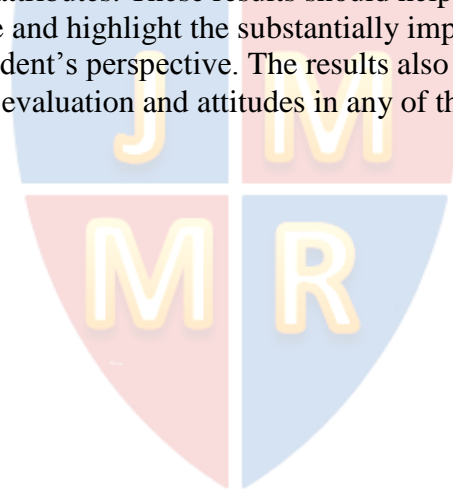# Measuring Chinese students' attitudes toward the marketing program

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ABSTRACT

This paper uses a model of measuring two attributes in comparing the characteristics of the marketing education program, observable and abstract, with respect to their practical significance to students' evaluation and attitudes toward the marketing program. Chi Squared test and Anova tests were used to analyze the data. The study found that students' evaluation and their attitudes are more understandably associated to the marketing program's observable attributes than to the abstract attributes. These results should help to develop a marketing campaign which will integrate and highlight the substantially important attributes of the marketing program from a student's perspective. The results also highlight the usefulness of the model in measuring students' evaluation and attitudes in any of the academic areas.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to measure Chinese students' evaluation and attitudes towards the marketing course and also to measure their perception of a career in marketing. This paper would be the first in a series measuring and comparing students across various countries taking the same marketing courses. This, student-based research can provide information to educators about students' evaluation, attitudes and expectations of the marketing program so that they can develop the appropriate promotional packages to inform and attract students. Through these discoveries, educators can adjust or modify their marketing programs better preparing them for the future. Using effective models to measure students' evaluation and attitudes makes available to researchers, specific details that educators and other scholastic influencers can easily apply on an ongoing basis to improve the rigor of the program. Student based research can recognize and support in explaining issues in education programs that have led to declining enrollments that may be due to students' insight about courses and their career path.

It is clear that there is more competition within the higher education sector and therefore meeting the requirements of students is placing a greater burden on academic organizations to address these needs (Binney, Kennedy & Hall, 2004; Cheng &Tam, 1997). A marketing concept in which the consumers' expectations are expected to be met, the student is regarded as the consumer and ongoing studies of student satisfaction (Elliot and Shin 2002; Gremeler & McCollough 2002) are some of the quality assurance guidelines methods used to oversee this concern in higher education (Centre for Education and Development and Support 2004; King et al. 1999). There are many complex issues that are presented when studying large classes, (Cuseo 2007) as large classes are usually a combination of students across various disciplines. Thus, the view may be a bit distorted as students may have a different reason or point of view about the marketing class they are taking since marketing is not their major field of study. This paper focuses solely on students who are in an upper level marketing class whose major field of study is business.

Consumers' attitude towards product attributes influences their purchasing behavior toward these products as marketing theory and research indicates (Hatzious, 1996; Claiborne & Sirgy, 1990). Centered around their image of the product consumers develop these attitudes (Hatzious, 1996); from this research perspective students will form those attitudes from both the observable and abstract attributes.

Attitude toward the behavior is defined as "a person's general feeling of favorableness or unfavorableness for that behavior" (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), Lutz (1981, p. 234) definition of attitude is one expressing hidden feelings of liking or not liking towards an object, person, issue, or behavior. Attitude toward behavior is a function of the product of one's belief that performing the behavior will lead to certain outcomes and an evaluation of the outcomes i.e., positive feeling towards a career in marketing will shape a students' attitude towards the marketing program. Attitudes over a period are learned by individuals interacting directly with the brand or product (marketing course) or by attaining the details about the brand or product (marketing course). Consumers use attitudes that are learned as a guide to their behavior with respect to the attitude object, thereby establishing constantly positive or negative forms of behavior. Measuring attitude can offer some dimension of a consumers' inclination towards a particular brand or product. The presumption is that attitudes are a sign of behavior (Hatzious, 1996). If a person is favorably

motivated towards an object (brand or product) the perception is that it would favor positive behaviors with regards to the object, or in this respect encouraging behavior towards the marketing program.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this research project was to establish how Chinese students at a Chinese university feel about particular attributes of the marketing program and their evaluation and attitudes towards the marketing course. The study addresses the following research objectives, specifically:

1. What is their interest in the marketing courses offered in the program?
2. What is their evaluation of the marketing courses offered in the program?
3. How do the marketing courses compare to other business courses?
4. Why did they choose a marketing course?
5. What is their view of marketing as a career?

