Not All International Students Are the Same: Understanding Segments, Mapping Behavior

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• Deep understanding of global higher education systems and institutions

• Direct access to international students to understand profiles and preferences

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- Write to us at advisor@wes.org for more info.
Overview

Objective

- Gain an understanding of international student segments
- Map segments with information seeking-behavior
- Assist institutions in making strategic choices

Approach

- Online survey of nearly 1,600 U.S.-bound international students
- Segmentation technique using survey data
Not all international students are the same

- **24%** used agents
- **46%** ranked school’s reputation in top 3 information need
- **40%** plan to attend an ESL program in the future
- **67%** plan to attend a top-tier school in the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Resources</th>
<th>Academic Preparedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRUGGLERS 21%</td>
<td>STRIVERS 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPLORERS 25%</td>
<td>HIGHFLIERS 24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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International students differ from country to country

International student segments in top 3 sending countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Strivers</th>
<th>Strugglers</th>
<th>Explorers</th>
<th>Highfliers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All U.S.-bound int'l students</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Different students need different information

Top 3 information needs of U.S.-bound international students from China and India

- Application Requirements
- Tuition and Costs of Living
- Financial Aid Opportunities
- Reputation of School
- Career Prospects After Graduation
- Program Content/Course Offerings
- Program Structure, Incl. Credit Transfer
- Student Services, Incl. Campus Safety, Student Life
- Faculty Research and Expertise

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Different students use different information channels

Percentage of respondents from top 3 sending countries that used each channel:

- China: WEBSITE (93%), FAMILY & FRIENDS (92%), EDUCATION FAIR (31%)
- India: WEBSITE (90%), AGENT (15%), SOCIAL MEDIA (48%)
- Korea: WEBSITE (80%), FAMILY & FRIENDS (71%), SOCIAL MEDIA (44%)
Conclusions

- Not all the students are the same
  - Identify which segment of student you want to recruit
  - Prioritize the quality and capacities

- Understand differences in information need and channel use
  - Customize the message and channel
  - Understand the trade-offs

*Not all the institutions are the same, either!*
Q & A

Send your questions to:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td>International student segments</td>
<td>Data analysis of enrolled students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>Information channels students used</td>
<td>Institutional &amp; Student Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td>Recommendations to map segments with channels</td>
<td>Comprehensive analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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