

Educational promotion plan for the Chinese market

Advice concerning Saxion's upcoming Master in Hospitality Management

By Monica Ferent

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Thesis report C

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Declaration of own work statement

I hereby declare that:

- I am fully informed about the Thesis C assessment criteria;
- all the work I have conducted to fulfill these criteria is entirely my own;
- I have not been assisted by any other person, except the coaching offered within HBS guidelines.

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Summary

The Hospitality Business School academy of the Saxion University of Applied Sciences situated in the Netherland, approached six bachelor degree students to conduct research in certain geographical areas for an upcoming master's degree in Hospitality Management. The students were also responsible for assisting HBS with the development of a promotion plan. The programme's launch will take place in September 2020. The role of this study was to focus on the region of China as per request of the academy being referred to as 'the client'. The Chinese student market was previously not investigated within HBS and the client was curious to also learn the ways of promoting this future master's study to potential Chinese students.

The management question for this study was formulated as:

How can Saxion's Hospitality Business School promote its future Master in Hospitality Management in the region of China in order to attract students?

The theoretical framework explored the core concept 'characteristics of the Chinese students'. The objective within this research was to investigate the factors that play a role in the student's decision to apply for a master's programme. The core concept was further operationalized into 'promotion channels' and 'the messages'.

The research design for this particular study was an embedded case study analysis. The research strategy was to conduct qualitative research and the method of data collection was face-to-face interviews. Interviews were conducted with people from different backgrounds that had expertise on the studied phenomenon which was unravelling what are the characteristics of the Chinese students. Triangulation data was collected from a recruitment officer from Saxion, an Account Manager for China, three Chinese (former) students, and a Representative for China. The used sampling technique was non-random sampling.

The results highlighted that the Chinese potential students will seek foreign education due to facing disadvantageous circumstances in China such as being rejected by Chinese universities with high reputation. Instead they apply abroad due to getting accepted easier. The motivations for studying abroad are wishful thinking about the future and thrive for gaining an international perspective. The results showed that the Netherlands is not a first choice for the Chinese but rather native English speaking countries such as the US, UK, and Australia.

The lack of awareness and misconception about the Netherlands had led the advisory part to be centred on boosting awareness to the potential Chinese students. This was done either by promoting the new master's degree of Hospitality in China via an educational trip or by promoting the degree to current Chinese bachelor students situated in the Netherlands who would continue on with the hospitality master's degree students.

The second option was favoured by the researcher and a promotion plan was carried out. The option was selected due to having the chance of exposing the Master to a wider audience as the year's progress. The current hospitality bachelor students will enroll for the master's degree and will promote it to unaware Chinese potential students. This word-of-mouth will not only assist the client but will also increase the awareness level of Chinese about the Netherlands.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background description of the organisation

Saxion University of Applied Science is one of the largest institutions of higher education in the Netherlands with locations in three Dutch cities: Enschede, Deventer, and Apeldoorn. It was founded in 1998 when two educational institutions merged. The university offers bachelor's degrees in a variety of fields such as art & technology, business, engineering, education, and gaming. It also offers a few master's degrees in business administration, management, applied nanotechnology, innovative textile development, and facility and real estate management. Saxion's courses are monitored by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science and have been accredited by some international bodies.

The university prides itself with an international approach that is demonstrated in the multi-cultural student body made out of 89 different nationalities. Here, students with different backgrounds and nationalities discuss experiences and acquire an international outlook. Saxion focuses on applied teaching and research that will help students become professionals in their field. Applied education is a system of teaching where theoretical knowledge is supported by practical applications.

As part of Saxion, the Hospitality Business School's mission is to make an active contribution to an ever changing world by turning students into professionals that will look outside the box to find feasible solutions. The academy has two bachelor courses taught in the English language: Hotel Management and Tourism Management.

1.2 Reasoning for the thesis

For many years, Saxion University has offered higher education in applied sciences for Dutch and international students in the fields of tourism management and hotel management. Both programs are part of the hospitality industry and have recently undergone major changes in the curriculum in order to better reflect the field of study.

The university permits students to obtain a degree up to Bachelor in Business Administration. The Hospitality Business School, referred to as the 'client', is interested in introducing a new master's programme in hospitality management. At this point in time, the client is currently offering three types of master's programmes (none in hospitality); however, they are in cooperation with another university. The ambition of the client is to launch its standalone hospitality educational program that will be relevant in the industry and get accredited by the Dutch government.

The preparations and research for the content of the program and its course have already started and the team is confident that the programme's launch will take place in September 2020 as planned.

The client reached out to students who are interested in conducting research in a certain geographical area and in assisting with the development of a promotion plan for this master's programme. These promotion plans are critical to the overall success of the program. Not only is intercultural experience one of the university's selling points, but the lack of an international setting will hurt the quality of the study.

Particularly, this study was focused on the region of China. The client was curious on the ways of promoting the future master's programme to the region of China. At this point in time, the Chinese student market for the Hospitality Business School had not been previously investigated.

Based on the information above, the management question of the thesis project was as follows:
How can Saxion's Hospitality Business School promote its future Master in Hospitality Management in the region of China in order to attract students?

1.3 The objective of the advice and the advice questions

The objective of the advice was to deliver an efficient promotion plan that will attract Chinese students to attend Saxion's upcoming Master in Hospitality Management. Therefore, the advice question to be answered was as follows:

- Which promotion campaign is most suitable for Saxion's Hospitality Business School in order to attract Chinese students to attend its upcoming Master in Hospitality Management?

1.4 The objectives of the research and research questions

The objective of the research was to gain insight into the wants and needs of the potential Chinese master's students in order to formulate recommendations on a pertinent promotional plan for that market. The objective within this research was to investigate which factors play a role in the student's decision to apply for and follow such a master's programme.

Therefore, the central research question was:

Who are the potential Chinese students interested in the upcoming Master in Hospitality Management?

Sub-questions to the central research question have been formulated in order to manage the complexity of the topic:

- What are the promotion channels preferred by the potential Chinese students interested in the upcoming Master in Hospitality Management?
- What are the messages that attract the potential Chinese students interested in the upcoming Master in Hospitality Management?

Similarly, to the central research question, sub-sub-questions were formulated for the second sub-question:

- What are the Chinese motives for studying abroad?
- What are the Chinese motives for studying in the Netherlands?
- What are the Chinese obstacles for studying in the Netherlands?
- What are the key features of the program that attract the Chinese?

Explanation of choices

In order to provide recommendations in the advisory part about the most suitable promotion campaign for Saxion to use, it was imperative to understand which promotional channels work in China and which do not. Furthermore, the promotional campaign would potentially not work if the study did not address the characteristics of the potential Chinese students in order to create a framework for the target group.

The core concept 'characteristics' was already a broad term to be answered correctly; therefore, two aspects found from the literature review were broken-down into messages and promotional channels. These two aspects served as sub-questions to the central research question; however, the literature review pointed out important sub-aspects to be addressed for motives of Chinese studying to study abroad. This is the reason why there are existing sub-sub questions in this study. Overall, this advisory report would not be applicable to the 'client' if it did not contain the above-mentioned research elements that formed the grounded theory of this study.

1.5 Reading guide

The following paper consisted of seven chapters.

Chapter 1 introduced the reader to the organisation, the reasoning behind the study, the management question, the objective of the advice and research, the advice and research questions.

Chapter 2 encompassed the literature review of all core concepts that resulted from the management question. The core concepts were operationalised as well in this chapter. Additionally, the search methods used in the creation of the literature review were presented.

Chapter 3 consisted of the methodology practices to be followed such as the approach, the design, the data collection techniques, the sample, and the analysis techniques.

Chapter 4 was devoted to analysing the data.

Chapter 5 discussed the reliability and validity of the research results.

Chapter 6 provided a comparison of different advice options derived from the primary data collection and the literature review. Each option was elaborated and the advisory questions were addressed.

Chapter 7 was devoted into the choice that served as the promotion plan for Saxion. Furthermore, it also addressed the ways of how the promotion plan would be implemented using the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle. The management question was also answered here.

2. Theoretical framework

The management question had two core concepts: promotion and the characteristics of the potential Chinese students studying abroad.

2.1 Promotion

Promotion is represented by the activities that a business carries out to communicate with the market and to stimulate sales. This communication has to be effective in order to achieve its objectives: to inform, persuade, or remind the market of the product and its benefits. The steps to creating a promotion plan or strategy are as follows: audience analysis, objective, promotion tools, message, and media (Wood, 2005).

Audience analysis has to be carried out in order to get to know the target group, their wants and needs as well as their media usage preferences. The choice of the target group affects the decisions regarding the steps that follow. Therefore, the target group should be researched in-depth and defined clearly (Wood, 2005).

The objective of the promotion plan is another important part. This objective must be in-line with the company's mission and support its marketing and financial objectives (Wood, 2005).

Five basic promotion tools can be used in order to create a promotion plan: advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling, and public relations (Wood, 2005).

Advertising is one of the most omnipresent forms of promotion as it is cost-effective while it serves for a large audience. Common examples are ads on television, radio, internet, magazines, and newspapers as well as product or company brochures (Wood, 2005).

Sales promotion is used to stimulate immediate purchase and honour repeated purchases. Furthermore, it is often used by marketers to increase sales in the short run, to start or to rekindle relationships with customers, or to increase the perceived value of the offer. Examples of such practices often include samples, contests, and demonstrations (Wood, 2005).

Direct marketing allows for two-way communication between the business and the customer. This tool can be especially effective when the business has a thorough customer data base that allows it to tailor the message to each customer or to test new or repositioned products or services. Some examples are printed and online catalogues, direct mail letters, and brochures (Wood, 2005).

Personal selling is one of the more expensive promotion tools. However, it provides one-on-one communication with the customers strengthening the relationship and it serves as an instrument for learning more about the audience. Examples of personal selling include sales appointments, meetings, and presentations (Wood, 2005).

Public relations is the promotion tool that holds the most credibility in the eyes of the customer because the business has no control over the message that the media channels will share. Therefore, this is also a high-risk tool where the result is uncertain. Some examples are event sponsorships, news releases, and public appearances (Wood, 2005).

The penultimate step in creating a promotion plan, the message, needs to attract the customer and hold his interest while creating desire and motivate him to buy the product. This can be achieved by using the AIDA model (Attention-Interest-Desire-Action). Furthermore, three decisions must be

made when designing the message: the message content, its structure, and its format (Kotler et al., 2005).

Regarding the message content, a theme or appeal must be chosen according to the target group. There are three types of appeals: rational, emotional, and moral. The rational theme appeals to the target group's individual self-interest, showcasing the product or service's high quality or performance. The emotional theme appeals to the positive or negative feelings of the target group in order to persuade or, in the case of the negative feelings, to guilt them into buying the product or service. The moral theme appeals to the target group's sense of integrity. This theme is often used for social causes and therefore, is not of interest for this study (Kotler et al., 2005).

There are also three issues regarding the structure of the message. The first one is whether to specify the conclusion or to the audience to draw it. While this tactic might stimulate the consumer, it is less likely to work if the audience is less likely to be interested by the product or service. The second issue is whether to showcase the product's strengths and weaknesses or just its strengths. The one side argument of presenting only the strengths is successful most of the time. This might fail though when there are no negative aspects connected to the product that the public is aware of and are likely to have opposing claims. The third issue is whether to introduce the stronger features first or last. While choosing to present them firstly might attract attention, the message might miss a climatic ending (Kotler et al., 2005).

Lastly, the format of the message is highly dependent on the type of media that is used. A newspaper advertisement will require a headline, text, and a design. Alternatively, a radio add will require planned decisions on the voice actor, sounds, and text. The following features can be used to attract the attention of the target group "novelty and contrast, eye-catching pictures and headline, distinctive formats, message size and position, and colour, shape and movement" (Kotler et al., 2005).