This research study determines how students at the university in China view the particular characteristics of the marketing program and then assesses the association of each of those evaluations and attributes towards the students' career in marketing.

The findings help instructors to generate effective marketing campaigns to inform and attract students in order to retain them in the program, by establishing the effectiveness of the programs from a student's perspective.

METHODOLOGY

Instrumentation

The research study was empirical in nature with a questionnaire being used, sent via e-mail to students in the upper level marketing courses at the end of the semester. Two basic sets of information were required in the development of the instrument: observable and abstract attributes of the marketing education program, as recognized by students. As well, an overall student evaluation and attitude toward marketing as a career was required. To gauge both the students' observable attributes of the program and the abstract attributes of the program; a questionnaire consisting of variables that measured their overall evaluation and attitudes toward the marketing course or the marketing program was designed.

Attributes

A comprehensive set of attitude statements with regards to the marketing program was created from literature review. The attributes were developed concentrating on the findings from a wide-ranging assessment of related literature from educators both marketing and other business areas. The resulting instrument was endorsed by a panel based on their on their experience and knowledge in conducting marketing research and survey research in the past.

The focus group interview was conducted with the experts in the field to focus the instrument in the direction of understanding the marketing students and measuring the program from their point of view. The panel consisted of 5 academics at the current university across various disciplines as well as 6 marketing executives from several agencies in the business community, all of whom were fluent in English.

Observable Attributes

One section of the questionnaire consists of the observable attributes of the program. So that the observable attributes of the program could be measured, a scale was designed which has been used previously to successfully measure self-perception and self-expression of the marketing course. The ideal self-perception was obtained by asking students questions as to why they chose this marketing course, how confident they are in what they are learning and their evaluation of the course taken. The idea of self-expression is obtained when students rate how they compare the marketing course to other business courses and their interest in the course and the relevance to their career. For this attribute, several measurement scales were used, from; strongly disagree to strongly agree, scale of 1-5; as well as a very unlikely to very likely, scale of 1-5. Then they were questioned as to the degree to which they thought that the marketing education program influenced each construct under this attribute.

Abstract Attributes

This part of the questionnaire measures the students' perceptions of the abstract attributes with respect to the marketing course. The students were asked to indicate on the questionnaire their significance assessment of their perception of the program with regards to their career. For this attribute, the measurement was from; strongly disagree to strongly agree, scale of 1-5. Then they were questioned as to the degree they thought that the marketing program influenced this construct under this attribute.

Student Research Analysis

The research was conducted on six main levels, that is:

1. Students' interest in marketing
2. Students' confidence in their marketing ability
3. Students' evaluation of marketing courses
4. Students' comparison of marketing courses to other business courses
5. Students' reason for choosing a marketing course
6. Students' perspective towards a career in marketing

For all the following data analysis, the number and percentage represent the students who answered in the positive for each question, either agree/strongly agree or likely/very likely.

STUDENTS' INTEREST IN MARKETING

Students were asked what their actual interest is in the subject of marketing.

Although many students were interested in understanding the basics of marketing, some are interested in marketing because of career choices or using the knowledge in the future. The variation in the answers given suggests that students have some interest in understanding the subject, but it is at best rather fragmented, as some are interested because of the subject matter and some because of career choices.

Table 1: Interest in marketing

Response	Number/Percentage of Respondents
Understanding principles of marketing	372 (67.26%)
Understanding advances in marketing	486 (87.88%)
Pursuing a career in marketing	362 (65.46%)
Using marketing knowledge in the future	495 (89.51%)
Working on assignments/projects	340 (64.48%)

STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE IN THEIR MARKETING ABILITY

Students were asked about their understanding and ability to discuss marketing concepts. Although many students were confident in their understanding of marketing, some also have the skills and knowledge to analyze and explain marketing concepts. The variation in the answers given suggests that students have some confidence in the subject and that they understand the concepts but it also suggests that students seek knowledge through business examples.

