

**MARKETING EDUCATION:
A GUIDE TO BETTER TARGETING OF ASIAN STUDENTS**

REPORT 2

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Published by:

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University of Otago

May 21, 2000

ISBN: 1-877156-14-0

SUMMARY

As funding for tertiary education decreases, New Zealand tertiary educational institutions have been forced to fund existing services via other means. It has been suggested that New Zealand tertiary institutions have attempted to target overseas students because of the high per student revenue received for this market segment. However, this segment seems to be growing faster internationally than observed in New Zealand, and as such, this study aims to identify how New Zealand tertiary institutions might better target this lucrative market segment.

The current study examined a group of Malaysian, Singaporean and Hong Kong students who had yet to make their decision regarding what country/institution they were going to attend, once their secondary education had been completed. The students were from a range of colleges and states in the respective countries. The students were administered a self-completion questionnaire, based on four specific topic areas: preferred promotional tools, preferred promotional messages, cultural values and socio-economic perceptions (of home country compared to New Zealand). The aim of this survey was to determine whether there were any differences in students' choice of promotion tools and promotional messages. The study also attempted to examine the students' cultural values and their perceptions of the level of socio-economic development (of home country compared to New Zealand).

Additionally, 20 New Zealand marketers were also administered a similar questionnaire that sought to contrast the assumptions that these marketers had about the markets they were attempting to target. As such, the current study has several implications for improving the effectiveness of the international marketing of New Zealand educational institutions.

Demographically, the student respondents were from a range of religious beliefs and favoured a range of countries for further tertiary education. New Zealand was of particular importance to Malaysian students with 20% indicating that this was the country they favoured, with only the United Kingdom (22%) rating higher. However, the students from Hong Kong and Singapore had much lower awareness level of New Zealand tertiary institutions.

The findings also revealed an array of differences in the students' choice of promotion tools and promotional messages. In particular, the WWW was the most common source for educational information. The second most important tool was print media. The promotion message that appealed most to the students was a quality learning environment, followed by the reputation of the Institution.

Culturally, most Asian students were very traditional and respected both their elders and those in authority. They were also ambitious and yet open to new ideas. Socio-economically, the Asian students perceived their country's standard of education and living as relatively similar to New Zealand. These differences in cultural values and socio-economic development could have caused the Asian students to value some promotion tools/messages as more important than the others. However, it is beyond the scope of this report to link cultural values and socio-economic development to the students' choice of promotion tools and messages.

New Zealand marketers seem to have a rather firm grasp of the promotional messages that are particularly important to students, however they do not understand why these messages are important, nor do they understand what tools should be best utilised to most effectively promote to Asian students. Of particular concern in this area is the extent which New Zealand marketers over-value their own contribution, whilst ignoring particularly important promotional tools such as print media.

This report then applied the findings of this study to the marketing of New Zealand tertiary institutions. In conclusion, the theme of these recommendations were that New Zealand tertiary institutions should:

"...Ask not what Asian students can do for New Zealand tertiary institutions, but what New Zealand tertiary institutions can do for Asian students..."

Paraphrasing John F. Kennedy

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: Rationale for the Current Study

Over the last decade, funding for New Zealand Universities has been decreasing due to the market driven policies of the government. As such, a dilemma has occurred for the Universities, that is, how to continue providing the services that they have in the past whilst funding continues to decrease (per student). A solution to this problem is to target International students who often pay full fees (an average of \$13,700 per annum).

Although there has been much rhetoric about a '*knowledge-based economy*' governmental support programmes for the targeting of International students have been non-existent. Previous studies from overseas have suggested that the international market of students generally has a relatively low awareness of New Zealand as a tertiary education destination (British Council Report 1999). As such, this study will examine a sample of the potential target market, so that the results may be used to enhance New Zealand tertiary institution's international marketing activities.

The strategy of targeting international students itself has several issues that the current study aims to address. Most importantly, in recent years the number of international students coming to New Zealand has not matched growth patterns displayed overseas. The issue here is why this has occurred, and what can be done to enhance this growth. It has been purported that New Zealand's poor performance may be related to marketing, and in particular, the targeting of products to particular market segments.

1.2 Objectives of the Current Report

The overall objective of this report is to find out more information about New Zealand tertiary institution's international target market so that more effective targeting can take place. Once this information has been established, it will be utilised to illustrate how the targeting of Malaysian, Singaporean and Hong Kong students should take place. These objectives will be achieved in several ways:

- ◆ To identify the promotional tools that are particularly effective in these markets
- ◆ To identify the promotional messages that are particularly appealing to students in these markets
- ◆ To examine the cultural values of students in these markets
- ◆ To examine how students in these markets rate their country's level of socio-economic development relative to New Zealand
- ◆ To compare the students' promotional tool and message preferences, cultural values and socio-economic development with that from New Zealand tertiary marketers

1.3 Why Target International Students?

As mentioned, international students in New Zealand often have to pay full-fees, averaging around \$13,700 per student per annum. Whilst Governmental funding continues to decrease, the University has to look at other market segments that are capable of providing a sustainable income so that the University's activities are not reduced.

Studies have estimated that international students already bring as much as \$73 million to Dunedin alone and \$1 billion to the New Zealand economy in

fees and other expenditures (Pang 1999). It has been estimated that this amount could double within five years, but for this to happen, New Zealand tertiary institutions would need to lift their performance in terms of international marketing.

1.4 Why Target Asian Students?

Malaysian, Singaporean and Hong Kong students represent the largest of the international segments that currently purchase New Zealand tertiary education products. These students are already geographically close to New Zealand and view this country as part of Asia. As these countries represent such an important segment for New Zealand tertiary exports, it is important to examine whether these students are being reached effectively.

1.5 What Issues Exist When Targeting Asian Students?

An important issue to address when targeting Malaysian, Singaporean and Hong Kong students is the differences in cultural values and socio-economic development in their home country relative to New Zealand. As such, it is necessary to ensure that we use the 'right' promotional tools and/or messages to reach these students. If this is not the case, it is likely that negative word of mouth will result in a decline of the popularity of New Zealand as a tertiary destination.

It is recognised in this report that it is not enough to just get the students to come to New Zealand tertiary institutions, as they have to be satisfied with the product as well. Whilst this is an important issue, it is beyond the scope of this article to investigate what the product should contain, although some inferences can be made from the opinions that students state.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 The Questionnaire

The survey was a self-completion questionnaire in which the questions were divided into five sections. The five sections are listed below:

Section 1: Advertising/Promotion Tools (19 items)

How important do you think the following promotion tools are in communicating advertising messages to students like yourself?

Section 2: Message Content (34 items)

How important do you think the following themes/messages are that a NZ tertiary institution might use in recruiting students like yourself?

Section 3: Cultural values (16 items)

How relevant are these cultural variables to you?

Section 4: Socio-economics (12 items)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Section 5: Demographic Information

In each of the five sections, a six-point balanced Likert scale was used. This scale was preferred because previous studies have illustrated that Asian students if given a neutral alternative will exercise this option so as not to offend the researcher by disagreeing with them. By using a six-point scale,

the students were forced to have an opinion on each item, and could not '*sit on the fence*'.

2.2 The Sample

Judgmental sampling was used. In all, 1096 responses were obtained from students studying at various private colleges in Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong. Colleges were chosen because they were believed to be more likely to have students that were in the market for international tertiary products. The survey was administered to the students in February 1999.

For the marketers, a similar questionnaire was sent to the 39 New Zealand institutions of higher learning. The questionnaire was addressed to the International Recruitment/Marketing managers.

2.3 Demographic Profile of Student Respondents

The average age of the students was 19.4, 20.3 and 20.12 for Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore respectively, and most (63.4%) Malaysian students had heard of New Zealand tertiary institutions. This was not surprising given that most of the respondents were from colleges that have close co-operation with various overseas institutions including those from New Zealand. However, a relatively small proportion of students from Singapore (39.4%) and Hong Kong (29.1%) were familiar with New Zealand tertiary institutions.

The respondents were from a range of schools, and intended on attending a range of tertiary institutions in a variety of countries. The decision to attend a particular tertiary institution had several influencers, whose importance differed dramatically. Additionally, a range of religions was sampled. The following graphs illustrate these profiles:

