

Youth Impact Communication

A Project To Investigate Curricula Differences And Impact

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Summary

Identify the Topic

| Topic Description

The topic is based on one simple decision made by Chinese (mainland) parents: whether or not to send their children to international schools. We would like to examine whether this decision is capable to yield the results as expected when making such one, or just another form of “false consciousness.”

To make it clear in this case “international” refers to a characteristic of a school. If a school is “international,” in this project, then it means that the very school can provide curriculum/curricula different from the Chinese education system and the student group of which must include but not limited to Chinese citizens.

We would like our project to be informative and be able to help middle school students and their parents to make better decisions on whether to go on the path of international education to not.

| Why it is important

This topic is significant in our view because this topic represents not only a recent social phenomenon in both education and culture spheres but also a mark that reflects how Chinese citizens value education within a changing social context. Education matters because the upcoming generations would thrive on what they are exposed to. At the intersection of tradition and modern views of education, and ever-maturing economy of China, “to send or not to send children to international school” can be a question that almost every family would consider.

However, concerns may arise as this topic seems much larger than one project in control of high school students, thus hard to make an actual impact. Our team acknowledges this limitation, and, on top of that, we still find this topic of high intrinsic value because this ultimately provides empirical evidence to Chinese parents with this concern. The more important aspect of this project is the signal we try to send: to use scientific empirical evidence to re-evaluate the rationale behind common phenomena that rare actual efforts are put to testify--even a group of high school students have this capability to conduct research and make their impact. This means to think critically and share our project results. We

believe that the sharing informative results are just as, or even more, important than sharing a wonderful knowledge sphere, as this is one project with efforts and a unique perspective of our team.

The result that can be potentially yielded from this topic can change the way people view about event and decision not only in international education but in all fields as it encourages a holistic evaluation. Sending Children to International school is not something as unusual nowadays, yet people fail to provide concrete evidence upon making such a decision. But can this seemings pioneer-y resolution turn out to be, at least, not be the best ones? This is the question we are attempting to solve. With the insights we find on this very topic, we believe that we need to have more people understand when making their decisions. To circulate those evidence that parent needs when making a life-changing decision and investment for their children.

(For example, studying abroad would increase future income which can lead to a more satisfactory life. We would Justify it potential wrongness by referencing to Prof. Laurie R. Santos' courses on Science of well-being)

| Project Objective

The main objective of the objective is to be informative. This means that we aim to make the decisions of our target audiences upon whether choosing international school or not more rational, not to try to influence our target audiences directly. (The effectiveness of impact is determined by the rating of usefulness that our target audiences find.)

The object of our project is to provide scientific insights on a specific yet stereotypical view upon international education in China, especially mainland.

According to the MOE.org, 608,400 Chinese students left the country to pursue advanced studies overseas in 2017, tipping the number over the 600,000 marks for the first time, in an 11.74% increase in 2016.

It is widely acknowledged that relatively developed countries tend to provide better educations, and based on that very rationale, it is reasonable to get prepared as early as possible: the rate international schools that provide curricular systems different from the domestic Chinese one for Chinese students is increasing in an exceptionally high pace. It is essential here that we ask ourselves a question: Is it so? The focus of this project is the rationality of such a decision—send Children to international schools—by Chinese parents. We would examine factors generally adopted by those parents, in this case, the decision-makers, by both primary and secondary research. We would love to share our

insights and we would like you to understand the booming population of international schools, the product of increasing demands and social trends, is, in its very nature, reasonable, or just parents' assumed conclusions that are neither founded nor correct.

Identify the Target Audience

| Who Are They?

Chinese parents with children under 18 as well as the students who are making the decision whether to go to an international school or not.

| Why Are They?

As international education is boosting and willingness to study abroad increases dramatically, parents who are about to help their kids into the international education are likely to have misunderstanding upon some fundamental aspects and facts. Therefore, by providing parents with specific information and fundamental facts, we are able to clarify potential reasons that misleads parents to choose international education as their environments provided are not suitable for international education at all. By providing them with specific information and fundamental facts, we are able to help the parents to make more rational and suitable suggestions for their children.

| What is your scope?

We mainly want to impact parents with children in schools in Shanghai who are yet deciding whether sending their children to international schools or to domestic schools. We organize offline workshop and invite parents mainly from Shanghai Pinghe School and Shanghai East Experimental School to take part in out workshop.

| How to reach them?

We aim to provide valuable information through posting the content of investigation on public accounts of Wechat and Wechat groups. Besides, the workshop will resemble the parents from the middle department to further introduce the results of our investigation.

Identify the Key Message

| The Key Message

Your children's education, the future, should be accompanied by rationality. think critically, and make well-founded decisions. So we want to help you, help you to know more about the daunting curriculum, about the hidden reasons, with the aid of empirical evidence and our actual experiences.

| The Tactics Behind

By using future to describe the children's education, we successfully emphasize the cruciality of information that clarifies potentially existing misunderstandings. The word "should" arouses responsibility of parents to pay much attention to their children's future. Therefore, they are likely to be self motivated to provide crucial and beneficial decisions for their kids as great concerns generates among the parents. Rationality clearly demonstrate the characteristics of decisions made, the crucial quality that we aim to develop by the provision of information that clarifies particular points. "Think critically" and "well founded" both increase the power of the sentence, stimulating great credibility of the statement from the readers. Overall, several techniques enriches the slogan by stimulating great mood from the readers and credibility, which leads the parents taking actual actions.