Table 2: Confidence in marketing ability

Response	Number/Percentage of Respondents
Understanding of marketing concepts	339 (61.30%)
Ability to write about marketing concepts	179 (32.37%)
Ability to explain about marketing through discussion	316 (56.80%)
Analyzing case studies	252 (45.74%)
Understanding concepts through the business examples	485 (87.14%)

STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF MARKETING COURSES

Students were asked to evaluate the marketing course on their learning. Although many students evaluated the course based on their learning, most indicated that reading the text was helpful in their learning; some indicated that assigned homework was of little help to them. The variation in the answers given suggests that students have a preference for the method of learning as some preferred to read while some preferred to use the Internet.

Table 3: Evaluation of marketing course

Response	Number/Percentage of Respondents
Reading the text	419 (75.76%)
Doing assigned homework	274 (49.91%)
Research on Internet	463 (83.73%)
Participating in class discussion	361 (65.28%)
Writing reports	287 (51.89%)
Working on final project	344 (62.21%)

STUDENTS' COMPARISON OF MARKETING COURSES TO OTHER BUSINESS COURSES

Students were asked to compare the current marketing courses to other business courses taken previously.

Many students evaluated the course based on how challenging, interesting, and demanding it was compared to other business courses. Most indicated that they strongly agree that the course was as challenging as other courses, while less indicated that they had control of the pace of the course. The variation in the answers given suggests that students didn't see much difference between the marketing course and other business courses and that most will recommend the course to other students.

Table 4: Comparison of marketing course to other business courses

Response	Number/Percentage of Respondents
Marketing course was more challenging	320 (57.86%)
Marketing course was more interesting	323 (58.41%)
I learned more in this marketing course	302 (54.61%)
I had more control over the pace of learning in this course	265 (47.92%)
I had to prepare more for this marketing course	307 (55.51%)
I would take more marketing courses	352 (63.65%)
I would recommend this course to other students	391 (70.70%)

STUDENTS' REASONS FOR CHOOSING A MARKETING COURSE

Students were asked the reason why they chose their current marketing course.

Although many students evaluated the course based on how interesting and convenient the marketing course was to them, most indicated that they strongly agree that the course would be helpful to their careers and would provide a better career base for them. The answers given suggest that students had a variety of reasons to choose the marketing course and that most chose because of career reasons rather than curriculum selection or recommendations.

Table 5: Reasons for choosing this marketing course

Response	Number/Percentage of Respondents
Course was more interesting	436 (78.84%)
It provides a wider career base	403 (72.88%)
Allows flexibility to specialize in my career	429 (77.57%)
Fits in with other courses	383 (69.26%)
Prior knowledge of marketing	356 (64.37%)
It is a popular subject	283 (51.17%)
It was compulsory	250 (45.20%)
It was recommended to me	214 (38.70%)

STUDENTS' VIEWPOINT TOWARDS A CAREER IN MARKETING

Students were asked their point of view towards a career in the marketing field.

Although many students evaluated the course based on their career path and how the marketing course will help them in the future, most indicated that they strongly agree that the course helps them in their understanding of marketing concepts, even though they would not pursue a career in marketing. The variation in the answers given suggests that students had many reasons to believe that choosing this marketing course would be either helpful in the future or with their careers.   .

Table 6: Viewpoint towards a career in marketing …

Response	Number/Percentage of Respondents
Course helps in understanding marketing concepts	470 (84.99%)
Helps in choosing a career path	332 (60.04%0
Find a job after graduating	371 (67.09%)
Advances chosen career field	370 (66.90%)
Useful in the future	421 (76.13%)
Some marketing knowledge is required	415 (75.05%)
I will pursue a career in marketing	184 (33.27%)

Sample and Data Collection

The research study was empirical in nature, with a questionnaire being e-mailed out to the students near the end of the semester. For the Chinese students the survey was completed at Shantou University, Shantou, China.

The questionnaire method was selected for its ease of distribution and low-cost process especially in the student research survey. Personal interviews, although a reliable and preferred method for qualitative data research, were not considered practical due to their high cost in terms of time needed. The student questionnaire was given to all students in the upper level marketing class, 553 students, in their final week in the course. It consisted of a combination of both open and closed ended questions, including a few qualitative in design, making a total of 45. This was

answered by the students, and then sent to me via e-mail, with a response rate of 87 per cent.