Figure 1: Respondent's Colleges

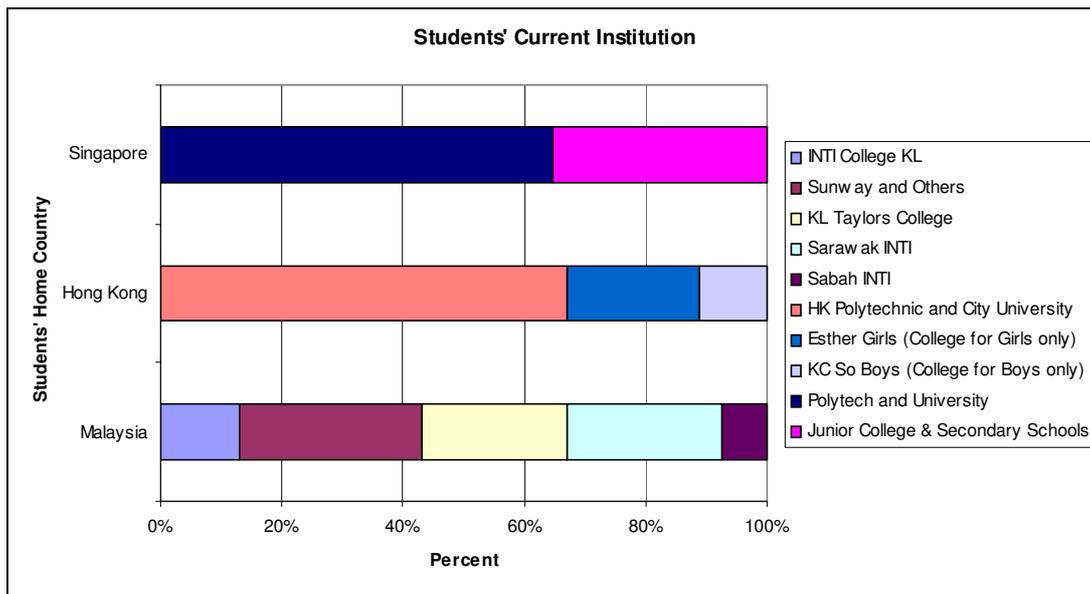


Figure 2: Intended Country of Study

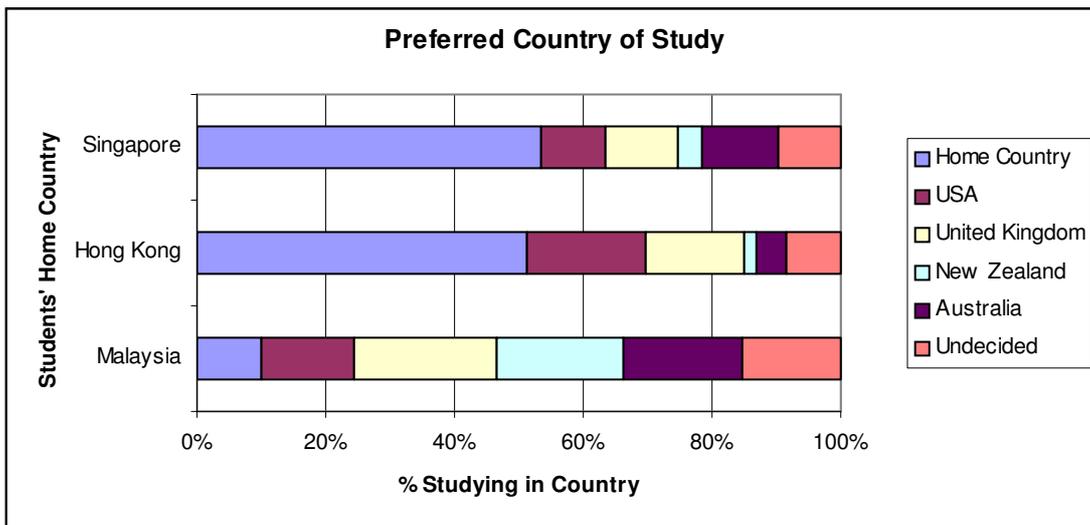


Figure 3: Respondents' Religion

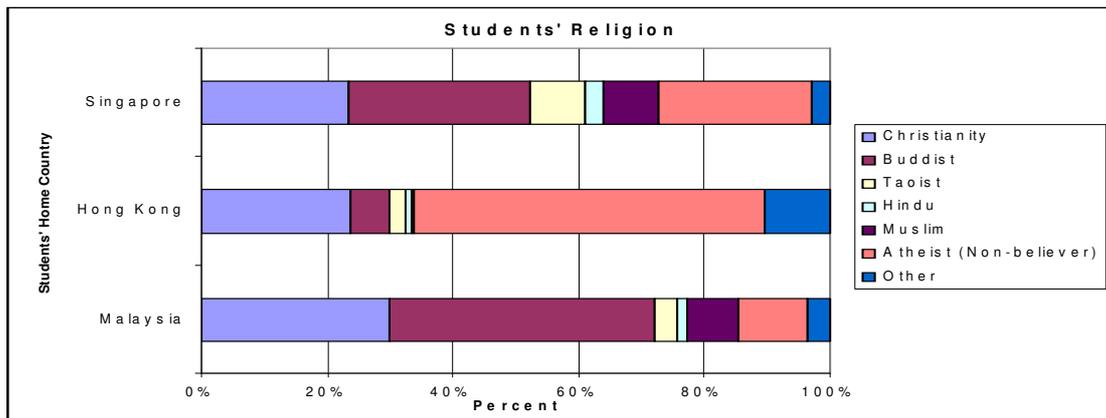


Figure 4: Preferred Tertiary Format

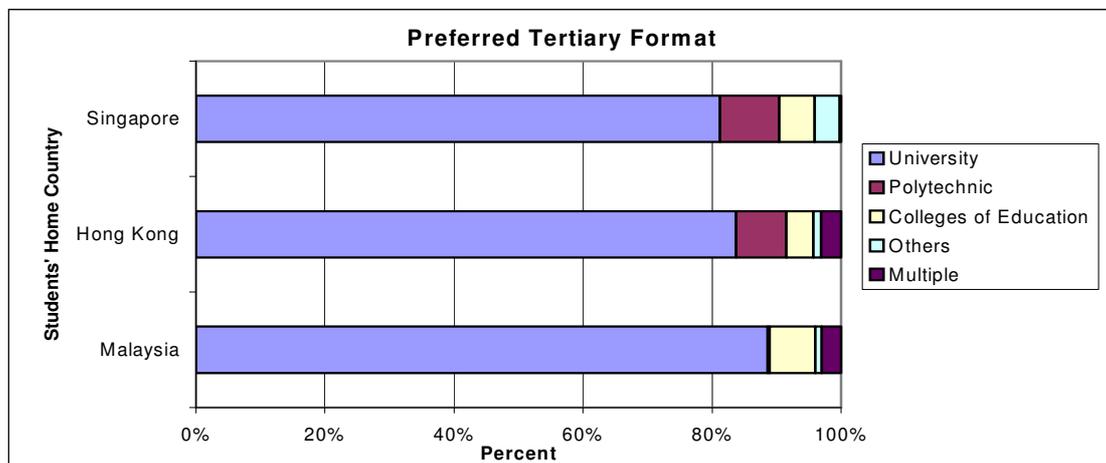
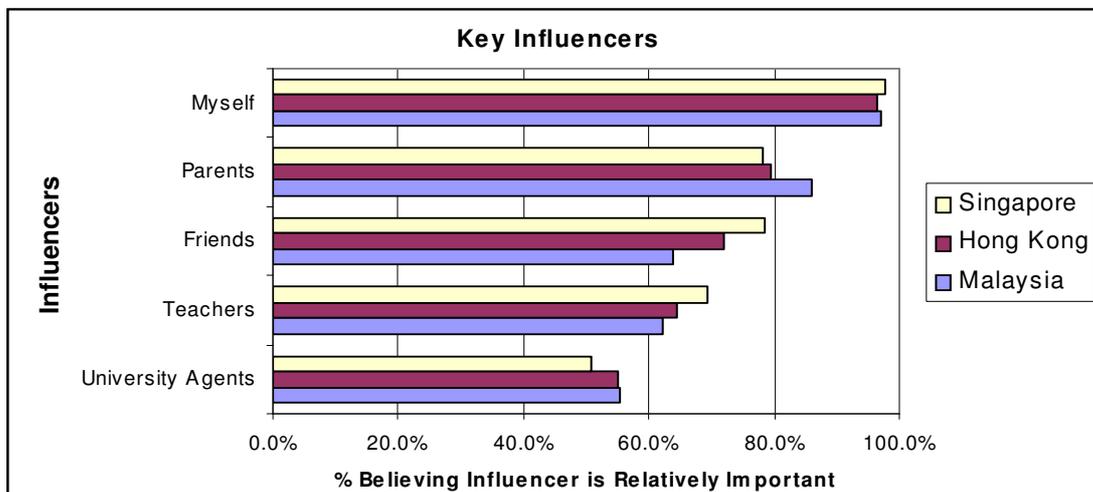


Figure 5: Key Influencers



As the above graphs illustrate, the sample incorporates students from a range of countries, schools and religious backgrounds. Whilst University was the most preferred format of tertiary education by far, polytechnics and colleges of education were mentioned by some students. Additionally, the key influencer to the purchase decision was the individual student in all countries, however, parents occupied a significant role.

The students mentioned a range of countries as their intended country of study. Pleasingly New Zealand (20%) was second only to the UK (22%) in Malaysia. This is perhaps due to the survey location given that most institutions where the students were sampled provide 'twinning' courses with various New Zealand institutions. Perhaps more importantly, New Zealand tertiary institutions seemed to have a rather weak presence in the two other markets surveyed.

3. RESULTS

In each of the following sections, an analysis of the promotional tools/media, promotional messages, cultural values and socio-economic factors will be undertaken. These four topics will be analysed from two contrasting perspectives, namely the Asian students (**students** hereafter) and the New Zealand Marketers (**marketers** hereafter). The ultimate aim of this comparison is to draw some implications for more effectively marketing New Zealand tertiary institutions to Asian students.

3.1 Promotional Tools/Media

A) Important Promotional Tools for Asian Students

The importance of the various promotional tools to the students is summarised in Table 1. An important promotional tool to these students was the World Wide Web (**WWW** hereafter) followed by newspapers and trade fairs/shows. University agents (or representatives) and testimonials from past students were also important. The least important tools were bookmarks and stickers. Although statistical differences were observed between the three country's students, the promotional tools seem to be ranked similarly in each country.

Table 1: Importance of Various Promotional Tools

Promotional Tool	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore	F-Value
WWW	5.31	4.80	5.04	19.631**
Newspapers	5.26	4.72	5.20	26.286**
Trade Fairs/Shows	4.88	4.12	4.73	42.139**
Sponsorships	4.84	4.25	4.61	22.744**
Television	4.79	4.65	4.87	2.602
Institution Open Days	4.79	4.36	4.60	11.237**
Magazines	4.78	4.56	4.64	3.659*
Radio	4.47	3.79	4.33	25.155**
Photographs	4.47	4.07	4.24	9.776**
Representatives and Agent	4.46	4.18	4.35	4.707*
Testimonials	4.43	4.29	4.59	5.274*
Posters	4.33	4.10	4.16	3.596*
Video Clips	4.31	3.93	4.44	15.778**
Brochures	4.30	3.93	4.09	7.351**
Alumni Associations	4.14	3.90	4.15	4.584*
Postcards	3.97	3.56	3.57	12.907**
Banners	3.94	3.73	3.93	3.279*
Bookmarks	3.72	3.67	3.27	14.681**
Stickers	3.49	3.39	2.95	20.837**

On a scale of 1-6, where 1=very unimportant and 6=very important

The above table clearly illustrates that there are differences as to the promotional tools that are popular with students in each of the three countries that were examined. Although there are statistically significant differences in the responses, there is an overriding pattern as to how the students rank the promotional tools. For instance, the WWW and newspapers seem to rank highly and direct mail tools such as bookmarks and stickers seem to rank lower with students from each of the three countries, even though statistical differences were displayed.

Perhaps the differences were displayed because the intensity of the belief differs between countries, rather than the opinion of the effectiveness of the promotional tool. As such, although ranked similarly, students from Malaysia and Singapore seemed to rate all of the promotional tools higher than their counterparts from Hong Kong.