Lastly, the media is the last step of a promotion plan. The media represents the channels of communications which can be broadly divided into two categories: personal and non-personal. The personal communication channels facilitate the direct communication between two or more people. It can be face to face, over the phone, through email or online chat. This communication can be controlled by the company through its employees or not. The latter case might be by independent experts or family or friends creating word-of-mouth. The non-personal communication channels include mass media such as newspaper, magazines, radio, television, billboards, and posters. Another non-personal channel is events designed to communicate messages to target groups such as conferences or grand openings (Kotler et al., 2005).

2.2 The characteristics of the potential Chinese students studying abroad

Bodycott (2009) argued that universities need to know the recruiting market in order for them to successfully attract it. He looked into the preferred way of receiving information for the Chinese students and their parents as well as what motivates and attracts them.

Bodycott's (2009) found out via a questionnaire distribution and focus groups that the preferred way of introduction to studying abroad for both the Chinese students and their parents are study fairs, and recommendations from friends and relatives. Following the fairs, the students continue to gather information and make decisions based on the informational pamphlets received during the fairs, internet sources, and newspaper and television advertisements. Bodycott (2009) research also showed that the Chinese students are reluctant to using educational agents as they are often expensive.

Additionally, Chao et al. (2017) also agreed with Bodycott (2009) stating that universities must acquire a better understanding of the motivations of the Chinese students coming to study abroad in order to service them better. The authors studied the motivations for leaving China to study abroad by distributing a questionnaire to over 350 Chinese respondents.

According to Altbach (as cited in Liu, 2016), the push and pull factors are an essential place to start exploring these motivations. Students get pushed to study abroad by disadvantageous circumstances in their home countries and get pulled abroad by the opportunities the host countries are offering.

In the Chinese student's case, some of the push factors are the difficulty of getting accepted at a high ranked local university, the social status determined by the ranking of the university followed which affects the job prospects after graduation (Liu, 2016), the old fashioned and rigidity of the Chinese educational system (Chao et al., 2017; Bodycott, 2009), and the increase in income helping to make studying abroad more affordable (Liu, 2016).

In contrast, some of the pull factors are the perceived better quality of study in higher education abroad (Chao et al., 2017; Bodycott, 2009; Liu, 2016), the wish to study a certain program not available in China (Liu, 2016), the desire to gain international perspective (Chao et al., 2017; Bodycott, 2009; Liu, 2016), and the work and immigration prospects (Bodycott, 2009).

Furthermore, Liu (2016) found out from her research that there are three elements part of the Chinese culture that are pertinent to understanding the reasoning and motivations of the Chinese students and their families when deciding to study higher education abroad. These are the education-first culture, the saving culture, and the extended-family culture.

The education-first culture is an aspect that developed from Confucianism and it indicates that Chinese parents believe the education of their kids is "the only lofty pursuit" that will render job opportunities in government positions, which are highly valued in their society as opposed to being tradesmen or engineers. This is the reason why Chinese families are keen on making big investments in higher education that will yield good social status and high income jobs (Liu, 2016).

The saving culture started in China as a necessity for survival in times of famine and it continued as a way of being self-reliant due to disappointing social and healthcare systems. Nowadays, saving is less of a necessity and more of a habit that the current generations have culturally inherited. Nevertheless, this practice is proving useful as it is enabling the parents' wish to send their kids to higher education abroad (Liu, 2016).

Over the course of history, China has been under the rule of different foreign invaders. Even so, the tight family structure helped sustain the Chinese culture and was not under the risk of culture assimilation. The extended-family culture means that the whole family is taken into account when making decisions as the prosperity and social status of the family as a whole is at stake. Studying abroad will not only improve the student's future but will increase the social advantages of the family for future generations. Similarly, the financial load is also supported by the whole family. A few generations of saving couples will add up to pay for the student's tuition fee and other expenses. Furthermore, the Chinese culture also emphasizes respect and compliance towards authority and older individuals (Liu, 2016).

Moreover, Bodycott (2009) adds to Liu's (2016) findings about the importance of the students' parents when making the decision of studying abroad. Bodycott (2009) discovered that the parents made

decisions based on more pragmatic factors such as employment prospects after graduation, migration possibilities, proximity to home, scholarships, cost of tuition, reputation of the institution, cost of living, and level of crime and discrimination.

These aspects might turn out to be key features that help Chinese students pick the Master in Hospitality Management. This is due to the fact that the Netherlands offers forging graduates a visa extension by taking a Search Year. Should the graduate find a job within one year after graduation, his work visa will be accepted.

By comparison, students valued factors such as facilities, lifestyle, and the international setting more than their parents. Still, the researcher discovered students will follow their parents' decisions regardless of their wishes, fact that is backed by Liu's (2016) extended-family culture.

Furthermore, Pan, Wong, Joubert, and Chan (2008) summarized five acculturative stressors that have an impact on Chinese students' experience while studying abroad: language, academic, psycho-socio-cultural, financial, and other issues. The authors derived this insight via distributing a questionnaire to Chinese students in Hong Kong and Australia.

The language obstacles come from the difficulty in understanding common and formal vocabulary and shyness when talking. An added struggle would also be if the national language of host country differs of that of the university courses'. Having to master one foreign language is already a big effort, but having to master two will only hinder social life (Henze and Zhu, 2012).

The Netherlands has the highest English-proficiency in the world according to the English Proficiency Index (Education First, 2017). This represents another key feature that the Chinese students might be eyeing for as they will not face any trouble communicating in places such as supermarkets, city halls, hospitals.

The academic obstacle refers to the struggle with the course work and the different educational style. Henze and Zhu (2012) also found in their research that Chinese students lack in critical thinking and group discussion skills even though they strive to reach their teachers' and parents' expectations. The psycho-socio-cultural domain refers to difficulties to connect with domestic or international students due to communication, culture or racism. The financial issues are concerning scholarships and day to day finances while other issues refer to the overall lack of information about services, facilities, food, health, housing, transportation, security, religion, and taxes in the host country.

Another advantage that the Netherlands would have is the Holland Handbook. This yearly publication offers essential and up-to-date information for expatriates on all aspects of living and working in the Netherlands such as: the Dutch culture, visa, career, housing, finance, international education, tax and legal issues, health care, telecommunications, and insurances.

2.3 The operationalisation of the core concept

The core concept of the Chinese students' characteristics can be divided into two aspects as a result of the literature review: the promotion channels preferred, and the messages that will attract them.

The promotion channels preferred are study fairs, and recommendations from friends and relatives in the beginning stages, followed by informational pamphlets received during the fairs, internet sources, and newspaper and television advertisements.

Furthermore, the students' motivations for studying abroad, the obstacle they face when doing so, and the key features of the study itself as well as of the life abroad that attract them have been all included in one category: the messages that will help attract the Chinese students.

The motivations for the Chinese students to study abroad are mainly the poor and old fashioned options that local education offers. This fact does not cooperate well with the Confucian believe that education is of utmost importance in the pursuit of high job positions that would not be otherwise an option after graduating local educations. Parents' wishes were also important as the Confucianism teaches that the young ones have to obey their elders for the prosperity of the whole family.

Obstacles that the Chinese students and their parents might encounter when deciding on an education abroad were the high cost of the tuition, the costs of living abroad as well as the level of crime and discrimination in the host country. Other obstacles that the Chinese students might be facing while studying abroad were described in the literature research as being language, academic, psycho-socio-cultural, financial, and other issues.

The key features attracting the Chinese students to universities abroad that have resulted from the literature research were the internationally recognised education, the program diversity, the international setting, the facilities, and the work and immigration prospects (the Search Year).

Please refer to the Appendix I for the tree diagram of this core concept.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research approach

Wilson (2014) argued that “research methods are often associated with two approaches: inductive and deductive” (p.12). This study revolved around gaining understanding of the meanings that participants attached to Chinese students who want to study abroad as well as the collection of qualitative data. This approach is referred to as inductive (Wilson, 2014). Therefore, the study was inductive. Moreover, this approach is associated with qualitative research unlike quantitative research which deals with the need to explain causal relationships between variables. Qualitative methods do not require numerical information nor statistics but rather rely on interviewing or observing people.

The chosen interpretivist epistemological research philosophy aimed at engagement with people from different backgrounds who explained the characteristics of Chinese students. This information could have been gathered by spreading a questionnaire solely to Chinese students who want to study abroad, as witnessed that past researchers had done so in the literature review. However, it clashes with one of the goals of this researcher which was not to lose interesting insights presented by the participants. Past researchers opted primarily for demographic information and generalisation of statistical insights, whilst this interpretivist philosophical study was to generalize the delivered content of the participants.

3.2 Research strategy and design

There are two possible research strategies to conduct research: quantitative and qualitative (Wilson, 2014). The previous paragraph already provided extensive insight that the chosen strategy for the study was of qualitative nature. This paragraph further clarifies the reason for not choosing a multi-strategy (mixture of qualitative and quantitative analysis). Firstly, time-constraint was one issue at hand for deciding to do only one type of analysis. Secondly, the distributing of a questionnaire to a population which was already difficult to reach could prove problematic. Self-administering questionnaires to Chinese already studying in the Netherlands could appear as biased when leaving out Chinese who had decided to study somewhere else abroad or are yet to decide where to study. Finally, this decision was a matter of choice and belief that it was better to focus solely qualitative-based research.

Wilson (2014) defined research designs as “detailed plans to focus and guide the research process” (p.116). The research was conducted via a case study design. Case studies are very commonly used when it comes to researching a certain phenomenon within a population group. However, the types of case studies vary: holistic and embedded (Wilson, 2014). This particular case study used an embedded analysis. Even though the unit was Chinese student characteristics, there were different sub-units in order to assess the phenomenon from several points of view. These sub-units were stakeholders. By comparing different scenarios from the case study, the researcher was able to interpret the motives of the Chinese students to follow a master’s programme in the Netherlands and later advised the client on the most suitable promotion plan catered to their wants and wishes..

3.3 Data collection method and measurement instrument

This study opted for primary data collection. The data collection method that was used was asking questions (interviews). Wilson (2014) argued on various types of interviews: face-to-face interview, telephone interview, and elite interviewing. This study opted for a face-to-face type of interview because the verbal communication between the interviewee and the interviewer allowed for exploration of certain themes. Furthermore, this interviewing type provided insight into the respondent’s feedback on the characteristics of the Chinese students.

The interview method of collecting data was semi-structured (Wilson, 2014). A semi-structured interview is a combination between structured and unstructured interviewing. This approach was

helpful in having a measurement instrument (the interview guide) that is structured; however, also flexible enough when new questions were introduced based on the participant's response. The measurement instrument differed for the type of respondent. The interview guides for each respondent can be found in Appendix II.

3.4 Sampling

An important aspect for any primary data collection is sampling (Wilson, 2014). The first step of the sampling process was to define the target population. The target population for this particular study were Chinese students interested in studying abroad. However, as previously mentioned, triangulation was used to gather insight on this population by a Recruitment Officer from Saxion, an Account Manager for China, three Chinese (former) students, and a Representative for China. An interview was as well conducted with the course coordinator of the master's office; however, it did not yield any relevant information for this study. These participants were able to provide sufficient insight to answer the central research question which led to the continuation to the advisory part. The last conducted interview reached a saturation point where new information could not be obtained anymore and previous findings were repeated; therefore, the data collection was halted and moved on with the analysis part.

There are two sampling techniques that are available for researcher purposes: probability and non-random-based sampling. This study opted for non-random sampling due to it lacking a sample frame. Case study research designs are associated with non-random sampling (Wilson, 2014). Here, purposive sampling was used for selecting the participants that could provide information that cannot be obtained by a different person due to having expertise in this field. The anonymity and confidentiality was kept for these participants; therefore, they were referred throughout the analysis chapter as 'interviewee #' or 'respondent #'. The list of the interviewees can be found in table 3.1.

