



**LUND UNIVERSITY**  
School of Economics and Management

**Corporate Reputation Management of Swedish Universities in Marketing  
Perspective - an Example of Lund University**

Master Level - Degree Project in Global Marketing

**Authors:** Xiaoying Wang & Chengmin Zhang

**Supervisor:** Professor Magnus Lagnevik

## **Acknowledgements**

Studying the one year Masters Degree programme at Lund University is interesting as well as fulfilling, and writing the thesis within a limited time frame is a challenging but worthwhile combination of efforts. Both of us are very satisfied with the research outcomes and hope our finds are helpful and interesting for the readers. Also we would like to take this opportunity to deeply thank the people who helped us to achieve the outcomes.

Firstly, we would like to thank our supervisor, Professor Magnus Lagnevik, for his guidance and supervision. This thesis could not be completed without his useful suggestions and feedback during the writing process.

Secondly, we particularly wish to thank Mr. Richard Stenelo and Mr. Johan Gunnarsson, who generously took time from their busy working schedules to meet with us, and provided really detailed and in-depth information during the interviews. Without their help, we would be unable to finish our thesis.

Thirdly, we want to graciously thank our friends and those people who have taken their valuable time to answer our interviews and surveys. Without their answers and support, we could not make it so far.

Last but not least, we want to thank each other. We have supported and encouraged each other during the thesis writing journey.

Lund, 2013

Xiaoying Wang  
Chengmin Zhang

## Abstract

Title	Corporate Reputation Management of Swedish Universities in Marketing Perspective - an Example of Lund University.
Date of the seminar:	27th May, 2013
Course:	BUSN39 Degree Project in Global Marketing
Authors:	Xiaoying Wang and Chengmin Zhang
Supervisor:	Magnus Lagnevik
Keywords:	corporate reputation, reference group, decision making process, marketing promotion strategy, Lund University
Background:	Sweden was one of the most popular countries where many non-European students chose as the destination to study. However, since the introduction of tuition fees in the autumn of 2011, there has been a major reduction of enrolment in the total number of non-European students. Approximately all Swedish universities had a 33% decrease in the number of foreign students in 2011. However, Lund University had the smallest decrease of foreign students; only 18% compared with the other Swedish universities.
Purpose:	This thesis aims to explore the marketing promotion tactics model used by Lund University in order to generate potential non-European applicants and minimize the negative impact of the tuition fee policy. Based on the Lund University marketing model, marketing promotion suggestions are proposed for three different types of Swedish universities.

Method:

First of all, qualitative interviews with 10 non-European Lund University students were carried out to have a general overview of the different factors that influenced them to choose Lund University.

Followed by the quantitative surveys with 189 Lund University students who are coming from countries outside of EU/EEA and Switzerland to investigate the main factors that they have taken into consideration when choosing Lund University and different approaches they have used to collect information about university.

Furthermore, in-depth interviews have been conducted with Lund University officials, Mr. Richard Stenelo and Mr. Johan Gunnarsson. The interviews give a big picture of the 10 different marketing promotion strategies used by Lund University to attract more perspective non-European students and to reduce the negative impacts of the tuition fee policy.

Conclusion:

By categorizing and analyzing the marketing promotion strategies that help Lund University to maintain and improve its corporate reputation after the introduction of tuition fees, there are suggestions of different marketing promotion strategies for three major types of Swedish universities, comprehensive universities, specialized universities and university colleges, in order to minimize the negative impact of said tuition fee policy.

Furthermore, these marketing promotion strategies can also be adapted by universities in other countries to better manage their corporate reputation in order to attract more perspective applicants.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction .....	9
1.1 Background Information .....	9
1.2 Research Objectives .....	9
1.3 Research Questions .....	10
1.4 Terms of Definition .....	10
1.5 Structure of the Thesis .....	11
Chapter 2: Methodology .....	13
2.1 Research Approaches .....	13
2.2 Research Methods .....	14
2.3 Research Design .....	15
2.3.1 Qualitative Interviews with Students .....	15
2.3.2 Quantitative Survey .....	16
2.3.3 Qualitative Interviews with University Officials .....	17
2.3.4 Benchmark .....	18
2.4 Limitations of Methodology .....	18
2.5 Validity and Reliability .....	18
Chapter 3: Literature Review .....	20
3.1 Reference Group .....	20
3.1.1 Types of Reference Group .....	20
3.2 Decision Making Process .....	21
3.3 Corporate Reputation .....	24
3.3.1 Classification of Corporate Reputation .....	25
Chapter 4: Empirical Analysis of Qualitative Interviews .....	27
4.1 Qualitative Interviews' Introduction .....	27
4.2 Analysis of Qualitative Interviews' Results .....	28
4.2.1 The Factors that Respondents Took into Consideration .....	28
4.2.2 The Approaches Used by Respondents to Collect Information .....	31
4.2.3 The Benefits that Respondents Receive from Lund University .....	32
2.4 The Attitude of Respondents Towards Recommending Lund University .....	34
Chapter 5: Empirical Analysis of Quantitative Survey .....	35
5.1 Quantitative Survey Introduction .....	35
5.2 Quantitative Survey Analysis .....	36

5.2.1 Survey Respondents Background Information.....	36
5.2.2 The Time to Think about Studying Outside Your Home Country.....	41
5.2.3 The Approaches of Gathering Information about Lund University.....	41
5.2.4 The Factors Considered when Choosing Lund University. ....	43
5.2.5 The Benefits of Studying at Lund University.....	47
5.2.6 The Attitude of Recommending Lund University to Potential Applicants .....	48
Chapter 6: Empirical Analysis of Qualitative Interviews with University Officials .....	51
6.1 Qualitative Interviews Introduction.....	51
6.2 The Impact of the Tuition Fee Policy on Lund University.....	51
6.3 Marketing Promotion Strategies Used by Lund University.....	52
6.3.1 Go-studying-abroad Agencies .....	53
6.3.2 Education Fairs .....	55
6.3.3 Lund University Web Page.....	56
6.3.4 Social Media Platforms .....	57
6.3.5 Student Competitions.....	58
6.3.6 Customer Relationship Management System .....	58
6.3.7 Global Cooperation and Student Experience .....	59
6.3.8 Alumni Network .....	60
6.3.9 Printed Marketing Materials .....	60
6.3.10 More Programme Portfolios .....	61
6.4 Lund University's Future Marketing Promotion Strategy.....	61
Chapter 7: Discussions .....	63
7.1 Corporate Reputation Factors of Lund University.....	63
7.2 Marketing Promotion Strategy Model .....	64
7.3 Why the Marketing Model is Valuable for Other Universities .....	65
7.4 Application of Marketing Strategy Model On Three Types of Universities.....	66
7.4.1 Comprehensive Universities .....	68
7.4.2 Specialized Universities .....	72
7.4.3 University Colleges .....	75
Chapter 8: Conclusions, Limitations and Suggestions .....	79
8.1 Conclusions.....	79
8.2 Limitations ..80	
8.3 Suggestions For Further Studies .....	81
List of References .....	82

Appendix 1 - Qualitative Interview Guide with Students .....89

Appendix 2 - Quantitative Survey Questionnaire .....91

Appendix 3 - Qualitative Interview Guide with University officials .....93

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Research design flow chart

Figure 2: Five stage decision-making process model

Figure 3: Consumer decision-making model with internal and external influences

Figure 4: Factors influencing the decision-making process of international students

Figure 5 : Dimensions of corporate reputation

Figure 6: The influential factors for non-European students to choose Lund University for studying

Figure 7: The types of reference groups that respondents used for collecting relevant information about Lund University

Figure 8: The benefits that respondents receive from the studying at Lund University.

Figure 9: Which country are you from

Figure 10: Which Faculty are you studying in

Figure 11: Which programme are you studying

Figure 12: Do you have a scholarship while studying at Lund University

Figure 13: The types and percentage of scholarship awarded to the non-European survey respondents

Figure 14: When you started to think about studying outside your home country

Figure 15: Where did you get relevant information about Lund University / Programme

Figure 16: What factors have you taken into consideration when choosing Lund University for studying

Figure 17: The factors influencing the respondents decision making process based on segments of scholarship rewarding students and non-scholarship rewarding students

Figure 18: What benefits you think the education in Lund University would bring to you

Figure 19: Would you recommend Lund University to others

Figure 20: Corporate reputation factors of Lund University

Figure 21: Marketing promotion strategies model

Figure 22: Categorise of Swedish higher education institutions

## List of Tables

Table 1: The Rating Average of the 8 statements given by 189 survey respondents

Table 2: Marketing promotion strategies for comprehensive universities

Table 3: Marketing promotion strategies for specialized universities

Table 4: Marketing Promotion Strategies for University Colleges



# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background Information

The rapid economic development of developing countries makes non-European students who are eager to receive better education in higher educational countries possible. Meanwhile, Sweden was one of the few countries in Europe where higher education was completely free of charge for everyone, which made Sweden an extremely attractive place for foreign students to gain access to a better and higher quality of education (SCB, 2009). For example, the total number of foreign students who enrolled in Swedish Universities presented an upward trend during past decade and reached 22,100 in 2010 (Landes, 2012).

However, there was a major reduction of the enrolment of the total number of non-European students in all Swedish universities since the introduction of tuition fees from the autumn semester of 2011. To be more specific, the introduction of tuition fees refers to all the non-European applicants from countries outside the borders of the EU/EEA and Switzerland and who do not participate in exchange programs (Högskoleverket, 2012). Based on the statistics published by the Swedish National Agency that total enrolment of non-European students in Sweden decreased from 22,100 to 14,700 between 2010 and 2011 (ICEF Monitor, 2012 & Landes, 2012). On average, all Swedish universities had a 33% decrease of foreign students' enrolment in 2011 autumn term (Landes, 2013 & Myklebust, 2012). Therefore, it can be concluded that the introduction of tuition fees have greatly influenced the number of non-European applicants, making especially those groups from countries such as China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, India and Thailand account for the largest decrease. However, Lund University has had the smallest decline of foreign students' enrolment; approximately 18%, compared with the other Swedish Universities (Landes, 2012).

Therefore, it is important to explore what successful strategies Lund University has utilized to minimize the negative impact of the introduction of tuition fees and to attract such a great number of applicants. Also the strategies of Lund University can be regarded as a good example for the universities who are going to charge or implement tuition fees.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

This master's thesis aims for two different objectives. The first objective is to find out the key factors that the research targets have taken into consideration when choosing a university for studying, and the main approaches (the reference groups) they have used for collecting information about Lund University or programs. More specifically, the research targets can be divided into 3 categories: exchanges students, scholarship

awarded students and self-financed students who are outside of EU/EEA and Switzerland, and also started the studying at Lund University after the autumn semester of 2011.

Secondly, more attention is given to investigating and categorising the useful marketing strategies undertaken by Lund University to approach different reference groups in order to attract considerable applicants and minimize the negative impact of tuition fee introduction. In addition, it is an aim to create a useful promotion tactic model as a benchmark for the other universities to use by analyzing promotion strategies that have been utilized by Lund University to approach reference groups for the purposes of attracting considerable applicants and minimizing the negative impact of the introduction of tuition fees.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Based on the research objectives mentioned above, the main research question which will be investigated during the research process is:

**What is the marketing promotion tactics model used by Lund University to approach different reference groups in order to generate potential non-European applicants and minimize negative impact of tuition fee introduction?**

In order to create a suitable solution for the research problem, which is to build a useful promotion model for the universities who are going to charge tuition fees or implement tuition fees to benchmark, the following sub-questions also need to be covered during the research.

- 1) To explore the major influential factors that non-European students take into consideration when choosing Lund university.
- 2) To identify the reference groups of Lund non-European students and to investigate the impact of those reference groups.

### **1.4 Terms of Definition**

The most important concepts that are investigated in this thesis are reference groups, the decision making process and corporate reputation management.

Reference group: “a group of people that significantly influence an individual’s behavior and attitude” (Bearden & Etzel, 1982, P184).

In this case, the reference groups are the people that non-European students have turned to for suggestions or the key approaches they used to collect information when choosing a university for studying.

Decision making process: “A complex process which involving different kinds of buying decision and criteria for assessment. The classic five stage decision making model includes Problem recognition, Information search, Evaluation of alternatives, Purchase decision and Post purchase behavior (Solomon, Bamossy & Hogg, 2010).

The thesis research is intended to discover which approaches non-European students used in each process to collect information about studying, and which promotion strategies Lund University has utilized to attract potential applicants.

Corporate reputation: “a perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and future prospects that describes the firm’s overall appeal to all of its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals” (Fombrun, 2001).

In this research, it is important to investigate what factors usually influence a university’s reputation and how reputation correlates with the other elements of corporate marketing landscape (Shamma, 2012). Also from the research, it can be found out what strategies Lund University has used to manage its corporate reputation.

## **1.5 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is divided into 8 chapters. The first chapter gives a comprehensive thesis introduction. For example, the background information about the thesis topic is presented, and is then followed by the research objectives and key research questions. In addition, the most important research concepts are also covered in this chapter.

Chapter two introduces the thesis methodology. Research approaches and research methods are covered in this chapter, and then followed with a more detailed description of the research design. The research limitations are also mentioned briefly as well.

Chapters three is about the literature review, where the readers can find more detailed descriptions of the key concepts. The literature used for this chapter is collected from university library resources and different journals relevant to the topics of reference group, decision making process and corporate reputation management. The course book in addition to other books related to research topics were also used as well. Online resources, such as master thesis’s related to the similar topic written by the previous programme graduated students have also been used.

Chapter four, five and six show the main findings of the empirical studies. For example, the analysis of qualitative interviews with 10 different non-European Lund University students, the quantitative survey results and the qualitative interviews with the Deputy Executive marketing promotion Director and International Marketing Manager. In addition, the detailed analysis of marketing promotion strategies used by Lund University is included as well.

Chapter seven is a discussion of the thesis, which contains the models of different factors that influence Lund University's corporate reputation and the various marketing promotion tactics of Lund University. More importantly, based on these two models, the suggestions of marketing promotion strategies for three different types of universities are proposed in this chapter.

The conclusions of the thesis, limitations as well as suggestions for further studies are stated in chapter eight.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

Many academic researchers have emphasized the importance of using appropriate and consistent methodology for research studies (Jin & Punpanich, 2011). One of the main reasons is that methodology has been regarded as an extremely important measurement to evaluate the quality of research (Kent, 2007). Therefore, it is fully understandable how important methodology and aiming to select the most suitable research approaches and methods is in order to get most of the research questions.

As stated in Chapter 1, one of the main research objectives is to create a marketing promotion tactics model for the other universities to benchmark by analyzing promotion strategies that have been utilized by Lund University to approach reference groups. In order to achieve this objective, two sub-questions will be discussed as well throughout the research. They are listed as follows:

- 1) To explore the major influential factors that non-European students take into consideration when choosing Lund University for studying.
- 2) To identify the reference groups of Lund non-European students and to investigate the impact of reference groups.

Therefore, this chapter will present the chosen methodology for the research studies in order to achieve the objective and the reasons why the selected methods are the most suitable approaches for this research. To be more detailed, this chapter will touch upon the research approaches, research designs, as well as the research methods in detail. Furthermore, the limitations of the research methodology choices, validity and reliability of the study will also be covered.

### 2.1 Research Approaches

In general there are two main approaches when conducting research; deductive and inductive (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2009). The deductive approach uses the theories and framework as the foundations to generate assumptions and hypotheses, then conducts a study to test them to explain the certain set of empirical materials (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Thus, the deductive research approach is often used when testing theories. On the other hand, Inductive mainly uses empirical materials or empirical data as the foundation to create model or framework (Hörnfeldt & Cavalli-Abrahamson, 2011). However, both of them have certain level of limitations. For example, the limitation of the inductive approach is that it lacks the ability to generate theories, and is often being viewed as the empirical summaries (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008 cited on Hörnfeldt & Cavalli-Abrahamson, 2011). While, the weakness of deductive approach is that researchers might only aim for collecting the empirical materials which support the initial

expectations of the research, which might mislead the research results in certain circumstances (Jacobsen, 2002 cited on Hörnfeldt & Cavalli-Abrahamson, 2011).

Therefore, based on the research objectives it was decided to use the abductive research approach, the combination of two research approaches as mentioned above. As per this thesis, it is believed that abductive research approach is more flexible and it allows room go back and forth between the theories and empirical materials (Hörnfeldt & Cavalli-Abrahamson, 2011). In addition, the abductive approach also makes it possible to use the exiting theoretical model of corporate reputation as the basis for the research, also new ideas can be contributed based on the empirical data analysis and interviews to enrich and modify the exiting model to achieve the main objective Therefore, the abductive approach is the most appropriate and consistent approach to choose.

## **2.2 Research Methods**

There are two main methods to use when conducting research, the qualitative research method and quantitative research method.

The qualitative research approach is a mixture of rational, explorative and intuitive research (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). The main focus of qualitative research method is to achieve better understanding of the social reality by studying respondents' attitudes, perception, motivation and behaviors (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Qualitative research is often conducted through focus groups, in-depth interviews or observation to get most out of the respondents. Because of its high flexibility in data collection, many researchers prefer to choose the qualitative method. However, the qualitative method does contain some limitations. For example, it is too subjective and has a lack of transparency. Besides, there are many uncontrollable elements, such as the skills and experiences of the researchers and respondents might affect the quality of the results. In addition, the sense of observation and language skills might also lead to the biased data analysis (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005).

Instead, the quantitative research method emphasizes on collecting data in terms of numbers to explain a social event or certain phenomena (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 2008; Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2007). The main purpose of the quantitative method is to focus on results testing and verification (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Therefore, the structured questionnaires would be used during the data collection, also there are different survey methods being utilized, such as online survey, personal interview survey, telephone survey and email survey etc. However, quantitative research method has been criticized for not being able to get in-depth and rich data. Instead, it would only scratch the surface of the research areas (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Hörnfeldt & Cavalli-Abrahamson, 2011).

After careful consideration of the different research methods, it was decided to apply both qualitative and quantitative research methods in the empirical research in order to be able to answer the research questions. More detailed explanations and research method design can be found from section 2.3, research design.

## 2.3 Research Design

Figure 1 below reflects the flow of the research processes, which starts with qualitative interviews and is then followed by a quantitative questionnaire collection and in-depth qualitative interview, finally ends up with benchmark.

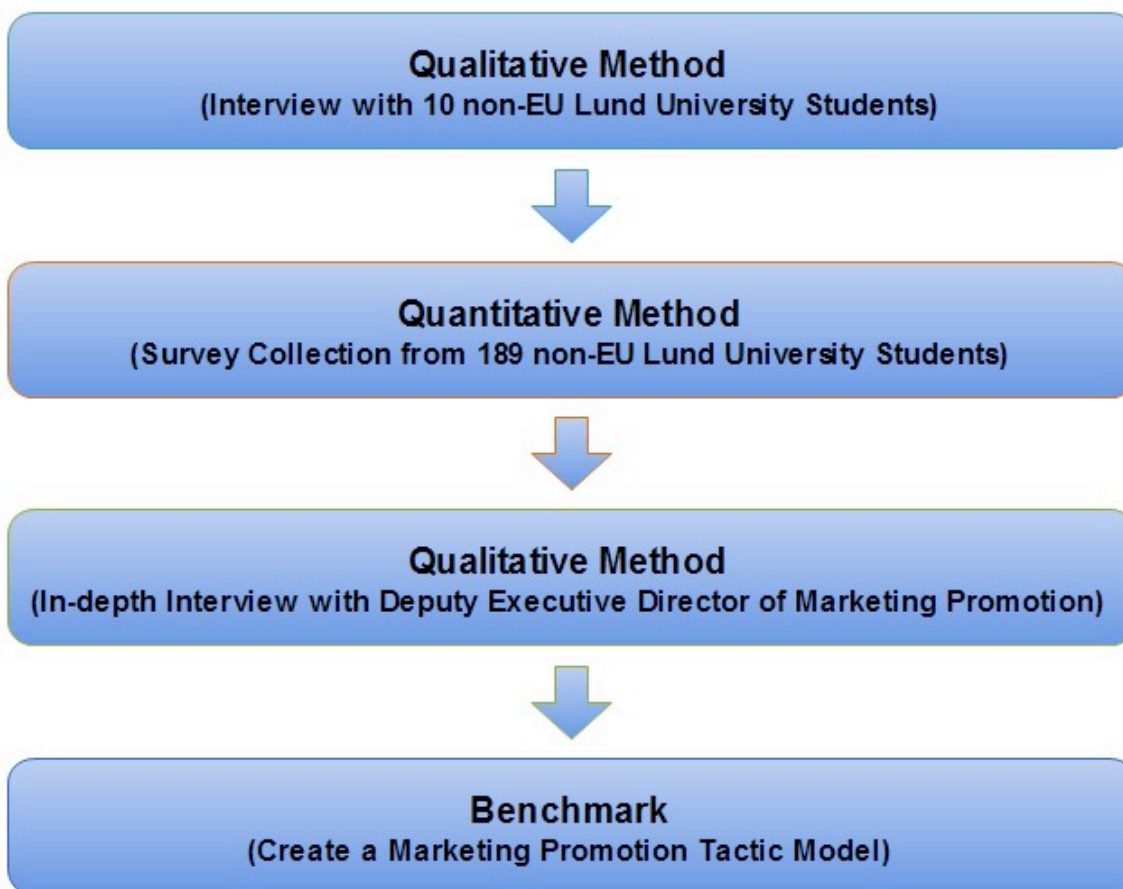


Figure 1: Research design flow chart.

### 2.3.1 Qualitative Interviews with Students

As the first step of the research process, face to face interviews have been adopted. The interview targets are the students who are from countries outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland and enrolled at Lund University after the autumn semester of 2011. In general they are divided into three categories: exchange students, scholarship rewarded students and self-financed students. In this thesis, they are generally referred as non-European Lund University students. However, non-European PHD students are not included in the

applicable research target. The aim is more for interviewing 10 non-European students all together. More importantly, the plan is to cover students from different faculties within Lund University, from different countries, different cultural and economic background to get a general picture and deep understanding of 1) what factors influence their decision when choosing Lund for studying, 2) who were their reference groups when they applied to Lund University, 3) where did they get the relevant information about Lund University, and 4) whether they would like to recommend Lund University to others. By using qualitative interviews, it is hoped that deeper insights can be gained from respondents and their ideas and answers can be used as database for the following quantitative questionnaire design. To be more specific, the database gained based on the interview analysis can be used to specify categories and dimensions of a category of the following quantitative research design (Easterby-Smith, et al. 2008).

The interview guide for the non-European students consists of 2 parts and 12 questions all together. All the questions are open ended questions, taking about 15-20 minutes to complete, and more detailed description regarding the interview guide can be found from appendix 1. What deserves to be mentioned is that 3 pre-test interviews were conducted before starting the formal interviews to make sure the question design is reasonable and understandable. The interview guides were sent to all the interviewees beforehand to make sure the respondents could prepare for the questions and feel comfortable during the interviews. Also, the interviews were guided with the structured questions to ensure that all the necessary information would be gotten; difficult questions would be explained during the process. Furthermore, the recording device would be used to record every word during the processes, which could be very helpful for the analysis later on.