B) Factor Analysis of Promotional Tools

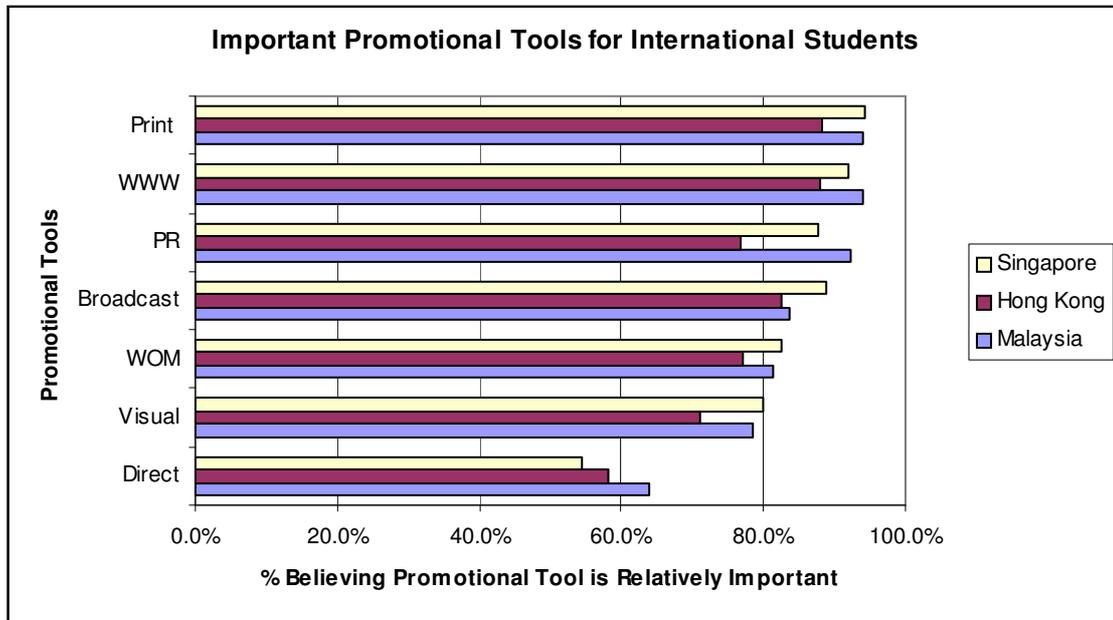
A factor analysis was used to determine which promotional tools had underlying similarities. It would seem that the WWW is the most important source of information for these students, followed by Print Media, PR and Broadcast Advertising. The factor analysis supports the analysis of the individual items by suggesting that in general the students from Hong Kong responded with less intensity than their counterparts from either Malaysia or Singapore.

Table 2: Factorised Promotional Tools

Promotional Tools	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore
Internet/WWW	5.31	4.80	5.04
<u>Print Media</u>	5.03	4.64	4.94
◆ Newspapers			
◆ Magazines			
<u>Public Relations</u>	4.84	4.24	4.65
◆ Institution Open Days			
◆ Sponsorships			
◆ Trade Fairs/Shows			
<u>Broadcast Media</u>	4.64	4.27	4.62
◆ TV			
◆ Radio			
<u>Word of Mouth</u>	4.35	4.17	4.37
◆ Representatives/Agents			
◆ Testimonials			
◆ Alumni Associations			
<u>Visual Aid Promotions</u>	4.23	3.96	4.20
◆ Video Clips			
◆ Banners			
◆ Posters			
◆ Photographs			
<u>Direct Mail</u>	3.93	3.65	3.52
◆ Bookmarks			
◆ Stickers			
◆ Brochures			
◆ Postcards			

The importance attributed to these promotional tools is illustrated in the following graph:

Figure 6: Important Promotional Tools for Asian Students



From the scale of 1-6 (where 6 is a very important promotion tool and 1 is a very unimportant promotional tool), we divided the total student sample into two groups, group 1 (who scored 1-3) and group 2 (who scored 4-6). As shown in Figure 6, the sample believed that various promotional tools were particularly important, in particular those that involved print media and the WWW.

Between 30-50% of students in each of the three countries did not believe direct mail promotional tools such as banners, postcards, bookmarks and stickers were as important as sources of educational information. This was especially true in Singapore where about half the respondent held this view.

C) Comparison between Students' and Marketers' Perceptions of Important Promotional Tools

The marketers' perceptions of the importance of the various promotional tools are displayed in Table 3. This table suggests that the marketers were correct in their assumptions regarding the importance of some promotional tools. In particular, the importance of the WWW to both students and marketers is apparent. However, marketers also seemed to over-rate their own contributions, rating university representatives, testimonials and alumni associations as considerably more important than they appear to be to students. Further, the importance of print media to students was not reflected in the marketers' responses.

Table 3: Comparison of the Relative Importance of Various Marketing Tools

Promotional Tool	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore	NZ Marketers
WWW	5.31	4.80	5.04	5.45
Newspapers	5.26	4.72	5.20	3.45
Trade Fairs/Shows	4.88	4.12	4.73	3.60
Sponsorships	4.84	4.25	4.61	3.00
Television	4.79	4.65	4.87	2.12
Institution Open Days	4.79	4.36	4.60	4.32
Magazines	4.78	4.56	4.64	3.47
Radio	4.47	3.79	4.33	1.94
Photographs	4.47	4.07	4.24	4.32
Representatives and Agent	4.46	4.18	4.35	5.40
Testimonials	4.43	4.29	4.59	5.60
Posters	4.33	4.10	4.16	4.16
Video Clips	4.31	3.93	4.44	4.05
Brochures	4.30	3.93	4.09	5.05
Alumni Associations	4.14	3.90	4.15	4.25
Postcards	3.97	3.56	3.57	2.89
Banners	3.94	3.73	3.93	3.11
Bookmarks	3.72	3.67	3.27	2.44
Stickers	3.49	3.39	2.95	2.39

On a scale of 1-6, where 1=very unimportant and 6=very important

D) Importance of Promotional Tools by Intended Country of Study

The importance of several promotional tools seems to differ for students based on the country in which they intended studying. This is illustrated in the following tables:

Table 4: Importance of Promotional Tools to Malaysian Students by Intended Country of Study

Promotional Tools	Intended Country of Study					F – Value
	Malaysia	USA	UK	NZ	Aust	
WWW	5.48	5.32	5.22	5.29	5.22	0.873
Newspapers	5.28	5.02	5.37	5.22	5.29	0.993
Trade Fairs	5.10	4.53	5.05	4.69	4.82	3.646*
TV	4.90	4.88	4.68	4.85	4.81	0.341
Open Days	4.90	4.56	4.86	4.82	4.75	0.745
Sponsorships	4.83	4.91	5.01	4.53	4.78	2.432*
Magazines	4.75	4.79	4.84	4.86	4.73	0.278
Radio	4.60	4.61	4.36	4.53	4.42	0.494
Posters	4.58	4.23	4.17	4.35	4.44	0.885
Photographs	4.58	4.42	4.39	4.59	4.49	0.388
Testimonials	4.58	4.14	4.40	4.49	4.42	0.940
Reps and Agents	4.50	4.11	4.61	4.38	4.49	1.586
Video Clips	4.42	4.11	4.25	4.38	4.26	0.640
Brochures	4.30	4.14	4.10	4.44	4.36	1.075
Postcards	4.20	3.60	3.47	4.44	4.10	6.827**
Alumni	4.13	3.77	4.06	4.31	4.25	1.685
Banners	4.07	3.91	3.74	4.12	3.97	0.986
Bookmarks	3.50	3.56	3.41	4.12	3.81	3.047*
Stickers	3.43	3.37	3.05	3.90	3.64	4.295**

On a scale of 1-6, where 1=very unimportant and 6=very important

Table 5: Importance of Promotional Tools to Hong Kong Students by Intended Country of Study

Promotional Tools	Intended Country of Study					F-Value
	Hong Kong	USA	UK	NZ	Aust	
Newspapers	4.80	4.79	4.67	4.60	4.58	0.819
World Wide Web	4.79	4.85	4.69	5.00	4.75	0.183
Television	4.73	4.71	4.67	4.20	4.17	0.945
Magazines	4.57	4.63	4.59	4.20	4.33	0.288
Institution Open Days	4.35	4.33	4.28	4.60	4.17	0.475
Sponsorships	4.17	4.42	4.23	3.80	4.58	0.695
Posters	4.11	4.08	4.10	4.80	4.33	0.921
Testimonials	4.11	4.42	4.49	5.00	4.33	1.580
Trade Fairs/Shows	4.06	4.15	4.23	4.00	4.17	0.244
Photographs	4.05	4.15	4.13	4.20	4.17	0.453
Representatives and Agent	4.03	4.38	4.18	4.60	4.17	1.542
Radio	3.95	3.60	3.77	3.60	3.58	1.104
Video Clips	3.92	3.98	3.87	3.40	4.33	0.709
Brochures	3.78	4.08	4.15	4.00	4.08	1.071
Alumni Associations	3.77	3.94	4.08	4.00	3.92	1.248
Banners	3.73	3.79	3.59	4.40	3.92	0.838
Bookmarks	3.64	3.69	3.72	3.00	4.00	0.672
Postcards	3.47	3.67	3.51	3.60	3.92	0.705
Stickers	3.35	3.46	3.36	3.20	3.83	0.608

On a scale of 1-6, where 1=very unimportant and 6=very important

Table 6: Importance of Promotional Tools to Singaporean Students by Intended Country of Study

Promotional Tools	Intended Country of Study					F-Value
	Singapore	USA	UK	NZ	Aust	
Newspapers	5.24	5.14	5.15	5.27	5.28	0.997
World Wide Web	5.03	5.26	4.98	4.93	5.04	0.447
Television	4.87	4.90	4.85	4.87	4.92	0.039
Magazines	4.65	4.76	4.53	4.33	4.88	1.094
Trade Fairs/Shows	4.63	5.17	4.62	4.80	5.06	3.296*
Sponsorships	4.54	4.74	4.66	4.93	4.74	0.702
Institution Open Days	4.53	4.88	4.66	4.60	4.96	2.556*
Testimonials	4.47	4.88	4.51	4.87	4.74	1.618
Video Clips	4.44	4.79	4.23	4.73	4.44	1.361
Radio	4.38	4.07	4.38	4.47	4.22	0.555
Representatives and Agent	4.30	4.74	4.02	4.53	4.66	3.061*
Photographs	4.26	4.38	4.06	4.67	4.20	0.751
Posters	4.08	4.24	3.94	4.80	4.42	1.901
Alumni Associations	4.03	4.43	4.09	4.73	4.44	2.449*
Brochures	3.96	4.36	4.00	4.73	4.36	1.984*
Banners	3.94	3.71	3.66	4.60	4.24	2.725*
Postcards	3.55	3.64	3.36	4.00	3.82	1.122
Bookmarks	3.21	3.33	3.55	3.87	3.32	1.682
Stickers	2.91	2.95	3.11	3.73	3.04	1.770

The above tables seem to suggest that Malaysian and Singaporean students displayed preferences for different promotional tools, dependent on where they were going to attend a tertiary institution. However, students from Hong Kong did not display differential preferences based on the country they were going to attend a tertiary institution.