Research Hypotheses Concepts:

1. Students' interest in marketing
2. Students' confidence in their marketing ability
3. Students' evaluation of marketing courses
4. Students' comparison of marketing courses to other business courses
5. Students' reason for choosing a marketing course
6. Students' perspective towards a career in marketing

The research hypotheses are directly related to the student's intended major and choices of marketing subjects. The research attempts to measure if there are differences between the students' intended major, choice of classes and their observable and abstract attributes.

The development of the following hypotheses was based on the premise that different groups of students based on their major field of study exist in relation to their benefits expected from a marketing course. Thus:

H1. Student groups seeking different benefits (payback) from a marketing course will display differences in demographic characteristics with regards to (a) gender, (b) age, and (c) year of study.

H2. Student groups seeking different benefits (payback) from a marketing course will display differences in student characteristics with regards to (a) interest, (b) confidence, (c) evaluation, (d) comparison, (e) reason for choosing, and (f) career perception

H3. Student groups seeking different benefits (payback) from a marketing course will display differences in the amount of hours of study in (a) preparing for a marketing course and (b) preparing for all courses.

The following hypothesis was developed based on the assumption that there will be differences in students' responses due to demographical and behavioral characteristics for each of the tested construct cluster: (a) observable, and (b) abstract. Thus:

H4. Students will display differences due to their demographical and behavioral characteristics in response to each of the measured construct clusters in terms of (a) interest, (b) confidence, (c) evaluation, (d) comparison, (e) reason for choosing, and (f) career perception

DATA ANALYSIS

Univariate analysis (χ^2 test and Anova) was used to test the significance of means between groups within the study. Before analyzing the data, an examination of the results was performed to describe the sample size and frames and to present the results of the survey.

Table 7: Characteristics of the sample

Variable		Male 220(39.8)	Female 333(60.2)	Total
Age	20	40 (42.6)	54 (57.4)	94 (16.99)
	21	83 (36.9)	142(63.10	225 (40.68)
	22	39(23.0)	131(77.0)	170 (30.75)
	23+	58(90.6)	6(9.4)	64 (11.58)
Year of Study	2	74(36.8)	127(63.2)	201 (36.35)
	3	99 (36.8)	170(63.3)	269 (48.64)
	4	47(56.6)	36(43.4)	83 (15.01)
Major of Study	Marketing	94(37.9)	154(62.1)	248 (44.85)
	Management	34(61.8)	21(38.2)	55 (9.94)
	Other	92(36.8)	158(63.2)	250 (45.21)
Hours preparing for Marketing course	<5	140(36.0)	249(64.0)	389 (70.34)
	5-10	80(61.5)	50(38.5)	130 (23.51)
	10-15	0(0.0)	16(100.0)	16 (2.89)
	>15	0(0.0)	18(100.0)	18 (3.26)
Hours preparing for all courses	<5	36(57.1)	27(42.9)	63 (11.39)
	5-10	129(59.7)	87(40.3)	216 (39.06)
	10-15	3(6.9)	42(93.3)	45 (8.14)
	>15	52(22.7)	177(77.3)	229 (41.41)

Reliability

Reliability measures the degree to which the questionnaire supplies consistency of respondents' answers to all the items in a measurement. A reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) for the observable and abstract attributes was conducted after all data were collected and the study was completed; to establish the internal reliability of the questionnaire responses. An alpha score of .70 or higher is desired and was achieved for the research, which means, internal reliability of the measures used in this research can be considered to be good. These attributes are found in Table 8.

Table 8: Attributes of the marketing program

Observable Attributes:

Construct	Variables	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha (correlation coefficient)
Interest	Understanding the principles of marketing. Working on marketing projects	0.82 0.82	0.72
Confidence	Your understanding of marketing concepts. Your ability to write about marketing concepts	0.88 0.88	0.71
Evaluation	Participating in class discussions Working on marketing projects.	0.72 0.72	0.74
Comparison	The marketing course was more challenging The marketing course was more interesting I would take more marketing courses.	0.60 0.75 0.78	0.72
Choice	It allows me more flexibility in my career It offers me more career choices I had prior knowledge of marketing	0.84 0.79 0.74	0.70

Abstract Attributes:

Construct	Variables	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha (correlation coefficient)
Career	In helping me choose a career path In helping me find a job after graduating In helping me advance in my chosen career field	0.83 0.80 0.75	0.71

RESULTS

H1: Profiles Based on Demographic Characteristics

For H1, χ^2 test was implemented to establish if the resulting groups had differences in demographic characteristics.