### **2.3.2 Quantitative Survey**

The second step of the research process is to conduct quantitative survey data collection from at least 200 non-European Lund University students. Based on the main findings of qualitative interviews with 10 non-European students who are studying at Lund University, the quantitative survey questionnaire is designed to cover 5 main research areas and survey questions are arranged by following the decision making process orders from “Problem Recognition”, “Information Search”, “Evaluation of Alternatives” to “Product Choice” and “Post-purchase Evaluation”. The aim of the quantitative survey is to test the main findings on a large scale, to see the main reference groups that have influenced decision making of Lund University’s non-European students and what are the main information research methods they have used.

The survey questionnaire consists of 14 questions as you could find from Appendix 2. Different forms of questions have been utilized to get most out of the respondents’ answers when designing the survey questionnaire, such as multiple choice questions, 1-5 scales questions, Yes or No questions, semi open-ended questions and open question.



In order to achieve the ideal sample size of 200 survey responses and accelerate the efficiency of data collection within a limited time, both online survey method and personal interview survey method are used. An online survey is really convenient and it allows for access to the different respondents at the same time via different platforms, such as emails, Facebook and Skype. As McDaniel and Gates (2008) mentioned that Online survey enjoys many advantages, such as *“timesaving, reduced cost, higher response rates, the higher ability to contact people who have difficulty of accessing survey questionnaires”* (Jin & Punpanich, 2011, P31). The online survey tool that was used is survey-monkey and the survey web link could be found from here: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/xiaoying\\_chengmin](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/xiaoying_chengmin). Another important function of the survey-monkey was that it could be used to analyze the results and create charts to better illuminate the results summary. As for the personal face to face interview survey method, the printed copies of the survey questionnaires were delivered to the research targets and they were asked to fill-in the questionnaires at the same time.

Therefore, all the collected survey results would be analyzed by using office tools, such as word and Excel as well as the online survey tool survey-monkey itself. Based on the data analysis, the ranking of reference groups would be drawn, and it would be served as the basis for the qualitative interviews with Mr. Richard Stenelo, Deputy Executive Director, and Mr. Johan Gunnarsson, the International Marketing Manager, to get a in-depth understanding of what promotion strategies Lund University has utilized to approach different references groups and to reach potential applicants.

### **2.3.3 Qualitative Interviews with University Officials**

The third step of the research process is to conduct a in-depth qualitative interview with Mr. Richard Stenelo, the Deputy Executive Director of Marketing Promotion within Lund University, and Mr. Johan Gunnarsson, the International Marketing Manager within the International Marketing and Recruitment Department. The main reason they were chosen is that they are responsible for Lund University’s various marketing promotion. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct interviews with them. The main purpose of the this interview is to gain a deeper understanding of 1) the influences of the tuition fee policy on Lund University in general, 2) the main non-European target countries and marketing promotion strategies that Lund University has utilized in the past two years, and 3) the most effective promotion methods for Lund University to attract non-European applicants. The interview results will serve as the basis to create a marketing promotion tactics model for the other universities to use.

Based on the data analysis of the reference groups’ rankings that we get from the previous quantitative survey results, a structured open-ended interview will be made and the questions used as the interview guide to get as much information as possible from them. The interview guide includes 11 questions all together, and these questions could be divided into five parts. Each part is well designed to get different answers to support the

research results. More detailed information about the interview guide can be found from Appendix 3.

The interview will take approximately two hours to complete. In order to get all the important information, the interview questions are sent to them beforehand. It will give some ideas about what questions to prepare. More importantly, if they think that any questions are difficult to understand, there will still be time to modify the questions before the interview. Furthermore, the recording machine will be used again for the results analysis later.

#### **2.3.4 Benchmark**

The last step of the research process is to benchmark. Benchmarking is defined as “an improvement process to discover and incorporate best practices into operation” (Damelio, 1995, p1). In this case, the successful marketing promotion strategies used by Lund University could be taken as a model for the other universities who are going to charge tuition fees or have already implemented tuition fee policy. The main benchmarking analysis is based on the face to face interview with Mr. Stenelo and Mr. Gunnarsson for the purpose of building a practical marketing model.

#### **2.4 Limitations of Methodology**

There are several barriers apparent when conducting these research designs. It is not possible to push all the research targets to fill in the questionnaire survey, although it is understandable the sample size could greatly influence the accuracy and validity of further results analysis. In addition, People have their own ways of thinking, motivations, and subjective feelings when doing the questionnaires, which is beyond control. For example, the quantitative survey questionnaire is conducted based on first qualitative interviews with 10 non-European students which may lead to bias. Another typical example is the open questions involved in the questionnaire, people normally express themselves freely, which could be a challenge - to interpret them in a proper way.

#### **2.5 Validity and Reliability**

There are two important measurements which researchers need to take into consideration when conducting research, validity and reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2005; Saunders et al, 2003).

Validity can be defined as “the extent to which data collection method or methods accurately measure what they were intended to measure” (Saunders et al, 2003). Put it in another way, “*validity is to what extent a research measures what we really want to measure*” (Jin & Punpanich, 2011, P33). Then validity can be divided into two categories, which are internal validity and external validity (Saunders et al, 2003). Internal validity refers to the ability to make sure that the research questions are answered. However, external

validity is *“the generalizability of the finding across people, settings and times”* (Cooper & Schindler, 2003 cited on Jin & Punpanich, 2011, P33). Therefore, it is important to enhance or guarantee the validity of research by undertaking the following steps:

- 1) All the empirical materials are collected from the right target groups. For example, during the research process, the questions related to the respondents' nationality and their study programs have been asked to check if respondent is a research target. The survey response from EU/EEA and Switzerland citizens and PHD students at Lund University are considered as invalid questionnaires and eliminated from the analysis.
- 2) The questions asked in the qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys are created based upon both the theories and research objectives in order to make sure all the research questions are be answered. For example, the quantitative survey questionnaire is designed to cover 5 main research areas and the survey questions are arranged by following the five stages of decision making processes.

Reliability can be understood as the “consistency of a measure of a concept” (Bryman & Bell, 2007). In other words, Reliability is a standard often adopted by researchers to measure whether the data collection results are consistent with the findings that draw out by other researchers when utilizing the similar methods (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). In order to ensure the reliability of the research, having a good understanding of the main challenges or limitations that might lower the research reliability, makes it possible to minimize the drawbacks and improve research reliability.

- 1) First of all, it is apparent that the interview with 10 non-European students is a too small sample to represent the general students' opinion. Therefore, In order to minimize the limitation it is intended to pick the respondents from different countries, cultural and economic backgrounds and faculties within Lund University.
- 2) Secondly, all of the research targets and authors are not native English speakers so that the respondents would inaccurately express their thoughts and their information might be misunderstood. However, a recording device has been utilized to record the interview process which can help to have a better understanding of their answers.
- 3) Last but not the least, the time for this thesis is very limited since there is only 10 weeks to complete the four important research processes, even the whole thesis project. In order to achieve higher efficiency, a plausible management plan was created, for example the questionnaires are being collected and the theory research conducted at the same time. Also deadlines were set for each part to be finished.

## **Chapter 3: Literature Review**

In this chapter, the key concepts are provided and theories related to the research, with the intention to increase understanding in the research areas. Also the theoretical framework is the main foundation of this thesis. It helps to expand the knowledge and combine them with the research designs. Therefore, this literature review is one of the most fundamental sections of this thesis. This chapter is divided into three parts: theories of reference group, consumers' decision making process and the theories related to corporate reputation.

### **3.1 Reference Group**

The researches focus on reference groups have been articulated in a more explicit way recently, because many academics have realized that individual consumers, are very likely to be influenced by different people, such as families, peers, colleagues, celebrities, and opinion leaders in different purchase and consumption situations. These sources of influences could be defined as "reference group"(Bearden and Etzel 1982 cited in Ekström, 2010), and they are the groups of people a person belongs, desires to belong, or even not to belong (Stafford, 1966; Chuang, Cheng & Hsu, 2012).

The importance of reference groups and their influences have been studied by a large number of researchers so far. Thompson and Hickey defined that reference groups are the groups that individuals regard as a reference when evaluating personal behaviors, attitudes, values, qualities and circumstances (2005). Another definition is that "reference groups are the people whose attitudes, behavior, beliefs, opinions, preferences, and values are used by an individual as the basis for his or her judgment" (WebFinance, 2013). Based upon the definition purposed by Bearden, he pointed out reference groups have a great impact on an individual's behavior, Punpanich and Jin indicated that a reference group could influence not only consumers' behavior, but also brand preferences and product selections (2011). Besides, Scholderer suggested a different idea that consumers would like to take similar attitudes with the ones that they have close relationships with (Scholderer, 2010). For example, people are more likely to take the suggestions from the people close to them (Chuang et al, 2012). Some consumers use a recommended brand/product from a trusted information source as a benchmark to evaluate other brands/product in order to find the best available alternative (Senecal, Kalczynski & Nantel, 2005).

#### **3.1.1 Types of Reference Group**

Reference groups can be divided into two types, normative referents and comparative referents (Jin & Punpanich, 2011). In other words, reference groups have both normative function and comparison functions. (FrouzanFar, Meimar & Tagipour, 2012) People such as parents, friends, relatives, colleagues, and teachers can be considered as normative reference groups who create attitudes, norms, and even values indirect interaction with

individuals. Normative referents are often regarded as the most important reference groups (Goedeme & Rottiers, 2011), since they play essential roles in individual socialization (Acevedo, 2009). Also Ekström (2010) stated that normative referents are strong influential groups that greatly influence individual's decisions in different circumstances, especially when considering purchasing exclusive products. Besides, it is also strongly believed that family and peers have a great role in influencing young consumers' behaviors (Budzanowska-Drzewiecka, 2011).

While, comparative reference groups usually include celebrities, entertainment stars, sports heroes or anyone we respect and want to be or somebody we look up to (Martin & Bush, 2000). However, there is a certain social distance between comparative reference groups and individuals. The most effective ways for comparative reference group to influence individuals are through media and marketing communication. What deserves to be mentioned is that only if attitudes of targets towards comparative referents are favorable, good effects can be achieved (Jin & Punpanich, 2011).

According to Hyman and Singer (1968) individuals tend to use more than one reference group to compare with in order to have a better understanding themselves. It is the same when individuals are making consumption decisions. They often collect information through different approaches or from different reference groups. For example, a consumer may ask a close friend for suggestion when considering a certain product, but he or she may also gather complementary information from other information sources such as advertising, store visit and salespeople in order to determine the most suitable product to choose (Senecal et al, 2005). Goedeme and Rottiers (2011) therefore concluded that everyone can be known as a reference group in any given circumstances. However, different gender, age, social relations and cultural background of reference groups will cause various degrees of impact (Martin, Daniel & Torsten, 2008). A previous study has been made to compare different types of reference groups that influence Thai consumers and American consumers. The results illustrated that Thai consumers largely rely on family groups instead of peer groups that U.S. consumers depend on, when considering the experience of brand attitudes. (Wei & Yu, 2012).

### **3.2 Decision Making Process**

It is commonly accepted that the consumer decision making process is a complex process which involves different kinds of buying decisions and criteria for assessment. One of the most used consumer decision making process models contains three stages, including 1) gaining buying attention, 2) specification among alternatives of action, and 3) the actual choice (Ferber, 1962 cited on Jin & Punpanich, 2011). Another 3 steps strategic decision making process model starts with the definition of objective, followed by the searching of information, developing and comparing different alternatives and finally selecting the most suitable alternative, then the process ends with the follow up and control of the chosen alternative (Musso & Francioni, 2012). Furthermore, the most classic five-stage decision-

making model is often adopted to analyze the specific situations where the product or service being purchased is likely to be infrequent, expensive and high involvement (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 2003). The five stages (Figure 2) starts with problem recognition, followed by information search, alternatives evaluation, purchase decision and ends up with post-purchase evaluation (Solomon et al., 2010).



Figure 2: Five stage decision-making process model (Solomon et al., 2010)

The Figure above shows the first step of the decision making process is problem recognition. During this step, consumers find the gap between their reality state and their expected state. Then consumers would try to find the solution to fill this gap. During the second step, consumers will try their best to search as much reliable information as possible through different approaches, because each information source is necessary for decision making. Consumers could get a shortlist of the most suitable alternatives to choose after collecting, filtering and comparing large amounts of massive information. And then consumers would choose the most suitable and optimal solution after all the information assessment. More importantly, consumers will have some positive or negative evaluation feedback after experiencing the products or services. The marketers also nowadays realize the importance of following up with the consumers and using the feedback collected to improve current performance and drive the further development (Shahraki, Zarea & Jannesari, 2012).

The decision-making process can assist marketers in knowing more about their targets, and thus they can make specific marketing strategies to better serve the targets. It is necessary for marketers to understand each step of their customers decision making process, in this way, markets can get the key information about their customers. For example, how customers collect information before making purchasing decision, what factors motivate them to buy, and what other possible factors may have impact on customers' decision making. The factors could be consumers' purchasing motivation, specific objectives, previous perception of products and so on (Peter and Olson, 2005).

However, a prerequisite for using this model is that consumers should be rational decision makers. Everyone has his own decision making style that is normally considered as a fundamental psychological construct, which is considered stable during a period of time. In other words, the basic personal decision making style does not change with different products or services, because it is rooted in consumers' mind (Burns, 2011). Burns also mentioned the consumer decision making styles of Generation Y (the birth year between 1983 and 2000) are quite distinguish compared with previous generation owing to

emerging development of e-commerce, social media and changing shopping environment in their daily life (Bakewell & Mitchell & Mishra, 2010).

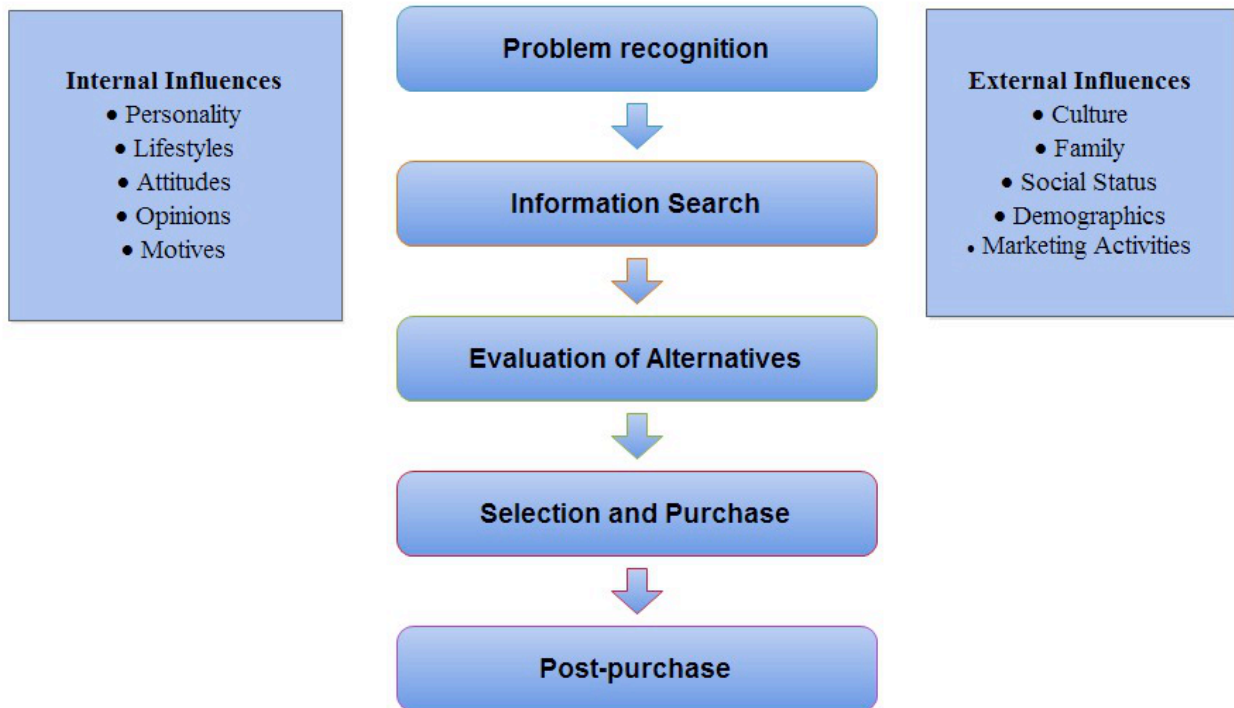


Figure 3: Consumer decision-making model with internal and external influences (Rudd, Djafarova and Waring, 2012)

The Figure 3 above indicates that there are a variety of factors that have a great impact on decision making process. These factors can be divided into internal influences and external influences (Rudd, Djafarova and Waring, 2012). The internal influences are mainly focused on individuals, including personal lifestyles, attitudes, motives, opinions and self-personalities (Vrontis, Thrassou & Melaanathiou, 2007). While external influences involve culture, social status, family, demographics and marketing activities, which are all within the large environment. It is certainly in line with social economic trends, which makes external influences become more and more important.

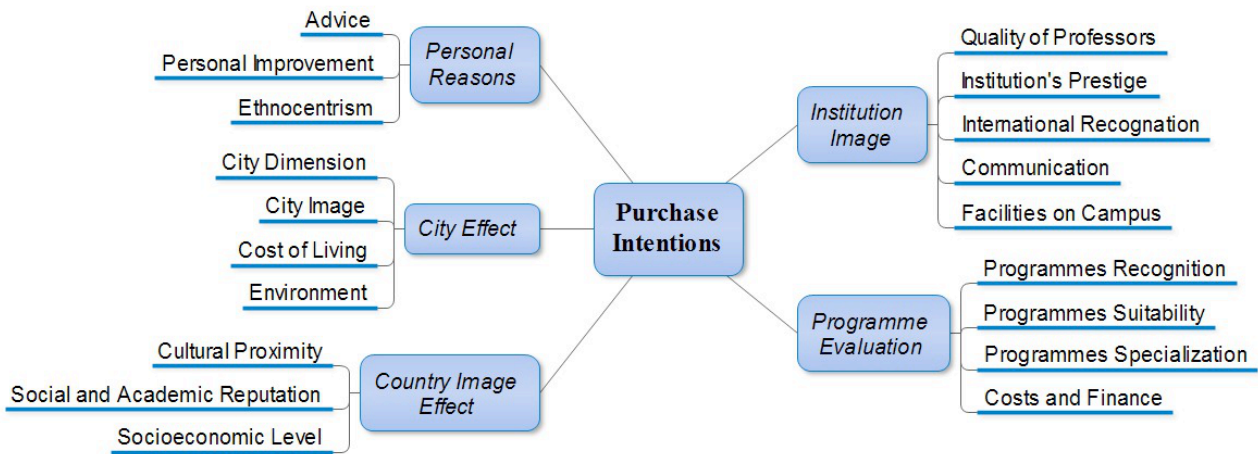


Figure 4: Factors influencing the decision-making process of international students (Cubillo et al., 2006, p.107)

In 2006, Cubillo, Sanchez and Cervino extended contents for the purpose of explaining what factors influencing the decision-making process of international students. It can be seen from the model (Figure 4) that there are five major influences that would influence the decision-making process of international students, including personal reasons, city effect, country image effect, institution image and programme evaluation. The detailed factors are classified from these five categories in Figure 4. Although stated earlier in this chapter, suggestions from family members can greatly influence individual's decision making process (Davey, 2005), family members are not included in any of these categories. Chen and Zimitat therefore explained that decisions discussed with family members are usually regarded as household issues instead of individual decisions; therefore it does not have to be classified into this model (Chen & Zimitat, 2006).

### 3.3 Corporate Reputation

Corporate reputation should be well maintained by companies in order to create competitive advantages and keep long term relationships with their employees, consumers and other stakeholders (Lange, Lee & Dai 2011). Just as Siltaoja stated in 2006 that corporate reputation is an important resource, which gives a company the unique selling points over other counterparts (Siltaoja, 2006; Deephouse 2000).

In 1992, Wartick defined corporate reputation as “the aggregation of a single stakeholder’s perceptions of how well organizational responses meet the demands and expectations of many organizational stakeholders” (Waddock, 2000, p.323). Four years later, Fombrun purposed one of the most cited definitions of corporate reputation as “a perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and future prospects that describes the firm’s overall appeal to all of its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals” (Fombrun, 2001, p. 293). He also regarded corporate reputation as a function of



corporate image and corporate identity. To be more specific, corporate image is normally created by a company internally, but perceived by the external stakeholders as perceptions about an organization through different communication and brand activities (Davies & Miles 1998). While, corporate identity drives from the perceptions of internal stakeholders (Shamma, 2012).

Sandberg commented that corporate reputation focuses on behavior predict and expectations fulfillment (Delgado-García, Quevedo-Puente & Díez-Esteban, 2013). It can be said that all the definitions mentioned above reflect the point that corporate reputation is closely related to perception, since it reflects people awareness towards a company (Shamma, 2012). Therefore, it is essential for companies to put their commitments into practices and meet the stakeholders' expectations in the reality in order to develop or maintain its reputation (Siltaoja, 2006; Dowling & Moran, 2012).

### **3.3.1 Classification of Corporate Reputation**

Corporate reputation is also viewed as “general view of the company” (Bick & Jacobson & Abratt, 2003, p. 853) because it is composed by all aspects of corporate activities. The main elements that affect corporate reputation concluded by Roux in 2003 are shareholder value, financial performance, organizational ethics, marketing mix activities, corporate branding activities, internal relationships with stakeholders and external public relations (Le Roux, 2003).

In 2006, Castro classified corporate reputation into three major categories, which are managerial reputation, product reputation, and financial reputation (Martin de Castro & Navas Lopez & Saez, 2006). Based on this initial framework, Reddiar and Kleyn (2011) clustered dimensions of corporate reputation into six themes, including customers, leadership, financial performance, corporate conduct, crisis management and corporate governance. It is obvious that there are many specific factors that comprise corporate reputation; therefore they are sorted according to different categories which can be easily seen in the following Figure 5 (Reddiar & Kleyn, 2011).