Interviewee	Responsibility of the interviewee	Date of interview
1	HBS Account Manager for China (Chinese nationality)	April 13 th , 2018
2	Recruitment and Partnership Officer for Saxion (Dutch nationality)	April 24 th , 2018
3	Former Student Ambassador for China (Chinese nationality)	April 23 rd , 2018
4	Student Ambassador for Nuffic and Saxion (Chinese nationality)	April 26 th , 2018
5	Master of Business Administration alumni (Chinese nationality)	April 26 th , 2018
6	Representative for Saxion in China (Chinese nationality)	June 12 th , 2018

Table 3.1: The list of participants in the study

3.5 Analysis techniques

Wilson (2014) stated that transcribing the interviews is the first step when analysing them. The steps undertaken in this study were to transcribe all the data with the software package Microsoft Word. After this, the transcriptions were reread through in order to identify patterns. The next step was to rearrange the data in categories that could be used as new theoretical concepts.

The open coding labelled and categorized the data whilst the axial coding related these categories into sub-categories. Certain patterns were identified by doing this procedure that led to the interpretation of the findings. The interpretation was based on finding connections between each transcript, checking whether the findings are consistent with what past research had proposed, and using an inductive approach. This formed a systematic content analysis of staying within the boundaries of the literature whilst proposing new theory whenever possible. An emphasize was formed to distinguish the similarities and differences from this study to past studies.

4. Research results

The following chapter introduces the research results gathered by qualitative means. The first part consists of a descriptive analysis on the collected interviews as comparisons and similarities are drawn.

4.1 Open coding

All interviews were transcribed and open coded. The large proportion of collected data was dispersed by classifying each interviewee (e.g. Interviewee 1). The open codes consisted of short phrases or words that formed ideas about the measured aspect. The line number served as a tool for the reader to find the origin of the quote from all transcribed interviews. The open coding table was merged for all interviews and can be found in Appendix IV. The code trees can be found in Appendix V. This was done as to structure patterns of similarities and to make it easier to categorize the information. The codes served as a summary of the transcribed data by keeping the original meaning not too vague and not too specific. Despite the fact that the sample size was relatively inferior compared to past research, it still reached a saturation point when information was repeated, especially with the last respondent. New codes hardly appeared as future interviews occurred. It should be important to note that more information could have been obtained if spoken directly to a person working for an agency.

4.2 Axial coding

Concepts	Aspects	Indicators
The messages Promotion channels	Motivations for studying in the Netherlands	Secondary choice
		Reasonable price
		Not being accepted elsewhere
		Entrance requirements are less than in China
		English language prior to research
	Motivations for studying abroad	Knowing best of both worlds
		Reassurance for a bright future
		Opportunities after graduation
		Parents requirement to study abroad
		Parents financial support
	Obstacles for studying in the Netherlands	Intense competition for local admission
		The poor brand of the country in China
		Language barrier
		Cultural aspects
		Misconception about the Netherlands
	Obstacles for studying abroad	Unawareness about the Netherlands
		Doing everything yourself (Proactivity)
	Education fairs	Visa issues
	Agents	Not helpful
	Chinese community	Trustworthy
		Expensive but secure
	Key features of the program	Trust in own people
		Collective
		Preference for smaller class sizes
		The reputation of the university
		Cooperation with agencies
		Partner with Chinese universities
		Connection with Dutch companies
		Invitation of experienced guest speakers
		Better utilisation of Saxion's WeChat

Table 4.1: Axial coding

4.3 Chinese motives for studying abroad

The results highlighted that Chinese favour countries where there is an established Chinese community that they can put their trust in.

"In the beginning stages it's always good to have kind of own people to rely on" (respondent 1, Account Manager for China, female).

Chinese future students put trust in their own kind, regardless of familiarity. Importance is emphasised on the word of mouth such as a family member studying already abroad as well as staying together.

"My older brother is also studying abroad. I think my brother going abroad, that's the main reason". (respondent 4, current Student Ambassador for China, female).

In this instance, respondent 4 was motivated to study abroad because of her brother. The researcher verified Bodycott's (2009) past finding that the recommendations from friends and relatives play an important role for the decision-making. Parental peer pressure is common as reported by the interviewees (respondent 2, 3, and 4). Parents are more demanding and influential to make the choice whether the future Chinese students will conduct their study abroad (respondent 3, former Student Ambassador, female). The family does so in order for their children to have a higher social status in the society after returning back from the study. This finding is in-line with past research that the undertaking of a study abroad increases the student's future as well as the social prosperity of the family (Liu, 2016).

"Third reason they go abroad will be probably their parents want them to go abroad" (respondent 3, former Student Ambassador for China, female).

Respondent 3 further elaborates that parents are capable of deciding on everything for their children.

"Chinese families have a really, really big power to affect, to influence, if they've childrens to decide which school to choose" (respondent 5, MBA alumni, female).

It is most likely that the interviewee was referring to bachelor student cases as this scenario correlated with past research (Lium, 2016). However, a different interviewee commented that the older Chinese people have more liberty of deciding on their own which master to study.

"I think for master student I think parents wouldn't have so big influence because master student mostly study hospitality management is can be that the student graduate from other program, from bachelor so they also after 2 years maybe working in the hospitality will want to continue master program. I think they can decide by themselves mostly" (respondent 6, Representative for Saxion in China, female).

Nonetheless, the fifth respondent further mentioned that this influence comes from the fact that many of the Chinese families pay for the education and living costs for their children, even in her case as a master degree student.

A common pattern was established across four respondents of a wishful thinking about the future. The main reason for Chinese studying abroad is to have a sense of security and knowing the best of both worlds. This was referred in the literature review as gaining an international perspective (Chao et al., 2017; Bodycott, 2009; Liu, 2016). Respondent 5 elaborated *"I want to have a really, really good futures"*. The interviewee commented that she does not want to have a traditional Chinese life and

wants to witness a different world. Another interviewee commented that Asians are leaving their countries for *“a better future, more chances for making a career”*. Much emphasis is placed on the future career plan and the opportunities after graduation.

Another pattern found for studying abroad is the difficulty in getting accepted to a Chinese university. This push factor was previously mentioned in the literature review (Liu, 2016). The application process for local admission was referred to as *“really too much competition”* (respondent 5, MBA alumni, female). The majority of the interviewees consider studying abroad due to the less demanding admission criteria in comparison to their country. An interviewee was relieved to know that she only needed to pass an IELTS exam and fill in *“other forms”* just to get accepted for a higher education.

“In China it is really, really difficult to get in but its super easy to get out” (respondent 4, current Student Ambassador, female).

The interviewed students believe that by going abroad, they will make their study life much easier whilst in most cases it is the opposite way around.

4.4 Chinese motives for studying in the Netherlands

It was imperative to understand which pull factors make Chinese consider conducting a master in the Netherlands so that those messages can be used in the promotional plan. The answer that three interviewees gave was that the Netherlands was not actually a first choice of interest for Chinese. The predominant choices were countries where English is the native language. This is despite the findings of past research that the Netherlands has the highest-English proficiency in the world (Henze and Zhu, 2012).

“Let’s say, the UK or the US, and the Netherlands, if they can afford both, they will choose US or the UK, than the Netherlands” (respondent 3, former Student Ambassador for China, female).

Agencies have an influence on the Chinese students when it comes to decision-making. Interviewee 5 was anticipating to study in France; however, due to a rejected visa, her agencies suggested her to study elsewhere due to the easier requirements to obtain a visa.

“Netherlands is not my firster choice to be honest. I plan to go to the, move to the France. So my, my agency suggest me to choose the Netherlands. That is the reason I choose the Netherlands” (respondent 5, MBA alumni, female).

Saxion’s Account Manager for China elaborated that students retrieve information from the agents in order to get better acquainted with the Dutch educational system. The agents provide them with specific answers to questions such as *“payment, the living condition, the education quality”*.

A pattern can be witnessed between not being accepted elsewhere due to a scholarship or financial issue and the Netherlands as a second choice due to its attractive components such as *“higher quality of education but with a reasonable price”* (respondent 1). Another interviewee used a similar formulation.

The education tuition fee in the Netherlands is perceived much cheaper than in countries such as the UK, Australia, and the US. For Chinese *“the tuition fee is the most important, the cost-wise”* (respondent 3, former Student Ambassador for China, female). This finding was in-line with past research as the saving culture (Liu, 2016). The biggest motivation for students coming to study in the Netherlands is the English language. The Chinese future students who have researched and are aware

that most of the Dutch population speaks understandable English are willing to do their masters in the Netherlands.

"I think for students who choose to come to the Netherlands, they probably did some research, and know that people speak English here. But for a lot of other students, especially younger, like gonna join bachelor, they probably didn't know that like European speaks English pretty well, so they would probably choose the UK or the US just because of the language barrier" (respondent 3, former Student Ambassador for China, female).

4.5 Chinese obstacles for studying in the Netherlands

There are a number of obstacles that were agreed on by most of the respondents when it came to studying in the Netherlands. First and foremost, the respondents expressed that the country is not that well-branded in comparison to other English speaking countries.

"The Netherlands is less known in China compared to other countries" (respondent 1, Account Manager for China, female).

Secondly, the popularity of the Netherlands is limited in China. Interviewee 2 expressed concern that the Netherlands is so small that it provokes lack of awareness and misconception that it is *"a city in Germany"*. Another aspect which came across current Chinese students was that they only realised that the Dutch speak English only after arriving to the country (respondent 4). This unawareness comes from their lack of proper preparation of what to expect in the Netherlands. The unawareness is applied as well for the language barrier. *"They are afraid that yeah: I won't be understood if I only speak English, if I don't speak Dutch. So this is, this might be one"* (respondent 1). Thirdly, the results pointed out that it is difficult for Chinese to get used to the proactive nature of the study and the Dutch culture. This cultural aspect was reported to be problematic for Chinese that they cannot be prepared beforehand to face. Furthermore, this was one of the five acculturative stressors that have an impact on the Chinese student's experience when travelling abroad (Pan, Long, Joubert & Chan, 2008).

"If you got to the Netherlands you need to do everything yourself" (respondent 5, MBA alumni, female).

The Recruitment Officer (interviewee 2) acknowledged the difficulty that the Chinese face when adapting to *"the way of teaching, they have to be very proactive, they have to do presentations"*. The academic obstacle is a burden for Chinese students lacking group discussion skills (Henze & Zhu, 2012). Other notable aspects mentioned by the respondent 4 were the difficulty in finding international friends and the lack of an existing Chinese community.

"They don't have many international friends, they just stay together with Chinese. For me, I think it's really difficulty for that, to get international friends" (respondent 4, current Saxion Ambassador, female).

4.6 Key features that attract Chinese to a program

When approached about which features would potentially attract future Chinese students to the program, two interviewees mentioned that the size of the class plays a role. Chinese are used to being in large classrooms but they have a preference to be tutored in a smaller class setting.

"A lot of Chinese have a lot of people and our class are very, very big. Like for example, my high school class was 70 people in one class. It was crowded and nobody gets attention. It's just very annoying sometimes"(respondent 3, former Student Ambassador for China, female).

Interviewee 2 clarified that the university is aware of the USP that attracts students which is small scale facilities. Interviewee 3 and 5 expressed concerns that the program should have a solid connection with Dutch companies after the study is over.

"I think for hospitality or let's say in general business, it's very important for them to have working experience especially in like big companies, reputational companies"(respondent 3).

The respondent further stressed this important feature in order for them *"to gain some working experience"*. Respondent 5 pointed out that the university is not sufficient when sharing specific information for Dutch companies after the study. Another factor that attracts Chinese potential students to the program is the invitation of experienced guest speakers from the hospitality field.

"Or you know, invite some famous, not famous, but enough experienced speakers, lecturer. That would probably also help"(respondent 3, former Student Ambassador, female).

A similar feature pointed out from another case was *to "bring a manager for the real or like the people who has real experience about this major"* (respondent 5, MBA alumni, female). A broader lucrative feature sparking the Chinese interest is to have an insight on the reputation of the university. However, this is more general about the school, rather than the program. The issue that occurs is the distinction between a research university and an applied science university. The university Recruitment Officer (respondent 2) expressed concern of not being able to share any details on the ranking when asked by potential students.