Choose the Platform

| The Platform Chosen

1. We will carefully analyze the results we collect from the formal questionnaires. By processing the data, we can find how much we have changed the parents' point of view directly and effectively.
2. We will also collect responses from the parents directly. (The number of responses we delivered to parents) The responses will not only show how the parents' opinions have changed but also imply how the parents will influence their children after viewing our works.
3. We can measure the number of pamphlets that is received by the parents. Although this method is not as convincing as the previous ones because we cannot make sure that each parent will review our results seriously, it's a good way to help us evaluate our impacts more comprehensively.

| The Alternative Platforms

1. We will ask several agencies that are responsible for our contests to gather volunteers and hold a brief lecture to collect feedback from the volunteers.
2. We would spread information on a broader scale, if possible. Such begin on a population-heavy street, instead of the school gate.
3. We can create our own simple website (even though the number of visit can be limited).

 [Results Collection](#)

| The Criteria to Evaluate

1. Measurability: this is one of the most important and fundamental factors that should be taken into consideration. In our case, the platform three we choose might not fit perfectly under this criterion, as it is almost impossible to measure whether our audiences actually read our brochure thoroughly or not.
2. Quality of the feedback: the quality of the feedback from the platform can be used as an indicator to see whether the platform chosen has a pool of audience that are indeed interested in our research, thus producing high-quality feedback.
3. The Platform itself: various factors are linked to the platform itself including,

formality, the range of audiences, common topics covered, and whether is this possible for the audiences to discuss freely under the presentation part.

| The Rating Sheet

The Rating sheet would be constructed as a score for each platform we choose, with reference to the criteria we determined.

(You can refer to them in part 1 and 3 of this section) Suppose each criterium has a maximum score of 10.

Platform 1: publishing investigation on WeChat public account. $8+7+6=21$

platform 2: designing article $7+6+6=20$

platform 3: number of pamphlets $8+3+6=17$ (As the number of brochures does not contain any feedback, the mark for second criterion can be low.)

Set the Agenda

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3/15: Have an appointment with the president of the middle school to make a speech for the students

3/15: Finish the final draft of the paper.

3/18: Spread the pamphlet and talk with the president.

After 3/18: Enlarge the impact online by sharing the articles in different social media.

Design the Packages

 [Questionnaire](#)

 [SOCIO—Comprehensive research notes](#)

Create and Track the Impact

| The Execution Plan

Before 3.15, we promote the workshop that holds on 3.15 through Wechat public accounts and post information on the groups of parents in middle school. On March the third, we holds the workshop for the parents and students who are interested in international education in the meeting room 207 in high school department in Pinghe high school. During the discussion, we first illuminate the results of the research in detail so that parents are able to learn much about the international school. After the discussion, parents are allowed to asks questions related to the topic of the workshop.

On 3/20, we spread the pamphlets in the middle school and help parents finish a survey to collect the results of effectiveness of the survey.

| Impact Statistics

The first questionnaires receives 197 responses in total, and the second questionnaires receives 375 responses in total. Besides, there are huge amount of parents who are in contact with us to raise questions about international education. Most of them asks about what makes a students qualified to be a students attending international school and what skills should a students necessarily possess in order to improve themselves during learning in international education. We kindly offer our answers based on the research we have already done. Specifically, we claim that social skills are actually quite important during learning because the group projects are required to complete in many subjects. Therefore, it is definitely important to gain some social skills.

 [Statistics1](#)

 [Statistics2](#)

 [Results Collection](#)

| Collect Feedback

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Review and Reflections

| What Are Successful

*375 responses is the number showed on April 12th. There might be further increases.

The parts that we, as a team, considered as successful, are:

1. We approached hundreds of parent bravely, with plenty of response. We consider this as a successful part worth celebrating because this part is essentially the core component of this Youth Impact challenge, to execute and spread our ideas bravely, knowing that we are well-founded and have nothing to lose by communicating.
2. Our pamphlets did a wonderful job, as the number of responses topped our expectation. Almost every pamphlet receiver responded to us by either taking the post-experiment questionnaire or chatted with us via WeChat directly. This phenomenon reflected that our researches are indeed read and benefit them to a certain extent that they consider to fill out our online questionnaire.

Some elements that are proven effective in making this impact, according to our experiences in this case, are:

1. Present a well-demonstrated intention and identity within 10 seconds, being fast yet well-rounded is a challenge. One key factor that influenced our early rejection rate is directly related to this one. A mediocre introduction ruins all expectations. For Youth to impact, showing others the confidence and articulative skills beyond the level of youth is essential to initiate a conversation.
2. Well-prepared for all the pop question and judges, stay calm. Inner peace is always the panacea no matter how our team was challenged.