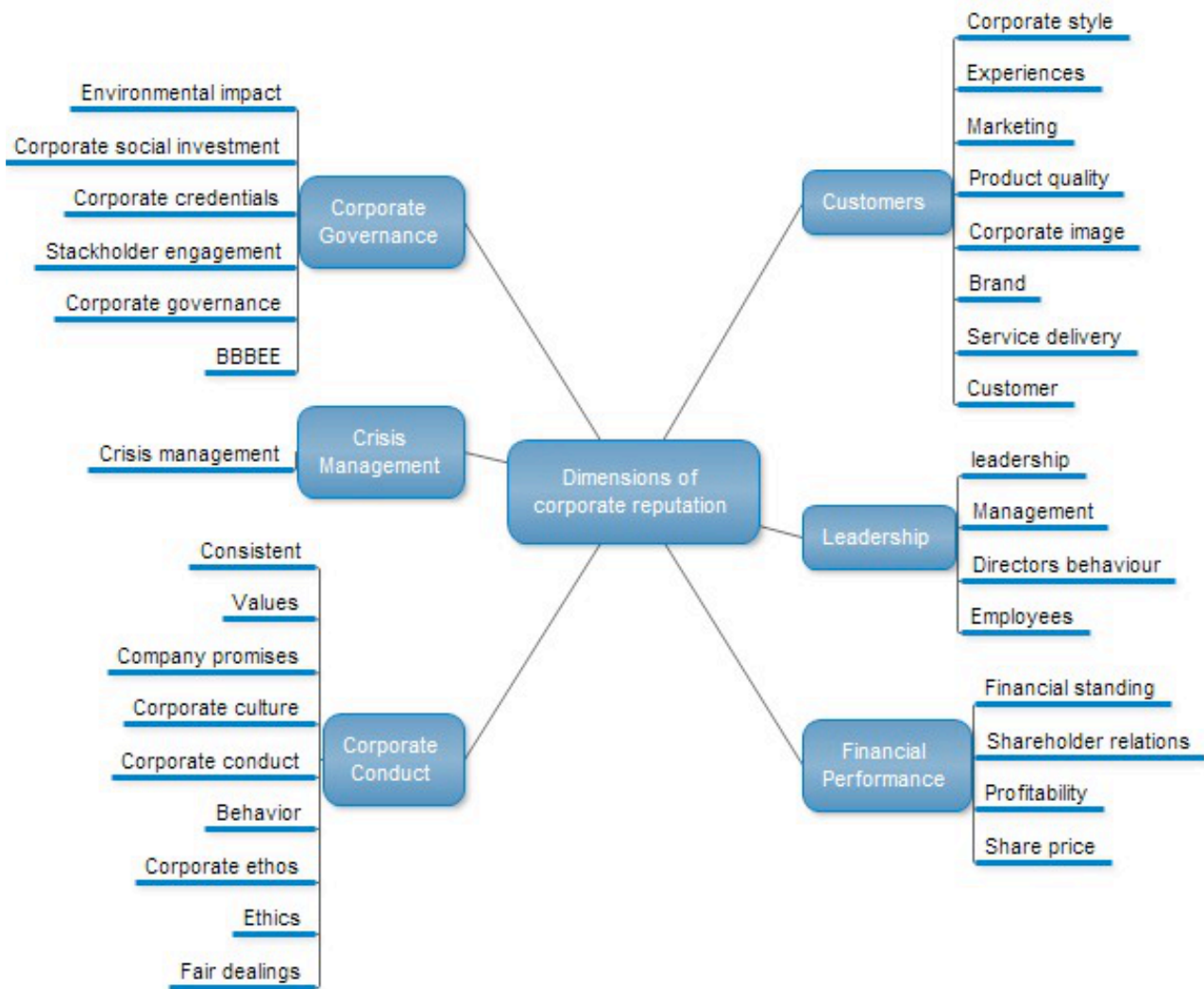


Figure 5 : Dimensions of corporate reputation (Reddiar & Kleyn, 2011)

Besides Fombrun's idea (mentioned earlier), many other researchers have also discussed that corporate reputation is formed by corporate image and corporate identify. For example, corporate reputation is always represented as organizational identity, organizational image, or even organizational brand (Emal, 2012). Wartick (2002) pointed out that corporate reputation can be presented as following formula:

$$\text{Corporate Reputation} = \text{Corporate Image} + \text{Corporate Identity}$$

Corporate image is explained as the "outside world's overall impression of the company including the views of customers, shareholders, the media, and the general public" (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). However, corporate identity focuses on discussing what individuals within the company perceive about their organization, and it can distinguish a firm from others through comparing different values and characteristics that firms deliver (Hatch & Schultz, 1997).

## Chapter 4: Empirical Analysis of Qualitative Interviews

This chapter shows the key findings that we gathered from the qualitative interviews with 10 non-European students who are studying at Lund University.

### 4.1 Qualitative Interviews' Introduction

As mentioned in chapter 2 that the research targets are tuition fee paying students, they can be defined as the students who are from countries outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland and enrolled at Lund University after the autumn semester of 2011. The interviewees have been divided into three different categories before conducting interviews. They are exchanges students, scholarship awarded students and self-financed students. However, PHD students are not included in our research groups.

In total, 10 non-European Lund University students were interviewed. The 10 interviewed students all together are from 8 different countries, including: China, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, Russia and Tanzania. The interviews covered students from 5 different faculties within Lund University. For example, School of Economic and Management, Faculty of Engineering, Faculties of Humanities and Theology, Faculty of Social Sciences and Faculty of Law.

In order to get the comprehensive results, the interviews are guided with the structured questions, which includes 2 parts and 12 questions all together (Appendix 1). All the questions are open ended questions, taking approximately 15-20 minutes to finish.

In this interview questionnaire, question 1-2 ask about the reasons and factors that were taken into consideration when Sweden and Lund University were chosen for studying. Question 3 is about what benefits of the education in Lund University would bring to them, which gives an outlook of important ideas about their purposes or main motivations for coming to study at Lund University. Question 4 and 5 are related to the main approaches or methods they have used to collect relevant information about Lund University. These two questions indicate the key reference groups that have influenced their choices on which university to apply. The most important factors that motivated them to choose Lund University can be found from question 6. Question 7 asks about whether or not and why they would recommend or would not recommend Lund University for students who intend to study outside their home country. From this question, it can be determined if they are satisfied with studying and living at Lund University. Questions 8-12 in Part two of the interview questionnaire helps to gain the background information of the interviewees. For example, their name, nationality, the faculty and program they are studying as well as the percentage of the scholarship they get for studying at Lund University.

All the interviews took place from 21st to 25th of February, 2013. The purpose of the interviews with 10 non-European Lund University students is to get an in-depth understanding of 1) the factors they have taken into consideration when choosing Sweden

and Lund University for studying, 2) the different methods they used to get the relevant information about Lund University, 3) the benefits they receive from studying at Lund University, and 4) if they would recommend Lund University to any future potential applicants.

Based on the analysis of the interviews, general conclusions are drawn and a quantitative questionnaire made to test the findings in a large amount of non-European students.

## **4.2 Analysis of Qualitative Interviews' Results**

The results of the interviews with 10 non-European Lund University students are compared, combined and analyzed from 4 different perspectives, which are the following:

- a) The factors that respondents have taken into consideration when choosing Sweden or Lund University for studying.
- b) The approaches that respondents used for collecting the relevant information pertaining to Lund University
- c) The benefits that respondents receive from studying at Lund University.
- d) The attitude of respondents towards recommending Lund University to potential applicants.

### **4.2.1 The Factors that Respondents Took into Consideration**

According to the interviews' results, there are many different factors that influenced respondents' choices of coming to study in Sweden or at Lund University. However, six different factors were frequently mentioned by the respondents, and could be regarded as the top 6 factors that considered commonly by non-European students. The other factors will also be taken into account.



Figure 6: The influential factors for non-European students to choose Lund University for studying.

8 out of 10 interviews respondents have claimed that “the ranking and reputation of Lund University, as Top 100 University in the world” is one of the most important factors that they have taken into consideration when thinking about coming to study at Lund University. As Agnes Masesa (2013), stated that she chosen to Lund University because “*Lund University is a Top 100 university in the world and it enjoys good reputation and image all over the world*”. Phanida Slanvetpan (2013) also stated that good reputation of university is the most important factor motivated her to choose Lund University. “*If Lund University is not the Top 5 among European universities, I would have chosen Stockholm University because I love to be in a big city.*”

The large variety of English programs and interesting curriculums setting are another important factor mentioned by 5 interview respondents. For some interview respondents, they choose to study at Lund University mainly because of the interesting programs. For Mengyao Han (2013), said that “*The program is the most important factor to me when I choose university. I like the curriculum of the program provided by Lund University better compared with the other similar programs*”. Another respondent also expressed that “*I choose to study in Lund University mainly because of the program. If this program is offered by Goteborg University or Stockholm University, I would go there as well*” (Male, 2013). Another example is Garniasih Garnijanto (2013), she put that “*I choose the program to study before choosing country or the university. I am really interested in branding and Lund University offers good program of marketing and branding courses.*”

Scholarship opportunity is the third most popular factor suggested by the respondents. For the non-European students, Lund University provides 7 different types of scholarships to finance them for studying (Grindlay, 2012). They are Lund University Global Scholarship Programme, Programme-specific scholarships, Erasmus Mundus Action 1, Erasmus Mundus Action 2, Swedish Institute Scholarships, US student finance and Canada and UK finance (Grindlay, 2012). From the results of the interviews, we could see that some of them choose to study at Lund University because they got scholarship to cover their tuition fees and living expenses (Slanvetpan, 2013 & Male, 2013). Garniasih also directly stated in the interviews that *“if there are not any scholarships provided to Indonesia students, I would not come to Sweden or Lund University in the first place”* (Garnijanto, 2013).

Advanced education system is the fourth important factor that mentioned repeatedly by 4 respondents. There are 4 respondents referred to the high quality of education in Sweden, which is an important element that motivates them to make decisions on applying for Lund University. 2 out of 4 respondents explained that the quality of education in Sweden is quite high in general, (Masesa, 2013 & Han, 2013) and another respondent said that Lund University provides him a conducive research environment in engineering field (Lee, 2013). Garniasih also considered that Sweden is a rather wealth country and supports education (Garnijanto, 2013).

Another factor considered by 3 respondents can be attributed to good living environment of Lund University. To be more specific, as an exchange student from Singapore, Gracia stated that safety is a big concern for her and her family when choosing Lund University for studying (Sim, 2013). Besides, Yunzhe expressed the city of Lund is beautiful and well-located, and it is convenient to go to anywhere with the train (Zhang, 2013). With the large number of international students in Lund, many respondents said they have increased their social networks and met people with different culture background (Endo, 2013 & Lee, 2013).

2 out 10 interview respondents expressed that the factor of previous studying experience in Nordic countries motivated them to choose Lund University for studying. Yunzhe Zhang, claimed that her exchange study in Sweden before is an important element for her to choose Lund University (Zhang, 2013). The other respondent stated that she had 3 years bachelor studying in Finland. The living environment, lifestyle, teaching methods and food choices in Sweden is similar to Finland, so that she could adapt to the life in Sweden quickly (Han, 2013).

There are also many other elements that have been considered by the interviewees besides these top 6 factors. For example, the tuition fees and living expenses is much lower compared with other countries, such as Norway, Netherlands, United Kingdom (Tekutova, 2013, Garnijanto, 2013), also English is widely used in Sweden and Lund, so some respondents said that they could improve their English language skills while studying (Han, 2013, Masesa, 2013, Zhang, 2013, Sim, 2013). Personal preference is also one

factor that explained why some of them choose to come to Sweden and Lund University to study (Garnijanto, 2013).

#### 4.2.2 The Approaches Used by Respondents to Collect Information

According to the results of the interviews, there are 5 major approaches for respondents to collect relevant information about Lund University. They are as follows.

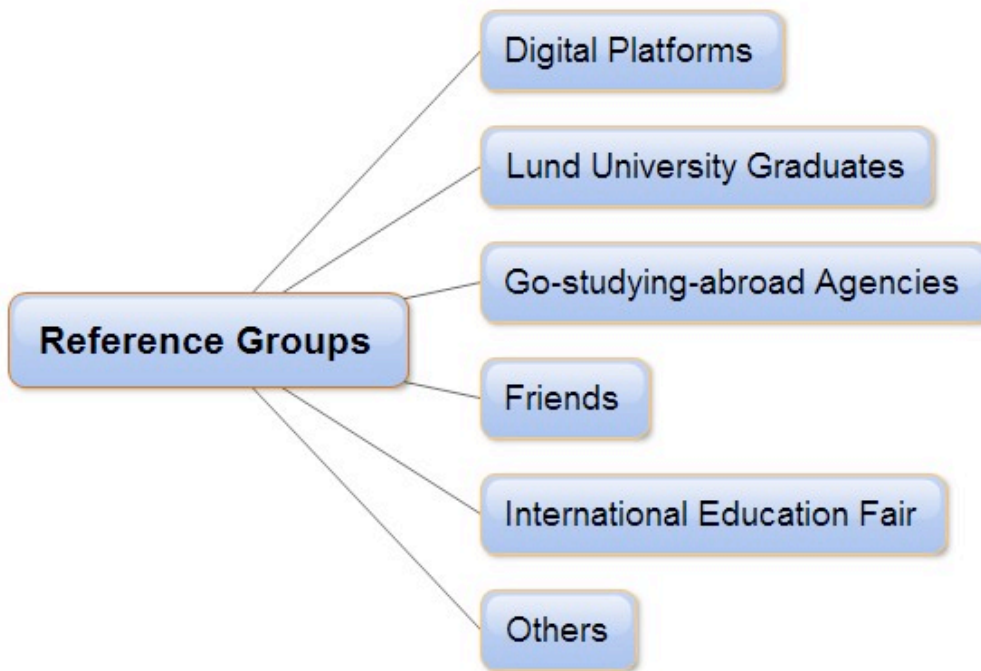


Figure 7: The types of reference groups that respondents used for collecting relevant information about Lund University.

Almost all of the respondents explained that digital platforms play an important role when collecting information about the university. The most often used digital platforms include the Lund University home webpage: [www.lunduniversity.lu.se](http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se), the websites of [www.studyinsweden.se](http://www.studyinsweden.se) and [www.universityadmissions.se](http://www.universityadmissions.se), where students internationally are able to collect relevant information about Lund University, their programs, the application processes and others as well. Besides these, internet search engines, such as Google have been mentioned several times during the interviews. In addition to that, different social media platforms, such as Facebook, Youtube and the Lund students' alumni blogs are also used by many respondents to collect information before making any final decisions.

5 out of 10 respondents expressed that they have contacted the students who graduated from Lund University for general information of Lund University. As one person mentioned in the interview that "By talking with Lund University graduates about different programs and student life at Lund, it would provide me with more inside information before making decisions (Male, 2013). Besides, Gwanho stated that he could get more direct and detailed answers from the Lund University graduates (Lee, 2013).

3 respondents mentioned that they have used go-studying-abroad agencies to collect information about Lund University. In general, a go-studying-abroad agency can be regarded as a type of intermediary service institution, and they provide important information or services to students who intend to study outside their home countries. For example, Anna stated that Nordic language school located in her home country helped her prepare the most of the application papers and handled the application process (Tekutova, 2013). Two other respondents also point out that they got the general information about Lund University and suitable programs from go-studying-abroad agencies.

Several respondents claimed that the recommendation of Lund University from their friends actually motivated them to start searching for more information about Lund University. Also many people agreed with the statement that they tended to trust the universities recommended by their friends. For example, Mengyao turned to her Swedish friends in China for suggestion about whether she should go to Lund University or Stockholm University (Han, 2013). Another reason influenced Agnes choosing Lund University largely was because “her friend mentioned many of her managers have studies in Lund University before” and it helped her to decide which university to apply (Masesa, 2013).

2 respondents have declared that participating in an International Education Fair was also a good way to gather important information about studying abroad. For example, Yunzhe mentioned education exhibition in her home city was quite popular and useful for the students who want to study abroad (Zhang, 2013). Garniasih also mentioned that Swedish embassy promoted the education and Lund University in the international education fair in her home country caught her attention (Garnijanto, 2013).

The other approaches used by respondents to generate information about Lund University and different programs included contacting the program coordinators and collecting information through International Desk within home university. Phanida mentioned that “*I sent emails to the program coordinators when she had questions about the program*” (Slanvetpan, 2013). From the exchange student respondents the conclusion can be drawn that their home universities played major roles in providing information about Lund University and its exchange programs.

#### **4.2.3 The Benefits that Respondents Receive from Lund University**

Through asking 10 interviewees the question about benefits they would receive from studying at Lund University, 4 major categories were figured out, including personal development in Academic field, future career opportunities, expand social network and language improvement.





Figure 8: The benefits that respondents receive from the studying at Lund University.

6 out of 10 respondents claimed that having a degree from Lund University can provide them more opportunities for a future career such as acquiring good jobs or further study. Just like one of the Chinese respondents, Mengyao stated that the Master degree of Lund University can enrich her resume, offer her more opportunities when searching for future jobs, and impress her future employer as well. The other Chinese respondent also thought the reputation of Lund University would be helpful for her future career because it is really a leading university among Scandinavian countries. The benefit of applying for PHD in the future was mentioned as well (Male, 2013).

Half of the respondents considered Lund a very academically based and research oriented university where they can obtain affluent professional knowledge and deep insights in academic field. 2 out of 5 respondents mentioned that their highly qualified professors have ample experience with teaching. Besides, Gwanho declared that the advanced research environment in Lund University makes applying theoretical theories to practical fields possible. Moreover, Garniasih believes studying in Lund will help her get different perspectives of the research areas from a more advanced country in terms of economics and development, when compared with her home country.

Expanding a social network is another benefit proposed by 4 respondents. They believe that Lund University offers them a good communication platform to meet people worldwide. Two of them thought studying at Lund University can help them create a massive social network with different people from different nations and cultural backgrounds (Masesa & Garnijanto, 2013). Besides, 2 out of 10 respondents believed that the improvement of language proficiency in terms of both English and Swedish is also a benefit that Lund University brought to them. (Zhang & Han, 2013)

## 2.4 The Attitude of Respondents Towards Recommending Lund University

Based on the feedback collected from 10 non-European Lund University students about whether they would recommend Lund University to future potential applicants. We found 6 respondents showed a positive attitude, while 4 respondents gave more neutral answers regarding this question.

Firstly, the positive attitudes derives from an attractive program curriculum, great educational facilities and teaching methods that allow students to easily gain access to abundant unknown academic knowledge. Secondly, as an international university where English is widely used and social activities are quite popular, Lund University builds a strong social network for students all over the world. These reasons are covered by 6 respondents when they were asked why they would recommend Lund University to others.

However, some respondents expressed a neutral attitude because they believe whether they would recommend Lund University to potential applicants or not totally depends on the programs they want to study. As one respondent said *“I would highly recommend Lund University for the students who want to study Nature Sciences. For example, the programs related to Engineering, Medicine, Microbiology etc. However, when it comes to the faculty of Social Sciences, for example, the programs related to Marketing, Business Administration, Business Development. Maybe Lund University or Sweden is not the best place for studying”* (Garnijanto, 2013). Another respondent held a similar opinion with Gernijanto, she said that *“Lund University is strong on certain subjects but not all”* (Zhang, 2013).

# Chapter 5: Empirical Analysis of Quantitative Survey

This chapter shows the key findings that were gathered from the quantitative survey with 189 non-European students who are studying at Lund University.

## 5.1 Quantitative Survey Introduction

Based on the main findings of the qualitative interviews with 10 non-European students who are studying at Lund University in the previous chapter 4, the quantitative survey questionnaire is designed to test the results on a larger scale. The key findings that were gathered from the quantitative survey with 189 non-European Lund University students are presented in this chapter.

The survey questionnaire consists of 14 questions as found from Appendix 2, and it takes about 5 minutes to finish. Different forms of questions have been utilized when designing the survey questionnaire, which includes, multiple choices questions, 1-5 scales questions, Yes or No questions, and semi open-ended questions and open question, in order to get all the necessary answers. The order of the questions is ranked based on the consumer decisions making process.

In this survey questionnaire, questions 1-6 regarding respondents background information, such as their nationality, the faculty and the program they are studying as well as their scholarship situation. Question 7 and 8 intended to investigate the "Problem Recognition" by asking when and what particular reasons made respondents started to think about studying outside their home country. Question 9 and 10 indicate "Information Search" that respondents used to collect information about studying at Lund University. Question 11 and 12 explain what factors they have taken into considerations when choosing Lund University for studying and the level of each factors influenced them. From question 13, we could know their "Product choices" by asking what benefits they received after coming to study at Lund University. Last but not least, question 14 illuminates their "Post-purchase Evaluation" by asking whether they would recommend Lund University to others.

The survey data collection took place in March 2013 and all together 208 responses were received. However, only 189 survey questionnaires are considered as valid for data analysis after all the survey responses were eliminated from EU/EEA and Switzerland citizens and PHD students at Lund University. The aim of the quantitative survey is to test the main findings on a large scale, to explore who the main reference groups are that have influenced the decision making of Lund University's non-European students and what are the main information research methods they have used. More importantly, Based on the data analysis, the ranking of reference groups will be drawn, and it will serve as the basis for the qualitative interviews with Mr. Richard Stenelo, Deputy Executive Director, and Mr. Johan Gunnarsson, the International Marketing Manager to get a in-depth understanding

of what promotion strategies Lund University has utilized to approach different references groups and to reach potential applicants.

## 5.2 Quantitative Survey Analysis

The survey results from 189 non-European Lund University students are compared, combined and analyzed by using office tools, word and Excel, as well as the online survey tool. The results can be divided into the following parts.

- a) Analysis of survey respondents' background information.
- b) The time when respondents started to think about studying outside home country.
- c) The approaches that respondents used for getting information about Lund University
- d) The factors that respondents take into consideration when choosing Lund University for studying.
- e) The reasons to receive education in Lund university
- f) The attitude of respondents towards recommending Lund University to potential applicants.

### 5.2.1 Survey Respondents Background Information

**The majority of survey respondents come from China**

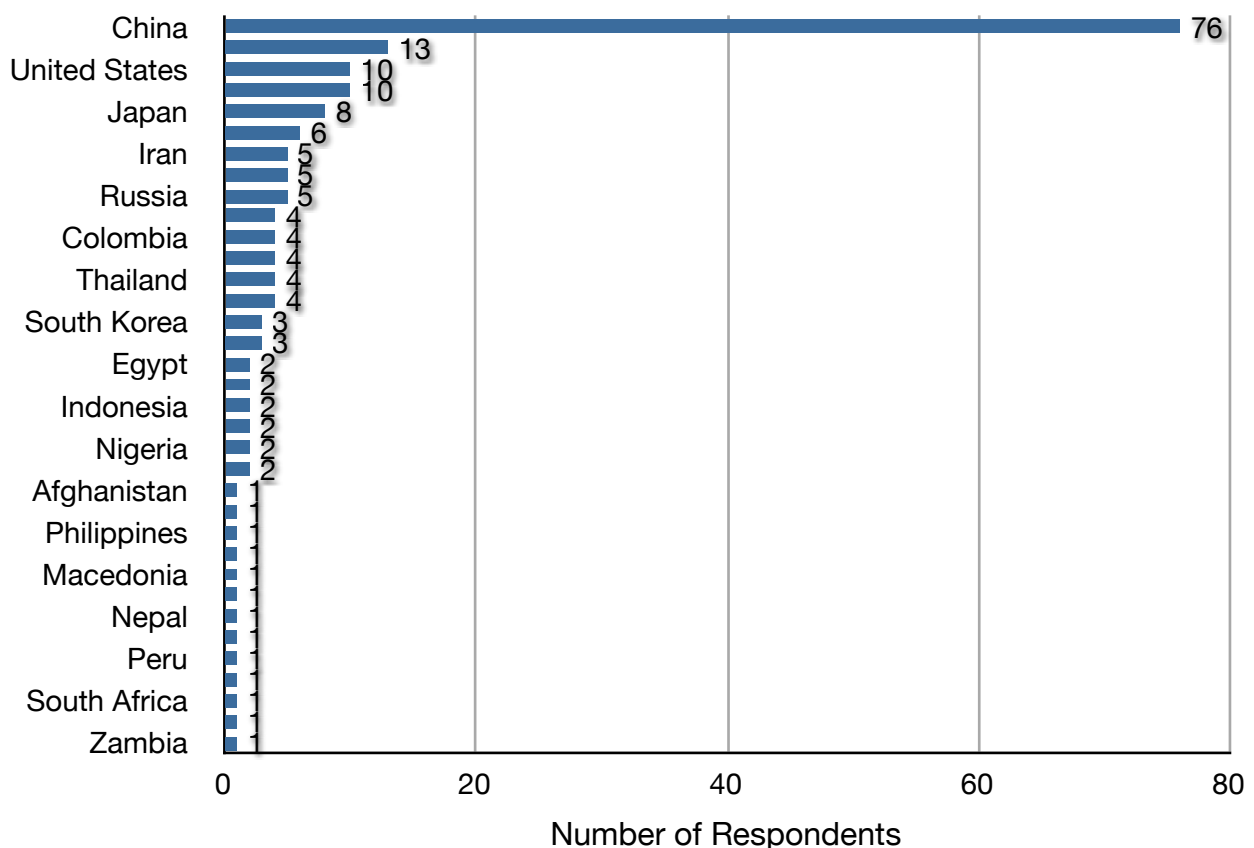


Figure 9: Which country are you from

Figure 9 indicates the countries that respondents come from. According to the 189 survey respondents, they are from 35 different countries as shown. The number of survey respondents that come from China is 76, which equals to more than 40% of the total number. Then followed by 13 respondents come from Canada, this accounts for the second biggest group based in the country. The third biggest group is the United States and Singapore, with 10 respondents from each. There are 8 respondents from Japan, 6 respondents from Pakistan and 5 respondents from Iran, Ecuador and Russia. The number of respondents from Australia, Colombia, Hong Kong, Thailand and Turkey is 4 from each. Only 3 respondents come from South Korea and Vietnam. The countries like Egypt, Indonesia, Lebanon, Nigeria and Uganda are represented here by 2 respondents. Moreover, there is also a long list of countries where only 1 respondent come from, the countries include Afghanistan, Albania, Philippines, Kenya, Macedonia, Mexico, Nepal, Nicaragua, Peru, Serbia, South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia.

Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn that the majority of non-European students studying at Lund University after the introduction of tuition fee are Chinese, and they account for the biggest group of non-European students. However, as one of the thesis limitations, the survey results might not correspond with the actual student percentage at Lund University. Thus, the quantitative survey might largely reflect the Chinese students' opinion.

**The number of survey respondents from the School of Economics & Management outweighs the number of respondents from other Faculties within Lund University.**

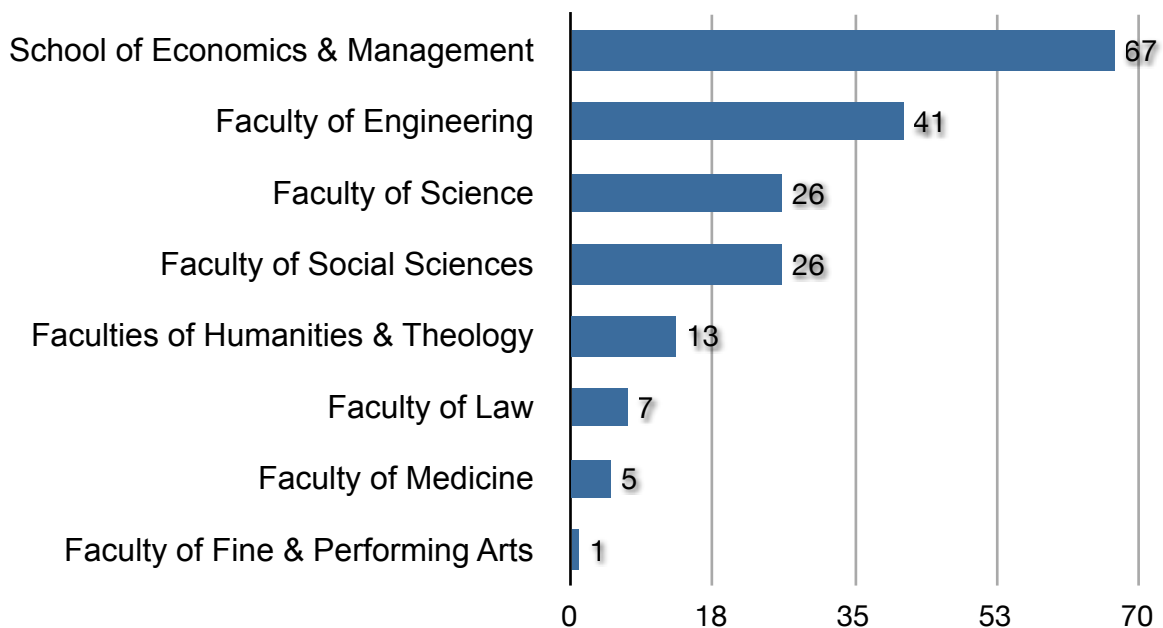


Figure 10: Which Faculty are you studying in

Figure 10 gives a clear picture of which Faculty of the survey respondents are studying in within Lund University. From the results it can be seen that out of 189 responses, 186 respondents have answered this question, while 3 people have skipped it. The survey results covered all the faculties within Lund University to reduce the survey limitations. The number of respondents from the school of Economics and Management is 67 and it takes about 36% of the total number. The Faculty of Engineering accounts for 22% of the total respondents with 41 numbers, followed by the Faculty of Science and Faculty of Social Sciences with 26 respondents from each. All together, 13 replies were received from non-European students studying in the Faculties of Humanities & Theology, 7 replies from the Faculty of Law, and 5 survey feedbacks from the Faculty of Medicine. However, only 1 questionnaire comes from the Faculty of Fine & Performing Arts.

### Segmentation of survey respondents based on the study program

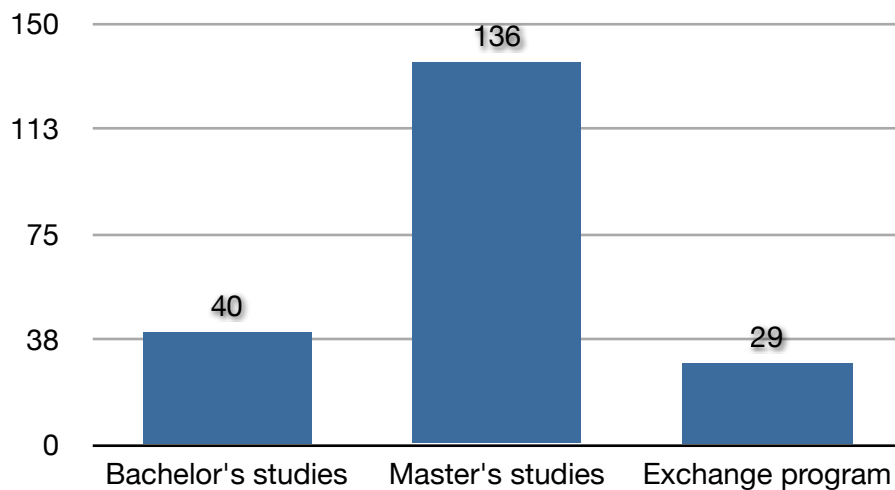


Figure 11: Which programme are you studying

In this quantitative survey, the respondents are categorized into 3 different study programs, which are “Bachelor’s studies”, “Master’s Studies” and “Exchange program”. While all the survey feedbacks received from the non-European PHD students have been eliminated from the data analysis, since they do not belong to the research target groups.

From the Figure 9 above it is known that 136 respondents are taking their “Master’s studies” at Lund University, which equals to the 72% of the total replies from the non-European students at Lund University. Then the number of Bachelor degree study respondents is 40 and takes 21% of the total. Moreover, 29 replies are from the non-European Exchange students at Lund University. Therefore, it can be concluded that the biggest group of Non-European students at Lund University are the Masters degree students.

### Only 1/3 of non-European survey respondents have scholarships

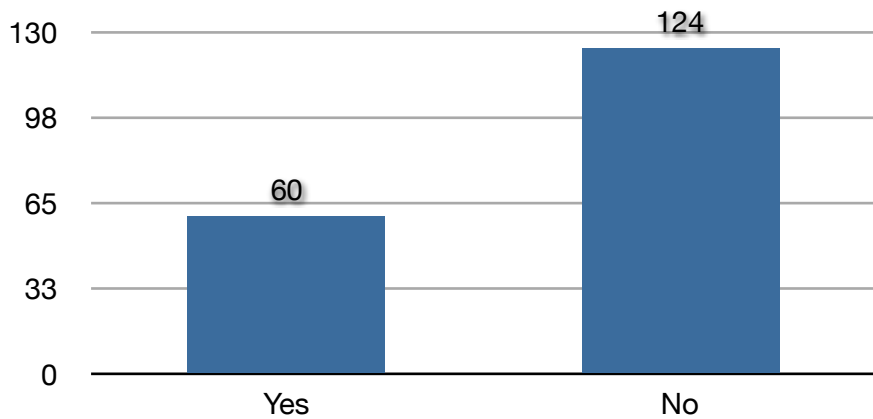


Figure 12: Do you have a scholarship while studying at Lund University

Figure 12 illustrates the scholarship situation of the non-European survey respondents. All together 184 people answered this question, while 5 respondents have skipped it. As it is clearly seen from the Figure 10 that only 1/3 of the respondents, 60 people are awarded scholarships while studying at Lund University.

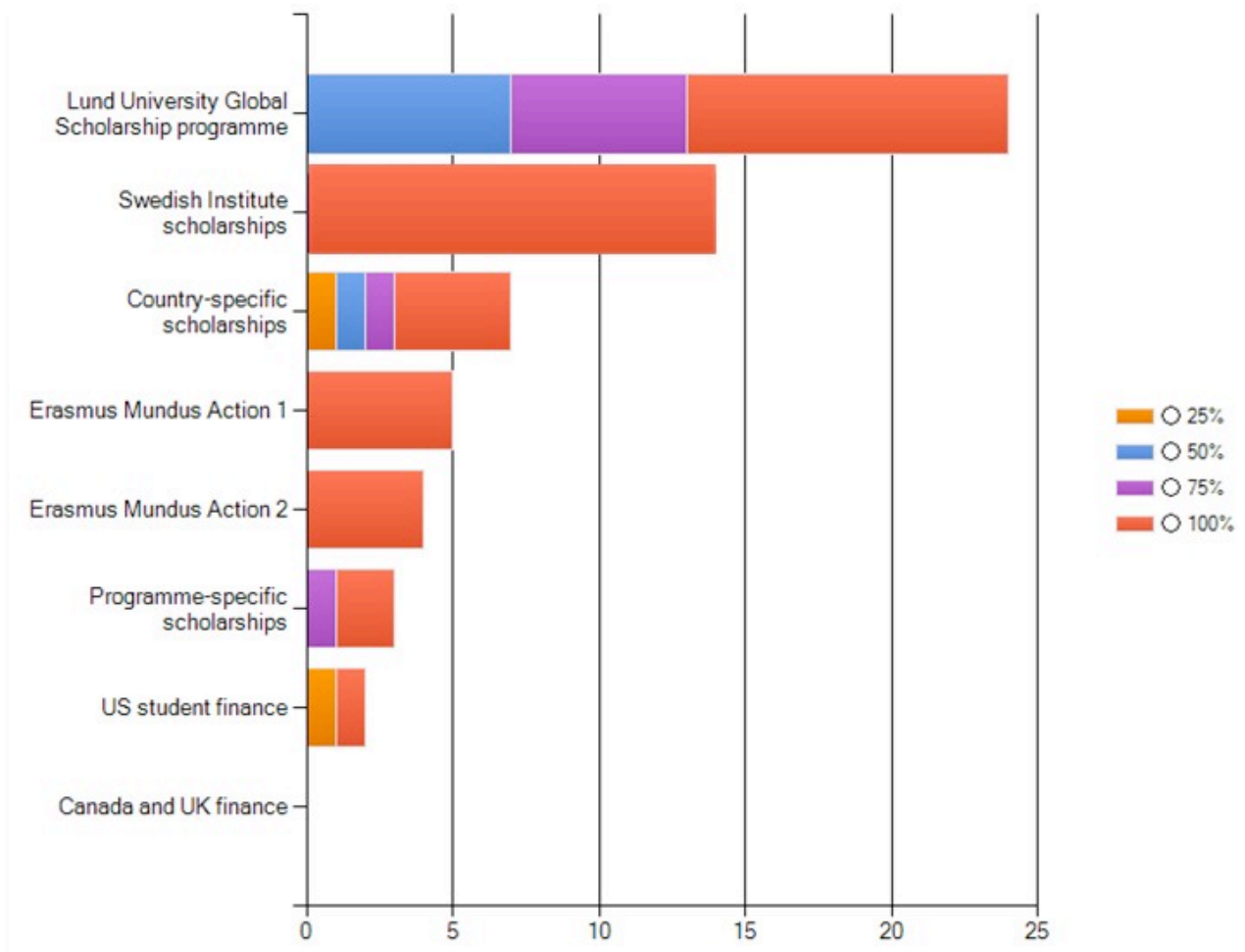


Figure 13: The types and percentage of scholarship awarded to the non-European survey respondents.

Also the Figure 13 clearly represents the different types and percentages of scholarship awarded to these 60 students. All together there are 8 different types of Scholarship available to non-European students since the introduction of the tuition fee and scholarship normally contains 4 various percentage groups, which starts from 25% of the scholarship to the full 100%.

According to the Figure 11, 24 out of 60 respondents are awarded the “Lund University Global Scholarship Programme”, which takes nearly 41% of the total scholarship awarded to respondents and is also accounted as the biggest scholarship group. Within this scholarship group, approximately half of the people received full scholarships, while the other half of people equally received 25% and 50% of the scholarships. The second biggest scholarship group is the “Swedish Institute Scholarships”. Altogether, 14 respondents belong to this group, and all the people in this group received 100% of the Scholarship. Followed by the “Country-Specific Scholarships”, 7 out of 60 respondents, almost 12% of the total, received this type of scholarship. 1 person of each received 25%, 50% and 75% of the scholarship, while the rest 4 respondents received the full scholarship. Furthermore, 9 non-European students all together are awarded full scholarships from the “Erasmus Mundus Action”. As for the “Programme-Specific Scholarship”, 1 person got a 75% scholarship, while 2 people received full awards within this group. Last but not least, 2 respondents received the “US Student Finance” all together, 1 is covered by a 25% scholarship, while the other one is covered by the 100% scholarship. However, 0 respondents have received the “Canada and UK Finance”.

In conclusion, only a third of all the non-European survey respondents have received any scholarship while studying at Lund University. The top 3 biggest scholarship groups are the “Lund University Global Scholarship Programme”, “Swedish Institute Scholarships” and “Country-Specific Scholarships”. However, there are as high as 67% of people awarded full scholarships.



### 5.2.2 The Time to Think about Studying Outside Your Home Country.

**Most non-European survey respondents started to think about studying outside their home country “During university studying” or “Before university studying”**

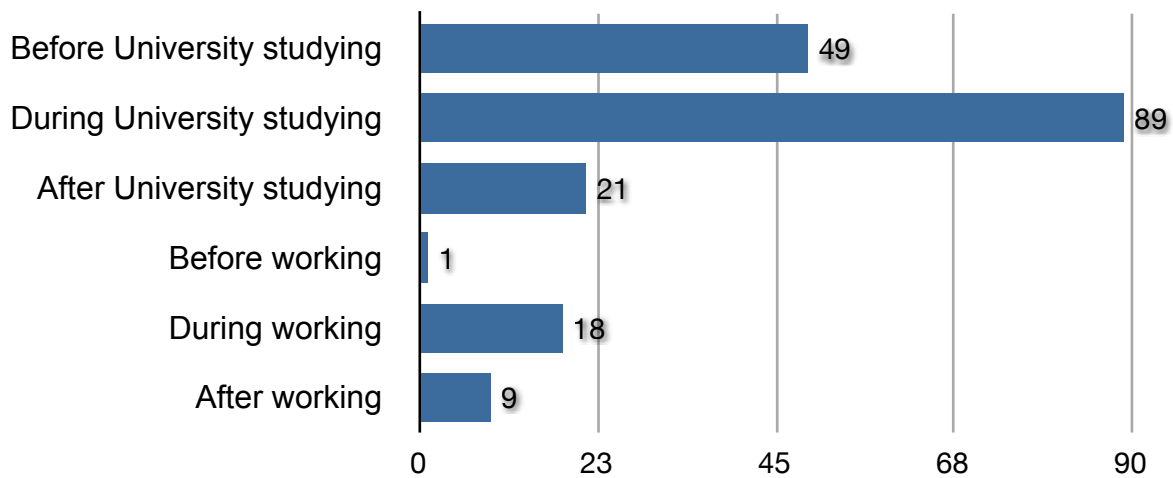


Figure 14: When you started to think about studying outside your home country.

Figure 14 below gives a clear picture about the time when the survey respondents had the intention to study outside their home country. In the survey, the time was divided into 6 different segments, namely, “Before university studying”, “During university studying”, “After university studying”, “Before working”, “During working” and “After working”. From the results it became apparent that the majority of respondents had the idea of studying abroad during university studying, which gets 89 votes and accounting for 48% of the total. The second most popular time segment is before university studying; 49 respondents claimed that they had the idea of studying abroad during that time. It explains the reason why the majority of the non-European students at Lund University are Master degree students.

### 5.2.3 The Approaches of Gathering Information about Lund University

**Nearly 70% of survey respondents claimed that the “Lund University Web page” is the most important approach to get relevant information about the university and programmes**

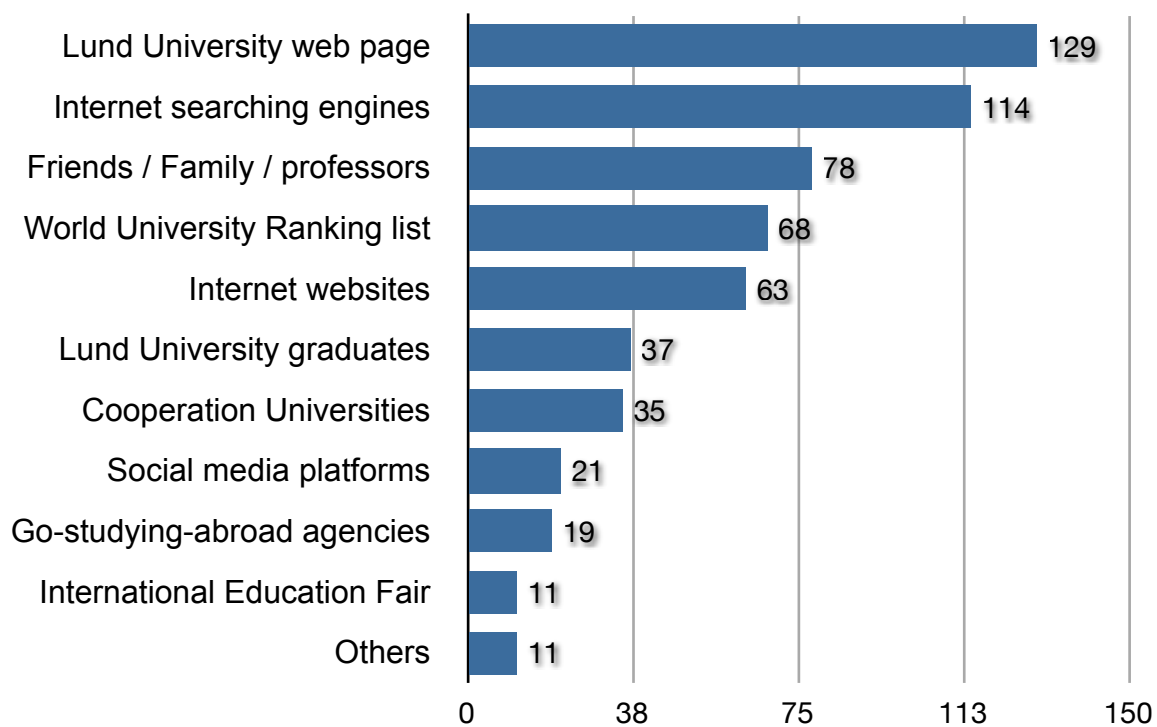


Figure 15: Where did you get relevant information about Lund University / Programme.

Figure 15 shows the important approaches or methods that survey respondents have used to collect relevant information about Lund University. More importantly, this question could indicate who the important reference groups are for the survey respondents (Research sub-question 2). This is a multiple choice question, where respondents could choose more than 1 answer.

As seen for the figure above, the most frequently used approach by the respondents is the “Lund University Web Page”, around 129 out of 189 have chosen this option. Therefore, there is a great need for Lund University to update and manage its web page and allow the potential applicants to get all the important information.

The second most important method is “Internet Searching Engines”, more than 60% of the respondents said they have used Google when searching Lund University.

Approximately 78 respondents stated that they chose Lund University for studying because they received recommendations from their “Friends/ Family/ Professors”, therefore, it is obvious that “Friends/ Family/ Professors” is indeed an important reference group which influences a students’ decision making process. As one respondent put it this way, “I choose to study at Lund University because I have relatives here in Lund.”

As for “World University Ranking List”, about 36% of respondents mentioned that “...as a top 100 university in the world, Lund University is a great attraction for me...” Therefore, the “World University Ranking List” is an important reference group to encourage and motivate people to choose Lund University.

“Internet websites”, especially [www.studyinsweden.se](http://www.studyinsweden.se) and [www.universityadmissions.se](http://www.universityadmissions.se) are important methods for many people (63 respondents) to gain access to the important information, such as, the application requirements, application process, the amount of tuition fees, scholarship availability and many others as well.

Furthermore, 20% of respondents said they got key information by contacting “Lund University Graduates”. One of the respondents stated “...contacting the students who have graduated from Lund University helps me to have more inside information, such as the studying and living environment at Lund University. More importantly, it increases the credibility of the information I get since it is based on people’s real experiences. Thus, It is different from reading the information on internet...” From this it can be concluded that people intend to trust the previously graduated students, who give suggestions based on their own experiences.

Also about 35 people, mainly non-European exchange students replied that they got most of information about Lund University from their home universities, which means “Exchange Cooperation Universities”. In addition, some respondents said they used different “Social Media Platforms”, such as Facebook, Youtube and Lund students’ alumni blogs when thinking about which university to apply. While, 19 respondents, about 10% of the total used the application services provided by “Go-studying-abroad agencies” and 11 respondents heard information about Lund University from “International Education Fair”, mainly from the Chinese and Indonesian students. Last but not least is that 11 people said they used other methods, such as by contacting the programme or course coordinators to get more information about the university and application process.