As illustrated, Malaysian students seem to view the importance of promotional tools differently, depending on which country they intend on studying in. On the whole, the WWW and newspapers were an important source of education information irrespective of which country they intend on studying in. However, there were some variations in importance of the lower ranked promotional tools. In particular the use of bookmarks, postcards and stickers seems to be of greater importance for students intending on attending New Zealand tertiary institutions. Similarly, sponsorships seem to be of more importance to

students intending on studying in the UK and trade fairs seem to be of more importance to those students staying in Malaysia.

Similarly to the Malaysian students, the Singaporean students displayed the same preference for the WWW and newspapers as a promotional tool, no matter what country they intended studying in. Again differences were displayed in the lower level promotional tools, although these tools were different to those exhibited by the Malaysian students. For Singaporean students intending on studying in the USA, University agents and trade fairs seem to be particularly important. Additionally, for Singaporean students studying in Australia, institution open days seemed to be relatively important. Finally, for Singaporean students intending studying in New Zealand, Alumni Associations, Banners and Brochures seemed to be particularly important promotional tools.

3.2 Message Content

A) Important Messages to Asian Students

The importance of the various promotional messages to the students is summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: Important Promotional Messages

Promotional Messages	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore	F-Value
Excellent Teaching Staff	5.55	4.88	5.45	56.129**
Quality of Courses	5.49	4.93	5.40	36.198**
High Standard of Education	5.48	5.02	5.44	27.654**
International Recognition	5.47	4.94	5.46	33.611**
Safety in the Country	5.43	4.66	5.32	58.498**
Reasonable Tuition Fees	5.35	4.64	5.23	41.767**
Safety within the Institution	5.31	4.26	5.08	87.806**
Experience of Institution	5.26	4.40	5.01	59.628**
Excellent Resources for Research	5.25	4.34	5.13	81.355**
Stability of Political Environment	5.24	4.63	5.19	36.479**
Graduate's Employment Prospects	5.16	4.85	5.29	17.374**
Scholarships Available	5.15	4.34	4.81	45.187**
Achievements of the Institution	5.10	4.58	4.85	20.666**
Employer's Views of Graduates	5.08	4.89	5.19	7.303**
Hospitality of New Zealanders	5.08	4.28	4.92	59.009**
Excellent Accommodation	5.07	4.20	4.81	59.132**
Student Support Services	5.04	4.45	4.92	28.840**
Excellent Physical Facilities	5.01	4.01	4.44	76.298**
Variety of Experiences	4.99	4.33	4.79	37.466**
Flexible Course Duration	4.97	4.42	4.96	30.530**
Travelling within Country	4.97	4.28	4.87	37.692**
Graduate's Expected Income	4.96	4.72	5.07	10.000**
Accessibility to town	4.78	4.14	4.73	34.292**
Multi-cultural Environment	4.74	4.21	4.48	18.821**
Uniqueness of Courses	4.58	4.22	4.49	9.169**
Natural Resources for Research	4.57	3.98	4.43	24.121**
Brand Name of Institution	4.54	4.56	4.59	0.22
Foundation Courses Available	4.53	4.18	4.59	10.673**
Valuing Cultural Diversity	4.45	3.94	4.52	24.978**
Vibrant Student City	4.39	4.01	4.48	20.336**
Industrial "hands-on" Courses	4.39	3.71	4.67	66.152**
Country's Natural Beauty	4.31	3.69	3.83	28.541**
Avenue for Religious Practices	4.04	3.17	3.65	32.587**
Tourist Attractions	3.83	3.45	3.57	8.028**

On a scale of 1-6, where 1=very unimportant and 6=very important

The results showed Asian students were more concerned about quality of teaching staff, courses, standard of education and international recognition than the *image of the country*. This is not surprising given that what these students want is the qualification and are at University 'to study, not to play'. After having spent so much (monetary and emotionally) on getting a degree, and a foreign degree in particular, it is small wonder that they want to make sure that that degree is internationally recognised.

This observation held for all three of the countries sampled, however, respondents from Hong Kong seemed to respond with remarkably less intensity to all of the items than their international counterparts.

B) Factor Analysis of Promotional Messages

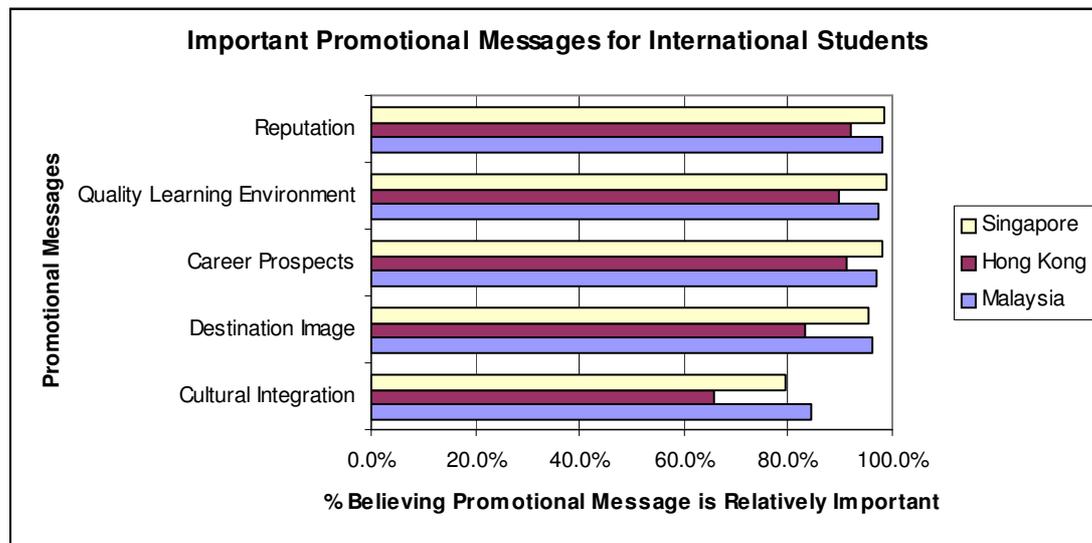
The promotional messages that were particularly relevant to students compressed into five main factors (after a factor analysis). As such, the promotional messages that seem to be of particular importance include the Quality Learning Environment, Reputation of the institution as well as the Career Prospects associated with a qualification from the institution. The factorised promotional messages are illustrated in the following table.

Table 8: Factorised Promotional Messages

Promotional Factors	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore
<u>Quality Learning Environment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Excellent Resources for Research ◆ Excellent Teaching Staff ◆ Student Support Services ◆ Excellent Physical Facilities ◆ Reasonable Tuition Fees ◆ Flexible Courses ◆ Safety within the Institution 	5.21	4.43	5.03
<u>Reputation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Achievements of Institution ◆ Institution Brand name ◆ High Standard of Education ◆ Experience of Institution ◆ Quality of Courses 	5.16	4.70	5.05
<u>Career Prospects</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Graduates' Expected Income ◆ Employers' views of Graduates ◆ Graduates' Employment Prospects ◆ International Recognition 	5.14	4.84	5.23
<u>Image of Destination</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Stable Political Environment ◆ Safety in New Zealand ◆ Hospitality of New Zealanders ◆ Country's natural beauty 	5.04	4.34	4.87
<u>Cultural Integration</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Avenue for Religious Practices ◆ Valuing Cultural Diversity ◆ Multicultural Environment 	4.40	3.77	4.21

The relative importance of these promotional messages is illustrated in Figure 7. Relative importance is rated on a 6-point Likert scale, where scores from 4-6 were grouped as relatively important and 1-3 were grouped as relatively unimportant.

Figure 7: Important Promotional Messages for Asian Students



As Figure 7 illustrates, the students generally had relatively unanimous beliefs regarding the importance of various promotional messages. Of particular note in each of the three countries were messages that conveyed the reputation of the institution, the quality learning environment provided and the career prospects once the course had been completed. Over 90% of respondents (in each country) believed that these messages were particularly important (with responses of 4-6). By comparing to Table 8, it is also apparent that these messages had high mean importance scores.

C) Comparison between Students' and Marketers' Perceptions of Promotional Messages

The marketers' view of important promotional messages is illustrated in Table 9. This table suggests that the messages perceived to be important by New Zealand marketers were actually important to students. Whilst not being identical, consistencies seem to exist between these two groups.

Table 9: Promotional Messages Marketers believe to be Important

Promotional Messages	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore	NZ Marketers
Excellent Teaching Staff	5.55	4.88	5.45	5.30
Quality of Courses	5.49	4.93	5.40	5.75
High Standard of Education	5.48	5.02	5.44	5.80
International Recognition	5.47	4.94	5.46	5.10
Safety in the Country	5.43	4.66	5.32	4.90
Reasonable Tuition Fees	5.35	4.64	5.23	5.00
Safety within the Institution	5.31	4.26	5.08	4.95
Experience of Institution	5.26	4.40	5.01	5.00
Excellent Resources for Research	5.25	4.34	5.13	4.20
Stability of Political Environment	5.24	4.63	5.19	4.50
Graduate's Employment Prospects	5.16	4.85	5.29	5.00
Scholarships Available	5.15	4.34	4.81	3.60
Achievements of the Institution	5.10	4.58	4.85	4.85
Employer's Views of Graduates	5.08	4.89	5.19	4.50
Hospitality of New Zealanders	5.08	4.28	4.92	4.65
Excellent Accommodation	5.07	4.20	4.81	4.40
Student Support Services	5.04	4.45	4.92	5.25
Excellent Physical Facilities	5.01	4.01	4.44	4.60
Variety of Experiences	4.99	4.33	4.79	3.70
Flexible Course Duration	4.97	4.42	4.96	4.55
Travelling within Country	4.97	4.28	4.87	3.70
Graduate's Expected Income	4.96	4.72	5.07	4.20
Accessibility to town	4.78	4.14	4.73	4.20
Multi-cultural Environment	4.74	4.21	4.48	4.35
Uniqueness of Courses	4.58	4.22	4.49	4.35
Natural Resources for Research	4.57	3.98	4.43	3.35
Brand Name of Institution	4.54	4.56	4.59	5.20
Foundation Courses Available	4.53	4.18	4.59	3.80
Valuing Cultural Diversity	4.45	3.94	4.52	4.55
Vibrant Student City	4.39	4.01	4.48	4.35
Industrial "hands-on" Courses	4.39	3.71	4.67	3.40
Country's Natural Beauty	4.31	3.69	3.83	3.90
Avenue for Religious Practices	4.04	3.17	3.65	3.05
Tourist Attractions	3.83	3.45	3.57	2.90

On a scale of 1-6, where 1=very unimportant and 6=very important

The important messages seem to fit into two distinct categories. The first is the quality of the product, as related to international recognition, and the second seems to be the internal support structures in place for Asian students. The implications of these two important message types will be expanded upon in a later section.

