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Effects of Marketing Mix on Students' Selection of Transnational Top-up Degrees in Hong Kong

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ABSTRACT

With fierce competition in transnational higher education (TNHE), marketing mix strategies should be adopted to attract students to study the transnational top-up degrees offered in Hong Kong. This research investigates the effects of service marketing mix on students' selection of transnational top-up degrees offered in Hong Kong. Understanding the perceptions of Hong Kong students can help institutions make informed decisions on what is important to students when delivering TNHE in Hong Kong. Institutions can formulate strategic plans and allocate appropriate resources to solicit right partners and recruit target students. Quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted in this research. The results reveal "Qualifications are recognized in Hong Kong" is the most important factor that influences students' selection of transnational top-up degrees offered in Hong Kong. Recommendations are made for senior management of TNHE to design effective marketing mix strategies in Hong Kong.

Keywords: 7Ps Marketing Mix, Marketing Strategy, Student Selection, Top-up Degree, Higher Education, Program Development
JEL Classifications: M31, I21

1. INTRODUCTION

This article begins with an introduction to transnational higher education, top-up degrees, transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong and marketing mix of TNHE in Hong Kong. In addition, it examines the development of transnational higher education, the demand and supply of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong and marketing mix of TNHE institutions. Then, the research methodology is explained. After that, the findings of students' selection of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong are discussed. Finally, this article depicts the limitations of this study and concludes by emphasizing the most important factor affecting students' selection.

This research is to find out the important factors of students' selection of transnational top-up degrees offered in Hong Kong from marketing mix perspective. The research is significant because transnational top-up degree is growing fast in Hong Kong. The main contribution of this research is to help senior management of higher education institutions identify the important factors of

marketing mix for developing transnational top-up degree programs in Hong Kong and design appropriate strategies to recruit students.

1.1. Transnational Higher Education
TNHE, in this research, refers to the provision of educational qualifications in which the awarding institution is based in one country (home country), different from where students are located (host country) (Caruana and Montgomery, 2015; Lawton and Jensen, 2015).

1.2. Top-up Degrees
A top-up degree is equivalent to the final year of a Bachelor's degree program. It allows graduates of foundation degree or other relevant qualifications to top up existing qualifications. Students can complete the remaining courses to gain their bachelor's degrees (Bournemouth University, 2019).

1.3. Transnational Top-up Degrees in Hong Kong
Transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong refers to the final year of Bachelor's degrees of home countries operate in Hong Kong (host

country). There are different types of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong. Most of them are jointly run by home and Hong Kong institutions. Some awarding institutions are not involved in any teaching and administrative work but committed to quality assurance. In this research, the home country is England whereas the host is Hong Kong. A student with a higher diploma or associate degree qualification can study a transnational top-up degree in Hong Kong. The qualification of transnational degree received in Hong Kong is the same as that obtained overseas. Students have to meet the academic requirements of home institutions.

1.4. Marketing Mix of TNHE in Hong Kong

When institutions offer transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong, marketing mix strategies are applied to recruit target students. In higher education sector, the marketing mix are product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical evidence. They are called 7Ps of marketing mix (Ivy, 2008).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Development of Transnational Higher Education

2.1.1. The demand of transnational higher education

The world population at the age of 15 to 24 will be 1.2 billion in 2050, among which 90% of them are estimated to come from developing countries. Traditional wealthier countries will not be the nations to demand higher education in the world (Population Reference Bureau, 2009). There is insufficient supply of degree places in many parts of the world leading to the increasing demand for TNHE programs, especially in Africa (Kunene et al., 2015), China and India (Altbach, 2009). In addition, the rankings of local universities in some countries are lower than overseas universities. Students look for high ranking universities with good reputations in their decision-making process (Priporas and Kamenidou, 2011). Prestigious universities develop their TNHE programs across the globe to meet such needs.