#### **5.2.4 The Factors Considered when Choosing Lund University.**

**More than 70% of survey respondents agreed that the “Ranking and Reputation” of Lund University is the most important factor that influenced their decision**

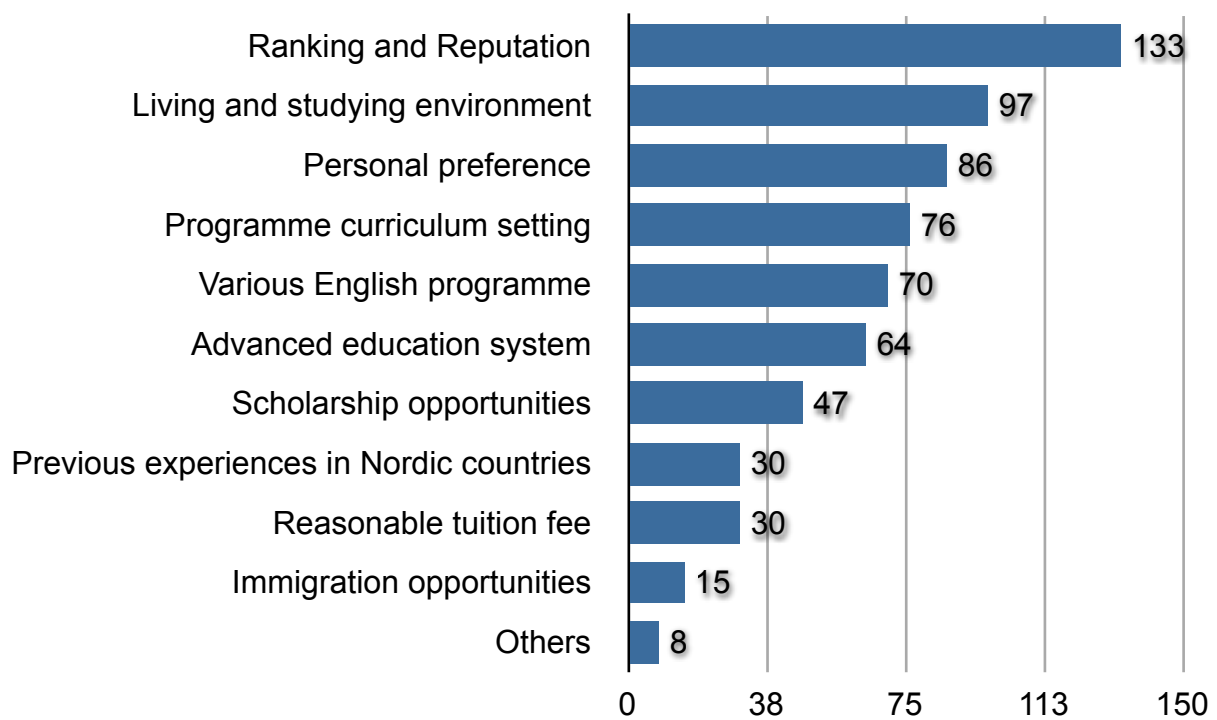


Figure 16: What factors have you taken into consideration when choosing Lund University for studying.

From Figure 16, It's easy to get a general picture of the different factors that influenced respondents' final decision to choose Lund University for studying (research sub-questions). In addition, this question in certain level indicates the main attractions that Lund University used to promote and attract potential applicants. This is a multiple choice question, where respondents could choose more than one factor that influenced their decision.

It is clear that the "Ranking and Reputation" of Lund University is the most popular factor, which received more than 70% of the respondents' votes. It also explained the reason why "Lund University ranked as a top 100 University" is displayed on the Lund University's web cover page, a link of ranking, facts and figures that directs the audience to a new page where more detailed information could be found. The second most important factor is the "Living and studying environment" within Lund University. Many factors have been mentioned by the respondents. For example, one of the important reasons is that Lund University is located in a university town; students can experience the rich history and cultural heritage of it. Also every year a large variety of international students from different countries and backgrounds choose Lund University for their studies and they enrich the Lund dynamic and international atmosphere. Furthermore, the English language is widely spoken by approximately 89% of the population, which allows students to have a unique experience without language barriers (Grindlay, 2013). "Personal Preference" is ranked as the third most important factor that motivated respondents to choose Lund University. Then followed by the factors, for example "Programme Curriculum Setting" "Various

English Programme”, “Advanced Education System” etc. could be found from the Figure 16 above.

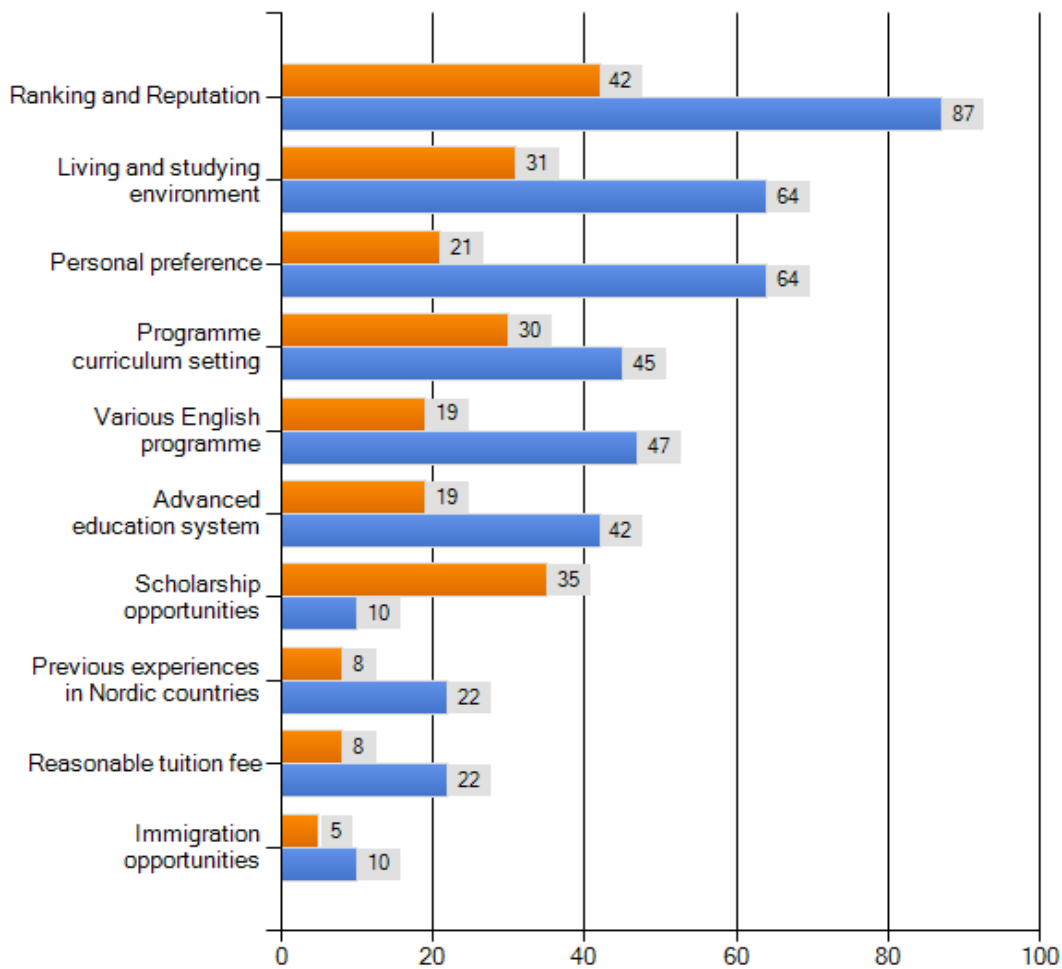


Figure 17: The factors influencing the respondents’ decision making process based on segments of scholarship rewarding students and non-scholarship rewarding students.

However, a slightly different attitude is noticeable towards this question when the answers are categorized based on segments of scholarship rewarding students (in orange) and non-scholarship rewarding students (in blue) in Figure 17.

For example, the top 3 most influencing factors for the scholarship rewarding students are the “Ranking and Reputation”, “Scholarship Opportunities” and “Living and Studying Environment”. However, “Personal Preference” is ranked as one of the top 3 for the non-scholarship rewarding students instead of the “Scholarship Opportunities”. Therefore, it can be concluded that these elements are the key factors that they take into consideration, but different segments of people prioritize them differently in different situation.

**More than half of the respondents disagree that “scholarship opportunities” “Immigration Opportunity” and “previous experiences in Nordic countries” greatly influenced their decisions to study at Lund University.**

Table 1: The Rating Average of the 8 statements given by 189 survey respondents

	Rating Average
Ranking and Reputation of Lund University greatly influenced my decision making.	3.98
Programme curriculum setting of Lund University greatly influenced my decision making.	3.72
Scholarship opportunities offered by Lund University greatly influenced my decision making.	2.92
The large variety of English programme offered by Lund University greatly influenced my decision making.	3.76
Advanced education system at Lund University greatly influenced my decision making.	3.72
Previous studying or living experience in Nordic countries greatly influenced my decision making.	2.55
Immigration opportunities in Sweden greatly influenced my decision making.	2.39
Lund University has a very good reputation in my home country.	3.12

Table 1 illustrates survey respondents’ opinions about 8 different statements by using the rating average of the total 189 respondents. 5 alternatives are given to the respondents to choose, number 1 means “Strongly Disagree”, while 5 refers to “Strongly Agree”. Thus number 3 is the middle number, standing for “Neither Agree Nor Disagree”. This question is designed to test the level of each key factor that has influenced respondents’ decision making when they choose Lund University for studying.

From the table 1 it can be seen that the highest average rate is almost 4 for the first statement, which means that the majority of people agreed that the high ranking and well-known reputation of Lund University has a great impact on their decision making. A large percentage of respondents agreed that the programme curriculum setting is an important factor for them when considering studies at Lund University. While, the rating average for the scholarship statement is 2.92, which tells most of the respondents did not take a scholarship opportunity as the main motivation for choosing Lund University. Also the number of scholarship rewarding students only accounted for 1/3 of the total number of respondents, while 2/3 of respondents are self-financing students, Thus, this statement

might not directly reflect the overall non-European students opinion. During the interviews with Mr. Richard Stenelo, and Mr. Johan Gunnarsson, they mentioned every year many students did not show up during the registration day because they are not granted scholarships. This being the case, it could be said that scholarship opportunity is a top factor for many applicants when applying to Lund University.

Both the average grade about the statements of Lund University’s large variety of English Programmes and advanced educational systems of Lund University reached 3.7, which means they agree with these two statements. However, when it comes to the statement that “Advanced education system at Lund University greatly influenced my decision making”, the average grade is only 2.5. Similarly, the statement of “Immigration opportunities in Sweden greatly influenced my decision making” only received an average point of 2.3. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the respondents did not have previous studying or living experiences in Nordic countries and they have not thought about immigration opportunities, such as settling down in Sweden after their studies. Instead, only a small number, 48 out of 189 non-European students have mentioned that they have studied or lived in Nordic countries before, and 29 people around 14% of all admitted Immigration opportunities greatly influenced their decisions before deciding to come to Lund University for studying. At last, most people agreed that Lund University enjoys a good reputation in their home countries, which could be understood that they might intend to go back to their home country and use the degree they get from Lund University for a better career opportunities.

### 5.2.5 The Benefits of Studying at Lund University

The majority of people come to Lund University for “development in academic field”

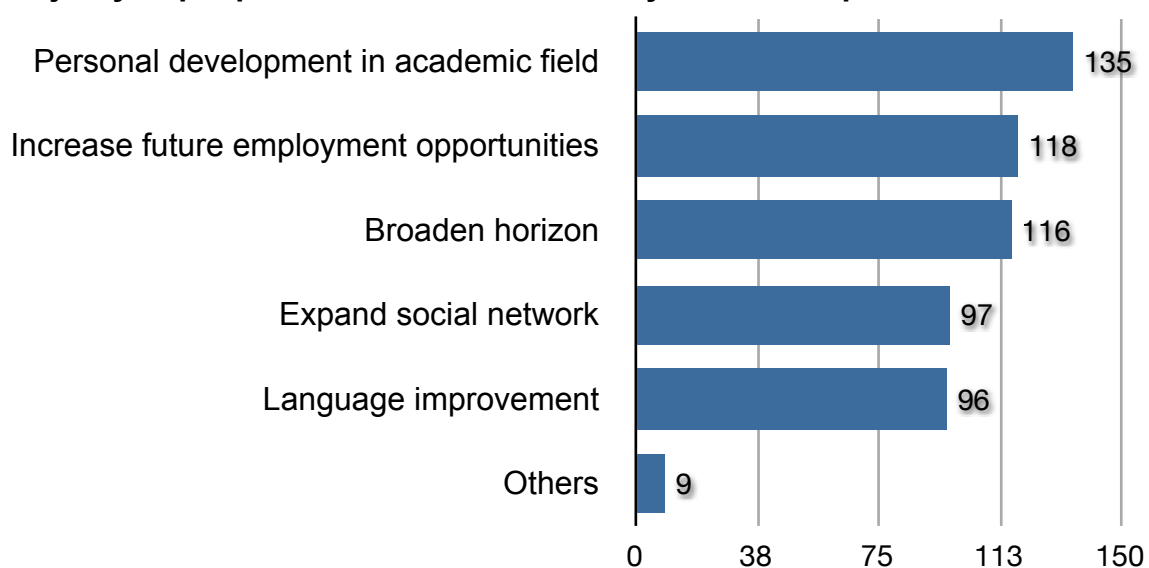


Figure 18: What benefits do you think the education in Lund University will bring to you

By asking 189 non-European Lund University students about their reasons for coming to Lund University in question 8 and the benefits they receive from the education in Lund University (question 13), the following answers were received (Figure 18).

During the survey analysis, 135 out of 189 respondents (71%) claimed that they could increase their “personal development in academic field” by benefiting from the advanced teaching equipment and experienced professors within Lund Universities. Meanwhile, about 118 people expressed that they want to increase future employment opportunities through the education at Lund University. Most of these answers are given by the Bachelor and Master degree studying non-European Lund University students.

In addition, nearly 61% of respondents (116 people) stated that studying at Lund University could broaden their horizon and allow them to have a better understanding of Swedish student life. Furthermore, some respondents said that they have also travelled to different countries and cities within Europe in their free time to broaden their horizons and to see the world. The main groups of respondents who chose this option are exchange students and students who are outside of their home countries for the first time.

97 respondents, around 51% of the total claimed they have expanded their social networks and have met a lot of international people from all over the world. 96 people expressed that studying in Lund University helped them to improve their language skills in terms of both English and Swedish. There are about 5% of respondents, 9 people, choosing the others option.

### 5.2.6 The Attitude of Recommending Lund University to Potential Applicants

**As many as 97% of respondents willingly recommend Lund University to others**

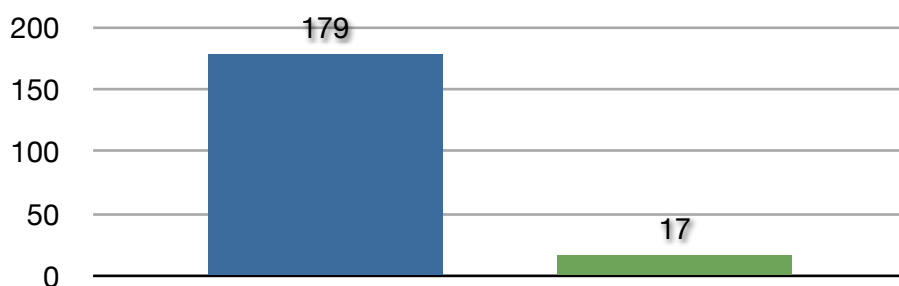


Figure 19: Would you recommend Lund University to others

From question 14 in Appendix 2, it is clear if the respondents are satisfied with their studies at Lund University when they are asked if they would recommend Lund University to others.



From the Figure 19, more than 97% of total respondents, 179 out of 184 are willing to recommend Lund University to future applicants (in Blue). Only 5 respondents said they would not recommend Lund University. While 12 people mentioned that in general that they would recommend Lund University, but still there are many things they are not happy with, therefore, they stated both advantages and disadvantages of studying in Lund University (Green part).

By analyzing the 179 positive answers about why respondents would recommend Lund University, there are three main reasons that were found, 1) International studying and living environment, 2) high quality of education, and 3) good university with well-known reputation worldwide.

Many respondents mentioned that Lund University offers a very international environment both from academic and social perspective. There are a large percentage of international students at Lund. Also there are many opportunities to broaden the horizons by meeting new people. Therefore, many people agreed that they have increased their social networks during their time in Lund University.

Besides, the majority of respondents also expressed their satisfaction towards the high quality of education provided by Lund University. For example, as one respondent stated in this way *"...studying approaches at Lund is very professional and practical, also teaching staff are really helpful, professional and also strict. I harvest a lot..."*

Last but not least, many people said they would recommend Lund University because of its ranking position, as one of top 100 universities globally.

However, by analyzing the 17 respondents' negative feedback about why they would not recommend Lund University, it was found that their feedback could be categorized into 3 different segments, 1) Programme Curriculum settings, 2) Accommodation availability, and 3) small city.

A few respondents have mentioned that some programmes curriculum is poorly designed. As one respondent wrote that *"...the course is too relaxed, not intense enough..."*, while another respondent hold a totally different opinion that *"...tend to be too stressful in some courses..."* In addition, one respondent put that *"the schedules are not consistent and there are many confusing aspects to the academic life in Lund University, for example, unorganized schedule structure for classes, the courses are not on a regular basis and there are changes in each week"*. As the result, these few points caused a great satisfaction and some respondents think that the education outcome does not meet the expectations of what was advertised in the program overview.

As for the accommodation, many respondents complained the poor housing accommodation availability provided to the students at Lund University, thus, one respondent putted that "*housing shortages at Lund need to be improved*".

In addition, some respondents claimed that Lund is a small city and there are not many things to see and visit. Therefore, some of the respondents said it is boring to live in Lund after a few months.

# **Chapter 6: Empirical Analysis of Qualitative Interviews with University Officials**

This chapter shows the key findings that were gathered from the qualitative interviews with university officials, Mr. Richard Stenelo, the Deputy Executive Director of External Relations Division, and Mr. Johan Gunnarsson, the International Marketing Manager within the International Marketing and Recruitment Department. In this chapter, the general impact of the tuition fee policy on Lund University will be mentioned and the marketing promotion strategies of Lund University are explained in detail.

## **6.1 Qualitative Interviews Introduction**

Based on the key findings from the 189 quantitative survey analysis, a interview in chapter 5, the interview question guide is made to get an in-depth understanding of 1) the impact of the tuition fee policy on Lund University in general, 2) the important marketing promotion strategies utilized by Lund University since 2011, and 3) Lund University's Future Marketing Promotion Strategy.

The interview guide consists of 11 questions all together (Appendix 3) and all these questions can be divided into 5 parts. All the questions are open questions to get as much information as possible. Part 1 in the interview questionnaire includes question 1-3, which ask about the influences of the tuition fee policy on Lund University in general and how the number of non-European applicants changed. Part 2 consists of questions 4, 5 and 6. It mainly indicates the main non-European targets that Lund University is targeting at the moment and the different marketing promotion strategies that Lund University has used since 2011. Questions 7 and 8 are counted in part 3, which help to investigate the strategies which are regarded as the most effective ones, which can also be taken as additional supplement questions. In part 4, from questions 9 and 10, the aim is to find out what makes Lund University's marketing promotion strategies different from the other Swedish Universities, such as Uppsala University and Stockholm University. In the last part, the question related to the marketing methods that Lund University intends to use in the future is examined as the concluding question.

The interviews were conducted with Mr. Richard Stenelo, the Deputy Executive Director of External Relations Division, and Mr. Johan Gunnarsson, the International Marketing Manager within the International Marketing and Recruitment Department on 2nd of April, 2013. The interviews took more than 2 hours and we got very useful and detailed answers to each questions, which is really important for the quality of our thesis.

## **6.2 The Impact of the Tuition Fee Policy on Lund University**

According to responses from Mr. Stenelo and Mr. Gunnarsson, the introduction of tuition fees in Sweden in the autumn of 2011 caused a great impact on Lund University in

general. On one hand, Lund University lost two-thirds of admitted non-European students and the number of the applicants all over the world went down even more. Mr. Stenelo explained that there were nearly 21,000 applicants from three countries, including Pakistan, Nigeria and Bengal before tuition fees were introduced, while the applicants from these three countries basically became zero after 2011. Mr. Gunnarsson added that comparing with the students from other countries; Chinese students are more prepared to pay the tuition fee. The reason being that they generally think it is reasonable for individuals to pay the educational fee if they intend to study abroad, besides, there is a huge group of middle-income families in China, and Chinese parents are willing to save money for education for their children. What deserves to be mentioned is that the quality of the admitted students did not decrease, even though the number of applicants has dropped significantly. Compared with the other Swedish universities as well as Danish universities when they first introduced tuition fees, Lund University got greater number of applicants than expected. Mr. Gunnarsson stated that "...I think Denmark lost 90% when they first introduce tuition fees..."

On the other hand, Lund University's market share has greatly increased after the introduction of tuition fees. There were approximately 7% of students who applied for Swedish universities that came to Lund in the past, however, after the tuition fee was launched, the number increased to 18-20% (Gunnarsson, 2013).

Considering the big loss of applicants from the non-European countries, Lund University thus launched a specific department called International Marketing Department. The task of this department is to recruit both European and non-European students. However, Mr. Gunnarsson said that there is no need for them to conduct marketing activities in Europe since European students show up anyway. The first reason is that European students do not have to pay the tuition fees, and the other reason can be attributed to the outstanding academic reputation of Lund University in Europe. Therefore, this department is mainly focused on conducting marketing activities in non-European countries. Thus, the various marketing promotion strategies mentioned in this chapter are mainly for targeting non-European Students. Also it's worth mentioning that the marketing activities Lund University has been conducting since 2011 have turned out to be quite successful. To be more specific, the number of applicants has increased nearly 20% since 2011(Gunnarsson, 2013).

### **6.3 Marketing Promotion Strategies Used by Lund University**

According to the interviews with Mr. Richard Stenelo, the Deputy Executive Director of External Relations Division, and Mr. Johan Gunnarsson, the International Marketing Manager within the International Marketing and Recruitment Department, ten different marketing promotion strategies have been utilized by Lund University in order to enhance the University's image in non-European countries, to attract more non-European

Perspective students and to minimize the negative impacts of the tuition fee policy from 2011. The ten promotion strategies are as follows:

### **6.3.1 Go-studying-abroad Agencies**

One of the main marketing promotion strategies that Lund University uses is to cooperate with go-studying-abroad agencies in different markets. A Go-studying-abroad agency is a kind of intermediary service institution, which provides important information and application services for students who intend to study outside their home countries (Wang & Jiang, 2011). To be more specific, go-studying-abroad agencies provide four fundamental services, which include the following ones (Wang & Jiang, 2011):

- 1) Information. Go-studying-abroad agencies provide consulting services to students who have the idea to study abroad. For example, many students might ask questions about such things as the quality of education, university ranking, cultural atmosphere, tuition fee and the immigration policy in certain countries. Therefore, a go-studying-abroad agency would help students to gain a comprehensive understanding of the universities and different suitable programs.
- 2) University application services. A Go-studying-abroad agency offers helps with the whole application process, from preparing application materials, such as personal statements and motivation letters, collecting studying transcripts, and translating documents to sending the applications.
- 3) Visa services. Go-studying-abroad agencies also help with the Visa applications/ residence permits applications in another country, for example, the agency helps to prepare all the necessary documents for applications, and also provides visa interview training.
- 4) Extended services. In order to help students settle down better abroad, go-studying-abroad-agency offers airport pick up services and accommodation arrangement services.

For Lund University, the marketing promotion strategy of cooperating with go-studying-abroad agencies is mainly used in China and India. For example, Lund University cooperates with 5 different agencies in China. Every year around 30% of the Chinese students come from go-studying-abroad agencies. In year 2011, about 65 Chinese students enrolled at Lund University, while at least 20 of them came via agencies. Thus, go-studying-abroad agency is an important marketing tool for Lund University to attract students, especially the students from China.

By interviewing Mr. Johan Gunnarsson, the International Marketing Manager of the International Marketing and Recruitment Department, he concluded that there are two advantages by cooperating with go-studying-abroad agencies from Lund University perspective.