D) Important Messages by Intended Country of Study

Table 10: Important Promotional Messages to Malaysian Students by Intended Country of Study

Promotional Messages	Intended Country of Study					F-Value
	Malaysia	USA	UK	NZ	Aust	
International Recognition	5.78	5.58	5.68	5.28	5.22	4.565**
Safety in the Country	5.68	5.35	5.49	5.36	5.42	1.033
Stable Political Environment	5.60	5.14	5.32	5.15	4.99	3.024*
Quality of Courses	5.58	5.42	5.55	5.49	5.33	1.376
Excellent Teaching Staff	5.57	5.54	5.72	5.45	5.41	1.788
Safety within the Institution	5.55	5.39	5.37	5.14	5.25	1.262
High Standard of Education	5.55	5.40	5.62	5.44	5.36	1.184
Reasonable Tuition Fees	5.52	5.37	5.51	5.26	4.97	3.901*
Experience of Institution	5.45	5.07	5.55	5.15	5.03	4.100**
Grad Employment Prospects	5.40	5.11	5.23	4.92	5.12	2.140
Resources for Research	5.35	5.37	5.34	5.12	5.08	1.331
Travel within country	5.32	4.95	5.02	4.82	4.84	1.651
Achievements of the Institution	5.30	4.96	5.23	5.06	4.96	1.192
Employer's Views of Grad	5.25	5.02	5.07	5.01	5.10	0.385
Hospitality of New Zealanders	5.23	4.95	5.09	4.99	5.05	1.166
Variety of Experiences	5.20	4.81	5.17	4.92	4.86	1.649
Excellent Physical Facilities	5.05	5.21	5.01	4.90	4.92	0.924
Student Support Services	5.03	4.98	5.20	5.04	4.88	0.851
Flexible Course Duration	5.03	5.07	4.95	4.78	4.86	1.920
Grad Expected Income	5.00	5.09	4.85	4.88	4.99	0.568
Excellent Accommodation	4.95	5.05	5.30	4.94	5.03	1.285
Accessibility to town	4.95	4.72	4.97	4.49	4.62	3.132*
Natural Resources of country for Research	4.93	4.49	4.31	4.73	4.45	2.536*
Scholarships Available	4.87	5.30	5.32	5.00	4.90	3.186*
Multi-cultural Environment	4.87	4.70	4.93	4.54	4.58	1.853
Foundation Courses Available	4.72	4.46	4.49	4.41	4.68	0.667
Valuing Cultural Diversity	4.68	4.37	4.61	4.29	4.30	1.513
Industrial "hands-on" Courses	4.65	4.42	4.31	4.17	4.30	2.235*
Uniqueness of Courses	4.55	4.70	4.48	4.47	4.56	0.849
Brand Name of Institution	4.40	4.37	4.60	4.60	4.51	0.780
Country's Natural Beauty	4.35	4.14	4.31	4.46	4.15	0.989
Vibrant Student City	4.30	4.16	4.56	4.32	4.25	2.571*
Avenue for Religious Practices	4.05	4.04	3.92	4.10	4.11	0.239
Tourist Attractions	4.00	3.84	3.68	3.83	3.92	0.443

On a scale of 1-6, where 1=very unimportant and 6=very important

Table 11: Important Promotional Messages to Hong Kong Students by Intended Country of Study

Promotional Messages	Intended Country of Study					F-Value
	Hong Kong	USA	UK	NZ	Aust	
Brand Name of Institution	4.54	4.63	4.54	4.00	4.33	0.613
High Standard of Education	4.97	5.00	5.00	5.20	4.92	0.742
International Recognition	4.90	4.88	5.00	5.00	4.92	0.288
Employer's Views of Graduates	4.89	4.85	4.87	4.60	4.92	0.161
Quality of Courses	4.87	5.00	4.85	4.80	5.00	0.595
Graduate's Employment Prospects	4.86	4.88	4.72	5.20	4.58	0.446
Excellent Teaching Staff	4.83	4.92	4.87	5.20	4.83	0.348
Graduate's Expected Income	4.80	4.52	4.62	4.60	4.67	0.637
Reasonable Tuition Fees	4.61	4.65	4.77	4.00	4.58	0.385
Stability of Political Environment	4.59	4.77	4.56	5.00	4.25	0.663
Achievements of the Institution	4.57	4.63	4.51	4.40	4.50	0.230
Safety in the Country	4.55	4.85	4.72	4.80	4.58	0.676
Experience of Institution	4.48	4.33	4.26	3.80	4.42	0.598
Student Support Services	4.45	4.29	4.49	4.00	4.33	0.987
Flexible Course Duration	4.39	4.23	4.64	4.80	4.67	0.956
Scholarships Available	4.35	4.27	4.28	4.40	4.00	0.690
Hospitality of NZers	4.30	4.31	4.08	4.60	4.08	0.712
Travel Around NZ	4.29	4.10	4.31	4.20	4.00	0.936
Variety of Experiences	4.29	4.42	4.38	4.00	4.25	0.376
Excellent Resources for Research	4.23	4.50	4.44	4.00	4.25	0.861
Excellent Accommodation	4.23	3.88	4.21	4.40	4.17	2.153
Safety within the Institution	4.20	4.23	4.33	4.40	4.25	0.311
Uniqueness of Courses	4.19	4.08	4.41	4.80	4.00	0.919
Accessibility to town	4.13	4.21	4.05	3.80	4.17	0.241
Multi-cultural Environment	4.11	4.08	4.28	4.60	4.50	1.975
Foundation Courses Available	4.05	4.27	4.36	4.00	4.50	0.852
Natural Resources for Research	3.95	4.02	4.18	3.60	3.92	0.555
Vibrant Student City	3.92	4.00	3.95	3.80	4.08	3.492*
Excellent Physical Facilities	3.92	4.25	4.03	3.40	3.83	1.250
Valuing Cultural Diversity	3.86	3.88	4.08	4.20	4.00	0.826
Industrial "hands-on" Courses	3.67	3.79	3.72	3.40	3.92	0.294
Natural Beauty of the Country	3.63	3.71	3.74	4.00	3.25	1.402
Tourist Attractions	3.48	3.69	3.38	3.00	3.33	1.205
Avenue for Religious Practices	3.15	3.33	3.00	2.00	3.33	1.614

Table 12: Important Promotional Messages to Singaporean Students by Intended Country of Study

Promotional Messages	Intended Country of Study					F-Value
	Singapore	USA	UK	NZ	Aust	
Excellent Teaching Staff	5.45	5.40	5.23	5.67	5.56	1.439
High Standard of Education	5.43	5.40	5.32	5.27	5.62	1.125
International Recognition	5.42	5.60	5.19	5.27	5.72	3.180*
Quality of Courses	5.37	5.48	5.26	5.20	5.54	1.194
Safety in the Country	5.32	5.33	5.28	5.53	5.36	0.308
Graduate's Employment Prospects	5.29	5.36	5.04	4.80	5.56	2.794*
Reasonable Tuition Fees	5.21	5.19	5.17	5.33	5.32	0.285
Stability of Political Environment	5.15	5.29	5.13	5.20	5.36	0.606
Employer's Views of Graduates	5.14	5.38	4.91	5.07	5.48	2.447*
Graduate's Expected Income	5.09	5.10	4.89	4.67	5.28	1.460
Excellent Resources for Research	5.07	5.26	4.96	5.47	5.32	1.831
Safety within the Institution	5.00	5.17	5.04	5.20	5.26	0.796
Experience of Institution	4.96	5.00	4.91	4.87	5.30	1.254
Flexible Course Duration	4.91	4.93	4.91	5.13	5.14	0.754
Student Support Services	4.87	4.93	4.91	5.27	5.06	0.691
Hospitality of NZers	4.86	5.12	4.83	5.07	5.10	1.052
Travel Around NZ	4.85	4.86	5.02	4.87	4.90	0.277
Achievements of the Institution	4.83	4.93	4.70	4.73	5.14	1.207
Excellent Accommodation	4.77	5.00	4.85	4.93	4.86	0.620
Variety of Experiences	4.77	4.81	4.72	4.80	4.94	0.341
Scholarships Available	4.74	4.76	5.04	4.93	4.92	0.881
Accessibility to town	4.73	4.88	4.66	4.53	4.76	0.333
Foundation Courses Available	4.63	4.71	4.72	4.40	4.64	2.137
Industrial "hands-on" Courses	4.51	4.69	4.66	5.07	5.16	4.080**
Brand Name of Institution	4.45	5.07	4.34	4.60	4.82	4.960**
Vibrant Student City	4.43	4.57	4.28	4.27	4.64	1.932
Excellent Physical Facilities	4.41	4.45	4.60	4.60	4.34	0.340
Valuing Cultural Diversity	4.40	4.60	4.55	4.60	4.78	1.416
Uniqueness of Courses	4.38	4.55	4.62	4.87	4.70	1.318
Natural Resources for Research	4.38	4.45	4.51	4.80	4.44	0.501
Multi-cultural Environment	4.35	4.64	4.53	4.73	4.80	1.655
Natural Beauty of the Country	3.69	4.14	3.96	4.60	3.94	2.697*
Avenue for Religious Practices	3.50	4.05	3.68	4.40	3.70	1.863
Tourist Attractions	3.48	3.98	3.74	4.00	3.50	1.827

As the above tables illustrate, students exhibited statistical differences to the importance that they attributed to various promotional tools, based on the country in which they intended on studying. In particular, the experience of the institution, the vibrant student-oriented nature of the city, the accessibility to town and the availability of scholarships were all of higher importance to

Malaysian students intending on studying in the UK. In a similar fashion, the affordability of tuition fees, the applied nature of the courses offered, the international recognition associated with the institution, the stability of the political environment and the availability of natural resources for research were all more important for Malaysian students intending on studying in Malaysia.