"We are not a research university and all they ask about is ranking and I cannot say anything about ranking cause we don't participate in the research university in ranking. So that is hard"(respondent 2, Recruitment and Partnership Officer, female).

Other singular mentions and suggestions were to organise extracurricular activities such as international events for students, apply the newest technological trend, and have a strong base of active community of alumni.

4.7 Potential promotion channels to be utilized for the Chinese market

In terms of personal promotion channels, fairs were considered by interviewee 1 as a way of establishing the Dutch image for the market and a beneficial direct channel. However, some interviewees expressed concern about them as being mediocre and not beneficial.

"In China, we don't go to the fair because the fair doesn't work in China. There were thousands of students come passing by the booth with no interest" (respondent 2, Recruitment and Partnership Officer, female).

Interviewee 3 having gone through the experience of a future student explained that she had skipped visiting an educational fair because instead she received all the information from her trusted agent. Her words were *"I don't think study fairs are very helpful"*. The above-mentioned statements contradict with past research findings that the preferred way of being introduced to abroad education are education fairs (Bodycott, 2009).

The second personal direct channel that is preferred by most of the respondents are agencies. Yet again, these research findings contradicted to past research which stated that Chinese students are reluctant to use educational agents (Bodycott, 2009). In this results findings, agencies were considered to be trustworthy, "very popular" (respondent 2) and able to ease the application process for those Chinese future students who do not apply by themselves. In other words, they are making the life of Chinese students easier so the applicants do not have to stress about it.

"They don't have time to waste and they lack experience" (respondent 6, Representative for Saxion in China, female)

Some interviewees believed that the Chinese approach agencies because of unavailable information elsewhere, despite the expensive fee that they have to pay for this service. Agents are able to obtain information from universities that the Chinese web-browser has banned (respondent 5, MBA alumni, female). Other key-resources that the agents possess are the connections that they can make with universities and the future students by organizing seminars.

"If we can organize such kind of how do you call it, seminar where all those agencies will be informed and will sent there that will also bring some sort of contacts" (interviewee 1, Account Manager for China, female).

When asked about fairs, interviewee 2 dealing with the recruitment process for the university, elaborated on an on-going trend that *"the focus has shifted from desk research at home, where to study, going to agencies instead of going to fairs"*. This speculation contradicted to Bodycott's (2009) proposed process of gathering information via information pamphlets from fairs, internet sources, newspaper, and television advertisements. The last personal indirect promotional channel was friends and relatives. It appeared that this aspect is more influential than agents.

"Chinas families have a really, really big power to affect, to influence if they're childrens to decide which school they choose" (respondent 5, MBA alumni, female).

In another case, interviewee 3 revealed that the only reason why she wanted to study abroad was the influence of her brother who was already studying abroad. The person let her brother gather all the information she needed about the Netherlands and he also reach out to his friends for recommendations. This finding corresponded to Liu's (2009) proposed elements of the Chinese culture which are the education-first and the extended-family. The Chinese were distinguished in this study as a very closed and collectivistic society. A tendency for nationalism was revealed from one of the interviewees to stick with Chinese people when she proposed to *"have a sports team for Chinese students"* (respondent 5).

"I know that Chinese students they tend to cling together because they feel more safe" (respondent 2, Recruitment and Partnership Officer, female).

These findings proposed the importance that family and friends have for Chinese deciding to study abroad. This further explained why Chinese have obstacles when trying to find international friends and are reluctant to study abroad.

A prominent promotion channel that was also discussed was the cooperation with another university and trips.

"Maybe final bachelors students they have the chance to go master in the Netherlands. I think it's really good cooperation with the university" (respondent 4, current Student Ambassador, female). Interviewee 5 proposed to have an introduction of the master's programme via a Chinese university. Interviewee 1 (the Account Manager for China) agreed that this can be an effective key-feature to have suitable universities to promote the master degree.

"We have to go to universities if they already have got their bachelor or they are in their third or fourth year considering their next step" (respondent 1, Account Manager for China, female).

Past research had pointed out the usage of newspapers advertisement and television advertisements as promotional channels; however, these types of non-personal ways of getting the attention of future students were not mentioned by the interviewees. What matters to the Chinese are the opinion of the family and friends and the agents. Educational fair participation of Dutch universities does not make a difference.

4.8 Research conclusions

The objective of this research part was to gain insight into the wants and needs of the potential Chinese master's students. The objective within this research was to investigate which factors play a role in the student's decision to apply and follow a master's programme. Moreover, this research part was designed to answer the central research question: Who are the potential Chinese students interested in the upcoming Master in Hospitality Management? By answering this question, the researcher was able to proceed with the advisory part.

For answering this question, a fictional persona was created to portray the background of a potential master student.

The future Chinese master student comes from an education-first, saving, and the extended-family culture (Liu, 2016). The student comes from a family where education is priority in order for a better life. The literature review pointed out that the future Chinese student is heavily dependent on the influence of the family and friends. The results section highlighted that the future master student can be financially dependent on the family throughout the study; however, unlike a potential bachelor student, a master student can be the one deciding in which educational field or country to study.

The literature review pointed out, that the potential Chinese student is the one that has disadvantageous circumstances in China and gets pushed to study abroad by the Chinese community. The data analysis elaborated that these circumstances came from the intense competition for getting admitted to a Chinese university. The literature review provided insight that the potential Chinese student will seek an alternative study path abroad. The future student views the foreign education requirements to be significantly easier to be dealt with than those in China and approaches agents to do the process for her/him. The interviewees provided insight that the potential student perceives studying abroad as an alternative to a traditional Chinese life and hopes for a better career and family-related future.

The future master student wanting to study abroad is unaware or partially aware of the existence of the Netherlands. She/he would apply to a native English speaking country such as the USA, UK, and Australia. The potential master student who decides to study and has researched the Netherlands is influenced either by her/his family or by an agent. Pan et al. (2008) elaborated on five obstacles for the potential Chinese student: the language barrier, academical, psycho-cultural, and financial. The results section highlighted that the potential Chinese student is not a proactive persona.

The potential Chinese master student that would study in the Netherlands will pay an expensive fee to use the service of an agent rather than joining an educational fair. The data results highlighted that the student will join a seminar organized by the agent or a Chinese university to make a decision where to study.

With this retrospective conclusion, the advisory part would address the possible options to increase the awareness of the Netherlands in China, so that Saxion's master's programme could attract potential students. The two options are either to cooperate with agents and universities or by current bachelor students living in the Netherlands who will spread the word-of-mouth.

5. Discussion

It is fundamental that every research paper that deals with data collection it tests its quality. This chapter discusses the reliability and validity of the qualitative study that was undergone. Both are crucial components.

5.1 Reliability of the study

Reliability deals with assessing whether the proposed qualitative study generates understanding (Verhoeven, 2011). Unlike quantitative research, it is virtually impossible to have the same results in qualitative research. Measures that were undertaken to improve the reliability of this research were the usage of multiple sources of evidence. The multiple sources of information were exhibited in the literature review and the data analysis. There were aspects found in the collected data that could be traced back in previous research papers.

Unfortunately, there were certain threats that decreased the reliability of this study. One instance was the diversified techniques on interviewing the participants. The interviewer had face-to-face interviews with some of them, whilst with others, it was via Skype. In research terms, this is considered as inconsistency in the measurement instrument (Verhoeven, 2011). Furthermore, the interview guide was catered towards the role of each participant. There wasn't a standardized way of asking questions. However, the researcher improved the reliability by making sure to record all interviews and transcribe them as proof for further reference. The recorded information can be accessed via the provided USB memory stick. This systematic way of recording information increased the reliability and prevented distortion.

5.2 Validity of the study

Wilson (2014) points out that researchers are concerned about "the relationship between a construct and its indicators" (p.132). In other words, this is referred as validity. Validity is sub-categorized as internal and external validity. Furthermore, there are two types of internal validity: construct and content (Wilson, 2014).

5.2.1 Internal validity

Before conducting the interviews, the interview guides were reviewed and approved by the supervisor. This improved the face validity of the measurement instrument. Within this study, sampling validity was partially achieved. The stakeholders that were involved were from different areas within the nature of the study. The participant diversity from Chinese students, recruitment officers, account managers, to alumni, provided a holistic view on the subject at hand. However, the stakeholder educational agents did not appear in this study which decreased the sampling validity.

Wilson (2014) defined construct validity as "the extent to which the findings from the study can be generalized to other cases or settings" (p.134). Triangulation was achieved in this study when multiple participants from different settings provided measures of the same phenomenon. Despite having different structures of the interview guide for each participant and Dutch and Chinese background, they still provided similar answers that were easily categorized in the axial coding.

5.2.2 External validity

This form of validity deals with whether the findings of the study can be traced back to other settings. However, unlike the objective of quantitative research to achieve generalization statistically the goal of this interpretivist approach is to generalize the delivered content of the participants. The external validity is high because the participants explained similar situations about Chinese students. The external validity was also improved when it provided similarity to past research papers.

6. The advice

6.1. The objective of the advice and questions

The objective of the advice is to provide an efficient promotion plan that will attract Chinese students to attend Saxion's upcoming Master in Hospitality Management. Therefore, the advice question to be answered in the coming paragraphs is as follows:

- Which promotion campaign is most suitable for Saxion's Hospitality Business School in order to attract Chinese students to attend its upcoming Master in Hospitality Management?

6.2. Advice options

Several promotion campaigns were designed as a result of the research conclusions. These campaigns were assessed according to pertinent criteria in order to advise the Hospitality Business School on the most effective one. These criteria included the longevity, financial implications, and feasibility of the promotion campaign.

The research results pointed out that there is a lack of knowledge and awareness of the Netherlands in China which limits any Dutch university's reach of students. Therefore, the promotion of this master's program needed to raise awareness of the country's welcoming features for foreign students besides the program's characteristics.

While the literature review indicated that Chinese students favour study fairs and a range of advertisements in the detriment of educational agents, the research disapproved and insisted that agencies were a trusted and secure medium to get professional advice and study application services. Study fairs have proved to be a promotion practice that did not justify the costs according to the research. One reason for this was pointed out as being the significant difference between the English speaking countries local awareness compared to that of the Netherlands. This medium might be more effective in the future once the Netherlands reaches a certain level of recognition in the Chinese people's eyes with the help of organisations like Nuffic. Another channel that got introduced in the research results was partner universities. This channel could help the promotion campaign reach its target group easily by using the partner university's resources. Furthermore, the research results suggested promotion events in partner universities would help create awareness and trust as the students would be in direct contact with representatives from the master's program. As a last channel, both the literature review and research results advocated that friends and relatives opinion and advice were influential in the decision making process due to their collectivistic culture.

Therefore, the following advice options have been designed as a direct consequence to the juxtaposition between the literature review and research results as discussed above:

1. A promotion trip in main cities in China in collaboration with partner universities and educational agencies
2. Promotion for current bachelor students in the Netherlands

6.2.1 The promotion trip

The research results clearly emphasised that cooperating with local universities and educational agencies would offer support and resources in reaching the target group and creating awareness. In addition, research has also pointed out that direct promotion from events where potential students can get immersed into the experience of studying the program will increase the interest of the target group and bring them one step closer to deciding to join the master's program.

A promotion trip will combine all of these in order for the Hospitality Business School to reach its objectives. This promotion trip would take place in partner universities in several big cities in China, an

opportune location for the target market. Educational agencies and the universities will assist with pre-promotions and invite interested students to join the event.

The event itself will hold presentations that will introduce the Netherlands, Saxion, and the master's program. The latter will be held by a representative of the program in order to offer the lecture experience. A meet and greet segment will follow for the potential students to have the chance to interact with the university's representatives. Thereupon, a session of interviews will be held by the program's representative for the interested students who prepared the application documents. This part of the event will further increase the interest of the students and to facilitate their application process.