First of all, the go-studying-abroad agencies can help with the university image promotion. For example, they could use large space of their company website to introduce the university and their programmes. In addition, these agencies provide more detailed information about Lund University and can increase students' awareness towards Lund University, since agencies share the same language and have a more direct connection with the students and their parents. More importantly, agencies can directly recommend a particular university or programme to the students. Therefore, the cooperation of go-studying-abroad agencies could help Lund University to convince students and their parents to apply.

Secondly, go-studying-abroad agencies could help to select the qualified students and recommend the suitable programmes based on a students' personal academic and financial situation. In this way, Lund University would get only the most qualified and suitable students.

From the go-studying abroad agency's perspective, they could also benefit from the cooperation with Lund University. As Mr. Gunnarsson stated in the interview that *"...even though Lund University is not so well known in China, many go-studying-abroad agencies still think it is good to cooperate with Lund University, because Lund University is a highly ranked university in the world. So they might promote that they cooperate with a very respectful university with a high rank globally, so people may think this agency is must be good and worth trusting..."* Therefore, it can be concluded that a cooperation strategy could be considered as a win-win for both Lund University and the agencies.

However, Mr. Gunnarsson clearly mentioned in the interview that Lund University does not give any preferential treatment to the applicants from these cooperating go-studying-abroad agencies, since it is each programmer's responsibility to select the students and they do not even know whether these students are from the cooperating agencies or not.

From the qualitative interview with International Marketing Manager, Johan Gunnarsson, three main difficulties were discovered, when cooperating with go-studying-abroad agencies. They are as follows:

- 1) It is difficult to select the most suitable and qualified cooperate go-studying-abroad partner. As Gunnarsson put it *"...so far there have been many agencies from all over the world contacted us and expressed their willingness to cooperate with Lund University. However, we rejected almost 99% of the agencies that come to contact us. Usually they do not appear to be professional and competent enough. Instead, we approach the agencies that recommended by the other universities or our partners universities..."*
- 2) Another difficulty mentioned by Mr. Gunnarsson is that the majority of go-studying-abroad agencies are very often focused on the universities from Australia, United States, Canada and United Kingdom. Thus, the agencies are not always willing to start

with a new market, such as Sweden or Nordic Countries. Since the agencies normally emphasize the markets where they could send out a large number of students, while Sweden or Lund University is not one of them. That explains the reason why only one out of five agencies that Lund University cooperates with is mainly focusing the Nordic Universities.

3) The last difficulty is that the go-studying-abroad agency makes a profit from the commission. They get a certain amount of money when students are admitted by the university. Most of the agencies know that it is difficult to get accepted by Lund University, only a few students each year. Therefore, the agencies become less enthusiastic about recommending students to Lund University. Instead, they tell the students to apply to the universities which basically admit everyone, because it is the easiest way to make a profit.

As mentioned above, almost 30% of Chinese students in Lund University are through go-studying-abroad agencies. Mr Gunnarsson thinks this number is pretty decent and is satisfied with the cooperation outcome, but he does not expect the number to grow significantly in the future. As he explained it this way, *“...because I think the type of students who go to agencies in China are not the best students, Usually those students have a hard time to get into good university themselves so they sue agencies in the first place. However, they are not the type of students we want. We are more demanding in terms of students’ quality; therefore, I do not expect the number increase dramatically...”*

### **6.3.2 Education Fairs**

An Education Fair is another important marketing promotion tool used by Lund University to recruit international students all over the world. The Education Fair is like a commercial Fair, where each university pays to have a stand. Education Fairs offer the space and opportunity for Lund University to meet prospective students who are interested in taking different programmes offered by Lund University (EducationFairFinder.com).

Every year Lund University conducts 13 different Education Fairs globally. The main target countries are China, India, Turkey, North America and Hong Kong, because there are the biggest country groups of applicants. But every year Lund University might also try a few new markets based on the number of applications. According to Mr. Gunnarsson that *“...each year we would look at the numbers of applicants in different countries, we have a large number of students from the United Kingdom, and then we would consider conduct marketing campaigns there. Normally the first thing we might do is to try Education Fair to see if it is working...”* In most countries, the fairs are organized in autumn, between September and December; because that is the time when most students are preparing to apply to go abroad. That is why Lund University chooses that period of time to meet the potential students.

During the interviews, both Mr. Stenelo and Mr. Gunnarsson admitted that conducting Education Fairs cost money, but still it is worth doing it. Especially Johan Gunnarsson expressed that *“...It is a great way to create bonds with potential applicants and develop connections with them rather than just sitting in front of computers...”* In addition, both of them agreed that Education Fair offer a very good platform for them to meet perspective students and talk with them. In this way, they could obtain a better understanding of what students are expecting from Lund University, what programmes students are most interested in and what the students are looking for. In the end, they can use the information collected as market intelligence to better modify or even increase new programmes/courses to meet perspective students’ needs.

At the same time, they are aware of the fact that those students who participated the Education Fair might not end up applying to Lund University, because those students do not have clear goals about which university to apply. They are always open minded and could possibly go to any country and any university. Therefore, participating in the Education Fair for Lund University is more about collecting marketing intelligence, university branding and school representation, rather than directly attracting a large amount of potential students to apply. As Mr. Gunnarsson said that *“In the Education Fair, all other big Swedish universities are there, so we would have to be there, otherwise it would be strange if Lund University were not there..”* Furthermore, the most direct way to brand Lund University is simply being present in the Education Fair and creating people’s awareness towards Lund University.

### **6.3.3 Lund University Web Page**

Lund University launched a new web page after the tuition fee policy, also from the quantitative survey analysis; it became clear that Lund University web page is considered as the most important approach for respondents to collect important information about the university and its programmes. Therefore, it could be concluded that the web page plays an extremely important role in Lund University’s promotion strategies.

Mr. Gunnarsson compared with the old web page of Lund University and he said that *“...three years ago, when tuition fee was free, we did not need to pay attention to that because people would apply anyway, thus, our old website was horrible and very difficult to for people to find the information they wanted...”* But now, we could see Lund University really put efforts to build a more interactive webpage in terms of both the accurate and detailed information as well as the way of presenting the information.

Even though the newly launched web page has different target groups, such as graduated students, current students, perspective students and staffs. Still the main target is the potential students. Therefore, the web page is mainly focus on what perspective students



would like, which means that perspective students could find all the relevant information easily, such as the tuition fee, scholarships accommodation and student life.

Also from the content of the Lund University web page, the information are not useful for current students, instead, it is largely focus on the things potential students would find interesting.

Also as Mr. Richard Stenelo concluded “...by providing accurate and updated information to the perspective students on our web page, we could better present Lund University and various programmes to students. More importantly, the new launched web page would reflect the quality of education in Lund University...”

### **6.3.4 Social Media Platforms**

In addition, Lund University has been actively utilizing social media platforms to engage with potential students. The main social media instrument used by Lund University is Facebook. So far, Lund University page on Facebook has more than 25, 000 likes. The target of this marketing promotion platform is more like a combination for perspective students and current students of Lund University. The main content posted on the Facebook page is something interesting for both perspective and current students. For instance, some information about the happenings at Lund and what will be happening in the future at Lund University. Besides, the Facebook page is also a platform where perspective students can ask questions and obtain efficient answers. In this way, personal relationships could be developed by giving quick replies to the perspective students. More importantly, through the Facebook page, Lund University could get students emotionally involved and connected, which will increase their chances of ending up applying to Lund University.

Another important social media tool Lund University has been using is Sina Weibo, which is considered as one of the most popular sites in China. Sina Weibo had more than 368 million registered users by the mid of 2012. Therefore, there is a huge marketing ability and potential on Sina Weibo for Lund University. Lund University created Weibo page in November and have gotten 800 fans so far. It has similar function compared with a Facebook page. A Chinese student from Lund University is currently responsible for posting on Sina Weibo. She usually makes one post per week, but still the activities are not very active so far since it is pretty new, but from the long term perspective, Mr Gunnarsson said that they would put more focus on it in the near future as a way to connect with perspective students, and current students as well as the graduated students.

He also added that they are actually considering using the others media tools as well, such as Youtube, Instagram and Twitter to better connect with people.

### **6.3.5 Student Competitions**

Lund University also cooperates with studentcompetitions.com and arranges some online competitions in different countries. The main purpose of the students' competitions is to attract the top talent students who are passionate about competing and connecting with global opportunities through showing one's skills. Lund University usually conducts a competition once or twice every year, for example the previous ones included "Challenge yourself in US" and "Challenge your prospects in India". In order to participate in the competitions, students have to perform some kind of task. For example, the students might need to produce a video about his or her business idea and then upload it to the website, to generate as many votes as possible. At the end of competition, Lund University would select the best business idea with the highest vote, and this student would get the first prize, which is the full scholarship to come to Lund University for studying in certain programmes.

Based on the outcomes of the students' competitions, we could say such kind of competitions really gets a lot of attention from the students around the world, and they really find it interesting and challenging at the same time, especially with the full scholarship as the reward. Another really important fact with the students' competitions is the voting. Students would tell their friends, family and anyone they know to vote for them, therefore, they would have a strong motivation to put effort into generating much traffic and interest. In this way, Lund University creates awareness from many people and also many perspective students get more interested in coming to Lund University for studying even though some students might not win the first prize.

So far, such kinds of student competitions are widely used by many Swedish universities. At the moment, 13 different universities, besides Lund University are cooperating with studentcompetitions.com to organize different competitions for perspective students from time to time. These 13 universities include Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH), Chalmers University of Technology, Linköping University, Linnaeus University, Luleå University of Technology, Malmö University, Mid Sweden University, Mälardalen University, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Umeå University, University of Borås, University of Skövde and Uppsala University (studentcompetitions.com, 2013).

### **6.3.6 Customer Relationship Management System**

During the interviews, Mr. Gunnarsson mentioned that Lund University has been using an integrated computer tool named Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to keep track of every student that they have met anywhere in the world. Within this CRM system, the information, such as names of students and their email addresses that have been acquired from the educational fairs will be included. And then all the follow-up activities of each student will be stored and easily tracked within the system.

Mr. Gunnarsson then gave a very detailed explanation of how the CRM tracking system works. He said that *"...with the help of the system, we could easily find out if students send the emails to someone in the faculty, if he or she applies for specific programme, whether he or she gets the scholarship and how much they get after being admitted, and even whether students accept the offers and eventually comes to Lund university for study..."*. So everything is stored. He also commented that everything that happens online is much easier to track compared to offline communication.

### **6.3.7 Global Cooperation and Student Experience**

Lund University has achieved a big international network by establishing strategic partnerships and collaborations with universities all over the world (Lindblad, 2012). So far Lund University is an active member of several international networks. For example, the League of European Research Universities - LERU, Universitas 21(U21), Utreht Network and many others as well. Besides that, Lund University is also a coordinator and partner in several projects and programmes, such as Erasmus, Tempus, Linnaeus-Palme and Nordplus. As Mr Richard Stenelo, the Director of External Relations Division mentioned that, being an active member within such a big international network is a part of Lund University's marketing strategies, it could help Lund University to become known around the world.

When asked what are the main criteria Lund University takes into consideration when choosing the partner universities, Mr. Johan Gunnarsson answered in this way, *"...the most partner universities we choose are quite similar with Lund University, they should be highly ranked, research oriented and well-respected comprehensive universities internationally, these are the keys things to look for. In Sweden, Lund University is a traditional research oriented university, so when we look for the partners in other countries, they should be similar profiles..."* So far Lund University have exchange agreements with 680 universities in 50 countries, which makes students at Lund University able to exchange with partner universities globally (Grindlay, 2013).

Besides the big international networks, Lund University also aims to provide unique student experiences for exchange students from the different partner universities. For example, different games and social activities are organized to fulfil exchange students' social life and social networks, also various student organized nations and road trips are arranged for exchange student to enjoy the typical Swedish student cultural life. It explains the reason why Lund University is ranked as the number one choice for exchange students coming to Sweden. As Mr. Stenelo said that *"...by offering a unique student experience for the exchange students, they could be our ambassadors and recommend more students to come..."* Therefore, it can be concluded that establishing a big global network with different universities and making students satisfied with the staying at Lund University is also a really important marketing strategy.

### **6.3.8 Alumni Network**

Lund University Alumni Network could best be defined as an association of previous Lund University graduates. Lund University organizes events around the world for the former students to get together and keep in touch with the university. At the moment, the most of the alumni events are arranged in a few countries, such as China, Indian, Thailand, New York and Turkey. These are the same countries that most of the marketing activities take place.

There are two important reasons why Lund University puts budget on organizing alumni events globally, First of all, as alumnus within this network, the former students are also the ambassadors of Lund University all over the world. They play an important role of sharing their Lund University studying experiences with other perspective students. Therefore, many alumni act as guest speakers or mentors and spread the spirit and great things about studying at Lund University (Grindlay, 2013). Secondly, perspective students do take suggestions from their friends, family members and professors who might be the member of alumni networks, since they could be an extremely important reference group and a strong motivating factor when students are thinking about applying Lund University for studying. Therefore, the conclusion can be made that putting efforts on arranging alumni events and expanding alumni networks globally are definitely significant for attracting more perspective students. For example, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) has a very strong alumni network and take it as a key marketing promotion strategy (Gunnarsson, 2013).

However, Mr. Gunnarsson stated that *"...there is something we have to improve about alumni events, the follow up after the events is important but also the most difficult part. But due to the limited budget to reach out former students and communicate with them, we could not develop it further at the moment. However, from the long term perspective, it is definitely important to put more efforts..."*

### **6.3.9 Printed Marketing Materials**

Printed material, as one of the most traditional marketing strategies, is still an important marketing method for Lund University. Every year, Lund University makes different printed marketing materials, a small folder, booklet and others as well. For example, Programme Fact Sheets could be used to present a general idea of the programme and study schedules. Also the printing materials could be made in different languages. These materials are really important when participating in education fairs. According to Mr. Gunnarsson, he mentioned that nearly 30% of people go to fairs organized in China are students' parents. However, the language is the main barrier when communicate with them about different programmes options. Therefore, having the different programmes booklets printed in the language these people understand is really important, so that they could take it back home and read more later on.

### **6.3.10 More Programme Portfolios**

Besides by utilizing various marketing promotion strategies as mentioned above, Lund University also put more focus on the programme portfolios themselves in terms of both quality and the quantity. At the moment, Lund University offers a large variety of English programmes for non-European students to choose, which includes 5 Bachelor degree programmes and over 90 Master degree programmes (Grindlay, 2013).

As it is also indicated in the quantitative survey, programme settings are an important factor for non-European students to take into consideration when choosing Lund University for their studies. Therefore, it is also noticeable that Lund University had been actively collecting feedback on each course from the current students about what students are most and least satisfied with, and what could be improved. In this way, the teaching staff could modify the course settings and even programme settings to improve the quality of education.

In addition, Lund University also emphasizes more on finding the demands of perspective students by collecting information from various methods, such as education fairs and social media platforms. In addition, Lund University has been checking the other universities around the world to see what programmes they are offering, what are the demands for those programmes and what makes those programmes special and unique. Then based on the information collected they try to match the demands by creating and expanding new programme offerings to the more non-European students. Just as Mr. Gunnarsson mentioned in the interview that *"...the programme is useless if there is no demand from students, that is not sustainable..."*

### **6.4 Lund University's Future Marketing Promotion Strategy**

During the interviews some future plans are being drawn up by Mr. Stenelo and Mr. Gunnarsson, which including building new relationships with potential students and lobbying the Swedish Immigration Board to give extended half-year residence permits for graduating students. To begin with, Lund University generated an idea of great project named Foundation Programme for Pre-master students. Mr. Gunnarsson explained that this Foundation Programme is mainly targeting the students who meet all academic conditions except English proficiency, for example, their IELTS score is lower than 6.5. These students would be offered opportunities to improve their English language skills through six months of studying before they are officially enrolled by Lund University. Mr. Stenelo added that *"...in order to be accepted by the Foundation Programme, students need to apply the regular Master programme as well at the same time..."*

Besides, Lund University is an initiator in lobbying Swedish government and Immigration Board to change some rules. For example, Lund University has taken action in persuading and pushing Swedish Immigration to grand residence permits for students who come to

Sweden for studying Languages, and to allow students to stay six months longer after graduation. And nowadays many other Swedish universities also started entering the lobbying activity. Therefore joint letters have been drafted by many Swedish universities together to remove the disadvantages of some policies (Stenelo, 2013)

In conclusion, Lund University has undertaken a lot of changes since 2011. In general, Lund University puts more emphasis on the way it presents itself internationally and the ways of communicating with potential students, especially non-European students. Also all the marketing promotion strategies indicate that Lund University tries to be more student focused or student oriented, Lund University shows students that they take students' questions and demands seriously, and try to match students' needs and are fast to give students responses.

## Chapter 7: Discussions

In this chapter, the models of Corporate Reputation Factor of Lund University and marketing promotion strategies of Lund University are created and explained. Also based on the two models, the suggestions related to the marketing promotion of three different types of universities are put forward as the thesis contribution.

### 7.1 Corporate Reputation Factors of Lund University

As mentioned in section 3.3; corporate reputation is an organization's important resource, which helps the organization to achieve advantages over its competitors (Sitaoja, 2006; Deephouse, 2000). To be more detailed, corporate reputation is the general perception of the company's past actions and future perspectives received by the external stakeholders (Fombrun, 2001; Bick, Jacobson & Abratt, 2003). Therefore, it is very necessary for companies to take good care of their corporate reputation. It is the same when it comes to an educational institution. A university with a good corporate reputation would easily attract more perspective students. For example, the quantitative survey analysis indicates that the majority of respondents choose Lund University because of its good ranking and well-known reputation globally.

Based on the model of factors influencing the decision-making process of international students (Figure 4) that purposed by Cubillo, Sanchez and Cervino in 2006, and the dimension model of corporate reputation (Figure 5) raised by Reddiar and Kleyn in 2011, as well as the results collected from the qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. It was possible to build a specialized model that outlines all the factors that influence Lund University's corporate reputation. The factors are divided into internal measurement and external consideration. It can be easily seen from figure 20 that the internal factors are considered from Lund University perspective, which includes Lund University image, reputation, world ranking, facilities, staffs, culture, global corporation networks, scholarship availability, programme options and setting, financial resources, marketing promotion strategies, and tuition fees. Compared with the internal factors, external factors place more emphasis on socioeconomic level, culture, education relative policies, social welfare, etc. In general, this figure reveals all the possible factors which might affect Lund University's reputation. It may be different when it is applied to another university, but it provides a comprehensive picture of what should be considered in order to manage ones' corporate reputation when using different marketing promotion strategies.

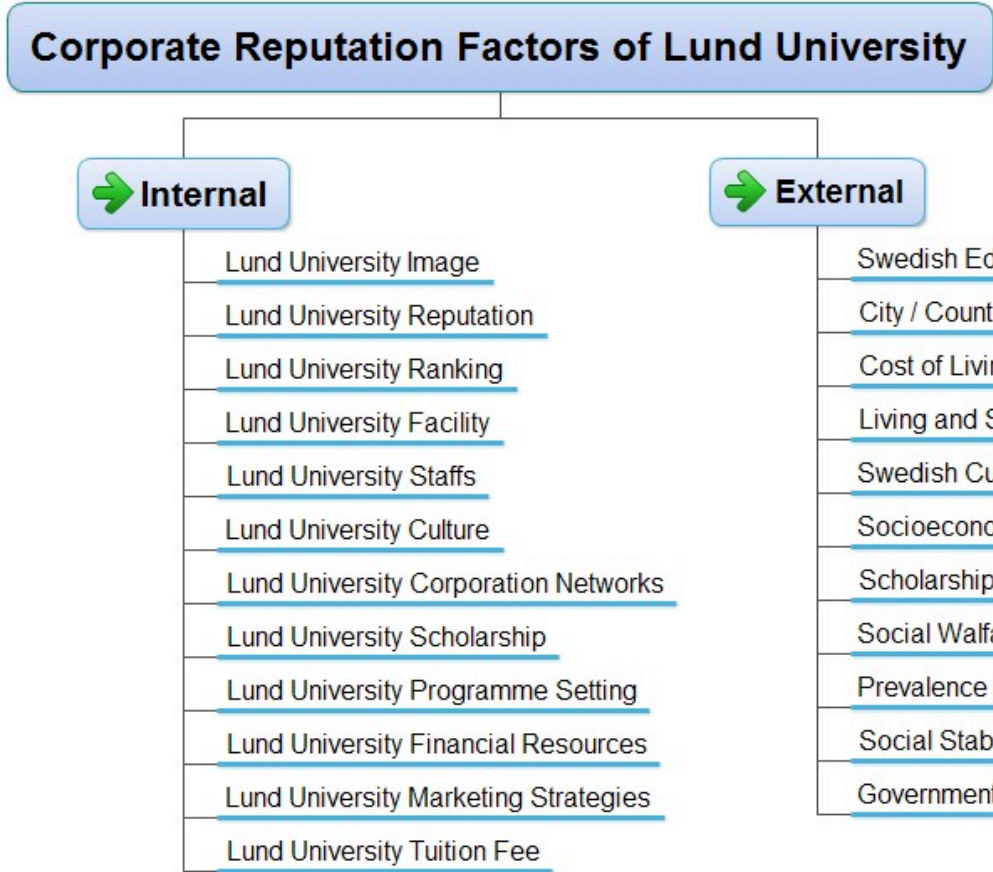


Figure 20: Corporate reputation factors of Lund University.

## 7.2 Marketing Promotion Strategy Model

Based on the interviews with Mr. Richard Stenelo and Mr. Johan Gunnarsson, the marketing promotion strategies of Lund University have been compared and classified into ten different categories. The detailed explanation of each category can be found from chapter 6.3. In general, the purposes of using these marketing strategies are to improve Lund University's corporate reputation globally to recruit more non-European students.

According to the interview analysis in chapter 6.3, a model was created (Figure 21) which summarizes the most important marketing strategies currently utilized by Lund University. Such as, cooperating with go-studying-abroad agencies, participating in education fairs, utilizing various social media platforms, organizing student competitions, using a CRM system tool, expanding alumni networks, preparing and printing marketing materials, providing various programme portfolios, setting up a Pre-Master Foundation Programme and Lobbying governments to change rules and regulations.

The consensus is that it is very important to take Lund University as a good and successful example to go deep and analyze what effective marketing promotions strategies they have used to reduce the great loss of non-European students. More importantly, these strategies have a great value to be used by different types of universities to enhance university image, attract more non-European students and minimize the negative impacts



of the tuition fee policy. However, the suggestion is that this marketing model should be used by universities in a rational way. They should consider their own university situation and flexibly pick the method that suits them best, rather than just copying what Lund University has done.



Figure 21: Marketing promotion strategies model.

### 7.3 Why the Marketing Model is Valuable for Other Universities

In general, there are two of the most important reasons why Lund University’s marketing promotion strategies has a great reference value for other universities. Firstly, since Lund University started to conduct marketing activities from 2011, these marketing promotion strategies have brought a great extent of positive influences on Lund University, especially the number of applicants from the non-European students have increased a lot in the past 2 years. To be more specific, compared with other Swedish university, Lund University has the smallest reduction rate of non-European students. Furthermore, the number of non-European applicants began to recover on a yearly basis, an average growth rate of 18-20% since 2012. Therefore, it could be concluded that Lund University’s marketing strategies are quite successful based on the growth rate of non-European students, and also applicable in the practices.