However, the only difference exhibited by the Hong Kong students seemed to be the importance of a vibrant, student oriented city. This was of greater importance to Hong Kong students intending on studying in Australia.

Finally, the Singaporean students exhibited several differences based on the country they were intending to study in. In particular, the Singaporean students that intended studying in Australia seemed to believe that the international recognition of the institution, safety in the country, the hand-on nature of the courses, the employment prospects and how employers viewed graduates to be of relative importance. The brand name of the institution seemed to be of higher importance to Singaporean students intending on studying in the USA, whereas students intending on studying in New Zealand seemed to believe the beauty of the country to be of particular importance.

Overall, irrespective of the country of study destination, the majority of Asian students were more concerned about the quality and reputation of the institutions rather than the physical environment.

3.3 Individual Cultural Values

A) Students' Cultural Values

The relevance of the individual cultural values of the students is reflected in the table below. The top three values were self-discipline, harmony in life and helping others. The least relevant value was the difficulty to relying on others.

Table 13: Students Cultural Values Scores

Cultural Values	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore	F
Importance of Self Discipline	5.22	4.47	5.09	47.922**
Importance of Harmony in Life	5.22	4.54	5.20	47.654**
Helping Others	5.01	4.29	4.84	42.561**
Individual Rights	4.95	4.47	4.61	20.396**
Deep Respect for Education	4.94	4.22	4.68	39.884**
Strong Work Ethic	4.90	4.26	4.86	34.911**
Honesty	4.86	4.19	4.57	26.654**
Well Respected in the Community	4.78	4.41	4.57	10.180**
Open to New Ideas	4.71	4.17	4.70	31.006**
Orderly Society	4.68	4.28	4.95	30.750**
Financial Success	4.68	4.33	4.46	8.631**
Speak Ones Mind	4.53	4.09	4.71	27.163**
Excellence in Everything	4.47	3.71	4.46	44.185**
Importance of Traditional Values	4.37	3.95	4.31	13.892**
Respect for Authority	4.24	3.77	4.17	16.884**
Difficult to Rely on Others	3.87	3.63	3.76	3.171*

On a scale of 1-6, where 1=very irrelevant and 6=very relevant

It would seem that the students from the three countries seemed to rate the cultural values differently. In particular, the students from Hong Kong seemed to rank the cultural values lower than their counterparts from Malaysia or Singapore. However, in terms of the rank attributed to each cultural value, there were similarities in responses from each of the three countries.

B) Factor Analysis of Cultural Values

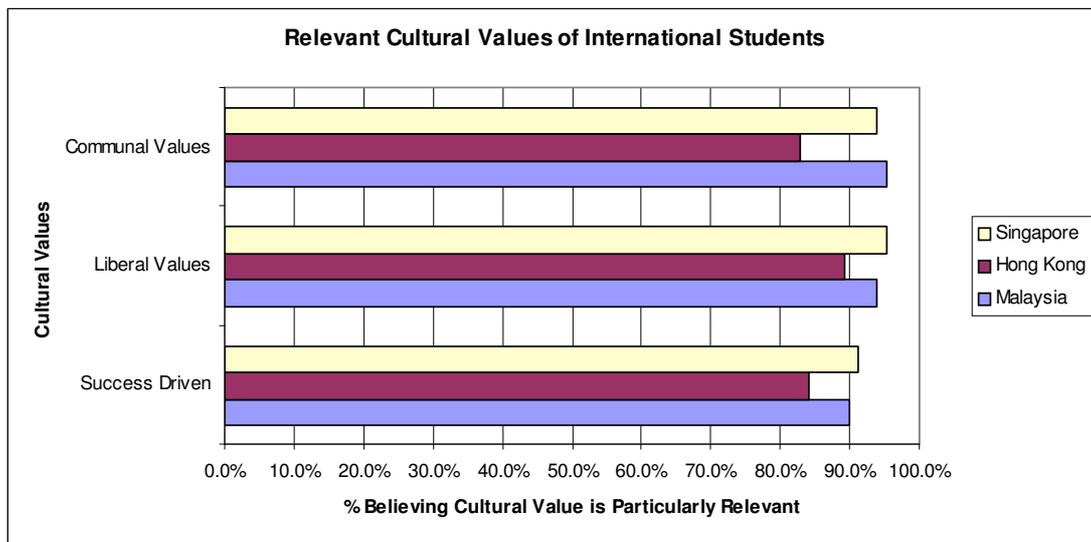
The cultural values of students seem to have three factors as illustrated in Table 14. It seems that the Asian students are generally very traditional with a deep respect for the elderly and authority. They are also quite liberal and ambitious; small wonder given that these students want to pursue an overseas' qualification.

Table 14: Factorised Cultural Values

Cultural Factors	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore
<u>Communal Values</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Helping Others as a way of life ◆ Live in Harmony with Others ◆ Honesty in Life ◆ Importance of Self-Discipline ◆ Importance of Traditional Values and Wisdom of the Elderly ◆ Deep Respect for Authority 	4.85	4.22	4.72
<u>Liberal Values</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Open to new ideas ◆ Belief in Individual Rights ◆ Deep Respect for Education 	4.76	4.22	4.68
<u>Success Driven</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Excellence on everything ◆ Importance of Financial Success ◆ Importance of being well-respected in the community 	4.64	4.16	4.49

The relevance of these cultural values to the Asian students is illustrated in the following graph:

Figure 8: Important Cultural Values of Asian Students



The relative importance of these cultural values is illustrated in Figure 8. Relative importance is rated on a 6-point Likert scale, where 4-6 is especially relevant and 1-3 is relatively irrelevant. As this figure depicts, there were several values that are of relatively more importance to the sample than other values, although differences were displayed between countries. Values that were of high importance to Malaysian and Singaporean students were those that related to communal or liberal values. However, the students from Hong Kong reversed the importance of these two types of cultural value.

C) Marketers’ Perceptions of Students’ Cultural Values

The following table illustrates how marketers perceive students’ beliefs regarding the importance of various aspects of individual values and culture.

Table 15: Comparing Students' Cultural Values with Marketers' View

Cultural Values	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore	NZ Marketers
Importance of Harmony in Life	5.22	4.47	5.09	4.30
Importance of Self Discipline	5.22	4.54	5.20	4.75
Helping Others	5.01	4.29	4.84	3.95
Individual Rights	4.95	4.47	4.61	3.25
Deep Respect for Education	4.94	4.22	4.68	5.35
Strong Work Ethic	4.90	4.26	4.86	4.90
Honesty	4.86	4.19	4.57	3.60
Well Respected in the Community	4.78	4.41	4.57	5.35
Open to New Ideas	4.71	4.17	4.70	3.65
Financial Success	4.68	4.33	4.46	4.80
Orderly Society	4.68	4.28	4.95	4.75
Speak Ones Mind	4.53	4.09	4.71	2.40
Excellence in Everything	4.47	3.71	4.46	4.20
Importance of Traditional Values	4.37	3.95	4.31	5.35
Respect for Authority	4.24	3.77	4.17	4.65
Difficult to Rely on Others	3.87	3.63	3.76	3.95

On a scale of 1-6, where 1=very irrelevant and 6=very relevant

This table suggests that New Zealand marketers of tertiary education products do not realise the importance of several key cultural values. In particular, cultural values such as helping others, importance of harmony in life, the importance of self-discipline, individual rights and a strong work ethic seem devalued by marketers – with most of these items ranked mid to low by marketers on the above table. The only important cultural value that seems to rank consistently between students and marketers was a deep respect for education, which is highly ranked by all of the groups.

The importance of knowing which cultural values are important to the students will help marketers in formulating the *right* promotional message for the *right* target audience. For instance, the Malaysian students placed a great emphasis on self-discipline and harmony in life rather than other cultural values. Therefore, it would be to the marketers' advantage if they could formulate promotion messages that emphasis these two cultural values that students associate with. It is beyond the scope of this report to actually test the proposed relationship.

3.4 Socio-economic Development

A) Students' Perception of Socio-economic Development

The students' perceptions of the socio-economic conditions in their home country (as compared to New Zealand) are summarised in Table 16. On a scale of 1-6, the majority of Asian students claimed that they have more exposures to other cultures relative to New Zealanders. However, with respect to the other socio-economic factors, the students from each of the three countries seemed to respond differently. In particular, the Malaysian students believed that Malaysia was socio-economically lower than New Zealand, whereas Singaporean and Hong Kong students seemed to view their country as being superior to New Zealand on some aspects.

Table 16: Students' Home Country Compared to New Zealand

Socio-economic Factors	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore	F
Exposure to other Cultures	3.96	4.02	3.99	0.143
Governmental Support for Tert. Education	3.61	3.30	4.22	62.065**
Standard of Tertiary Education	3.43	3.62	4.18	52.265**
Amount of Travel	3.41	4.08	3.70	27.999**
Purchasing Power	3.39	4.10	3.99	39.887**
Dependence on Ppl not Natural Resources	3.24	4.56	5.20	269.088**
Country Economic Performance	3.18	3.97	4.10	72.740**
Graduates per Capita	3.08	3.47	3.82	45.976**
Standard of Living	2.98	3.96	3.90	85.533**
Country Technological Advancement	2.98	3.74	3.92	72.252**
Standard of English	2.94	3.01	3.72	49.928**
Higher Income for the Same Job	2.85	3.90	3.71	99.402**

On a scale of 1-6, where 1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree

B) Factor Analysis of Socio-Economics

A factor analysis was used to compress the items associated with the socio-economics of the students' home country (relative to New Zealand). The students' socio-economic factors seemed to compress into two factors,

namely standard of living and the standard of education. These factors are listed in Table 17.