Based on the results of analysis, a chi-squared test was undertaken to establish if the three groups differ in demographic characteristics The results showed that the groups had differences in gender (χ^2 =12.44, p <0.01), age (χ^2 =83.77, p <0.001), and year of study (χ^2 =33.33, p <0.0001), supporting H1a-c .

In terms of gender, all three groups had similar percentages of male and female. It can be stated that mostly females attended marketing and other business courses as compared to other non-business majors. With regards to age, except for the 22 and 23+ year olds, the marketing group had the biggest percentage of all the ages, which was more dominant in the 'other' group. Data indicates that the younger students tend to favor the marketing program and thus marketing courses. In terms of year of study, marketing students had the largest group in year 2 of study whereas years 3 and 4 was dominated by the 'other' group.

Table 9: Profiles based on demographics

Variables	Group 1 (Marketing) n1 (%)	Group 2 (Management) n2 (%)	Group 3 (Others) n3 (%)	Pearson (χ^2)
Gender				
Male	94 (42.73%)	34 (15.45%)	92 (41.82%)	
Female	154 (46.23%)	21 (6.31%)	158 (47.45%)	12.44*
Age				
20	62 (65.96%)	8 (8.51%)	24 (25.53%)	
21	132 (58.67%)	20 (8.89%)	73 (32.44%)	
22	42 (24.71%)	17 (10.00%)	111 (65.29%0	
23+	12 (18.75%)	10 (15.63%)	42 (65.63%)	83.77***
Year of Study				
2	192 (95.52%)	9 (4.48%)	0	
3	44 (16.36%)	36 (13.38%)	189 (70.26%)	
4	12 (14.46%)	10 (12.05%)	61 (73.49%)	33.33***

* p<0.05   ** p < 0.01   *** p< 0.001

H2: Segment Profiles Based on Students' Characteristics

For H2, ANOVA test was implemented to establish if the groups differ in students' characteristics: observable and abstract variables. To decide if the students seeking diverse benefits from marketing courses had differences in observable and abstract characteristics, ANOVA tests were conducted (Table 10). When the three groups were compared in observable characteristics, no differences were detected for interest and choice variables among the groups.

However, differences existed in confidence (F =2.20, p <0.001), evaluation (F =4.99, p <0.001), and comparison (F =4.98, p <0.001). (Table10) Thus, *H3b, H3c* and *H3d* were supported, while *H3a* and *H3e* were not.

When the three groups were compared in abstract characteristics, the variable showed no differences in career decisions, not supporting *H2f*.

Students showed no difference among the groups in being confident about taking a marketing course and in their evaluation of the course. When compared to other business courses no difference was shown, as they may be expecting all courses to be similar in content and learning. Regarding abstract outcomes, there were major differences among the groups as possibly only marketing students would display a greater tendency towards marketing as a career.

Table 10: Profiles based on student characteristics

	Group 1 (Marketing) N= 248	Group 2 (Management) N= 55	Group 3 (Others) N=250	F Values	P Values
Observable Construct					
Interest variable	4.12	4.01	3.96	2.20	.112
Confidence variable	3.73	3.21	3.78	4.99	.007
Evaluation variable	3.88	3.28	3.80	5.01	.006
Comparison variable	3.85	3.12	3.80	4.98	.008
Choice variable	3.84	3.80	3.92	2.84	.071
Abstract Construct					
Career variable	3.90	3.87	3.84	0.31	.734

H3: Segment Profiles Based on Students' Effort in Marketing Courses

For H3, χ^2 test was implemented to establish if the groups had differences in students' effort in terms of hours studying (Table 11).

When the three groups were compared in the amount of hours spent preparing for courses, the results showed that there were differences in the groups.

When the three groups were compared on both levels: hours studying for marketing courses and all courses, differences were detected among the groups. The groups showed differences in preparing for marketing courses (χ^2 =45.25, p <0.001), and preparing for all courses (χ^2 =74.20, p <0.001), supporting H3a-b.

Students showed differences among the groups in that marketing students prepared more for their courses whereas the 'other' group prepared more for other courses.