Secondly, as one of the first Swedish universities who started to promote globally after the introduction of tuition fees in 2011, Lund University has accumulated rich marketing promotion knowledge. This marketing promotion knowledge can be reused and adopted by other universities as well. Generally, there are three reasons can attribute to Lund University’s rich marketing knowledge.

1) By considering the big loss of applicants from the non-European countries, Lund University launched the “International Marketing Department” to collect the market information of promotion strategies and to recruit international students globally. Thus, all the marketing methods in the model are approved and tested by the International Marketing Department already, so it’s easy to see that these strategies are applicable in the reality.

2) The other reason is that of being an active member of several international cooperation networks. Lund University has been benchmarking the marketing strategies of its cooperating university for the past three years. Especially the ones who are well-known globally and have years of marketing experience, such as the University of Hong Kong, National University of Singapore, University of Amsterdam, University of Birmingham, University of Melbourne, University of British Columbia and others. Therefore, by benchmarking these universities' communication strategies with perspective students and marketing activities, Lund University has reused their marketing strategies by combing with its own university uniqueness. Thus, to summarize, Lund University's marketing promotion strategies also represent other universities most useful and effective tactics.

3) In addition, Lund University has also learned lessons from the universities in the Netherlands and Denmark, who suffered from the negative impacts of the tuition fee policy before Sweden. Therefore, it can be concluded that Lund University's marketing strategies were worth being benchmarked by the other universities, who are going to charge tuition fees or have implemented tuition fees already.

#### **7.4 Application of Marketing Strategy Model On Three Types of Universities.**

As we have mentioned above that the marketing promotion strategy model (Figure 21) has a great reference value for different types of universities to benchmark in order to recruit more non-European students and minimize the negative impacts of the tuition fee policy. In Sweden, higher education institutions are mainly divided into 2 groups, universities and university colleges. Furthermore, then universities can be classified into comprehensive universities and specialized universities, more university examples can be found from Figure 22. However, keep in mind that even being grouped in the same university categories, every university is still different due to its own special characteristics, such as its university image, reputation, ranking, staff, culture, programme portfolios, financial resources, cooperation networks etc. Therefore, there does not exist a specific marketing promotion model that could be applied directly to all universities, instead, each university should make clear analysis of what unique factors influence its university corporate reputation, and then choose the marketing strategies that suits best with its own university situation.

In this part, the suggestions on how the marketing strategy model should be applied on comprehensive universities, specialized universities as well as university colleges are put forward.

# Swedish Universities / Collages

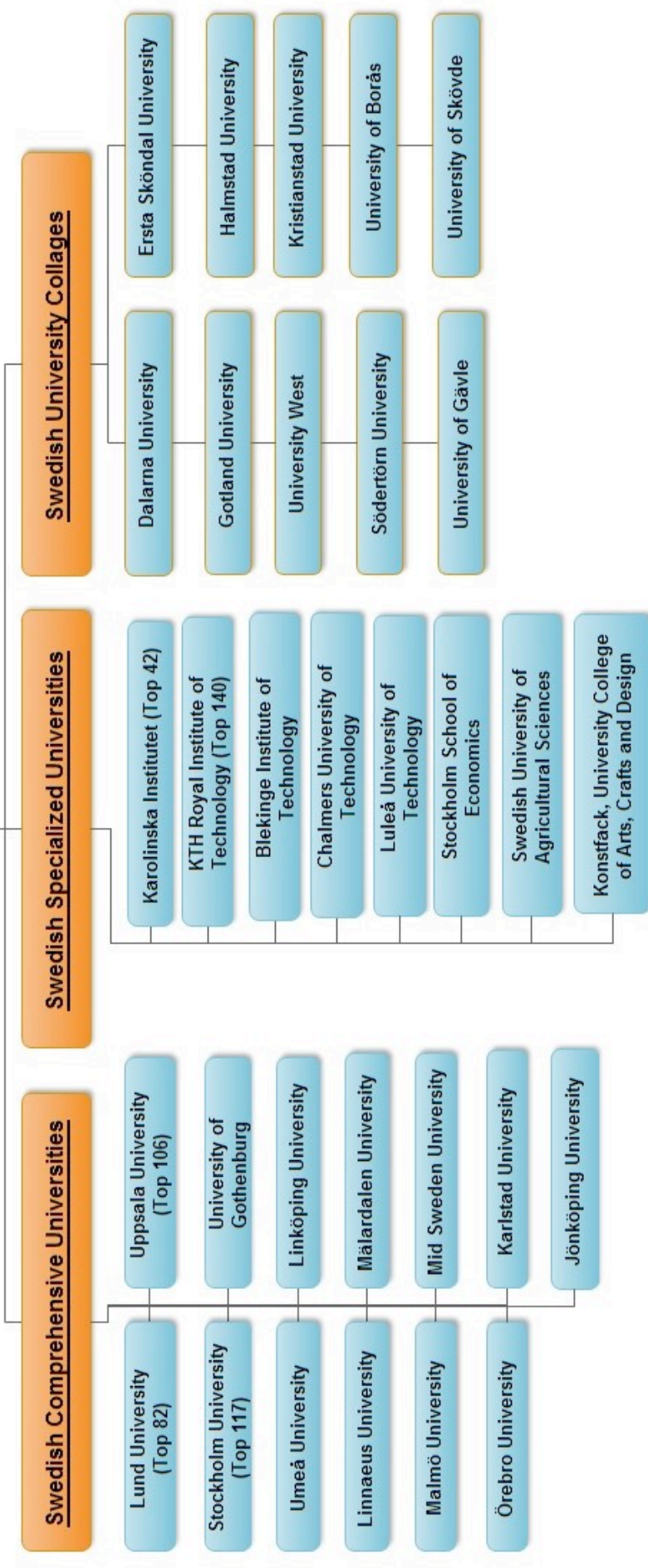


Figure 22: Categories of Swedish higher education institutions

### **7.4.1 Comprehensive Universities**

The first category of Swedish higher education institutions are comprehensive universities. Comprehensive university refers to the large sized research oriented university, which includes various faculties, such as Art, Social Sciences, Engineering, Business, Law and Medicines (Baidubaike, 2013). In Sweden, the most well-known big comprehensive universities include Lund University, Uppsala University and Stockholm University, University of Gothenburg and Umeå University. These 5 universities share similar profiles, for example, they are research oriented, highly ranked in the world, well respected globally and also have big international cooperation networks. Thus, they share many similar internal factors of corporate reputation with Lund University. Therefore, the marketing promotion model (Figure 21) based on Lund University could be well adopted by Uppsala University, Stockholm University, University of Gothenburg and Umeå University to attract more non-European students.

The other type of Swedish comprehensive universities are also well respected in the domestic markets but less well known abroad compared with the 5 universities mentioned above. Such kinds of universities include: Linköping University, Linnaeus University, Mälardalen University, Mid Sweden University and others that you could find from Figure 22. Even though these universities are less famous in foreign countries at the moment, still they have great potential to be internationally successful in the future. Therefore, based on the marketing promotion model, there are some suggestions proposed to these universities on how to utilize various marketing promotion methods to attract non-European students and increase internal awareness. These suggestions could be found as follows (Table 2):

Table 2: Marketing promotion strategies for comprehensive universities (Blue areas indicate the time of conducting marketing promotion strategies)

<b>Marketing Promotion Strategies for Comprehensive Universities</b>												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Unique Programme Options</b>	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
<b>University Webpage</b>	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
<b>Social Media Platforms</b>	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
<b>QR Code &amp; Online Open Courses</b>	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
<b>Go-study Abroad Agencies</b>	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
<b>Education Seminars</b>	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	White
<b>Benchmark other Top Universities</b>	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue

1) Compared with the large sized well known research oriented comprehensive universities, these universities should find ways to highlight their strengths and uniqueness when targeting perspective students.

Unique programme options could be a way to distinguish them from the other universities. From the quantitative survey analysis it became clear that programme settings is an important factor that influenced students decisions of whether to apply a university or not and the quality of the programme directly influenced students decision on whether to recommend this university to others or not. Thus, it could be concluded that programmes offered by the universities have a great impact on attracting more students.

In this way, it is suggested to comprehensive universities to improve the quality and settings of the programmes based on students' needs and expectation by creating the new programmes portfolios or by modifying the existing ones. Instead of just benchmarking what courses and programmes have been offered by Lund University or Uppsala

University, these comprehensive universities should provide more practical courses by cooperating with local Swedish companies and organizations. For example, 3-6 months internship is needed in the cooperating companies, if students want to achieve the degree. By participating in such kind of practical courses/programmes, students could not only apply their knowledge into real project works and cases, but also accumulate valuable working experiences and expand social networks while conducting the internships at local companies. As a matter of fact, the strong demands of such kind of courses/programmes have been suggested by many quantitative respondents, also many universities from Germany and France have noticed such demands and created many practical courses to match the needs. Therefore, we think the similar programmes should be offered by Swedish comprehensive universities to attract non-European students with such demands.

2) Besides providing unique programme portfolios, comprehensive universities could also integrate interesting and innovative online promotion way of presenting the university, programmes options, and student life in Sweden.

First of all, the information on university web page should be well maintained and updated on a regular basis, also the layout of the web page should be simple, clear, attractive and in favour of perspective students, where they could find all the important information they need for application. More importantly, the web page should be well designed to reflect the university's personality, uniqueness and the quality of education.

Besides the university website, the QR-code could also be well integrated into comprehensive universities marketing strategies. For instance, the QR-code could directly link with the university web page or programme introductions or even the various news of happening at the university. The QR-code could be printed on marketing booklets, advertisements and even the emails to perspective students. By using the QR-code, comprehensive universities could generate people's attention, help people find all the necessary information with their mobile devices and create a word of mouth among the perspective students.

In addition, the various social platforms could be utilized to create online university branding and also increase people's awareness towards university in order to attract perspective non-European students. The most popular social media tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, Sina Weibo, Instagram and Tumblr could be chosen based on the comprehensive universities' target groups and target countries. If university web page and QR-code are considered as one way communication between the university and students, then social media platform is a good example of two-way or even multiple way of communication, where perspective students could have a direct connection with the university staff and even asks suggestions from previous university graduates. Therefore, creating the online presence by using social media tools is very necessary to create bonds with the perspective students and get them emotional involved, which could most likely increase students application rate.

Furthermore, for those comprehensive universities, they can also post the videos of lectures on the internet, such as Youtube. On one hand, they can draw more public attention to universities. Not only the current students and potential targets who could have more access to the lectures, but also the academic experts who can make objective appraisals of lectures that opened to the public. On the other hand, the universities will have a better understanding of the feedbacks toward lectures and even programmes more clearly, these feedbacks and comments could be selected and used for programme / courses improvements. And therefore, they can interact with the audiences in a professional manner and response to feedback and requests immediately.

3) In addition to the online marketing promotion strategies that mentioned above, comprehensive universities should also use different offline marketing strategies, such as through cooperating with the go-studying-abroad agencies and participating education fairs.

From the standpoint of this thesis, it is very necessary for comprehensive universities to cooperate with go-studying abroad agencies in different markets. The main reason is that these universities are not so well known abroad, and people do not know these universities strong points and uniqueness. Therefore, the agencies could be used as the middle person to connect universities with students. Collaborating with local go-studying-abroad agencies could help these universities to promote their image and create students' awareness, build relationships with local universities and high schools, arrange education fairs and seminars and attract more perspective students, since these agencies share the same language with the target students and also agencies have years of experience of communicating with students and their parents, so the cooperating agencies know the skills and tricks when recommending universities to students.

The other offline marketing promotion strategy that needs to be mentioned is education fairs. As a comprehensive university, the target of perspective students is wide and diverse, which means that anyone could be a university's target potential student. Thus, participating in education fairs is a great way to present the university to the potential targets and explain the strengths of the programmes. Even though the people who attend education fairs might not really end up applying, still it is a way to brand university globally and create awareness. The university representatives who are chosen to participate in the education fairs should have good interpersonal communication skills, good local language skills and good understanding of different available programmes provided university. Furthermore, it is important to continue follow up with the students who showed interests in the education fairs. The email follow up is most widely used by different universities, to ask if students have any questions about application or studying and living in Sweden. By following up the target students, the image of university could be enforced in students' mind and deeper relationship between university and students could be built.

- 4) Last but not least, these comprehensive universities could benchmark the universities who share the similar profiles with and investigate what new marketing promotion methods they have adopted, and reused their marketing knowledge in the further marketing activities.

#### **7.4.2 Specialized Universities**

The second category of Swedish higher education institutions are the specialized universities, which including Chalmers University of Technology, Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH), Luleå University of Technology and Stockholm School of Economics. They are highly respected in the domestic market and also enjoying good ranking and reputation in Europe. But due to their specialized research fields and subject areas, these specialized universities might be less well known in other foreign countries. However, Karolinska Institutet and the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) are exceptions and they are ranked as top 200 universities in the world (The Times Higher Education World University Rankings, 2013). The advantage of this type of university is obvious, because they are specialized in specific areas so they could go after the potential target group, which is much easier than the comprehensive universities since their targets are wide and diverse. There are several marketing strategies that were found that could be adopted by specialized universities to recruit non-European students; they are as follows (Table 3):



Table 3: Marketing promotion strategies for specialized universities (Blue areas indicate the time of conducting marketing promotion strategies)

Marketing Promotion Strategies for Specialized Universities												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Social Media / Discussion Form</b>	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
<b>Specialized Education Fairs</b>								Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	
<b>Specialized Magazines / Newspapers</b>	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
<b>Student Competitions</b>	Blue	Blue	Blue								Blue	Blue
<b>Partner Universities</b>	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
<b>Guest Lectures</b>	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue

- 1) To begin with, it is advisable for specialized universities to utilize social media tools to create a communication platform, where universities could post some news about academic breakthroughs on a regular basis to give the future students ideas of university's academic achievements, and also to increase students awareness to the university, Besides, a discussion form could add on to the social media platform, where specialized universities could post the most current challenging difficulties and disputed issues in the research subject areas. Then everyone is welcome to give comments and share ideas on the social media platforms. In this way, potential perspective targets can be deeply involved in the topic discussion and the personal relationship binds with the university might be created and enhanced through this platform. Therefore, it is very necessary to use digital platforms and involve students and get their awareness.
- 2) The other suggestion is that it is important to participate in the education fairs. The most ideal time is between August and November. By participating in education fairs, specialized universities could collect information about the competitive advantages of other specialized universes. For example, to know what marketing promotion strategies

the other universities have done and what new programmes they are offering to students. Therefore, participating in fairs is a good way to catch up with other universities. More importantly, specialized universities can meet a lot of perspective students and face to face communication could help the universities to learn what are students' needs and demands and the main reasons why they would or would not choose your universities. This feedback is really important and could be regarded as the basis of future marketing planning. Besides, making an appearance in the fairs is also a way to present / brand the schools and programmes. Thus, it would be very inappropriate to be absent.

- 3) In order to spend the marketing budget in an effective way, a specialized university could brand its university and programme options in the magazines and newspaper, which is closely, connected to the university research areas. In our opinion, this is the most direct and effective promotion method, since the audience of these specialized magazines and newspapers are most likely to be the university's target groups. Therefore, it is a very direct way of attracting perspective students to apply.
- 4) Another good idea for specialized universities to use is to arrange student competitions. Based on the interviews with Mr. Gunnarsson and Mr. Stenelo, it came out that students really like such kind of competition to challenge themselves and compete with others for the full scholarships. Especially during the process, competition participants need to generate as many votes and supports as possible to win. Therefore, organized universities also attract people's attention and create positive awareness. So it could be stated that it is a very efficient way of getting a university known globally. Also at the same time, many specialized universities have utilized this strategy already, such as Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH), Chalmers University of Technology, Luleå University of Technology and Royal Institute of Technology (KTH). Therefore, these specialized universities could be investigated as good examples to benchmark. The suggested time in the Table 3 is from November to March, but it could be changed based on university's time schedule.
- 5) Furthermore, specialized universities could take the full use of their global cooperation networks and work closely with their partner universities. For example, a specialized university could arrange seminars and invite professors from partner universities to discuss the newest research breakthrough. In this way, the professors from cooperating university could have a better understanding of the university and also the relationship bonds are created during the seminars. The main reason it is important to establish good relationship with professors from corporate universities is that professors are regarded as an important reference group, which students usually turn to for suggestions when considering about applying for further studies. Therefore, it could be summed up that professors recommendation have a significant impact on students final decisions on where to apply. From the long term perspective, it is a great way to attract potential students from those partner universities.

6) Last but not least, it is suggested that specialized universities arrange guest lecturers frequently and invite the well-known researchers or professors, who have made great contributions to the related research subjects, to give presentations to the students within the university. In this way, the visibility of university could be increased.

### **7.4.3 University Colleges**

The last category of Swedish higher education institutions are the public university colleges. Because of the smaller size of the university colleges, they tend to provide less programme options and limited scholarship opportunities for non-European students and have less well known reputation globally compared with comprehensive universities. However, public university colleges also own some advantages, for example, they have rather advanced teaching facilities and more closed student-teacher relationships.

Since the introduction of tuition fees in 2011, almost all the university colleges have suffered from a huge reduction of non-European applicants, therefore, many people believe that it would be a huge challenge for university colleges to recruit non-European students, because they are public funded and do not have skills and budget to compete with other universities internationally. Thus, many people think they should primarily serve the local markets instead of recruiting international students all over the world. However, there are many marketing promotion strategies that could be used by Swedish University colleges to attract more non-European students. The marketing promotion suggestions are as follows (Table 4):

1) First of all, university colleges could define their target students by conducting a thorough research of which countries the current non-European students from, and then choose the top 3 countries where the majority of students came from as their marketing targets to conduct the marketing activities. In this way, they could have a general idea of where to promote, in order to attract non-European students. Besides, instead of focusing on the capital cities of the top 3 target countries, university colleges could emphasize on building cooperation relationships with go-studying-abroad agencies, local universities and high schools from the Medium Developed Regions and Developing Regions of the top 3 countries. There are two reasons why these regions should be chosen rather than capital cities, because in capital cities, university colleges would have to face fierce competitions with the other more well-known comprehensive and specialized universities. The other reason is that in Medium Developed Regions and Developing Regions, university colleges have more possibilities to expand cooperation with go-studying-abroad agencies, local universities and local high schools.

Table 4: Marketing Promotion Strategies for University Colleges. (Blue areas indicate the time of conducting marketing promotion strategies)

Marketing Promotion Strategies for University Collages												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Corporate with Going-study-abroad Agency	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Corporate with Local Universities	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Corporate with High Schools	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Specialized Education Fairs / Seminars	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	White
University Webpage	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Social Media	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Printed Marketing Materials	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	White
Modify Programme Setting	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Merge with other University Collages	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue

2) Secondly, university colleges could establish cooperation relationships in different go-studying-abroad agencies in the Medium Developed Regions and Developing Regions of the top 3 marketing target countries. From agencies perspective, they are less willing to recommend perspective students to the highly ranked universities since it is more difficulty to get admitted, therefore, go-studying-abroad agencies are more pleased to cooperate with university colleges and recommend students to apply. From the university colleges' perspective, agencies could help with university colleges' image and reputation promotion in the targeted cities and countries. Therefore, the cooperation between university colleges and go-studying-abroad agencies are win-win projects for both. Besides, university colleges to place more emphasis either on Bachelor degree perspective students or Master degree perspective students based on its own situation. If focusing on Bachelor students, university colleges should expand cooperation networks with local high schools. If university colleges are focusing on Master students,

then they could build relationships with more local universities to attract more non-European students. Besides, Go-studying-abroad agencies would help university colleges to expand its cooperation relationship by utilizing company's networks.

- 3) Thirdly, university colleges should participate in specialized education seminars organized by the go-studying-abroad agencies rather than large scale education fairs. The main reason why large scale education fairs are not recommended is that these university colleges would have to face intensive competition from highly ranked and well known universities from all over the world. Thus, they may not obtain expected return from such marketing promotion method. However, participating in the seminars arranged by the cooperating agencies and give the public presentation about available studying programme and student life, could allow university colleges minimize the expenses and have face to face discussion with the right target groups. Also during the seminars, any questions from the audiences could be directly answered by the university college representatives. In this way, personal relationships and emotional bonds could be created. Furthermore, university colleges could also arrange presentation in its cooperated universities and high schools to meet more perspective students and create a positive attitude and awareness. Based on the deadlines of Swedish university application, the ideal time of conducting education seminars should be from August to November.
- 4) Fourthly, university colleges are advised to fully integrate with various digital platforms. For example, the university web pages should be designed in favor of perspective students. From the web page, students could easily find all the necessary information. Also university colleges could use different social media tools to approach perspective students. They could utilize the most widely used social media instrument in that target countries to attract students online. In the social media platform, the information about programme options, interesting happenings at university, and the scholarship opportunities could be posted. Furthermore, social media network could also be the place where perspectives students could post questions they have and have a direct online conversation with the university.
- 5) Fifthly, it is also necessary for university colleges to prepare printed marketing materials in different languages to distribute during the education seminars. That is why the time of distributing printed materials is the same as the education seminars from August to November. Based on the suggestions above, the materials booklets could be placed on places like cooperated go-studying-abroad agencies, local universities international offices and Swedish Embassy in targeted countries.
- 6) Sixthly, university colleges are recommended to conduct market research from time to time to get new information of students' needs and demands. For example, they could modify the programme/ course settings to better match students' expectations. Besides, it also could be a good idea for them to get highly specialized in one or two subject

areas and promote the specialized subjects on web page, social media platforms and printed materials to attract students.

- 7) Last but not least, merging university colleges can also be regarded as a wise decision. A good example is Linnaeus University, which is founded on 2010. Even though it is not highly ranked in the world, still many non-European students choose it for studying because of its advanced university facilities, programme options and shares resources with other two university colleges, Växjö University and Kalmar University College.

## Chapter 8: Conclusions, Limitations and Suggestions

This chapter would include the conclusions of this thesis, the main limitations and suggestions for further research.

### 8.1 Conclusions

The most important objective of this thesis is to investigate and find out the useful marketing promotion strategies undertaken by Lund University to approach different reference groups in order to enhance university image in non-European countries, to attract more non-European perspective students and to minimize the negative impacts of the tuition fee policy from 2011. Since the introduction of tuition fees did not affect the number of European applicants, therefore, the main research targets are the international students who are outside the countries of EU/EEA and Switzerland. Also based on the information we collected, we are aiming to create a useful marketing promotion model for the other universities who are going to charge tuition fees or implemented a tuition fee policy already to benchmark.

In order to reach the research objectives, one main research question was designed and 2 different sub-questions in chapter 1.3. All these research questions have been answered in the thesis. Also based on the research questions, a series research practices were conducted. First of all, qualitative interviews with 10 non-European Lund University students were carried out to have a comprehensive overview of different factors that influenced them to choose Lund University, followed with the quantitative surveys with 189 Lund University students who are coming from countries outside of EU/EEA and Switzerland. From the analysis of survey results, the main factors that they have taken into consideration when choosing Lund University and different approaches they have used to collect information about university/ programmes were investigated. Furthermore, in-depth interviews with Lund University officials, Mr. Richard Stenelo, the Deputy Executive Director of External Relations Division, and Mr. Johan Gunnarsson, the International Marketing Manager within the International Marketing and Recruitment Department were conducted. The interviews reveal the big picture of 10 different marketing promotion strategies used by Lund University to attract more non-European perspective students and to reduce the negative impacts of tuition fee policy. Based on the analysis of Lund University's marketing promotion strategies, the model of internal and external factors that influence Lund University's corporate reputation (Figure 20) has been created, also marketing promotion suggestions have been proposed for different types of Swedish universities in the end of our thesis as the further contribution of the thesis.