Table 17: Socio-economic Factors

Socio-economic Factors (in home country compared to NZ)	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore
<u>Standard of Education</u>	3.14	3.96	4.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Governmental Support for Tertiary Education ◆ Quality of Tertiary Education ◆ Standard of English 			
<u>Standard of Living</u>	3.33	3.32	4.04
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Average Income ◆ Economic Performance ◆ Standard of Living ◆ Amount of Travel ◆ Technological Advancement ◆ Purchasing Power ◆ Amount of Holidays ◆ Graduates per Capita ◆ Dependence on People, not Natural Resources 			

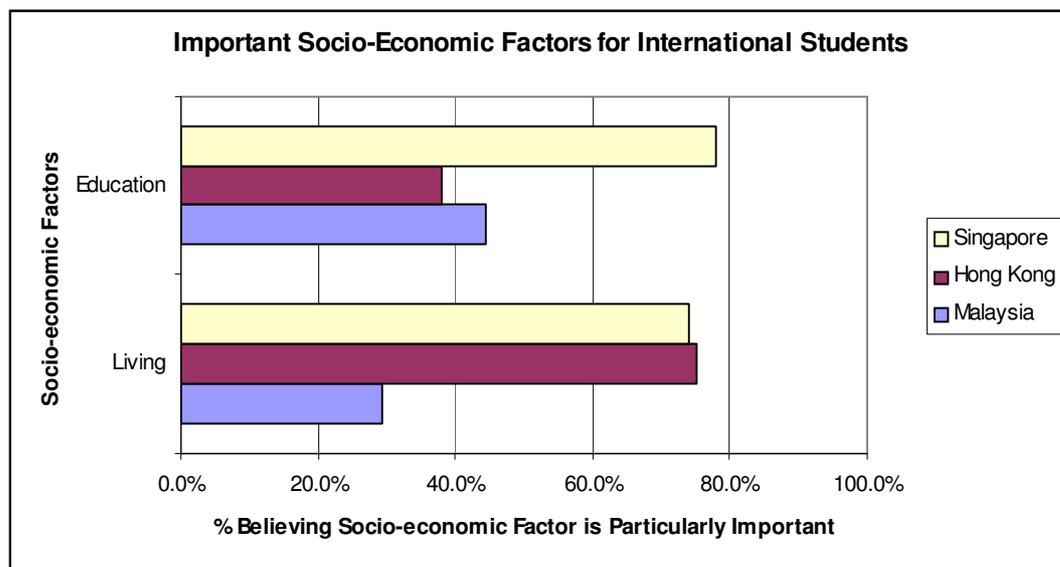
With a sample mean of 3.14, it seems the Malaysian students regard their standard of education is lower to that in New Zealand. However, students from Hong Kong (3.96) and Singapore (4.00) seem to view the standard of education in their own country more highly to that of New Zealand. As such, unless the Universities in New Zealand can show that they have a competitive edge over local universities/local private colleges which offer twinning programmes, these students might either stay put or turn to US, UK or Australian universities.

The Malaysian and Hong Kong students generally regard their country's standard of living (3.33 and 3.32 respectively) is slightly lower than New Zealand. So, as long as they perceived their standard of living is lower than New Zealand, these students will always look upon studying overseas, be it in New Zealand or somewhere else, as a way to raise their standard of living and also that of their parents. However, the students from Singapore did not perceive New Zealand's standard of living in this way. In fact, they believed that New Zealand's standard of living was inferior to that of Singapore. As

such, it is unlikely that Singaporean students would look to study overseas when the standard of living was so good in their home country.

The importance of these socio-economic factors is illustrated in the following graph:

Figure 9: Important Socio-Economic Factors



This graph illustrates that the respondents differed as to the extent that they believed that the socio-economic factors were important in the purchase decision. It seems as if the standard of living and standard of education factors are important in Singapore, but less so in Malaysia. This is unfortunate for New Zealand Universities, as it seems that they are strong in areas that are not considered important (i.e. for Malaysian students) but weak in areas that are considered important (i.e. for Singaporean students).

However, in Hong Kong it seems as if the standard of living is important yet the standard of education is not. This is important for the New Zealand Universities, as it is apparent that this is an area where New Zealand is perceived as being superior to the students' home country *and* it is an important dimension.

C) Comparing Students' Opinion on Socio-economic Development with Marketers

The following table illustrates how marketers perceive students view the comparative socio-economic conditions (between their home country and New Zealand).

Table 18: Comparing Students' Opinions with Marketers

Socio-economic Statements	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Singapore	NZ Marketers
Exposure to other Cultures	3.96	4.02	3.99	4.89
Governmental Support	3.61	3.30	4.22	3.44
Standard of Tertiary Education	3.43	3.62	4.18	3.16
Amount of Travel	3.41	4.08	3.70	2.84
Purchasing Power	3.39	4.10	3.99	2.58
Dependence on People not Natural Resources	3.24	4.56	5.20	2.89
Country Performance	3.18	3.97	4.10	2.47
Graduates per Capita	3.08	3.47	3.82	2.22
Standard of Living	2.98	3.96	3.90	2.11
Country Technological Advancement	2.98	3.74	3.92	2.63
Standard of English	2.94	3.01	3.72	2.26
Higher Income for the Same Job	2.85	3.90	3.71	2.78

On a scale of 1-6, where 1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree

As Table 18 illustrates, the students and marketers seem to be relatively consistent in their perceptions of Malaysia's socio-economic development. However, the marketers' perceptions seem to be polarised, with responses at the top and bottom of this list respectively higher and lower than the comparative responses of students.

Additionally, the marketers understanding of the socio-economic development in the other countries seems to be of relatively lesser consistency. This perhaps is due to broad marketing techniques being used, instead of segmenting the market depending on the different socio-economic conditions that are prevalent.

4. DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Promotional Tools

A surprising array of promotional tools were suggested as being important to Asian students. Perhaps the most surprising (by its absence) was the relatively low importance of direct mailing tools such as brochures, banners and stickers. It may be that these tools can not communicate the right level of information because tertiary education is a complex product that requires a considerable amount of credible information. For this reason, information-intensive tools such as print media (newspapers and magazines) seem to occupy a key position. In addition, previous studies have suggested that these media are more suitable for promoting a high quality product – as such their suitability for New Zealand tertiary education products is quite apparent.

Asian students also seem to favour the WWW. Perhaps this is because it is a source of information that is accessible from students' colleges, and could be conveniently utilised to find out further information. The advice for New Zealand tertiary institutions is that they should not ignore the importance of WWW. A Web page with information oriented towards overseas students should be set-up.

Several promotional tools that involve personal selling (trade fairs/open days) seem to occupy a key position for Asian students. This personal contact allows the students a first-hand chance to evaluate the prevailing culture of the institution, and they may evaluate whether they are able to live in harmony¹ with this. In a similar manner, sponsorships may indicate to the Asian student that New Zealand tertiary institutions are interested in helping potential students – an important cultural (helping others) and socio-economic (governmental support) dimension.

¹ Refer to cultural values section

Finally, Asian students seem to attribute a high level of importance to testimonials of past students. Perhaps credibility is a key issue that makes this promotional tool particularly important. The implication for marketers of New Zealand tertiary institutions is that key role models and opinion leaders of the students must be identified because these will have a higher level of credibility, hence being more convincing when conveying messages. In particular it seems as if a key influencer whose testimonial may be particularly effective is the parents of the Asian student.

Marketers of New Zealand tertiary education products seem to have had rather varied success as to the extent to which they favour tools that are of particular importance to students. Perhaps the key implication for New Zealand marketers is that they should examine their personal contribution to marketing, to determine whether this is being viewed as effectively as marketers perceive. Additionally, New Zealand marketers should explore the promotional opportunities that print media offers. If these two issues are addressed, the marketers' choice of promotional tools will much more closely resemble the preferences of the students they are trying to reach.

Perhaps most importantly for the marketers of New Zealand tertiary institutions is the realisation that the different cultures view the various promotional tools differently. As such, promotional tools that are effective in one country may be less so in other countries.

4.2 Promotional Messages

There seems to be several ways for successfully targeting the students. The first recommendation is for New Zealand tertiary institutions to ensure that the quality of the educational product is highlighted along dimensions that are relevant to Asian students. In particular, the international reputation of New Zealand tertiary institutions should be communicated. A probable explanation for these dimensions is the high level of competition in this

market, as shown by the demographic information regarding which countries Asian students consider for tertiary education. A further reason for the importance of international recognition is the likelihood that the students will work overseas after their tertiary education, either in their home country or in another country.

A second important dimension to communicate to Asian students is the hospitality of New Zealanders and their safety within New Zealand. This dimension is related to important cultural values such as the ability to live in harmony and the importance of helping others, as outlined in the cultural values section. The implication of the importance of this dimension is that Asian students seem to value the associated lifestyle of being a student as well as concerns regarding the quality of the education provided.

The implication for New Zealand tertiary institutions is that the safety of New Zealand could be compared to other competing destinations that are perceived as being less safe (e.g. the UK) or destinations that may have had problems with racial tensions (e.g. Australia). This strategy would not purport New Zealand as being perfect, but it would suggest that other countries have more serious problems with this issue. Additionally, New Zealand tertiary institutions could capitalise on New Zealand's comparatively small size, suggesting that the population is more hospitable than alternative cultures for this reason.

Possibly the best way of utilising the two dimensions described is by combining them. In this scenario, New Zealand tertiary institutions would be promoted as a place from which students can receive an internationally renowned tertiary education, and at the same time enjoying a unique lifestyle in harmony with the local population.

It is interesting to note that the marketers of New Zealand educational products seem to quite effectively align their promotional messages with those

that are important to Asian students. This is slightly surprising, as it has been illustrated that the marketers did not have a firm grip on the underlying cultural values, and as such may not have a good understanding of why these promotional messages are important. Other than re-evaluating the underlying culture of Asian students and recognising the implications for promoting New Zealand tertiary products, perhaps the other improvement that could be made is the integration of promotional messages, as described above. By doing this, effectively marketers would be selling a *bundled product*, with benefits other than an excellent standard of education.

However, this integration should exist within a country, rather than between the countries examined. As such it may be more effective to target specific students by the country they reside in with specialised messages that have been shown to be more effective than a broad-brush approach.

4.3 Cultural Values

The current research has shown that when marketing to Asian students², special care needs to be exerted to take into account the underlying values, the importance of which may differ to those displayed in New Zealand.

In particular, it appears that the marketing of New Zealand tertiary institutions should reflect the emphasis that Malaysian students place on helping others and the desire to live in harmony. As such, the importance of marketing auxiliary products (e.g. student support schemes) is quite apparent. Although these students purport a self-reliant approach to studying (through self-discipline and a strong work ethic), auxiliary products are able to illustrate that the cultural differences are not that an inhibiting factor – implying that they will fit in and live in harmony with those around them.