Alumni should also be invited to attend the events. They could offer a short presentation about their experiences of studying at Saxion and be available for the meet and greet. This will increase the interest of the potential students as the literature review and research results showed that the opinions and advice delivered by a person of the same culture is likely to have a bigger impact than someone of a different culture.

Furthermore, the trip should be scheduled in a way that it coincides with other events or activities Saxion might want to attend or host such as the alumni event in order to minimize costs. Inviting other academies to send representatives and promote their degrees will also help minimize the costs and maximize the potential of the promotion campaign.

6.2.2 Current bachelor students in the Netherlands

The data analysis results articulated that at this point in time the Netherlands is not that well-known nor branded in China. As one interviewee pointed out, the Netherlands was even mistaken to be a city in Germany. It can be witnessed that the unawareness level of the country, let alone Saxion, is far too primitive for any highly successful promotional efforts in China or fairs. Both the literature review and the research results proposed that potential students prefer to choose native English speaking countries. This is once again due to the Chinese population not being sufficiently aware that the Dutch speak fluent English and that they do not necessarily have to learn Dutch in order to follow a program or live in the Netherlands. Organisations such as Nuffic have been working on raising awareness about the opportunities Chinese people have in the Netherlands, including higher study prospects.

The university should start promoting to bachelor students that are sufficiently aware of the Netherlands, and have been studying there for a couple of years. It is suggested that current bachelor students from the Hospitality Business School will be tried to be converted as master degree students. It would be an easier conversion process for those Tourism and Hotel Management students to be interested in joining a master's degree in hospitality management directly after graduating rather than bachelor students from another management program such as International Business & Management Studies. One of the interviewed alumni that studied IBMS clearly had a misconception about what hotel management/tourism management was about; therefore, a Master in Hospitality Management would appear to her "too broad" and not allowing her to have "specific skills".

With this in-mind, it is advised that HBS should calculate the current number of active Chinese students, the drop-out rate, the graduation rate, and explore the timeline of their study. It can be a time-consuming process; however, would yield results in the long-run. For those that are in their last years of study, it is suggested to have a promotion session of the new master so interest is raised. Moreover, this promotion campaign will not only convert bachelor leads into master students, but also will provide certain exposure to potential Chinese students with Chinese bachelor degrees as they will

trust the opinion of a person of the same culture who attended the programme as uncovered in the literature review and research results.

Saxion should take into account to promote its master's programmes to students who are from universities such as NHTV Breda, Stenden etc. This can be achieved in two ways: via participation in master's degree educational fairs in the Netherlands or via collaboration with those universities. The educational fair participation in the Netherlands will increase the awareness of the master's programme not only to current Chinese bachelor hospitality students and alumni residing in the Netherlands but also to other nationalities. An annual master fair is Master Education Fair Amsterdam. At this point in time, Saxion did not participate to such event; however, Stenden and NHTV were participants.

The partnership with other Dutch universities may seem odd at first; however, some Dutch universities do not offer hospitality master's degrees which could be interesting for fourth year hospitality students. They hold master's degree seminars by collaborating with universities that promote it and this makes it easier to recruit bachelor Chinese students as well as other nationalities than promoting in their country.

Lastly, further research should be made in a few years' time in order to assess the position of the Netherlands on the studying abroad market in China and evaluated if a more local promotion strategy would yield a satisfactory return on investment.

6.3. Assessment of the advice options

6.3.1 Assessment criteria

The two advice options mentioned above were assessed and compared in order to pick the most effective one for the Hospitality Business School. Criteria were selected in order to offer a transparent and substantiated advice. The evaluation of these criteria will be scored from one to three, with one being the lowest score and three, the highest score. Therefore, the option with the highest score will be the chosen promotion plan.

Firstly, the time and effort need for the preparation of the promotion campaign should be taken into account. Secondly, the longevity of the promotion materials and objectives is also an important factor. Thirdly, the costs that are involved in the preparation and campaign development will offer a financial view on the campaigns. Lastly, the feasibility of the promotion campaign is critical in the assessment of the two options.

	1	2	3
Preparation resources	high	moderate	low
Longevity	long-term	mid-term	short-term
Financial investment	high	moderate	low
Feasibility	not likely	somewhat likely	likely

Table 6.1: Scoring of the assessment criteria

6.3.2 The promotion trip

The promotion trip will require extensive preparation. Most of it will involve building relationships with Chinese universities. One of the interviewees in charge of being a liaison between Saxion and Chinese institutions has pointed out that building relationships with universities is not only time consuming but it is not always successful. Once the relationship has been established, promotion material and travel itinerary must be planned preceding the trip. Additionally, Saxion should work in cooperation with the partner universities and educational agencies for the organisation of the events. The time and

resources that will take to build a strong relationship with local universities greatly increase the preparation resources needed scoring a 1.

This campaign is catered for all Chinese students in their last years of Bachelor programmes as well as Chinese working population, all aspiring to follow the Master in Hospitality Business. While some might be easily persuaded to apply right away, other still need time to finish their degrees or get their work affairs in order. That is why the promotion events to be held during the trip do not aim to attract only people who can apply only for the coming year but also inform the others of their possibilities in the nearby future. Although, the Hospitality Business School might not be able to afford sparing resources for such a trip yearly, the gap of two or three years between trips will be filled by the ground work that the previous trip has laid when appealing to students in their second year of bachelor. The promotion material designed, translated, and printed for the first trip will unfortunately, require an update once the firsts students of the programme have shared their opinions and experiences regarding it. Once a few testimonials are added to the promotion material, an update will only be needed every few years. While the trip will have lasting effects on its participants, the promotion material should be updated quite soon in order to help persuade future Chinese students with testimonials from current students of their own nationality. Therefore, the promotion trip scores mid-term on the longevity scale.

The financial investment required from the Hospitality Business School is attributable mostly to the travel costs such as plane tickets, accommodation, local transportation, and food and drinks and event organising costs such as venue rental and food and drinks costs. These costs will add up quite high; however, some costs can be minimized if other academies join the trip and costs are divided. Therefore, the promotion trip scores high on the financial investment scale.

The feasibility of this promotion campaign is greatly affected by the relationship building beginning part between Saxion and Chinese universities. As an interviewee pointed out, this is a challenge. However, Saxion has organised different activities in China before, some of which successful such as the alumni get together. Therefore, the feasibility of this option rates somewhat likely on the scale.

6.3.3 Current bachelor students in the Netherlands

The preparation resources for this option are of three natures: message design, organisational, and human. Similar to the other option, promotional material needs to be designed containing information on the programme and facts and student's reviews. A presentation needs to be made as well along the same lines. The student's reviews will initially be of the university and student life as there are no alumni yet. Once the first year is coming to an end, reviews of future alumni can be gathered and added to both, the brochure and the presentation. The same information needs to be shared with the person in charge of the Chinese social media accounts. This way, interested students can already create a more personal feeling towards the university and programme. The organisational resources refer to the preparation needed in order to give presentations in Saxion and other Dutch universities as well as attending study fairs. The latest type of resource needed is of human nature. The preparations and execution of activities is quite time consuming. Therefore, it might be advisable to hire a part time employee or intern to help with the workload. With all that said, this option scores a two for preparation resources.

Similar to the first option, the promotional material will need to be updated quite soon after receiving testimonials from the first students in order to help create a better picture of the study for the interested students. Therefore, this option scores two for longevity as well.

The financial investment required is rather low in comparison with the other option, the biggest and most significant cost coming from hiring a part time employee. Therefore, this option scores a two for financial investment.

The feasibility of this option is quite high for this option as most of the tasks needed are already being done by Saxion for other programmes. The only task that might impose difficulties is the presentations help at other Dutch universities as they might not be keen on accepting to promote other university's programmes. Therefore, this option scores a three for feasibility.

6.3.4 Conclusions

As seen in Table 6.2, the option of promoting to Chinese bachelor students in the Netherlands has the highest score of the two options concluding it as the most effective one. Therefore, this option was described in depth in the next chapter.

		Advice options	
		The promotion trip	Current bachelor students in the NI
Criteria	Preparation resources	1	2
	Longevity	2	2
	Financial investment	1	2
	Feasibility	2	3
	Total	6	9

Table 6.2: Evaluation of the advice options

7. Promotion plan

Qualitative research was conducted on the needs and wants of Saxion's Chinese potential master's students in order to learn which factors influence their decisions when applying for master programs abroad. As a result, a couple of options were evaluated and compared. The option concluded as the most efficient and feasible consists of promoting towards the current bachelor Chinese students in the Netherlands. The following chapter will expand on this promotion plan and on its financial implications.

According to the theoretical framework, the steps to creating an effective promotion plan are as follows: audience analysis, objective, promotion tools, message, and media.

7.1 Audience analysis

As resulted from the research, the Chinese students interested in studying master's programme in the Netherlands have either studied a bachelor's programme in the Netherlands and they want to continue living there, either chose to study in the Netherlands as their second choice. Overall, the Netherlands is not well known as a study destination in China and the promotion practices to change this would require a significant investment that needs a strong base of word-of-mouth in the Chinese community in the Netherlands as the research showed. Therefore, the current audience of the promotion plan is the Chinese students that are already living in the Netherlands and looking to study a master's programme in hospitality management.

The target group is already interested in pursuing a master's programme in the Netherlands. Therefore, they have done the research and know what options there are. They are highly responsive to facts as they desire to study a course that will add to their skills and experience. An added feature that will attract their attention is the hiring possibilities after graduating. While facts are a big decision factor for them, they are also persuaded by the word of mouth in the local Chinese community as well as by the opinions and advice from their family and friends. While the family's opinions matter more for future bachelor students, this is not the case for future master's students that are already in the Netherlands. Having said that, the word of mouth in the local Chinese community is still taken into account when making a decision even for future master's students.

7.2 Objective

The university wants to offer internationally diverse classes for its students in order to provide a multi-cultural learning environment. Therefore, it is important to develop promotion plans for markets of different countries. The objective of this promotion plan is to successfully attract Chinese students living in the Netherlands to the new master's programme. As a secondary objective, this promotion plan should increase brand awareness. As seen in the research chapter, the Chinese students' first choice was neither Saxion nor the Netherlands when deciding where to study abroad. Therefore, this promotion plan needs to spread the word about this new master's programme in the Chinese (student) community living in the Netherlands in order for it to ultimately, reach the local student community in China.

7.3 Promotion tools

Advertising will be used as a promotion tool through the promotion brochures spread out at presentations and study fairs in order to offer visual information and increase awareness even after the event ended. The brochures will be spread in Saxion, student dorms, presentations, and study fairs. Presentations will be held in Saxion and in other Dutch universities in order to reach as many Chinese bachelor students studying in the Netherlands as possible.

Furthermore, the programme's features and its Chinese students' experiences will also be promoted on Saxion's Chinese social media in order to help build a following in China as well.

Personal selling will also be used in one-on-one contact after presentations and during study fairs, as well as through every day contact via email or phone.

7.4 Message

The AIDA model will be used to tailor the communication between the university and the possible future students. First, awareness will be created about the university and the master by spreading brochures in key places where the target group likely spends time. Secondly, interest from the target group will be generated during the presentations the university will hold in Saxion and in other Dutch universities as well as during Dutch study fairs. Desire will be achieved through an emotional connection created by the students' reviews. Initially, these reviews will focus on Saxion as a whole and about the students experience as there are no actual students to review the course yet. After this master's programme first year, student reviews will be gathered regarding the programme as well. This will help make the emotional connection just mentioned stronger. After interacting at the presentations or study fairs, the students will fill in their email address for Saxion's database. After such events, Saxion will contact them via email to send them a shoutout and the programme's brochure. This interaction will most likely push the possible future student to look further into the programme and become more interested in it. This last step is known as action in the AIDA model.

The message that will be promoted will be a mostly rational one. The brochures and the presentations will share facts and information about the programme, showcasing its strengths. The research showed that the target group is influenced a lot by facts such as the ranking of the university and the chances of getting a job after graduating. However, the research also showed that the target groups responds to emotional messages as well as they take in consideration the opinions and advice of friends, family, and local Chinese community. Therefore, the message should take that into consideration as well and promote reviews of current students and alumni about the university and later on, about the programme itself.