For comprehensive universities, it is important for them to highlight the strengths and uniqueness they have compared with other well-known and highly ranked universities when targeting perspective students. Comprehensive universities could highlight its strong

programmes and courses when conducting marketing promotion activities. Comprehensive universities could also integrate interesting and innovative online promotion as a way of presenting the university, programme options, and student life in Sweden, such as a university web page, QR-code and different social media tools. What is more, comprehensive universities should also use different offline marketing strategies, such as through cooperating with go-studying-abroad agencies and participating education fairs. At last, these comprehensive universities should also benchmark the universities who share a similar profiles and investigate what new marketing promotion methods they have adopted, and reused their marketing knowledge in the further marketing activities.

As for Specialized universities, the various social media platforms, such as discussion forms should be well used to develop relationship bonds with the potential students and create awareness towards the universities. Besides, participating specialized education fairs is necessary to meet perspective students and collect market intelligence of their needs and demands. Also promoting university/programmes options in specialized magazines and newspapers is very direct way of marketing, also organizing student competitions could be regarded as a way to generate awareness for university. Furthermore, specialized universities should also expand the cooperation networks and collaborate with its partner universities to attract students. Last but not least, a specialized university could increase its popularity by arranging guest lectures and inviting well known researchers and professors in the related research areas.

For university colleges, different marketing promotion strategies have been suggested in this thesis. For example, university colleges could cooperate with go-studying-abroad agencies, high schools and local universities in the medium developed regions and developing regions of the target countries to create awareness and needs among the targeted students. Besides, organizing education fairs and seminars in agencies, high schools and local universities could directly approach and introduce programmes options to the potential students. Printed marketing materials could be distributed as the supporting material to the students. Furthermore, university webpage should be well maintained, and social media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter could be utilized help the students to find the key information about the universities. Modifying the programmes and courses is always important tool for any universities to attract students. Last but not least, merging universities colleges can also be taken as a wise decision.

## **8.2 Limitations**

From the conducted research, this thesis could provide some interesting information about the main factors that non-European students have taken into consideration and the major approach they have used when collecting information about Lund University. Also the marketing promotion model that we created based on the Lund University's marketing strategies could be useful for some other universities to benchmark. However, there are



also some limitations. First of all, the sample size of our survey research is only 189 non-European Lund University students, which could be considered too small size to represent the whole population of non-European students enrolled at Lund University.

Secondly, during the quantitative survey research, the percentage of survey respondents based on the nationalities does not reflect the real situation in Lund University. For example, more than 40% of the respondents are Chinese students at Lund University, so the survey results might largely reflect Chinese students' opinion and situation, which could cause bias to the research results.

Thirdly, the models of internal and external factors that influence a university's corporate reputation and marketing promotion strategies that were created in chapter 7 are mainly based on Lund University. Therefore, they might be not applicable when used by another university. Since the marketing promotion model is mainly created for the universities who have the similar profiles with Lund University, for examples the ones who are highly ranked and research oriented comprehensive universities.

### **8.3 Suggestions For Further Studies**

As mentioned above, there are three major limitations with the thesis research. Therefore, there are three main suggestions for anyone who wants to research this topic further and create a more detailed marketing promotion model. First of all, the future researchers should conduct the quantitative survey in a bigger sample, since the sample size of 189 respondents is considered rather small.

Secondly, the future researchers should be more rational when choosing the survey respondents, which mean that percentage of the different nationality survey respondents, should match with the real situation in order to minimize the research biases.

Thirdly, since the marketing strategies model in this thesis is mainly for the universities who have similar situation with Lund University, therefore, the future researchers could modify the model and put forward suggestions for other types of universities.

## List of References

- Acevedo, G (2009), Hispanics and Their Perceptions of Family Dynamics: An Extension and Test of Group Reference Theory, [Journal of Comparative Family Studies](#), Vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 387-414
- Bakewell, C. & Mitchell, V-W., (2004), Male Consumer Decision-making styles. *International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, Vol.14, no. 2, pp. 223-240.
- Baidubaike, (2013), 综合性大学 (Comprehensive University), available online: <http://baike.baidu.com/view/1001725.htm>, accessed on 11th April, 2013.
- Bearden, W. O., Etzel, M. J., (1982), Reference Group Influence on Product and Brand Purchase Decisions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9 (2), pp.183–194.
- Bick, G., Jacobson, M. & Abratt, R. (2003), The Corporate Identity Management Process Revisited. *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 19, pp. 835-55.
- Bryman, Alan. & Bell, Emma. (2007), *Business Research Methods*. 2nd edition. Oxford University Press.
- Burns, D. (2011), Consumer Decision-Making Styles: Relationships with Consumer Alienation, *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research (JBRMR)* Vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 48-62.
- Budzanowska-Drzewiecka, M. (2011), Social Conditioning of Purchasing Decisions of 9-11 year-old Consumers, *Journal of Customer Behavior*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp.143-160.
- Chuang, S., Cheng, Y & Hsu, C., (2012), The Influence of Suggestions of Reference Groups in the Compromise Effect, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, Vol. 33, pp. 554–565.
- Chang, C., Chuang, S., Cheng, Y., & Huang, T. (2011), The Compromise Effect in Choosing for Others, *Journal of Behavior Decision Making*, Vol. 24
- Chen, C., & Zimitat, C. (2006), Understanding Taiwanese Students' Decision Making Factors Regarding International Higher Education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 91–100.
- Cubillo, J., Sanchez, J., & Cervino, J. (2006), International Students' Decision Making Process. *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 101–115.
- Cooper, D. R., Schindler, P. S., (2003), *Business Research Methods*. 8th ed. McGraw-Hill higher Education.

Davey, G. (2005), Chinese Students' Motivations for Studying Abroad. *International Journal of Private Higher Education*, Vol. 2, pp.16–21.

Damelio, R., (1995), *The Basics of Benchmarking*. Productivity Press, Oregon.

Davies, G, & Miles, L. (1998), Reputation Management: Theory versus Practice. *Corporate Reputation Review*. Vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 16-28.

Deephouse, D. (2000), Media Reputation as a Strategic Resource: An Integration of Mass Communication and Resource-based Theories, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 26, no. 6, pp. 1091–1112.

Delgado-García, J., Quevedo-Puente, E., & Díez-Esteban, J., (2013), The Impact of Corporate Reputation on Firm Risk: A Panel Data Analysis of Spanish Quoted Firms, *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 24, pp. 1–20.

Dowling, G. & Moran, P. (2012), Corporate Reputations: Built in or Bolted on? *California Management Review*, Vol. 54, no. 2, pp. 25-42.

Ekström, K. (2010), "Families and reference groups" in *Consumer Behavior - A Nordic Perspective*, Studentlitteratur AB: Lund. Pp. 381-397.

Emal, A. (2012), The Role of Trust on the Relationship Between Organizational Engagement and Corporate Reputation, *Journal of Economy*, Vol. 19, no. 1, pp.47-58

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P. R., (2008), *Management Research*. 3rd edition. London: Sage. pp178-179.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Lowe, A. (2008) , *Management Research: An Introduction*, Third edition. Sage, London.

EducationFairFinder.com, (2013), What Are Fairs?, available online<<http://www.educationfairfinder.com/pages/page/page-showpage/2-what-are-fairs-.asp>>, accessed 6th April, 2013.

Fombrun, C. (2001), Corporate Reputations as Economic Assets. In A. H. Michael, R. E. Freeman, & J. S. Harrison (Eds.), *Handbook of strategic management*. Blackwell: Oxford, p.293

FrouzanFar, M., Meimar, S. & Tagipour, F. (2012), The Role of Reference Groups on Student's Cultural Values, *Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, Vol.3, no. 9, pp. 182-193.

Ghuri, P., Gronhaug, K., (2005), Research Method of Business Studies, a practical guide, 3rd edition. Prentice Hall.

Grindlay, M. (2013), Alumni, available online: <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/alumni>, updated on 27th March, 2013. accessed on 7th April, 2013.

Grindlay, M. (2013), Bachelor's Studies, available online: <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/international-students/bachelor-s-studies>, updated on 15th January, 2013, accessed on 7th April, 2013.

Grindlay, M. (2013), Student Exchange, available online: <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/global-cooperation/student-exchange>, updated on 2nd April, 2013, access on 7th April, 2013.

Grindlay, M. (2013), Welcome to Lund University." viewed 27th March, 2013. Updated on 5th February, 2013. Available at <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/international-students>

Grindlay, M. (2012), Scholarships and Funding on Lund University website. available at: <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/international-students/apply-fees-scholarships-housing/scholarships-and-funding>. accessed on 26th February, 2013.

Goedeme, T.& Rottiers, S. (2011), Poverty in the Enlarged European Union. A Discussion about Definitions and Reference Groups, Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy, University of Antwerp, vol.5, no. 1, pp. 77–91.

Hatch, M., & Schultz, M. (1997), Relationship between Organizational Culture Identify and Image. European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 31, no. 5, pp. 356-365.

Hatch, M., & Schultz, M. (2003), Bringing the Corporation into Corporate Branding. European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 37, no. 11

Hawkins, D., Best, R. & Coney, K. (2003), Consumer Behaviour; Building Marketing Strategy. USA: Irwin McGraw Hill.

Hyman, H. & Singer, E. (1968). Introduction in Readings in Reference Group Theory and Research, Herbert H. Hyman and Eleanor Singer. New York: The Free Press, pp. 3–21

Högskoleverket, Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, (2012). "Swedish Universities & Universities Colleges, Short Version of Annual Report 2012.

Hörnfeldt, K., Cavalli-Abrahamson, H. (2011), Trustworthiness of anonymous eWOM.

ICEF monitor, (2012), Sweden on the Rebound from Tuition Fee Fallout". published 21st September, 2012. Available Online: <http://monitor.icef.com/2012/09/sweden-on-the-rebound-from-tuition-fee-fallout/>. Accessed: 24th February, 2013.

Iwu-Egwuonwu, R. (2010), Corporate Reputation & Firm Performance: Empirical Literature Evidence, International Journal of Business and Management Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 197-206.

Jin, R. & Punpanich, W. (2011). Influence of Gender Difference in Reference Group on Smartphone Users' Purchasing Decision-making Process, Lund University

Joseph, D. (2008), Travelling Drum with Different Beats: Experiencing African Music and Culture in Australian Teacher Education, An International Journal of Teachers' Professional Development, Volume 9, pp. 287-299

Kinney, T. C., Taylor, J. R., 1996. Marketing Research: An Applied Approach. 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Koklic, M. & Vida, I. (2011), Consumer Strategic Decision Making and Choice Process: Prefabricated House Purchase, International Journal of Consumer Studies, [Volume. 35, no. 6](#), pp. 634–643

Landes, D. (2012), "Non-EU Students Drop Swedish Unis as Fees Bite", published 23 May 2012, Available Online: <http://www.thelocal.se/41002/20120523/#.UQgptqXpY8E>. Accessed: 29th January, 2013.

Lange, D., Lee, P., & Dai, Y. (2011), Organizational Reputation: An Overview. Journal of Management, Vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 153–184.

Le Roux, J. (2003), Corporate Reputation in the Information Technology Industry: A South African Case Study. Thesis, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of Pretoria.

Lindblad, M. (2012), Strategic Partnerships and Networks. Available online: <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/global-cooperation/networks-and-partnerships>, updated on 16th November, 2012, accessed on: 7th April, 2013.

Martin, B., Wentzel, D., & Tomczak, T., (2008), Effects of Susceptibility to normative Influence and Type of Testimonial on Attitudes Toward Print Advertising. Journal of Advertising, 37 (1), pp. 29-43.

Martin, B., Daniel, W., & Torsten, T., (2008), Effects of Susceptibility to Normative Influence and Type of Testimonial on Attitudes Toward Print Advertising, Vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 29-43.

Martin de Castro, G., Navas Lopez, J., & Saez, P. (2006), Business and Social Reputation: Exploring the Concept and Main Dimensions of Corporate Reputation. Journal of Business Ethics Online, (July 18, 2009)

McDaniel, C., Gates, R.,(2008), Marketing Research Essentials. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Mishra, A, (2010), Consumer Decision-making Styles and Young-adult Consumers: An Indian Exploration. İşletme Araştırmaları Dergisi, Vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 45-62.

Musso, F. & Francioni, B., (2012), The Influence of Decision-Maker Characteristics On The International Strategic Decision-Making Process: An SME Perspective. Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Vol. 58 PP. 279-288.

Myklebust, J. (2012). "International Masters Applications Rise Despite High Fees". published on 5th February, 2012. Available Online: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20120203160454119>. Accessed: 24th February, 2013.

Peter, J. & Olson, J. (2005), Consumer Behavior and Marketing Strategy. Irwin McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

Reddiar, C. & Kleyn, N. (2011), Director's Perspectives on the Meaning and Dimensions of Corporate Reputation, S.Afr.J.Bus.Manage, Vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 29-39.

Rudd, B.,Djafarova, E. & Waring, T., (2012), Chinese Students' Decision-making Process: A Case of a Business School in the UK, The International Journal of Management Education, Vol. 10, pp.129-138

Saunders M., Thornhill, A., & Lewis, P., (2009), Research Methods for Business Students. Harlow: Financial Times Press/Prentice Hall.

Scholderer, J. (2010) "Perception and information processing", in Consumer Behavior - A Nordic Perspective, ed. Ekström, K. Studentlitteratur AB: Lund. Pp.233-246

Senecal, S., Kalczynski, P., & Nantel, J., (2005), Consumers' Decision-Making Process and Their Online Shopping Behavior: A Clickstream Analysis. Journal of Business Research, Vol. 58. Pp. 1599-1608.

Shahraki,A., Zarea, H. & Jannesari, A, (2012), Decision Making with Multi Criteria through Hierarchic Analysis Technique and its Effect on Customer Decision Procedure, Journal of Information Management and Business, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 153-158.

Shamma, H., (2012), Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of Corporate Reputation: Concept, Measurement and Implications, *International Journal of Business and Management*, Vol. 7, No. 16, pp.151-169.

Siltaoja, M. (2006), Value Priorities as Combining Core Factors between CSR and Reputation—a Qualitative Study, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 68, no. 1, pp. 91–111.

Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S., & Hogg, M. (2010), *Consumer Behavior: a European perspective*. Essex: Pearson Education.

Stafford, J. E., (1966), Effects of Group Influences on Consumer Brand Preferences. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 3 (1), pp.68-75.

Studentcompetitions.com, (2013) Competition Organizers, available online: <http://studentcompetitions.com>, accessed on 7th April, 2013.

The Times Higher Education World University Ranking, (2012-2013). World University Rankings 2012-2013. available online: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2012-13/world-ranking>, accessed on 11th April, 2013.

Thompson, W. & Hickey, J. (2005), *Society in Focus*. Boston, MA Pearson

Universityadmission.se, (2013), Swedish Universities, available online: <https://www.universityadmissions.se/en/All-you-need-to-know1/Studying-in-Sweden/Swedish-universities/>, accessed on 10th April, 2013.

Vrontis, D., Thrassou, A., & Melanithiou, Y. (2007). A Contemporary Higher Education Student-choice Model for Developed Countries. *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 60, no. 9, pp. 979–989.

Waddock, S. (2000), The Multiple Bottom Lines of Corporate Citizenship: Social Investing, Reputation, and Responsibility Audits', *Business and Society Review*, 105, pp. 323–345.

Wartick, L. S. (2002), Measuring Corporate Reputation, Definition and Data. *Business & Society*, Vol. 41, no. 4, pp. 371-392.

Wang, X & Jiang, P. (2011), How to market Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences and increase its competitiveness in Chinese market in order to attract more Chinese degree students, available online: <https://publications.theseus.fi/handle/10024/37713>, accessed on February, 2013.

Wei, Y. & Yu, C. (2012), How do Reference Groups Influence Self-brand Connections among Chinese Consumers? Implications for Advertising, *Journal of Advertising*, pp.39-51

WebFinance, (2013), business Dictionary, Available online:  
<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/reference-group.html>. (Accessed 30 March 2013)

Wood, J. (1996), What is Social Comparison and How Should We Study It? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 22, pp. 520–37.

#### Personal Interviews References:

Endo, K. (2013) Personal interview conducted on 20th February, 2013.

Garnijanto, G. (2013) Personal interview conducted on 18 February, 2013

Gunnarsson, J. (2013), International Marketing Manager of International Marketing and Recruitment in Lund University, Personal interview conducted on 2nd April, 2013.

Han, M, (2013) Personal interview conducted on 20th February, 2013.

Lee, G. (2013) Personal interview conducted on 20th February, 2013.

Masesa, A. (2013) Personal interview conducted on 18 February, 2013

Male, Faculty of Social Science in Lund University, (2013) Personal interview conducted on 20th February, 2013.

Pekutova, A. (2013) Personal interview conducted on 22 February, 2013

Sim, G. (2013) Personal interview conducted on 22nd February, 2013.

Stenelo, R. (2013). Deputy Executive Director of Division of External Relations in Lund University, Personal interview conducted on 2nd April, 2013.

Slanvetpan, P. (2013) Personal interview conducted on 21 February, 2013

Zhang, Y. (2013) Personal Interview conducted on 19th February, 2013.



## Appendix 1 - Qualitative Interview Guide with Students

*We are now doing the master thesis that focuses on analyzing the impact of reference groups on non-European students who study at Lund University. This questionnaire includes two parts altogether. It takes 15-20 minutes to finish.*

*We sincerely hope you can answer the following questions. We really appreciate it. Thank you in advance.*

### **Part 1:**

1. Why do you choose to study in Sweden?

2. What factors you have taken into consideration when choose Lund University for studying?

3. What benefits you think the education in Lund University would bring to you?

4. Where did you get relevant information about your program / Lund University?

5. Do you know any other ways to get information about your program / Lund University?

6. Among the options you mentioned before, what are the most important factors that motivate you to choose Lund University for studying?

7. Would you recommend Lund University to students who intend to study outside their home country?

8. Why would / would not you recommend Lund University students who intend to study outside their home country?

**Part 2:**

What is your name?

What is your nationality?

Which Faculty are you studying in?

Faculty of Engineering  
Faculty of Science  
Faculty of Law  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
Faculty of Medicine  
Faculties of Humanities & Theology  
School of Economics & Management  
Faculty of Fine & Performing Arts

Which program are you studying?

How much percentage scholar do you get?

0%  
25%  
50%  
75%  
100%

# Appendix 2 - Quantitative Survey Questionnaire

1. What is your nationality? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which faculty are you studying in?

- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Social Sciences
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Fine & Performing Arts
- School of Economics & Management
- Faculties of Humanities & Theology
- Faculty of Medicine

3. Which program are you studying?

- Bachelor's studies \_\_\_\_\_
- Master's studies \_\_\_\_\_
- PHD studies \_\_\_\_\_
- Exchange program \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you have scholarship while studying at Lund University?

- Yes.
- No. (Please go to Question 7)

5. Which type of scholarship are you rewarded?

- Lund University Global Scholarship programme
- Programme-specific scholarships
- Country-specific scholarships
- US student finance
- Erasmus Mundus Action 1
- Erasmus Mundus Action 2
- Swedish Institute scholarships
- Canada and UK finance

6. How much percentage of scholarship do you get?

- 25%
- 50%
- 75%
- 100%

7. When you started to think about studying outside your home country?

- Before University studying
- After University studying
- During working
- Others \_\_\_\_\_
- During University studying
- Before working
- After working

8. What particular reason lead you to have this idea?

9. Where did you get relevant information about Lund University /programme? (You can choose more than one answer)

- Internet searching engines: Google, Baidu, Bing.
- Social media platforms: Facebook, Youtube, Blogs
- Internet websites: www.studyinsweden.se & www.universityadmissions.se
- Cooperation Universities
- Others \_\_\_\_\_
- Lund University graduates
- Go-studying-abroad agencies
- Friends / Family
- Lund University web page
- International Education Fair
- World University Ranking list

10. Please indicate your Top 3 most important approaches?

1	2	3
---	---	---

**11. What factors you have taken into consideration when choosing Lund University for studying? (You can choose more than one answer)**

- Personal preference
- Ranking and Reputation
- Programme curriculum setting
- Scholarship opportunities
- Various English programme
- Others \_\_\_\_\_
- Living and studying environment
- Previous experiences in Nordic countries
- Reasonable tuition fee
- Immigration opportunities
- Advanced education system

**12. Which alternative from 1 to 5 describes best of your opinion concerning the following statements?**

**(1= strong disagree. 2= disagree. 3= neither agree nor disagree. 4= agree. 5=strongly agree)**

10.1 Ranking and Reputation of Lund University greatly influenced my decision making	1	2	3	4	5
10.2 Programme curriculum setting of Lund University greatly influenced my decision making.	1	2	3	4	5
10.3 Scholarship opportunities offered by Lund University greatly influenced my decision making.	1	2	3	4	5
10.4 The large variety of English programme offered by Lund University greatly influenced my decision making.	1	2	3	4	5
10.5 Advanced education system at Lund University greatly influenced my decision making.	1	2	3	4	5
10.6 Previous studying or living experience in Nordic countries greatly influenced my decision making.	1	2	3	4	5
10.7 Immigration opportunities in Sweden greatly influenced my decision making.	1	2	3	4	5
10.8 Lund University has a very good reputation in my home country.	1	2	3	4	5

**13. What benefits you think the education in Lund University would bring to you? (You can choose more than one answer)**

- Increase future employment opportunities
- Personal development in academic field
- Broaden horizon
- Expand social network
- Language improvement
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Would you recommend Lund University to the others?**

- Yes.
- No.

14.1 . Please state your reasons?

## Appendix 3 - Qualitative Interview Guide with University officials

Part one:

4. What are influences of the tuition fee policy on Lund University in general ?
5. How had the number of non-European applicants changed after 2011 autumn semester compared with before.
6. How about the number of applicants from Non-European countries changed in 2011 and 2012 ?

Part two:

7. What are the main non-European target countries that Lund University is focusing at the moment ? why choose these countries? are the result of number of applications from these countries actually match with the marketing efforts in these countries?
8. What marketing promotion strategies Lund University has utilized in the past two years to attract more non-European students and minimize the negative impact of tuition fee policy ? Can you specify each strategy in details ?  
(go-studying-abroad agencies, how do you choose your agency partners? Do you have any key criteria when selecting potential agency partner ?
9. What are the new promotion strategies or marketing promotion Lund University adopted in the past two years compared with the marketing methods Lund University used before?

Part three:

10. What are the most effective promotion strategies in your opinion?
8. What measurement or assessment criteria you used to measure the effectiveness of the each promotion strategy you mentioned earlier ?

Part four:

9. Compared with Uppsala University and Stockholm University, does Lund University have any unique or innovative marketing promotions strategies, which the others don't have? If yes, what are they ? and why they are unique / what make them different from the others ?
10. Or are there any marketing strategies used by the other swedish universities that you find useful or necessary to be used as well ?

Part five:

11. Are there any potential marketing methods Lund University intend to use in the future ? If yes, what are they ?