² When International students are mentioned in this context, it refers to lessons learned from the students of the sample that may be applicable to the general population of International students.

An overriding value that underlies the Asian student's perception of New Zealand tertiary institutions is their deep respect for education. These students seem to perceive tertiary education as a way of further advancing their status – to get closer to their 'ideal life'. Effectively, this should help New Zealand tertiary institutions' cause as the students are already predisposed to viewing education as a means of advancement, so may be less disillusioned than their New Zealand counterparts³.

As mentioned earlier, it would appear as if the marketers of New Zealand tertiary education products currently do not have a firm understanding of the cultural values that are particularly important to the students. The implications to be drawn from this finding are far-reaching, as the chances of effectively marketing in a country when the prevailing culture has been misunderstood are very slim. Perhaps the only way to market to consumers given this misunderstanding is to adopt a selling orientation, where appropriate tactics are adopted as a function of what New Zealand tertiary institutions perceive themselves to be good at, rather than aligning with the values that are important to their consumers.

This issue is compounded when New Zealand tertiary institutions market their products to students in several different countries with varying prevailing cultures. In this situation, the lack of understanding of culture essentially impacts on the driving factors behind why an Asian student would want to come to New Zealand tertiary institutions. As such, marketers should look more towards what the students actually want, then promote their product as a solution to the problem that the students have.

4.4 Socio-economic Factors

The current study also has implications for the marketing of New Zealand tertiary institutions with regard to New Zealand's socio-economic situation. It

³ The common view in New Zealand being that just because you have a degree, it does not guarantee that you will get a good job.

would seem that Malaysian students perceive Malaysia to be inferior to New Zealand socio-economically.

The opportunity for marketers of New Zealand tertiary institutions is to capitalise on these differences, especially the improved lifestyle that students enjoy while in New Zealand. Whilst this is an opportunity to differentiate New Zealand from other destinations, it seems as if the importance of this factor is relatively low compared to Asian recognition and educational quality messages.

However, with respect to Singaporean and Hong Kong students, the New Zealand marketers have work to do. This is due to the relatively low perception of New Zealand socio-economically in these two countries, and the importance attributed to these factors by the students.

Two socio-economic areas that are important that marketers from New Zealand tertiary institutions may seek to capitalise on. These are the levels of governmental support for tertiary education as well as the exposures to other cultures. These seem to be important areas where New Zealand has deficiencies compared to other destinations.

Communicating to Asian students the establishment of a 'knowledge-based' economy, and New Zealand tertiary institutions role in this economy could partially overcome the first of these issues. The second could be addressed by illustrating the cultural diversity of New Zealand and Dunedin. Effectively this means both illustrating that other Asian students come to New Zealand and what their cultures are. Additional illustration should emphasise New Zealand's unique point of differentiation with respect to culture. Not only does New Zealand have a mixture of immigrant cultures (e.g. NZ Europeans etc.), Maori culture plays a key role in New Zealand society. This theme will appeal to Asian students who are used to living in a diverse cultural environment.

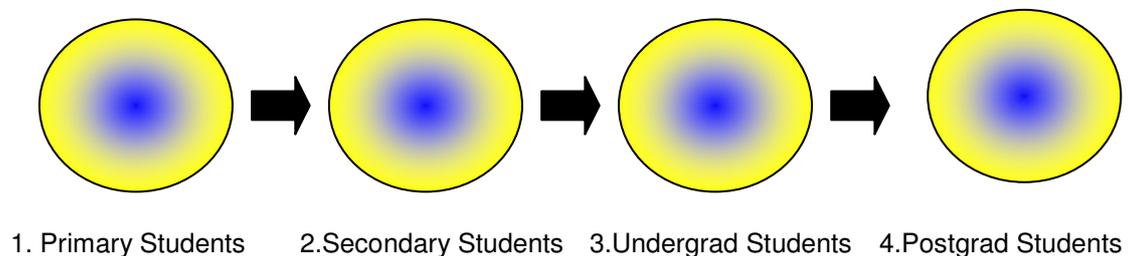
5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MARKETING

5.1 Market Segments and Potential Target Markets

New Zealand tertiary institutions have two types of tertiary products that could be marketed to potential students from Malaysia, Singapore or Hong Kong. The first is the BCom undergraduate degree and the second is the various types of post-graduate degrees (MBus, MCom, PGDip). The tertiary education market has segments of consumers that are grouped around these two divisions (under or post-graduate). Although these segments initially appear simple (e.g. under-graduate students and undergraduate degrees) complexities do exist, particularly at the postgraduate level. As such, the post-graduate degrees are both relevant for postgraduate students, as well as current marketing practitioners working in industry. These divisions will be further addressed later in this plan.

To complicate matters, to target a potential group of students, this must be done before the group of students exists. For example, postgraduate students often make this purchase decision when they are still undergraduate students. Figure 10 illustrates the procession that consumers in this market go through.

Figure 10: Market Segments



It is the perspective of this plan that New Zealand tertiary institutions should use their post-graduate degrees to target Asian students. The rationale behind this recommendation is the level of international competition by other

extremely well funded and aggressive international competitors (e.g. UK and Australian Universities) for undergraduate students. Also there are already too many private colleges offering twinning undergraduates programmes in Malaysia, Singapore or Hong Kong. As such the post-graduate segment offers New Zealand tertiary institutions a niche market that is being under-served by the current competitors.

5.2 Where to Communicate to Target Markets

There are several places in which New Zealand tertiary institutions can target potential postgraduate students. The first is through local universities and private colleges (with links to foreign universities). Each of these two types of institutions have students that are on the verge of completing a three year undergraduate degree, and as such, may be open to suggestions regarding what their next course of action might be.

Additionally, New Zealand tertiary institutions should consider targeting executives or marketing practitioners who currently only have an undergraduate degree. These people may be interested in making themselves more marketable internationally.

5.3 Decision Makers and Key Influencers

The current study has shown that there are two types of people involved in this purchase decision. The first is the potential students (themselves), who are likely to occupy a decision-maker type role. The key influencer to this decision is likely to be parents, who are probably the only other group to exert a significant influence over this decision.

There are several different ways in which these key decision-makers and influencers should be targeted. The current study has suggested that promotional tools such as the WWW, PR, print and broadcast media seem to

be particularly effective promotional tools to Asian students, the role of which is not well understood by New Zealand marketers.

It is likely that marketing practitioners or executives will need to be targeted differently to current under-graduate students. These consumers are more likely to value information sources that are perceived to be independent (such as Word of Mouth) and promotional tools that can be compared (e.g. brochures, newspapers, magazines) than the promotional tools preferred by current undergraduate students.

The third group that needs to be targeted is the parents. Specifically, this report recommends the targeting of parents that were students of New Zealand tertiary institutions 20 or more years ago, who now have children of university age. These parents are likely to want their children to go to a university the environment of which they were familiar with and that they wish to continue to be associated with.

5.4 Promotional Messages

Based on the decision-makers (students) and influencers (parents) that New Zealand tertiary institutions should be trying to reach the following tag-lines have been suggested:

- ◆ Current Undergraduate Students

“Become more competitive in the global marketplace by gaining an additional postgraduate degree from a New Zealand tertiary institution”

The effectiveness of this tag-line is related to the underlying needs and wants of a student that is considering studying overseas. In particular, it focuses on communicating to the student that if they study at a New Zealand tertiary institution, they will be able to differentiate themselves from the hundreds of

other students that may be applying for a particular position (in the global marketplace).

◆ Marketing Practitioners

“Develop your international marketing career by gaining an additional postgraduate degree from a New Zealand tertiary institution”

This tag-line focuses on the needs of the marketing practitioner and would be particularly relevant for applied marketing degrees (e.g. MBus/MBA). The tag-line suggests that if the executive were to upgrade their current qualification, they would make themselves more marketable, and be able to better develop their career in a direction that was more desirable.

◆ Parents

“New Zealand: Just as you remember, only better”

This tagline attempts to capitalise on the past student’s positive memories of New Zealand tertiary institutions, in an effort to get these parents to communicate these benefits to the key decision-maker (their children). As such, this tag-line focuses on the image of New Zealand tertiary institutions, and may make the testimonial more influential as it is coming from a source that is particularly relevant for the Asian student.

5.5 Summary

In summary, this marketing plan outlines the key promotional tools and associated messages that are likely to be useful when targeting potential Asian students.

However, to illustrate the key issue in this market it is perhaps best to paraphrase John F. Kennedy “...**ask not what Asian students can do for New Zealand tertiary institutions, but what New Zealand tertiary institutions can do for Asian students...**”

In other words, New Zealand tertiary institutions have to deliver on the promises of its marketing, as failure to do so would result in negative word-of-mouth. This in turn would seriously affect the long-term sustainability of the University’s marketing.

6. CONCLUSION

New Zealand tertiary educational institutions are forced to fund existing services via other means because of recent funding decreases. In particular, it has been suggested that New Zealand tertiary institutions have been particularly successful marketing their product to Asian students. However, this segment seems to be growing faster internationally than observed in New Zealand, and as such, this study aims to identify how New Zealand tertiary institutions might better target this lucrative market segment.

The current study examined a group of students from Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore who had yet to make the decision regarding what country/institution they were going to attend. The students were administered a self-completion questionnaire based around four specific topic areas: preferred promotional tools, promotional messages, cultural values, and socio-economic perceptions (of the students' home country compared to New Zealand). Additionally, 20 New Zealand marketers were also administered a similar survey that sought to identify if the assumptions that the marketers held about this segment were in fact correct.

The findings revealed an array of differences in the students' choice of promotion tools and promotional messages. In particular, the WWW was the most common source for educational information. The second most important tool was print media. The promotion message that appealed most to the students was Quality Learning Environment, followed by Reputation of the Institution.

Culturally, most Asian students were very traditional with respect given to elders and those in authority. They were also ambitious and yet open to new ideas. Socio-economically, the Asian students perceived their country's standard of education and living as relatively similar to New Zealand. These differences in cultural values and socio-economic development could have

caused the Asian students to value some promotion tools/messages as more important than the others. However, it is beyond the scope of this report to link cultural values and socio-economic development to the students' choice of promotion tools and messages.

In conclusion, the recommendation of this report is that the marketers of New Zealand tertiary institutions target both the key decision makers (students) as well as the key influencers (parents). The promotional tools and messages that should be used to target these two groups differ, although suggestions have been made in each of these two areas.

7. REFERENCES

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