7.5 Media

The theoretical framework showed that there are two types of media: personal and non-personal. This promotion plan uses both of them. Firstly, the presentations organised inside and outside of Saxion as well as social media posts with information about the programme are non-personal media. Secondly, the face to face contact between potential students after the presentations and at the study fairs represent personal media that will help create a bond between the potential students and the university. Additionally, any communication over the phone or email with the university's employees or students is personal media as well.

7.6 Financial implications

The financial implications of a promotion plan are a significant part for the academy. Costs can occur from labour work, the design, printing, and distribution of the promotional material. Costs might also arise from third party companies such as education agents, study fairs.

Therefore, the expected costs, expected benefits and feasibility have been discussed in the coming paragraphs and table.

Activity		Expected costs	Expected benefits
Pomotion brochures	Promotion brochures design Promotion brochures printing Promotion brochures spreading	The design and the spreading will be free as they will be included in the salary of the employee in charge. While the printing will costs 400 euro (for 2,000 copies) which is calculated as part of the budget of the department.	The brochures should raise awarenness prior to the presentations and fairs scheduled. They should also keep the future possible students attracted to the programme afterwards with facts and reviews.
Presentations	Preparing the promotional presentation Giving the promotional presentation in Saxion Giving the promotional presentation in Dutch partner universities	The preparation and the giving of the presentations is also free as it is included in the salary of the person in charge.	The presentations are meant to offer an example of what it would be like to study the course and provide an emotional connection with the university. They should also yield a data base of interested students for further contact.
Educational fairs	Applying to join educational fairs in the Netherlands Joining the educational fairs in the Netherlands	The tax for participation in suc a fair is an expected cost that depends on date, location, duration, size, and organizing party.	The educational fairs have the same expected benefits as the presentations.
Social media	Informing the Chinese social media manager about the key features of the master's programme in order to promote it	Free as it is part of the salary of the employee in charge.	The Chinese social media should create a following which will create word of mouth anf a emotional connection between the university and the possible future students.
Email, phone contact		Free as it is part of the salary of the employee in charge.	This type of contact should maintain the interest the future possible students have and increase it in order for them to finalize the application process.

Table 6.3: Expected costs and benefits of activities

The feasibility of all of the above actions except the presentations and the fairs is high as Saxion employees already do these tasks for the other programmes. The presentations within Saxion is also

high, though it might be challenging to find an appropriate date and time to hold it in order to have all HBS students available. The presentation in other Dutch universities might pose difficulties as the other universities might not be interested or might not want to promote another university's programme. While Saxion has not participate in any master's fairs in the Netherlands as it doesn't have that many currently, this action will not pose feasibility problems as it is quite straightforward.

Additionally, a part time employee or intern could be hired by Saxion in order to help out with the workload as the promotion of a master's programme is a time consuming task and might interfere with the tasks the current employees already have. Should an extra employee or intern be hired, his/her salary will constitute the expected cost of their tasks such as: designing and spreading the brochure, preparing and giving the presentation, participating in the fairs, communicating with the Chinese social media manager about the programme and the messages to promote, and managing the email account and phone calls. Moreover, if a employee works overtime, his/her salary for the extra time will also present a cost. This might happen if the study fairs or presentations are outside of the normal working hours.

Furthermore, travel costs will also be present as the employee responsible will need to travel to the partner Dutch universities to give the presentation, to the study fairs, and also to spread brochures. This amount is variable in the number of study fairs and universities that will be planned. A train pass for travelling at all times throughout the week anywhere in the Netherlands is 410 euro per month. However, Saxion's employees that require to use public transport for work often have a business card and it's expenses also enter the department's budget.

In conclusion, the advice option chosen and described in this chapter has quite high feasibility and is expecting high benefits while the biggest costs consist of the added salary of another employee or intern while the majority of the other costs are part of the department's budget.

8. Implementation plan

An advice for an implementation plan was designed for the proposed promotion plan. A successful promotion plan is depended on a properly designed implementation plan. Therefore, the PDCA cycle (plan-do-check-act), a performance management tool, was used to break down the steps needed to execute it.

8.1 Plan

All preparations required prior to the execution part should be made during this phase. Promotion material should be designed and printed. Promotion material should also be prepared for Saxion's Chinese social media as research proved to be an important source for the potential students to get information and a feel for the student experience. Promotion channels such as presentations and study fairs should be decided on. Preparations for organising the presentations inside Saxion as well as outside should start. One of the outside presentations that Saxion participates yearly is the one organised by NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences. Here, Saxion promotes its master programmes to current bachelor students of the NHTV University. Moreover, this presentation should emphasise on the features of the programme that the Chinese students feel attracted to and promote Saxion's Chinese social media and website. Additionally, the participation in study fairs should also be confirmed by contacting the organising institution and paying the required fee before the deadline. Furthermore, Saxion's representatives for China and the Chinese educational agents that Saxion is working with should be informed of this new master's programme and its features in order to promote it to interested local people and on Chinese social media sites.

8.2 Do

The plan phase secured all the preparation for the development of the promotion. The presentations inside and outside Saxion should be held in this second step of the implementation plan. Additionally, study fairs in the Netherlands should be attended. This phase requires the most attention to the market's initial response in order to provide feedback and possible improvements for the next phase.

8.3 Check

It is important to evaluate the promotion plan once the tuition fee payment deadline has passed in order to take appropriate steps towards improvement where needed. The people representing the master's programme throughout the do phase should provide insight and feedback into the target market that was reached and into the immediate market response they noticed and propose possible improvements based on their experiences. Additionally, the number of Chinese bachelor graduates in the Netherlands that have paid the master's tuition fee in time should be counted as this proves their dedication to following the course. HBS should also look deeper into these students and take a note of the channel they used to find out about this master's programme as well as what attracted them to it. A more profound look at the most successful channels and programme's features will help validate the current promotion tools or point towards steps of improvement that will be implemented for next year's applicants.

8.4 Act

The last phase of the PDCA cycle involves the adjustment of the promotion plan according to the information found during the check step. This will help improve the process and attract more Chinese students to the master's programme. Once the adjustments have been decided on, the PDCA cycle repeats itself and starts with the plan phase once again.

9. Advisory conclusions and future recommendations

A management question was formulated at the beginning of this report as follows: How can Saxion's Hospitality Business School promote its future Master in Hospitality Management in the region of China in order to attract students? The following paragraphs answered this management question and provided recommendations for future research.

One of Saxion's goals is to offer internationally recognised programmes to a student body of different nationalities. This helps create an international setting for the students where different perspective meets and have the opportunity to learn from one another which raises the quality of the course and satisfaction of the students.

This paper was designed to help this goal and had as objective attracting Chinese people to the upcoming Master in Hospitality Business. The conducted research uncovered the general view of the Chinese people towards studying in the Netherlands. This was not a satisfactory one as many Chinese people did not have knowledge on the country or its study opportunities. Therefore, classic promotion channels such as study fairs that would otherwise work in other countries were not successful in China. Moreover, research pointed out promotion trips inside local partner universities as a more successful channel as it would create a personal relationship between the university and the student as well as offer a preview of what studying at Saxion is like. However, this channel proved to be too expensive and unfeasible due to the difficulties in creating and maintaining relationships with high quality Chinese universities.

This proved that extensive promotion of the Netherlands as a study destination must be made by organisations such as Nuffic before any Dutch university can substantiate the time, effort, and money they need to invest in their own proper promotion plan in China with the profit gained from it.

Furthermore, research has pointed out that Chinese people trust family, friends, and their own people when taking advice on study destinations and courses. Additionally, the Chinese social media plays a big role in their decision making process as well. Here, potential students can find out information about the country, university, courses, and student life. A successful social media strategy would involve Chinese students taking about their experiences and life at Saxion as well as promoting student events.

Therefore, Saxion Hospitality Business School is advised to promote the Master in Hospitality Management to Chinese students that are doing their bachelor's study in the Netherlands. This will help the course build its international student body. At the same time, Chinese social media should be utilized as a tool where the master's students are asked to join in with their experiences while taking this course. Additionally, social media should promote features of the programme such as trips to local businesses or guest lectures. This social media strategy will help get the attention of the potential students studying in China as well as they get a feel for the student life in this master's programme and they receive trusted information from people of their own nationality that are currently following the course.

In conclusion, Saxion Hospitality Business School is advised to firstly, attract Chinese bachelor students in the Netherlands. Secondly, the client should promote the programme's features and its Chinese students' experiences on Saxion's Chinese social media in order to help build a following in China as well. The client is advised to also conduct further research in a few years' time in order to assess the position of the Netherlands on the studying abroad market and evaluated if a more local promotion strategy would yield a satisfactory return on investment.

10. Afterword

This research topic was introduced by the Hospitality Business School which is an academy of the Saxion University of Applied Sciences. This thesis research paper was part of a larger project in regards to the upcoming master's degree in Hospitality Management as requested by the 'client'. Each one of the project members dealt with a particular country or region. This researcher was in-charge of researching and advising on the region of China.

The researcher was proactively engaging with the first examiner and the involved stakeholders who dealt with the promotion efforts for the university. In total there were five meeting points with the first examiner. Three of the meetings were organized for the entire student project team. Those sessions made it clear for the researcher on which aspects to focus on and to overcome any obstacles. Secondly, there were two one-on-one meetings with the examiner where additional information was explained and the researcher's questions were substantially answered.

The researcher made sure to regularly update the first examiner on the progress of the report and received feedback. A meeting was also conducted with the client in which all researchers met and addressed the layout and boundaries of the project. A large aspect of the research design was to deal with participants. This meant that the communication between the participants and the researcher had to be done in a professional and hospitable manner. There were not any reported issues from the interviewees nor any exposed confidentiality about who they are as a person. Everything stayed under the paradigm of this research paper and the data was used for research purpose only.

The research project can be valuable for the hospitality industry when it comes to educating professionals who would one day lead tour operating companies and hotels. Furthermore, this paper takes a scope of the Chinese population which is ever-expanding and becoming wealthier. This means that there will be more Chinese potential students in the upcoming years who would like to study and work abroad. This research paper deals with explaining what the characteristics are of those potential students. This can be valuable information for both the education and the hospitality industry.

It encompasses critical knowledge that is helpful in developing a promotion plan to attract those students. Recommendations are also apparent here with ways of creating more exposure for not only the client but the Netherlands as well since it appeared to be widely misunderstood or unheard of by Chinese. Education is one scenario; however this study reveals certain behavior that is typical for a Chinese person that can be applied in other fields.