Table 11: Profiles based on student efforts

	Group 1 (Marketing)	Group 2 (Management)	Group 3 (Others)	Pearson (χ²)
Hours preparing for Marketing courses				
<5	162 (41.65%)	50 (12.85%)	177 (45.50)	
5-10	70 (53.85%)	5 (3.85%)	55 (42.31%)	
11-15	0	0	16 (100%)	
>15	16 (88.89%)	0	2 (11.11%)	45.25***
Hours preparing for All courses				
<5	2 (3.17%)	4 (6.35%)	57 (90.48%)	
5-10	114 (52.78%)	32 (14.81%)	70 (32.41%)	
11-15	22 (48.89%)	5 (11.11%)	18 (40.00%)	
>15	110 (48.03%)	14 (6.11%)	105 (45.85%)	74.20***

* p<0.05   ** p < 0.01   *** p< 0.001

H4: Construct Profiles Based on Students' Characteristics

For H4, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was implemented to establish if the groups had differences in students' characteristics: differences among the construct clusters, both (a) observable and (b) abstract (Table 12).

This test was used to determine whether there were differences in the reflection of the constructs across the students' different demographic profiles and behavioral characteristics. The dependent variable was each of the individual constructs among the observable and abstract clusters: (a) interest, (b) confidence, (c) evaluation, (d) comparison, (e) reason for choosing, and (f) career perception. The independent variable being each of the demographic profiles and behavioral characteristics such as: gender, age, year of study and number of hours spent studying for marketing and all courses.

For the Interest construct, the tests shows that there were significant differences by the category of age and hours preparing for courses (marketing and all). Older students had a higher score for this variable than younger students. As for hours spent preparing, students who prepared more for their courses had a higher score for their interest in marketing courses.

For the Confidence construct, the test shows that there were significant differences by the category of hours preparing for courses (marketing and all). Students who prepared more for their courses had a higher score for their confidence in marketing courses.

For the Evaluation construct, the tests show that there were significant differences among all of the categories: gender, age, year of study and hours preparing for courses (marketing and all). This indicates that each of the demographic and behavioral characteristics showed differences in how they evaluated the marketing course. This indicates that each of the demographic and behavioral characteristics showed differences in how they compared the marketing course to other business courses, except for the year of study.

For the Choice construct, the tests show that there were significant differences among the

categories: gender, age and hours preparing for courses (marketing and all). This indicates that each of the demographic and behavioral characteristics showed differences in how they chose the marketing course, except for their gender.

For the Career construct, the tests show that there were significant differences among the categories: gender, age and hours preparing for courses (marketing and all). This indicates that each of the demographic and behavioral characteristics showed differences in how they perceived the marketing course will help their future career, except for their gender.

Table 12: Profiles based on demographics and behavioral characteristics

Construct/ Demographic and Behavioral Variables	Interest variable	Confidence variable	Evaluation variable	Comparison variable	Choice variable	Career variable
Gender	*F= 1.92*	*F= 1.42*	*F= 29.79****	*F= 43.96***	*F= 3.41*	*F= 0.33*
Male Female	4.10 3.99	3.67 3.75	3.50 3.99	3.47 3.99	3.80 3.95	3.84 3.88
Age	*F= 9.50***	*F= 0.99*	*F= 11.48****	*F= 17.84****	*F= 19.77****	*F= 9.28***
20 21 22 23+	3.91 3.86 3.81 4.39	3.82 3.71 3.66 3.77	3.53 3.82 3.65 4.45	4.04 3.53 4.08 3.48	4.45 3.72 3.69 4.20	3.91 3.68 4.11 3.81
Year of Study	*F= 2.51*	*F= 2.01*	*F= 3.17**	*F= 1.25*	*F= 26.27****	*F= 5.45***
2 3 4	4.04 3.95 4.20	3.69 3.70 3.88	3.90 3.75 3.57	3.76 3.75 3.93	3.66 3.95 4.48	3.75 3.95 4.05
Hours preparing for Marketing course	*F= 34.19****	*F= 35.68****	*F= 29.51****	*F= 24.27****	*F= 16.96****	*F= 42.16****
<5 5-10 11-15 >15	4.12 3.53 5.00 5.00	3.62 3.53 5.00 4.89	4.16 2.98 1.00 4.11	3.76 3.51 5.00 4.89	3.92 3.56 5.00 4.56	3.65 4.38 5.00 3.89
Hours preparing for All courses	*F= 4.98***	*F= 20.32****	*F= 11.56****	*F= 21.81****	*F= 15.91****	*F= 14.69****
<5 5-10 11-15 >15	3.67 4.00 4.27 4.17	3.66 3.86 4.33 4.57	4.19 3.78 4.42 3.58	3.27 3.76 4.64 3.77	3.81 4.00 4.62 3.66	3.5 3.93 4.51 3.73

