country it will accept more other countries' employees and also the culture decides the employees thoughts.

L: -And then, before you went here and you told your friends that you were going away, did you say that you were going abroad to study or did you say I am going to Sweden?

- *Of course go abroad to study.*

Questionnaire concerning your perception of international education

This questionnaire is a part of a research conducted in Sweden at Kristianstad University. The purpose is to find out your thoughts and feelings concerning international education and studies abroad.

Your answers are anonymous which means that no one can link your answers to you. Please answer the questions as honestly as possible.

The questionnaire takes around 10 minutes to complete. Please read the instructions above the questions carefully.

Thank you very much for participating in the research.

Background Information

1. How old are you? _____

2. Gender?

Female ___ Male ___

3. How many years have you studied at the university so far?

- ___ 0-1 year
- ___ 2 years
- ___ 3 years
- ___ 4 years or more

4. My grades so far at the university are:

- ___ Under average
- ___ Average
- ___ Above average ___

5. What is your parents' work position?

- ___ Both my parents have positions as managers
- ___ One of my parents has a position as a manager
- ___ Neither of my parents have positions as managers

6. After graduation I want to:

- ___ Hopefully find a job as a public official
- ___ Hopefully find a job at a private firm
- ___ Hopefully find a job which means that I will work with international issues
- ___ Hopefully find a job outside China

7. What do you think symbolizes a good work? (you can only choose one option)

- ___ That the work develops me as a person

- That the work pays a lot of money
- That the work gives me power
- That the work is fun and enjoyable

Benefits with international education

You will now see several statements and you should state if you agree or disagree with these statements.

Statements marked with a) contains benefits that you could gain if you studied abroad for one or two semesters compared to if you only studied at your Chinese university. Do you agree with the statements: do you think that you would gain the mentioned benefits through international education?

Statements marked with b) also contains benefits associated with international education but this time you should value the benefits and answer how important these benefits would be to you.

If you choose 1 it means that you totally disagrees with the statement, if you circle 4 it means that you neither disagree nor agree with the statement and if you circle 7 it means that you totally agree with the statement.

Benefits associated with the choice to study abroad

8a) To study abroad would give me culture experience.

- 1 = Totally disagrees
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 = Totally agrees

8b) To study abroad would give me culture experience and this would be an important benefit for me.

- 1 = Totally disagrees
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 = Totally agrees

9a) To study abroad would give me access to unique courses and knowledge which would be difficult to get in my home country.

- 1 = Totally disagrees
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 = Totally agrees

9b) To study abroad would give me access to unique courses and knowledge which would be difficult to get in my home country and this would be an important benefit for me.

- 1 = Totally disagrees
- 2

- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

10a) To study abroad would give me courses and an education with higher quality.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

10b) To study abroad would give me courses and an education with higher quality and this would be an important benefit for me.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

11a) To study abroad would give me, if I so wanted, the possibility to migrate to another country.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

11b) To study abroad would give me, if I so wanted, the possibility to migrate to another country and this would be an important benefit for me.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

12a) To study abroad would lead to improved opportunities for me after finishing my studies.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

12b) To study abroad would lead to improved opportunities for me after finishing my studies and this would be an important benefit for me.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

13a) To study abroad would give me a higher status and a certain prestige.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

13b) To study abroad would give me a higher status and a certain prestige and this would be an important benefit for me.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

Benefits associated with the choice to study in a specific country.

14a) To study abroad in a country with good reputation would constitute a benefit.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

14b) To study abroad in a country with good reputation would constitute a benefit and this would be important for me.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

15a) To study abroad in a safe country would constitute a benefit.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2

- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

15b) To study abroad in a safe country would constitute a benefit and this would be important for me.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

16a) To be able to work in the new country during and after my studies abroad would constitute a benefit.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

16b) To be able to work in the new country during and after my studies abroad would constitute a benefit and this would be important for me.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

17a) To study abroad would improve my English which would constitute a benefit.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

17b) To study abroad would improve my English which would constitute a benefit and this would be important for me.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

18a) That it is easy to enter the country for my studies abroad would constitute a benefit.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

18b) That it is easy to enter the country for my studies abroad would constitute a benefit and this would be important for me.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

Benefits associated with the choice to study at a specific university

19a) To study abroad at a university with a good reputation which is recognised and famous would constitute a benefit.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

19b) To study abroad at a university with a good reputation which is recognised and famous would constitute a benefit and this would be important for me.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees
- ___ 2
- ___ 3
- ___ 4
- ___ 5
- ___ 6
- ___ 7 = Totally agrees

20. Is there any reason that would encourage you to study abroad which is not mentioned above? If so, what reason?

Perception of Sweden

How well do you think Sweden deliver the benefits connected to going abroad to study? Agree or disagree with the following statements.