TNHE has increased rapidly worldwide. In western countries, TNHE helps generate income for institutions (Jean Francois, 2016) in a cost-effective way (Wang, 2012). The growing trend of TNHE enables students to gain foreign qualifications without leaving their home countries. Some research has been done on the factors of students' choice of TNHE in Hong Kong and other countries. Such factors included course and country characteristics (Lawley and Perry, 2015), reputation and credibility of higher education institutions (Heffernan et al., 2018), push and pull factors (Wilkins et al., 2012).

2.1.2. The supply of transnational higher education

TNHE has evolved to absorb unmet demand for education. Most of the TNHE institutions are supplied in East and South-East Asia. However, due to prohibitive regulations, the supply of TNHE institutions in Africa and Malaysia are very limited. International providers may not consider African higher education institutions with weak profit-making capabilities as partners (Nnazor, 2018). South Africa may also fear that the overwhelming success of TNHE programs could have a detrimental effect on their own university systems (DAAD German Academic Exchange Service, 2014).

2.1.3. The demand of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, there is an intense competition for senior places of local universities. The current education system of Hong Kong includes kindergarten education, followed by six years of primary education and six years of secondary school education before entering university. There were 54,922 secondary school graduates (Education Bureau, 2020) and only 18,367 University Grants Committee (UGC) funded local universities first-year-first-degree places in Hong Kong in 2018 (University Grant Committee, 2019).

According to the statistics from the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education (Table 1), the number of sub-degree graduates including associate degree and higher diploma in Hong Kong was 24,094 in 2017-2018 (Concourse for Self-financing Post-secondary Education, 2019a). However, there were only around 5,000 senior year places (i.e. Year 2 or Year 3) of full-time UGC funded undergraduate programs in 2018-2019 (Education Bureau, 2019). Competition for senior year places was very keen in Hong Kong. Transnational top-up degree programs are emerging due to the insufficient funded senior year places for sub-degree graduates.

2.1.4. The supply of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong

According to the information from the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education, the self-financing higher education institutions in Hong Kong offer either local degree programs or transnational top-up degree programs or both. Some programs are accredited by Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ). There has been a steady increase in the supply of self-financing degree programs in Hong Kong. There were 591 accredited self-financing bachelor and top-up degrees including local and non-local programs in Hong Kong in the academic year of 2018-2019. The number of programs had increased by 91% from 2014 to 2018 with an increase in the supply of places (Concourse for Self-financing Post-secondary Education, 2019b).

2.2. Marketing Mix of TNHE Institutions

2.2.1. Product of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong

"Product" of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong refers to the final year of Bachelor degrees offered by home institutions and delivered in Hong Kong. TNHE curriculum must be appropriately designed for students that meet the required standard in Hong Kong. As the demand for TNHE increases, there is a concern for the quality assurance of overseas universities offering programs in Hong Kong. Quality assurance in higher education institutions is considered an indicator of achieving academic excellence (Ryan, 2015). Quality assurance can provide benchmark and enhance

Table 1: Number of graduates from UGC-funded, publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary programs in 2017-2018

Academic year	Funding mode	Level of study	Total
2017-2018	UGC-funded	Sub-degree	1321
2017-2018	Publicly-funded	Higher diploma	7931
2017-2018	Self-financing	Associate degree	8460
2017-2018	Self-financing	Higher diploma	6382
Total			24,094

confidence of employers and other local institutions in Hong Kong. Such information can be used as a reference to determine whether the TNHE graduates' qualifications meet the academic requirements for employment or further study. If TNHE graduates apply for a civil servant vacancy, Hong Kong government recognizes their qualifications accredited by HKCAAVQ.

Anctil (2008) stated that students and their families use university rankings to evaluate the reputation and quality for college choice. Similarly, ranking is a widely accepted indicator used by prospective students who are not certain about the quality of institutions before making decision. Therefore, brands are used by institutions to deliver clear distinctive competitive advantage to their stakeholders (Chapleo, 2010).