Overall, we are satisfied with the results, considering the workshops we held have a limited number of maximum attendees, 251 responses is indeed a number worth cheering, at least within our group.

| What to Improve

We acknowledge that even we did reach our goal, but this is still one thing that remains troublesome. As you might have understood that our aim is to provide parents undetermined to whether to send their children to attend the international curriculum or not make better and informed decisions.

We, alas, mainly held small workshops around prestigious public middle school in Shanghai, Pudong Area. But the inefficiencies inevitably occurred because this is not the perfectly matched targeted audiences we are searching for; meaning that while they might be interested, only around 20 parents indeed initiated an in-depth discussion with us.

We previously assumed that parents with the need to hear from actual international students and empirical evidence aggregated and delivered to them directly, because, after all, it costs just around nothing to give a glance. In reality, we ultimately learnt that there are way too many factors influencing their hospitality towards us. The key is not that we are giving them the information they might need, but that they refuse to accept information from high school students, our halo effect that determines all.

| Summarize Learnings

We learnt numerous things throughout this project, the most important one is to learn to substrate, or namely compromise. We, probably like most other teams, aim high enough that many of us might even be lost. Our team first sets the goal to make a comprehensive comparison between both Chinese and International curriculum and derive the conclusion by ourselves. As we find it impossible to do so, we gradually shrink our view from a panorama to a detailed shot. We, instead, by combining the pre-experiment survey with force field analysis, focus more on specific fields that most parents interest in, and dig deeper into those relative concrete topics to serve our best research results to them later on. Compromise does not mean that we are not doing a proper task, indeed we believe that it is necessary and a valuable lesson to learn. Be practical and then do our very best; willing to accept yet never give up easily.

We learnt to reflect and reshape. Yes, we did try, and we did finish our homework, but something is just not right. We sometimes are confused by the fact that we know just around nothing about which part we did is not good enough. This forces us to contemplate actively to conjure up several aspects that can be made better and be creative throughout. When the parents do not want to receive brochures, we then learnt to introduce ourselves by stating our purpose clearly instead of waiting for a response after reaching out; we added attractive elements to the cover and back page to make the entire reading experience better, and we even reframe the sentence according to their preferences.

Appendix

| Presentation File

 [Presentation file](#)

| Team Credits

Judge Comments

" As a teacher at an international school in China, I was really excited about this topic and think your topic description is clear. "

" While I can see the importance of your topic, you state that people "fail to provide concrete evidence" when making a choice to attend international schools. I'd like to know what this is based on. It seems as though most people would have at least one reason as to why they have made this choice. How can you know this? This is a large generalization, and seems rather unfounded. "

" This is really interesting. I wonder if they would have been more receptive to your information if you had been teamed with an adult school college counselor or a current university student. Something to think about when thinking about greater impact: who do you ally yourself with beyond your immediate group? "

" I think your brochure is great, and you clearly did academic research to support your information. However, you mention several times that parents did not seem as receptive to your presentation as you would have liked. Do you think preparing a video that could be shared (3 minutes or less) via QR code would have been helpful in getting your message out there? If you were not attempting to "sell" international schools and trying to educate parents on why they might want to choose, a QR code could have been more widely shared than to students/parents interested enough to come to your presentation. "

" I can appreciate that you learned several important process lessons (compromise, flexibility, and adaptability). I'm wondering what you learned related to the content topic of international school choice. Did you learn something about parent's choices (for example, what do parents prioritize when choosing a school for their children)? "

" When it comes to education parents generally want to provide their children with the most opportunities for growth and development, but not all parents are willing to put in the time to research those opportunities or how they vary from program to program, so I appreciate your goals to educate parents and students on the opportunities available to them in an international school verses a traditional domestic school. I think this is an important conversation between students and parents as well, so I like that your target audience was parents and students alike to help them make more informed decisions about their child's secondary education. "

" This presentation had some significant strengths, including speakers with an idiomatic command of English language and intonation, and both fluency and passion for their topic and the methodology that they used. On the other hand, the

heart of this presentation, meaning, the argument for attending an international school, was missing. From what the presenters told us, the decision to opt out of a traditional Chinese high school curriculum is one of the most difficult choices that student and parent can make; and yet why one might want to do this, and the advantages that might tempt her or him, were not discussed. Asking more questions might have helped: Is the international track easier? Do you get better teachers? Will it prepare you/me for life after high school? Get you/me into a better college? Help you/me to find a better and more satisfying job and way of life? All of these questions are likely on the mind of the parents and students that this project sought to engage, and yet they were not voiced. For me, this project was more about the methodology of marketing to private school parents than an exploration of academic choice. That said, some valuable lessons about how to reach such an audience were clearly learned. (end of Beatrice comment) "

" It is a big and serious topic, so need to be mindful that your research could really draw a conclusion or be valuable to your audience. I don't think the responses from surveys and interviews could help parents make the right decision, as it is really a complicated decision-making process involving so many factors. Maybe you should do more research, search more data and turn to some experts in education landscape to get more info about the advantages and disadvantages of leaning in International schools. "