21. To study in Sweden would give me culture experience.

- ___ 1 = Totally disagrees

___ 2
___ 3
___ 4
___ 5
___ 6
___ 7 = Totally agrees

22. To study in Sweden would give me access to unique courses and knowledge which would be difficult to get in my home country.

___ 1 = Totally disagrees
___ 2
___ 3
___ 4
___ 5
___ 6
___ 7 = Totally agrees

23. To study in Sweden would give me courses and an education with higher quality.

___ 1 = Totally disagrees
___ 2
___ 3
___ 4
___ 5
___ 6
___ 7 = Totally agrees

24. To study in Sweden would give me, if I so wanted, the possibility to migrate to Sweden.

___ 1 = Totally disagrees
___ 2
___ 3
___ 4
___ 5
___ 6
___ 7 = Totally agrees

25. To study in Sweden would lead to improved career opportunities for me after finishing my studies.

___ 1 = Totally disagrees
___ 2
___ 3
___ 4
___ 5
___ 6
___ 7 = Totally agrees

26. To study in Sweden would give me a higher status and a certain prestige.

___ 1 = Totally disagrees
___ 2
___ 3
___ 4
___ 5
___ 6
___ 7 = Totally agrees

27. To study in Sweden would improve my English.

1 = Totally disagrees
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7 = Totally agrees

28. Sweden is a country with good reputation and this would constitute a benefit.

1 = Totally disagrees
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7 = Totally agrees

29. Sweden is a safe country and this would constitute a benefit.

1 = Totally disagrees
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7 = Totally agrees

30. To be able to work in Sweden during and after my studies abroad would constitute a benefit.

1 = Totally disagrees
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7 = Totally agrees

31. It is easy to enter Sweden and this would constitute a benefit.

1 = Totally disagrees
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7 = Totally agrees

32. Sweden has universities with good reputation which are recognised and famous and this would constitute a benefit.

1 = Totally disagrees
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7 = Totally agrees

33. Overall, do you think Sweden is an attractive country to go abroad to study in?

- 1 = Totally disagrees
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7 = Totally agrees

Tuition Fees

34. Are you interested in studies in Sweden?

- Yes
 No
 I don't know

35. If there were tuition fees in Sweden. How much would you as a maximum be prepared to pay per year?

- If there were tuition fees I would not be interested in studies in Sweden
 20 000 RMB
 50 000 RMB
 70 000 RMB
 100 000 RMB

Thank you for your help!

/ Lisa Källström

Contact Information: Lisa.Kallstrom@hkr.se

Appendix 4

Spearman correlation tests

Correlations

			culture	cultureme
Spearman's rho	culture	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,668**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	cultureme	Correlation Coefficient	,668**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			knowledge	knowledgeme
Spearman's rho	knowledge	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,596**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	knowledgeme	Correlation Coefficient	,596**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			quality	qualityme
Spearman's rho	quality	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,666**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	qualityme	Correlation Coefficient	,666**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	152	152

Correlations

			quality	qualityme
Spearman's rho	quality	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,666**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	qualityme	Correlation Coefficient	,666**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			migrate	migrateme
Spearman's rho	migrate	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,651**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	migrateme	Correlation Coefficient	,651**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			opportunities	opportunitiesme
Spearman's rho	opportunities	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,658**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	opportunitiesme	Correlation Coefficient	,658**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			status	statusme
Spearman's rho	status	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,692**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	statusme	Correlation Coefficient	,692**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			english	englishme
Spearman's rho	english	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,662**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	englishme	Correlation Coefficient	,662**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			reputation	reputationme
Spearman's rho	reputation	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,723**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	reputationme	Correlation Coefficient	,723**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			safe	safeme
Spearman's rho	safe	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,708**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	safeme	Correlation Coefficient	,708**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			work	workme
Spearman's rho	work	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,651**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	workme	Correlation Coefficient	,651**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			nativeeng	nativeengme
Spearman's rho	nativeeng	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,768**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	nativeengme	Correlation Coefficient	,768**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			enter	enterme
Spearman's rho	enter	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,744**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	enterme	Correlation Coefficient	,744**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			universityrep	universityrepme
Spearman's rho	universityrep	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,749**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	152	152
	universityrepme	Correlation Coefficient	,749**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	152	152

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).