2.2.2. Price of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong

"Price" of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong refers to the availability of financial aid and scholarship, flexible tuition and payment time (Dao and Thorpe, 2015). Previous research indicated flexible payment, available scholarships and financial aids are important factors that affect students' decision making (Garwe, 2016; Yusof et al., 2008). Moreover, past research showed that price is one of the most significant factors affecting students' university choice (Ivy, 2008). Today, different types of financial aids such as grants and subsidies are available for students in Hong Kong. Neves and Hillman (2016) revealed that students do not want to pay additional tuition fees for famous teachers. Universities setting tuition fees should consider their rankings and reputations. Many universities with higher global rankings tend to set high tuition fees (West, 2019).

The Hong Kong Government provides different financial aids to local students for studying top-up degrees. Eligible students can apply for loans through different schemes such as Financial Assistance Scheme for Post-secondary Students (FASP) and Extended Non-means-tested Loan Scheme (ENLS) (Student Finance Office, 2019b).

A research on students' perceptions of transnational education undergraduate programs offered in Hong Kong shows that 69 percent of top-up degree students had household monthly income of HKD 25,000 or below. They were less likely to afford the cost of studying abroad (Forestier et al., 2013). The cost of studying in Hong Kong is much lower than studying overseas which involved additional costs such as air tickets and accommodation. Local students in Hong Kong can find jobs to finance their tuition fees during the period of study. Furthermore, many bachelor degree holders plan to study for a higher degree. Local students completing transnational top-up degree programs in Hong Kong can save more money for their master's degrees.

2.2.3. Place of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong

"Place" of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong refers to the location where TNHE program is delivered. A university far away from home is less attractive as it will have additional costs of living (Drewes and Michael 2006). Many students studying transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong are from low income families (Forestier et al., 2013). In the study of Gibbons and Vignoes (2009), lower income students consider commuting costs as an important factor when choosing universities. In Hong Kong, it is usually convenient to go from one spot to another within a short time as Hong Kong is a small city with a good transportation system.

2.2.4. Promotion of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong

"Promotion" of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong refers to the use of various communication tools to deliver features, benefits and values of programs to influence decision making of prospective students. Some researchers found that personal contacts with parents, relatives and friends have a great influence in promoting images of higher education institutions (Andrlic et al., 2013). More than 50% of students believe that relatives and friends are the most influential information sources for making decision in the selection of TNHE institutions, followed by high school teachers. They are considered as trustworthy information channels. Many students did not obtain enough information before they make decisions. Students are unfamiliar with the trustworthy channels to find information about TNHE programs (Fang and Wang, 2014). Successful graduates would disseminate positive messages and recommend the programs to their friends.

Higher education institutions can communicate to prospective students through e-marketing tools. Khatri et al. (2015) stated that social media is largely a free-to-use medium which can rapidly reach potential students. Contents on homepages should be consistent with the social networking sites (Barnes, 2009). The best practices for social networks include showing videos, publicizing achievements, and updating the information frequently.

In Hong Kong, there are regulations about the promotion of TNHE programs to protect the rights of students. Advertisements for a TNHE program must have its course registration number. In addition, a statement "it is a matter of discretion for individual employers to recognize any qualification to which this course may lead" has to be included in any advertisements. Education Bureau will impose penalties on institutions if any false or misleading information is found on their advertisements (Education Bureau, 2018).

2.2.5. People of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong

"People" of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong refers to all people involved in home and Hong Kong institutions to deliver services for meeting the needs of students.

"Teaching staff" refers to the flying faculty from home country or local academic staff delivering the modules in Hong Kong. Famous teachers are those who are reputable, prominent, and well known by students. One of the most important factors affecting students' perceptions of education quality is the qualifications of teaching staff. In a study by Arnon and Reichel, students' perceptions for the qualities of ideal teachers are leadership, kindness, subject matter knowledge and attitude toward profession (Arnon and Reichel, 2007). One of the key components to design a successful educational service is to have right teaching staff to deliver subject knowledge to learners. In Hong Kong, many academics of local universities are working as part-time lecturers to teach transnational top-up degree programs in Hong Kong. The income

from outside practice will have to be split between the teaching staff and the university.