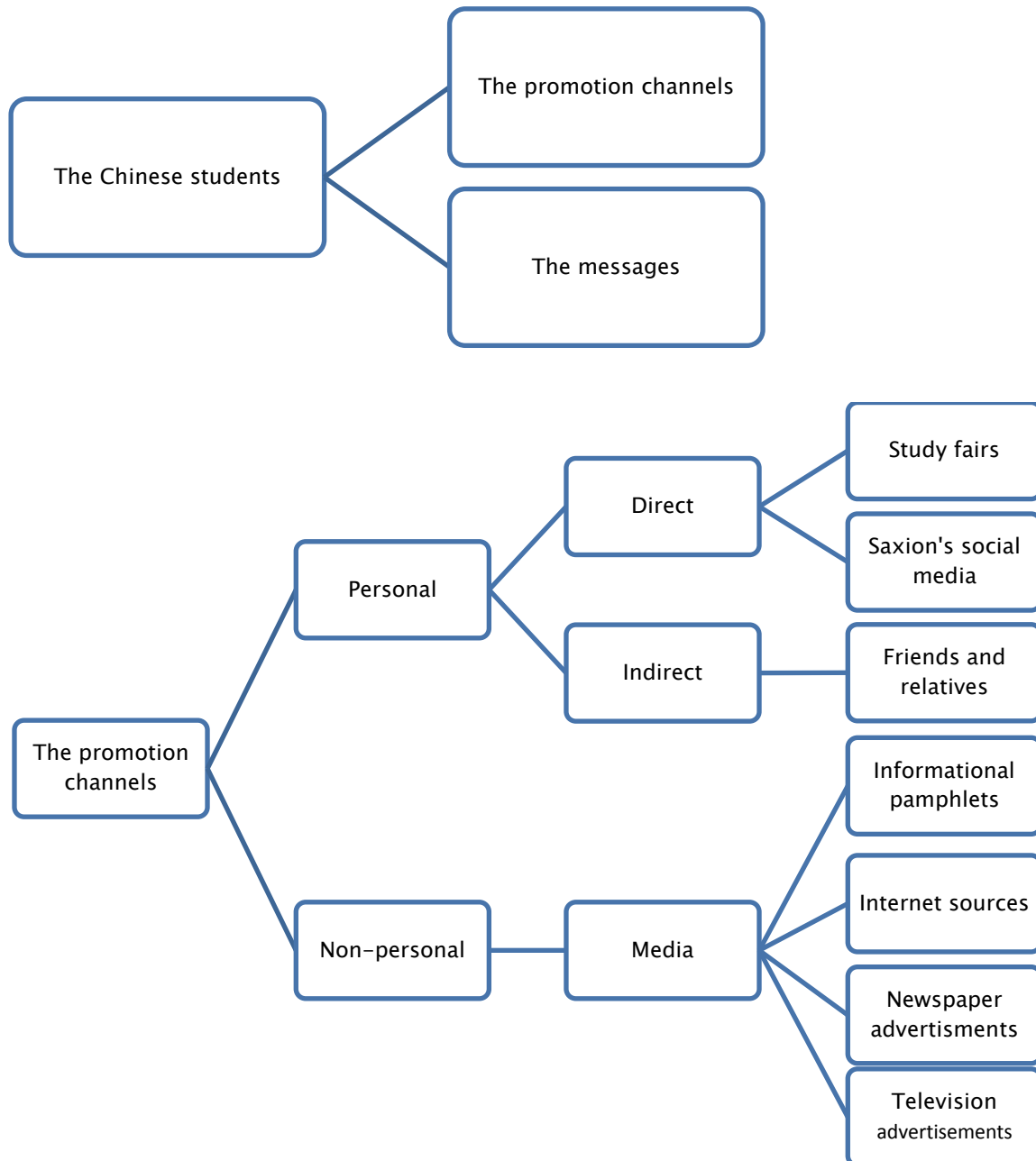
This study as well approves and disapproves previous found literature by adding fresh theory from the results section. Additional research is encouraged to be carried out in the spectrum of Chinese wanting to study abroad since this can one day be the source market not only for the client but as well for the Netherlands.

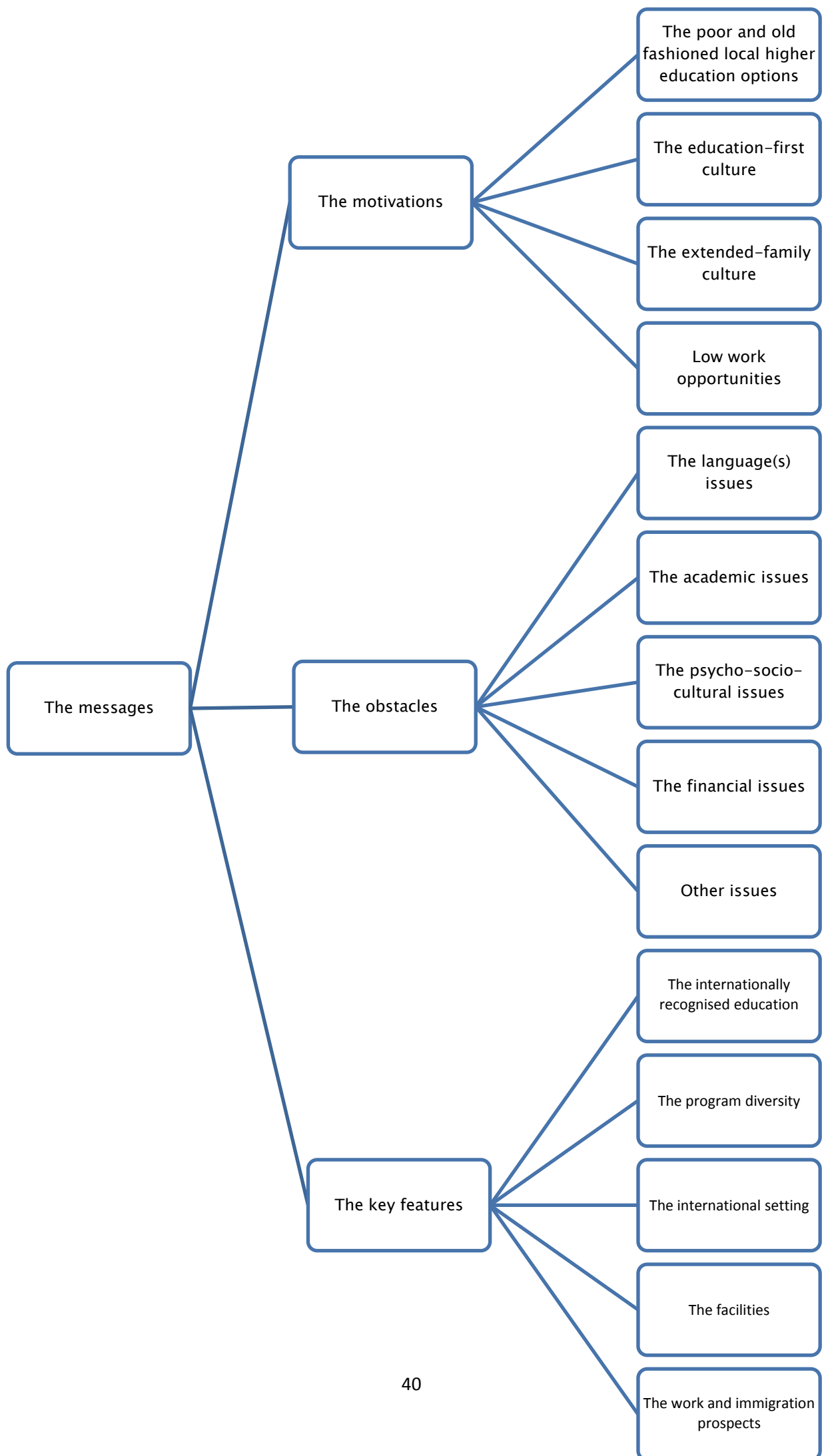
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12. Appendixes

10.1 Appendix I: The operationalisation of the potential Chinese students' characteristics





10.2 Appendix II: Interview guides

10.2.1 Interview guide 1

Interviewee: Saxion's HBS Account Manager for China, Coordinator of the "Doing Business with China" minor

Introduction

Thank the interviewee for agreeing to participate in the study.

Introduce yourself and the study (why is it happening, what we are looking into, what is the outcome, how will this interview help)

Explain the interview's reason, the main topics and the approximate length of the interview.

Main topics

What types of tasks do you have as an account manager for China?

- Attention points:
 - Chinese companies' relationship with Saxion
 - The promotion of Saxion's programs within Chinese companies

What other activities/events have you been a part of where you promoted Saxion and its programs to the Chinese market?

- Attention points:
 - Promotion channels
 - Study fairs
 - Friends and relatives
 - Informational pamphlets
 - Internet sources, social media
 - Newspaper advertisements
 - Television advertisements

Have you met and talked to potential Chinese students before or during their application process?

What motivates the Chinese students to come and study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - Rational/emotional appeal
 - The poor and old fashioned local higher education options
 - The education-first culture
 - The extended-family culture
 - Low work opportunities

What obstacles do the Chinese students usually face when coming to study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - The language(s) issues
 - The academic issues
 - The psycho-socio-cultural issues
 - The financial issues
 - Other issues

What features of the programs do the Chinese students usually feel attracted to come study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - The internationally recognised education
 - The program diversity
 - The international setting
 - The facilities
 - The work and immigration prospects
 - And more specifically, the features of the Master in Hospitality Business

Ending

Ask if the interviewee has any other aspects or thoughts she might like to add to conclude.

Thank again for participation and the (high) level of interest when answering it.

Ask if she'd like to receive the outcomes of the study at the end.

Ask if she can be contacted if any further questions arise.

10.2.2 Interview guide 2

Interviewee: Recruitment and Partnership Officer for Saxion

Introduction

Thank the interviewee for agreeing to participate in the study.

Introduce yourself and the study (why is it happening, what we are looking into, what is the outcome, how will this interview help)

Explain the interview's reason, the main topics and the approximate length of the interview.

Main topics

What types of tasks do you have as a Recruitment and Partnership Officer in relation to China?

- Attention points:
 - Promotion practices
 - Relationship with agencies, more students apply directly or through agency
 - Relationship with companies
 - Promotion channels
 - Types of study fairs, who attends: students, parents
 - Informational pamphlets
 - Internet sources, social media
 - Newspaper advertisements
 - Television advertisements

How is the budget allocated for promotion?

- Attention points:
 - Separate budget for bachelor and master programs
 - Agency fee paid by Saxion or student

How do you measure the succes of a promotion campaign / study fair attendance?

- Attention points:
 - Models/practices
 - Most successful & unsuccessful campaigns

What types of master programs are most requested by the Chinese market during fairs?

- Attention points:
 - A need for a master in hospitality

What motivates the Chinese students to come and study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - Rational/emotional appeal
 - The poor and old fashioned local higher education options
 - The education-first culture
 - The extended-family culture
 - Low work opportunities

What obstacles do the Chinese students usually face when coming to study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - The language(s) issues
 - The academic issues

- The psycho–socio–cultural issues
- The financial issues
- Other issues

What features of the programs do the Chinese students usually feel attracted to come study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - The internationally recognised education
 - The program diversity
 - The international setting
 - The facilities
 - The work and immigration prospects
 - And more specifically, the features of the Master in Hospitality Management

Ending

Ask if the interviewee has any other aspects or thoughts she/he might like to add to conclude.

Thank again for participation and the (high) level of interest when answering it.

Ask if she/he'd like to receive the outcomes of the study at the end.

Ask if she/he can be contacted if any further questions arise.

10.2.3 Interview guide 3

Interviewee 1: Saxion's former Student Ambassador for China, Saxion's former Marketing Intern for China

Interviewee 2: Saxion's current Student Ambassador for China, Student Ambassador for Nuffic (Separate interviews)

Introduction

Thank the interviewee for agreeing to participate in the study.

Introduce yourself and the study (why is it happening, what we are looking into, what is the outcome, how will this interview help)

Explain the interview's reason, the main topics and the approximate length of the interview.

Main topics

What types of tasks did you do as Chinese Student Ambassador for Saxion?

- Attention points:
 - Promotion practices
 - Relationship with agencies, more students apply directly or through agency
 - Relationship with companies
 - Promotion channels
 - Types of study fairs, who attends: students, parents
 - Informational pamphlets
 - Internet sources, social media
 - Newspaper advertisements
 - Television advertisements

What types of tasks did you do as a Marketing Intern for Saxion/Chinese Student Ambassador for Nuffic?

- Attention points:
 - Promotion practices
 - Relationship with agencies, more students apply directly or through agency
 - Relationship with companies
 - Promotion channels
 - Types of study fairs, who attends: students, parents
 - Informational pamphlets
 - Internet sources, social media
 - Newspaper advertisements
 - Television advertisements

How did you measure the success of a promotion campaign / study fair attendance?

- Attention points:
 - Models/practices
 - Most successful & unsuccessful campaigns

What types of master programs are most requested by the Chinese market?