* $p<0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p< 0.001$

DISCUSSION

This study was developed for the marketing program to explore the associations of the observable and abstract attributes of Chinese students' evaluation and attitudes about the marketing program at the university level. Evaluation and attitude towards the marketing program attributes is presumed to correlate very closely to students' inclination to register and continue in the program. The affiliation through the different groups of business students was successfully measured. In the past sometimes only the tangible attributes of the program or the program itself have been focused on by researchers to measure students' perceptions (Clodfelter, 1984; Reed & Smith, 1985; Hatzious, 1996).

Analysis of the data shows that students' evaluation and attitudes are more directly correlated to some of the observable attributes, but not the abstract attributes of the marketing education program. This would not be surprising as only the student marketing group would have a positive attitude towards marketing as a career. The attitudes of the students were also directly associated to certain observable attributes of the program, such as: confidence, evaluation and comparison of the marketing program. There were some differences among the groups in assessing the interest and choice of the marketing program.

While some university students can still be influenced to change their future career interests after starting a degree program; as they are not certain about what career paths they will follow. The target market consists of all students in the marketing program, both those registered and those not registered of for the marketing program. They need to be made aware and knowledgeable so that they can be easily persuaded by the benefits of the program or courses. If other students outline some benefits that are either course-related or career-related, then that would be beneficial to the university, even if it's applicable to only one group of students: the marketing students. Members of their peer groups can also be impacted by these current students to join in the marketing program. Marketing students that are participating in the program have already been motivated in a positive manner; however, universities must endure to develop marketing strategies that are effective and programs designed to retain them in the program. A positive attitude of students who are enrolled in the marketing program will result in a positive transference of inspiration toward all other perspective students and others.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to assess the perception of marketing classes by Chinese university students. The study investigated the concept of both the observable and abstract attributes from a students' perspective. The basic scale was comprised of six constructs; Interest, Confidence, Evaluation, Comparison, Choice (Observable) and Career (Abstract). The subjects were divided into groups based on their major: Marketing, Management and Other. The results indicate that while there is a relationship among the groups on some of the constructs, there is a difference among the groups in terms of career.

For students; both perspective and current, a directed marketing campaign should be considered. The promotion should highlight the strongest observable and abstract attributes establish by the students in this study. The strongest attributes were that the majority of students, regardless of their major field of study, indicated that enrolling in a marketing course is helpful to their study, knowledge and eventually their future career and as anticipated marketing students

expect the courses to be useful in their career.

The results of the study indicate that students do form attitudes about the marketing program from their evaluation and expectation of the course towards their career. And while it's not known what would happen in their career having a positive outlook on the marketing program towards their career is critical to attracting and retaining students.

The findings of such research as this one can support program coordinators and educators of education programs to support and possibly adapt future education programs successfully; to appeal and to keep interested students. Moreover, further research can be conducted to gauge students' perceptions towards other university degree programs (e.g., Management program, Accounting program, Finance program), and then decide how these education programs compare with each other on students' perceptions, evaluation and attitudes towards their degree program.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The participating university students in this study were:

male (39.8%), female (60.2%)

in the age group between 20 and 23 years old (100.0%),

in year of study, 2 (36.4%), 3 (48.6%), 4 (15.0%)

majoring in marketing (44.8%), management (10.0%), other (45.2%)

spending less than 5 hours preparing for marketing courses (70.3%),

spending more than 15 hours preparing for all courses (41.4%),

A limitation of the study, of course, is that only students currently enrolled in the university were included. As a result of this study, it is suggested that further research should compare students from other universities in different countries. This would enhance the value of this method of assessing student perception of marketing courses across diverse backgrounds, culture and scholastic value. Finally, a structural model should be developed to investigate the combination of student evaluation and responses across the various countries.

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