"Administrative staff" refers to the provision of administrative and supporting services enabling effective and efficient delivery of student services. Arena et al. (2010) identified that the administrative staff of home and Hong Kong institutions need to provide services in a rapid and friendly manner and to provide guidance for students. The trained administrative staff need to determine students' desire and guide them properly with information (Tsinidou et al., 2010). Students' first exposure to universities may be through administrative staff of the registry and therefore high-quality services provided to students can make good impressions (Kitchroen, 2004). Employees acting responsibly within their roles can create a favorable image to the universities. A standardized complaint handling procedure and the response time to inquiries should be established. A strong administrative team can contribute to image enhancement and students' satisfaction.

2.2.6. Process of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong

"Process" of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong refers to the process that provide different administrative services to students by institutions. A good administration process for students includes a smooth process of accessing learning materials, submitting assignments and releasing academic results. Many universities provide academic calendars that serve as an information source for students, academic and administrative staff. Most students are concerned with the dates of releasing their academic results to apply for master's degree programs in other institutions.

Good process strategies can improve the image of a university and attract more applicants. Candidates usually apply for more than one university and these strategies are important to convert a potential candidate into a student. A smooth enrolment process can minimize the dissatisfaction of administrative staff and the candidates involved. Hirvonen (2007) found that considering the needs of students is the concept of quality in higher education. Regarding the feedback provision process, Chen et al. (2007) found that interactive networking with student-faculty contact, which can help students focus on their studies, should be promoted.

2.2.7. Physical evidence of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong

"Physical evidence" of transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong refers to the facilities that deliver transnational programs in Hong Kong. The facilities give the first impression of service quality. Higher education institutions in Hong Kong may build a new campus or rent places to deliver transnational programs. As the rent of office space is very high in Hong Kong, many TNHE providers rent a small office with limited facilities to operate their programs.

Learning environment is an influencing factor for students' university choices. Students prefer to have state-of-the-art facilities and modern learning environment and aesthetically pleasing buildings. In addition, students expect the availability of textbooks in bookstores to support their academic life (Agrey and Lampadan,

2014). McBurnie (2000) studied that library facilities are a long-term problem in transnational education. Many TNHE providers do not have interlibrary loans. Students are expected to access reference materials through public libraries.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, quantitative and qualitative research methods were carried out to examine the effect of service marketing mix on students' selection of transnational top-up degrees offered in Hong Kong. This research was conducted over two years in Hong Kong. There was a total of 196 respondents. They are from the final year of Business Enterprise, Marketing Management and International Hospitality and Tourism Management programs of a British university in Hong Kong in 2016 and 2017. There were 57 males and 139 females participating in this research.

Questionnaires were adpoted in this research, the questionnaire was divided into two parts. A likert scale with 42 items, scored from 1 to 5 (1=not important; 2=slightly important; 3=fairly important; 4=important; 5=very important), was used to design the first part of the survey questionnaire. The second part was to collect students' opinions about the recommendations of transnational top-up degree programs to their friends.

Questions from previous literature were used as reference to develop items in the questionnaire of this research (Briggs and Wilson, 2007; Maringe, 2006 and Veloutsou et al., 2004). However, the previous research only covered part of the scope of this study and the questions may not be completely relevant for transnational top-up degrees offered in Hong Kong. Therefore, a new questionnaire was designed.

The questionnaires were distributed by teachers during lessons. Students spent fifteen minutes to fill in the anonymous questionnaires before submitting them to the teachers. The teachers then gave the completed questionnaires to the researcher next day.