- Attention points:
 - A need for a master in hospitality

What motivates the Chinese students to come and study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - Rational/emotional appeal
 - The poor and old fashioned local higher education options
 - The education–first culture
 - The extended–family culture
 - Low work opportunities

What obstacles do the Chinese students usually face when coming to study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - The language(s) issues
 - The academic issues
 - The psycho–socio–cultural issues
 - The financial issues
 - Other issues

What features of the programs do the Chinese students usually feel attracted to come study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - The internationally recognised education
 - The program diversity
 - The international setting
 - The facilities
 - The work and immigration prospects
 - And more specifically, the features of the Master in Hospitality Management

Ending

Ask if the interviewee has any other aspects or thoughts she/he might like to add to conclude.

Thank again for participation and the (high) level of interest when answering it.

Ask if she/he'd like to receive the outcomes of the study at the end.

Ask if she/he can be contacted if any further questions arise.

10.2.4 Interview guide 4

Interviewee: Saxion MBA alumni

Introduction

Thank the interviewee for agreeing to participate in the study.

Introduce yourself and the study (why is it happening, what we are looking into, what is the outcome, how will this interview help)

Explain the interview's reason, the main topics and the approximate length of the interview.

Main topics

How did you find out about the Netherlands as a possible study destination?

- Attention points:
 - Study fairs
 - Informational pamphlets
 - Internet sources, social media
 - Newspaper advertisements
 - Television advertisements
 - Word of mouth

What motivated you to come and study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - Rational/emotional appeal
 - The poor and old fashioned local higher education options
 - The education-first culture
 - The extended-family culture
 - Low work opportunities

What obstacles did you face when coming to study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - The language(s) issues
 - The academic issues
 - The psycho-socio-cultural issues
 - The financial issues
 - Other issues

What features of the program you are following did you feel attracted to come study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - The internationally recognised education
 - The program diversity
 - The international setting
 - The facilities
 - The work and immigration prospects
 - And more specifically, the features of the Master in Hospitality Management

What types of master programs are most requested by the Chinese market?

- Attention points:
 - A need for a master in hospitality

What promotion practices do you think would be successful in China that Saxion could do in order to attract master students?

- Attention points:
 - Study fairs
 - Informational pamphlets
 - Internet sources, social media
 - Newspaper advertisements
 - Television advertisements

Ending

Ask if the interviewee has any other aspects or thoughts she/he might like to add to conclude.

Thank again for participation and the (high) level of interest when answering it.

Ask if she/he'd like to receive the outcomes of the study at the end.

Ask if she/he can be contacted if any further questions arise.

10.2.5 Interview guide 5

Interviewee: Saxion MBA alumni, Saxion's Representative for China

Introduction

Thank the interviewee for agreeing to participate in the study.

Introduce yourself and the study (why is it happening, what we are looking into, what is the outcome, how will this interview help)

Explain the interview's reason, the main topics and the approximate length of the interview.

Main topics

What types of tasks do you have as Saxion's Representative to China?

- Attention points:
 - Promotion practices
 - Relationship with companies, universities
 - Agency fee paid by Saxion or student
 - Promotion channels
 - Types of study fairs, who attends: students, parents
 - Informational pamphlets
 - Internet sources, social media
 - Newspaper advertisements
 - Television advertisements

How do you measure the success of a promotion campaign?

- Attention points:
 - Models/practices
 - Most successful & unsuccessful campaigns

What types of master programs are most requested by the Chinese market?

- Attention points:
 - A need for a master in hospitality

What motivates the Chinese students to come and study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - Rational/emotional appeal
 - The poor and old fashioned local higher education options
 - The education-first culture
 - The extended-family culture
 - Low work opportunities

What obstacles do the Chinese students usually face when coming to study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - The language(s) issues
 - The academic issues
 - The psycho-socio-cultural issues
 - The financial issues
 - Other issues

What features of the programs do the Chinese students usually feel attracted to come study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - The internationally recognised education
 - The program diversity
 - The international setting
 - The facilities
 - The work and immigration prospects
 - And more specifically, the features of the Master in Hospitality Management

Ending

Ask if the interviewee has any other aspects or thoughts she/he might like to add to conclude.

Thank again for participation and the (high) level of interest when answering it.

Ask if she/he'd like to receive the outcomes of the study at the end.

Ask if she/he can be contacted if any further questions arise

10.2.6 Interview guide 6

Interviewee: Recruitment and Partnership Officer for Saxion

Interview held in cooperation with Jodie Mulder

Introduction

Thank the interviewee for agreeing to participate in the study.

Introduce yourself and the study (why is it happening, what we are looking into, what is the outcome, how will this interview help)

Explain the interview's reason, the main topics and the approximate length of the interview.

Main topics

What types of tasks do you have as a Recruitment and Partnership Officer in relation to China?

- Attention points:
 - Promotion practices
 - Relationship with agencies, more students apply directly or through agency
 - Relationship with companies
 - Promotion channels
 - Types of study fairs, who attends: students, parents
 - Informational pamphlets
 - Internet sources, social media
 - Newspaper advertisements
 - Television advertisements

How would you describe the image of HBS Saxion?

Who creates Saxion's awareness in non-European countries?

- Attention points:
 - Social media

How do you measure the success of a promotion campaign / study fair attendance?

- Attention points:
 - Models/practices
 - Most successful & unsuccessful campaigns

What types of master programs are most requested by the Chinese market during fairs?

- Attention points:
 - A need for a master in hospitality

How is the budget allocated for promotion?

- Attention points:
 - Separate budget for bachelor and master programs
 - Agency fee paid by Saxion or student

What are the general steps in a decision making process?

How do they collect information?

Which universities do they compare with?

Is there information available on students who are not choosing Saxion?

How much time is there between first contact and enrolment?

How much time is there between enrolment and start study?

What do you see as the main factors that have an influence on the decision making?

- Attention points:
 - Personal reasons
 - Promotion
 - Image country, city, university
 - Course program, facilities, job guarantee etc.
 - For China:
 - Rational/emotional appeal
 - The poor and old fashioned local higher education options
 - The education-first culture
 - The extended-family culture
 - Low work opportunities

What do international students attract to the Netherlands?

What do international students make them leave their country? Negative reasons, especially Argentina?

What do international students attract to Deventer?

How do the students experience the city?

- Attention points:
 - Migrations options, guarantee for a job, safety
 - Crisis, safety, poor education
 - For China:
 - The internationally recognised education
 - The program diversity
 - The international setting
 - The facilities
 - The work and immigration prospects
 - And more specifically, the features of the Master in Hospitality Management

What obstacles do the Chinese students usually face when coming to study in the Netherlands?

- Attention points:
 - The language(s) issues
 - The academic issues
 - The psycho-socio-cultural issues
 - The financial issues
 - Other issues

What are typical characteristics of international students who enrolled/started/ finished their study at Saxion?

What is the percentage of graduating? In how many years?

What are they doing after their study? (Staying in The Netherlands, what kind of work)

- Attention points:
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Ethical background
 - Income parents
 - Education parents

Ending

Ask if the interviewee has any other aspects or thoughts she/he might like to add to conclude.

Thank again for participation and the (high) level of interest when answering it.

Ask if she/he'd like to receive the outcomes of the study at the end.

Ask if she/he can be contacted if any further questions arise.

10.3 Appendix III: Open coding

Axial coding aspect	Open coding	Interviewe	Line number
Education fairs	Recruitment purposes	1	107
	Spreading information	1	106
	Setting an image for the market	1	108
	Not helpful	3 2	1325+1326 476
Agents	Easier to apply for education	3 6	1231+1232 2373
	Trustworthiness	3 4 5	1233+1234 1809 1944
	Massive turnover rate for relationship building	2	767+768
	Expensive but secure	3 4	1243+1244 1810
	Paid by students	2	415
	Easier to acquire information due to banned Netherlands websites	5	1973-1974
	Utilize own network to send students abroad	2	514+515
	Preference of agencies rather than fairs	2	484+485
	Chinese representatives are hired to work on the promotion	2	519+520
	Agency resources	4 5 1	1983 2251 318-319
Chinese universities	Spreading information	5	1970
	Cooperation	2 1	763 292+293
Chinese community	Trust in own people	1 4 5	128 1716 2180+2181, 2219
	Sticking together	4 2	1765 1028+1029
Motivations for studying in the Netherlands	Secondary choice	1 3 5	145 1220,1308 1934
	Central location in Europe	2	1021+1022

	Own decision (without parents)	6	2398
	Not being accepted elsewhere	1	143,144
	Quality education	1 6	146 2483,2486
	Reasonable price	1 3 2 6	146 1218 1037 2387
	Agent influence	1	151
	The English language prior to research	3 5 2 6	1222+1223 2021 618-620 2490
	Career-related	3 6	1387 2386
	No extra requirements for the masters	2	875
	The university requirements are less than in China	4 5	1719-1720 2163-2164, 2165+2166
	Application for the Orientation year visa	2	952+953
	The practicality approach of studying	4	1784+1785
	Search year Schengen visa	2 6	941+943 2421+2422, 2493
Motivations for studying abroad	Increasing demand for Chinese skilled labour	1	165+166, 193+194
	Advanced level of education	5 6	2157-2158 2384
	Meeting more people	4	1718
	Upper class able to afford the study	2	673
	Knowing best of both worlds	1 5	167+168,176+177 1995+1996
	Improving the position in the society	1	170
	Reassurance for a bright future	1 3 5 2	170+171, 1435+1436 1993, 2156+2157 964
	Opportunities after graduation	1 2 6	183 964 2385
	English language mastery	1	183+184

	Speaking professionally with companies	1	195+196
	Underperforming on the national entrance exam for higher education	3 6	1421 2525+2526
	Older Chinese people decide on their own what to study	2	820+821
	Parents requirement to study abroad	3 5 2 6	1434, 1438 2177+2178 799+800, 815 2391+2392
	Parents financial support	5 3 6	2002-2004, 2178 1410+1411 2393+2394
	The international environment	5 6	2150-2151 2492+2493
	Intense competition for local admission	5 4	2166+2167 1727-1728
Obstacles for studying in the Netherlands	The poor brand of the country in China	1 3 2	213 1307 437, 476, 479,624
	Lack of scholarships	2	436+437,687+688
	Cost-wise	3	1452
	Native language is not English	1	214
	Less connections in the Netherlands	1	217
	Little to none Chinese community	1	223+224
	Uncertainty about the location	1	225+226
	Language barrier	4 5	1749-1750, 1765 2008
	Cultural aspects	5 2	2009 1150,1154
	The English language test	3	1447
	Misconception about the Netherlands	1 4	129 1757-1758
	Unawareness about the Netherlands	1 2	111,133+134 624
	Difficulty in finding international friends	4	1764
	Doing everything yourself	5 2	2011 1158+1159
	Internship limitation	6	2407+2408
Obstacles for	Visa issues	5	1940,1950

studying abroad			
Key features of the program	Preference for smaller class sizes	3	1468+1469
		2	566
	Personal approach	2	902-904
	The reputation of the university	1	246+247
		J	556+557
	Active community of alumni	1	232+233
	Applying newest technology trends	3	1472
	Being treated as a friend	3	1475
	Extracurricular activities	1	245+255,256
	Start-up challenges	3	1486
	Have a tour through China to spread the words of the programme	1	279+280,308
	International events for students	1	261+262
	Partner with Chinese universities	4	1816
		5	2125+2126, 2242
		1	294+295
	Cooperate with companies to send their employees for one year education	3	1571+1572
	Cooperation with companies for internships	3	1487-1488
	Connection with Dutch companies after the study	3	1511-1512
		5	2121
	Chance of obtaining work experience	3	1514
	Invitation of experienced guest speakers	3	1515-1516
		4	1839-1840
	Short study duration to save money	4	1736-1737
	Opportunity to find a job after graduation in NL and China	5	2096+2097
	Better utilise Saxion's WeChat	5	2103
		1	232+233
	Hire people from other universities	5	2230
	Exchange program	6	2440+2441

10.4 Appendix IV: Code trees