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with fifteen participants randomly selected from three different transnational top-up degree programs. Interviews were conducted in order to explore insights of the service marketing mix affecting students' selection of transnational top-up degrees offered in Hong Kong. The interviews were conducted at the meeting room of participants' institute in 2017 and the duration of each interview was thirty minutes.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Statistical findings of students' selection of transnational top-up degrees offered in Hong Kong are shown in the Appendix.

4.1. Product of Transnational Top-up Degrees in Hong Kong

"Qualifications are recognized in Hong Kong" is the most important item of product element. Both male and female respondents rate "Qualifications are recognized in HK" as the most important

factor (Mean = 4.38, SD = 0.794). "Courses taught by partner employed teaching staff" is the least important factor (Mean = 3.91, SD = 0.862) among product items. Students in this research prefer a qualification with local and overseas recognition. Home institutions should establish a quality assurance system involving the procedures and requirements for the collaborative program. To maintain the competitive advantage of TNHE market, TNHE providers should promote the quality assurance with positive outcomes of the transnational top-up degrees in Hong Kong. TNHE programs should be registered from Non-local Courses Registry in the Education Bureau of the Hong Kong Government. If the TNHE programs are successfully accredited by HKCAAVQ, they will be recognized as meeting a comparable level of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework. The accredited institutions and TNHE programs can help students can transfer their credits to other institutions for studying master's degrees. According to the students' qualitative feedback, they would refer their friends to study one-year transnational top-up degree programs in Hong Kong if the awarding institutions have good reputations. They perceived that a good recognition is associated with university and program rankings. One interviewee said, "Flexible intake of the program suits my working schedule. If I miss the enrolment deadline, I can apply for next intake three months later. In addition, the lessons of each module are scheduled on five evenings and one weekend every three months so my work schedule is not affected. However, this fast-paced transnational top-up degree program does not provide any university life". According to another interviewee, he said "The most important factor to select this TNHE top-up degree is that my working organization recognized this qualification". He worked in a public sector and was not qualified to get promoted because he was not a degree holder. "If I receive a degree, I will have a chance to promote from within. This type of program becomes popular as students can complete it in one year." He also mentioned "university ranking and qualifications recognized by local and overseas organizations are the selling points for this program". These results are similar to what Priporas and Kamenidou (2011) found, which maintained that students seek top ranking universities with best reputations.

4.2. Price of Transnational Top-up Degrees in Hong Kong

"Lower tuition fee" of price element is an important item in both male and female respondents' decision making (Mean = 4.05, SD = 0.887). According to the qualitative feedback provided by some participants, they would recommend the transnational top-up degree programs to their friends because of low tuition fee and short duration of study (one year). When asked why one interviewee had chosen this transnational top-up degree, she commented that "I want to get a degree as soon as possible so that I can find a good job. My main concern is the tuition fee and the availability of government loan". When she applied for this transnational top-up degree program, she had obtained a higher diploma with a part-time employment. The result makes the importance of the price element self-evident – offering programs with low tuition fees are likely to attract students to study transnational top-up degrees offered in Hong Kong. This finding is similar to what Ivy (2008) had done that price is the most important factor affecting students' choice.

4.3. Place of Transnational Top-up Degrees in Hong Kong

"Convenient public transport" is an important item of place element (Mean = 3.70, SD = 0.946). According to the qualitative feedback, some students commented they would introduce their friends to study the transnational top-up degree in Hong Kong that can save the time and costs of their study. They indicated that convenience is the utmost important factor. With the development of the internet, online learning can be adopted as a part of the transnational top-up degree program. Interactive and high-quality content should be created so students can access the learning materials through internet at any time.

4.4. Promotion of Transnational Top-up Degrees in Hong Kong

"University prospectus" of promotion element is an important item in both male and female respondents' decision making (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.847). "University website information" is also as important as "University prospectus" among female respondents (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.872). Khatri et al. (2015) found that students made decisions for choosing institutions based on the information on online platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. The websites of both home and local institutions can display factual information about the top-up degree programs offered. Home institutions should provide marketing guidelines and monitor marketing activities in Hong Kong. Approval of marketing materials should be sought from home institutions before publishing.

4.5. People of Transnational Top-up Degrees in Hong Kong

"Attitude of teaching staff" of people element is the most important factor (Mean = 4.25, SD = 0.795). "Famous teachers" is the least important factor (Mean = 3.64, SD = .859) in both male and female respondents' decision making. According to the qualitative feedback provided by some participants, students would recommend their friends to study because of professional attitude in teaching. Students explained that teachers delivering top-up degrees in Hong Kong should possess the subject knowledge and teaching skills. According to an interviewee, when asked what factors of the "people element" she would consider for choosing this program, she expressed "The lecturers should demonstrate good pedagogical content knowledge. Flying faculty from British university can guarantee the quality of teaching. I am interested in learning more British cases. Professors from British university can widen my horizon. However, the flying faculty does not provide adequate face-to-face academic support to local students as they go back to Britain immediately after they finish teaching". Students enrolled in transnational top-up degree programs in Hong Kong usually cannot meet the requirements to study at local universities. It is important to have teachers with good attitude to help these students as they need more guidance on how to do their assignments.

4.6. Process of Transnational Top-up Degrees in Hong Kong

Both male and female' respondents rate "Course administration" as an important factor of process element (Mean = 4.01, SD = .780),

followed by "Accurate assessment" (Mean = 3.95, SD = .791). "Fair and accurate assessment process" is an important factor for students' choices. The qualitative feedback indicated that students would recommend their friends to the program because the lessons of each module were completed within one week. The process of service provision should be organized in a logical sequence. Host institutions should simplify administrative procedures for enquiries, enrolment and payment. TNHE students in Hong Kong experiencing satisfaction of service delivered will show subsequent loyalty. For those students who need to take bridging modules in order to meet the entry requirement of transnational top-up degree programs, the bridging modules should be offered by host institutions and be aligned with the standard of home institutions. Home institutions should also control the quality of assessments through the quality assurance process to ensure that the academic standards are equivalent to comparable programs in home country.

4.7. Physical Evidence of Transnational Top-up Degrees in Hong Kong

"Clean and tidy learning environment" is considered an important item of physical evidence (Mean = 4.12, SD = 0.795). Cleanliness is conducive to learning so host institutions should endeavor to maintain clean and tidy environment of classrooms. The qualitative feedback indicated that both male and female Hong Kong students prefer equipment with advanced technology in spacious classrooms. Free access to fast wireless internet will facilitate students' learning with the use of tablets or laptops. Students favor institutions in Hong Kong with advanced technical facilities inside well-managed buildings. Home institutions should provide a reliable network for students to access online materials. Due to COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020, many classes were suspended. Before class resumption, host institutions should take precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

4.8. Limitations

In Hong Kong, there are many institutions offering transnational top-up degree programs. The sample of students from one particular TNHE institute was chosen so the findings of the research cannot be generalized. Nonetheless, the results of this research can be used as a reference for comparison with other similar research in Hong Kong or other countries.

5. CONCLUSION

There is an increase in the number of TNHE providers but a decrease in the number of students in Hong Kong. In this research, "Qualifications are recognized in Hong Kong" is the most important factor affecting students' selection of transnational top-up degree programs in Hong Kong. Both Hong Kong and home institutions should cooperate and seek accreditation from HKCAAVQ to ensure qualifications are recognized in Hong Kong. This is an evidence to show students and employers that institutions are committed to maintaining high quality.

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APPENDIX

The Mean score on students' selection of transnational top-up degree in Hong Kong								
	Male			Female			Total	
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Qualifications are recognized in Hong Kong	57	4.40	0.704	138	4.38	0.830	195	4.38	0.794
Qualifications are recognized overseas	57	4.28	0.921	138	4.30	0.805	195	4.29	0.838
Attitude of teaching staff	57	4.23	0.887	138	4.26	0.757	195	4.25	0.795
Courses taught by overseas university teaching staff	57	4.16	0.882	138	4.28	0.799	195	4.24	0.824
Teaching quality	57	4.21	0.796	138	4.21	0.778	195	4.21	0.781
Duration of study	55	4.15	0.819	137	4.19	0.809	192	4.18	0.831
University ranking	57	4.05	1.076	138	4.18	0.830	195	4.18	0.908
Flexible intake through the year	56	4.14	0.819	138	4.12	0.846	194	4.12	0.836
Clean and tide learning environment	57	4.04	0.844	138	4.15	0.801	195	4.12	0.813
Academic qualifications of teaching staff	57	3.98	0.855	138	4.14	0.756	195	4.09	0.788
Attitude of administrative staff	57	4.00	0.802	138	4.13	0.809	195	4.09	0.807
Content and structure of the program	57	4.11	0.748	138	4.05	0.795	195	4.07	0.780
Availability of bridging courses to fulfil top-up program	57	4.11	0.817	138	4.05	0.813	195	4.07	0.813
Lesson begin at night	57	4.05	0.854	138	4.08	0.929	195	4.07	0.905
Lower tuition fee	57	4.05	0.895	138	4.04	0.887	195	4.05	0.887
Program ranking	57	3.96	0.886	138	4.06	0.723	195	4.03	0.773
Quiet learning environment	57	4.04	0.823	138	4.03	0.810	195	4.03	0.812
Course administration	57	4.07	0.884	138	3.99	0.735	195	4.01	0.780
Courses fulfilling the market needs	57	3.91	0.969	138	4.04	0.823	195	4.00	0.868
Safe learning environment	57	3.89	0.900	138	3.99	0.837	195	3.96	0.855
Reputation of local partner institution	57	3.93	0.961	136	3.96	0.802	193	3.95	0.850
Accurate assessment	57	3.98	0.813	138	3.93	0.785	195	3.95	0.791
Course taught by partner employed teaching staff	57	3.88	0.867	137	3.93	0.863	194	3.91	0.862
Financial aid and grant available	57	3.91	1.090	137	3.87	0.984	194	3.88	1.014
University website information	57	3.86	0.972	138	3.88	0.872	195	3.88	0.900
University prospectus	57	3.88	0.965	138	3.88	0.796	195	3.88	0.847
Library and recreation facilities	57	3.75	1.005	138	3.90	0.804	195	3.86	0.867
Use of advanced teaching equipment	57	3.65	0.896	138	3.91	0.818	195	3.83	0.848
Scholarship available	57	3.77	1.018	137	3.82	1.049	194	3.81	1.038
Size of venue in Hong Kong	57	3.60	0.821	138	3.77	0.882	195	3.72	0.866
Convenient public transport	57	3.63	0.858	137	3.73	0.981	194	3.70	0.946
Advices of sub degree program teaching staff	57	3.61	0.774	137	3.66	0.902	194	3.65	0.864
Famous teachers	57	3.54	0.908	138	3.67	0.839	195	3.64	0.859
Advices of alumni of top-up degree universities	57	3.51	1.020	138	3.61	0.875	195	3.58	.918
Seminar about the program	57	3.53	0.908	138	3.54	0.864	195	3.53	0.875
Advices of alumni of sub degree program	57	3.51	1.037	138	3.49	0.906	195	3.49	0.944
Social media information about the program	57	3.46	1.001	138	3.49	0.795	195	3.48	0.858
Class venue close to my home or work	57	3.32	1.038	137	3.47	1.001	194	3.43	1.012
Advices of friends	57	3.30	1.117	138	3.43	0.966	195	3.39	1.011
Education exhibition	57	3.39	.959	138	3.88	0.849	195	3.38	0.880
Advices of parents	57	3.28	1.192	138	3.28	1.032	195	3.28	1.078
Newspaper and magazine advertisement	57	3.28	1.130	138	3.25	1.010	195	3.26	1.043