CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ON PRIVATE PRE-SCHOOL SELECTION IN CHINA

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CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ON PRIVATE PRE-SCHOOL SELECTION IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

This paper is to find out the factors that influence Chinese people to choose private pre-schools for their children, and whether there are any differences in making decisions in different socio-demographic groups. The research is limited in the mainland of China and only focuses on early education. It includes children from 1.6 to 6 years old. This paper uses the quantitative method by conducting online questionnaires. The collected data is analyzed by using SPSS. It found that academic curriculum, location and security are the top three factors that Chinese people emphasize. Besides, people' age and income are related to some schools' attributes.

KEY WORDS: consumer behavior/ preschool/China

41 pages

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1Background

The research topic of this thematic paper is to find out what drives consumers in China to choose one private preschool over another, and to further find out whether different socio-demographic groups in society make different choices when choosing a kindergarten for their children.

Based on national statistics up until now, 24 percent of the population in China will be 65 years of age or older by 2040 which means that China has gradually entered an aging society. (Anon.,2017) This trend has not only threatened the Chinese economic boom that's based on huge labor supply, but has also led to a larger burden on the government's budget on taking care of the elderly. In response to this social trend, in 2016, the Chinese government decided to abandon the one-child policy which had been carried out for the last 30 years and allow all people to have up to two children instead. Currently, there are also indications that the Chinese government might remove all restrictions on birth control and encourage birth-giving instead.

Following the new two-child policy, it has become more common for Chinese parents to have two or more children per household. Most Chinese parents believe that getting a good education as early in life as possible would benefit their children in the future. They also believe that young education is helpful on developing the child's IQ, language skills along with other abilities. However, in China, there is a shortage of government-run kindergartens. Therefore, in 2014, "private kindergartens represent more than 60% of the total market of kindergarten in China, while the rest being

government-run kindergartens." In addition to this, the gross enrolment rate is estimated to increase from 81% in 2014 to 95% in 2020. (Thibaud, 2014) Therefore, there is a growing number of private kindergartens opening up in the Chinese market and competition is becoming fiercer all the time.

1.2Research Questions

As has been mentioned above, recently, there is an increase on the amount of private kindergartens opening up in China. Although the big brand institutions already have a strong market share, most of them tend to be very similar in terms of curriculum and schedule. In other words, there tends to be very limited differentiation among each school. Therefore, the research questions are to find out what factors drive Chinese parents or future Chinese parents to choose one private preschool over another? Are the factors the same in different socio-demographic groups?

1.3Research Objectives

The purpose of this paper is to find out the factors that influence customers to choose one particular private preschool over another in China, and whether there are any differences in making decisions in different socio-demographic groups. This study is aimed as guidance for entrepreneurs who run early education institutions to keep up with and be able to meet the customers' needs and satisfactions. It is also aimed for people who intend to open pre-schools for young children to get a deeper understanding of the market in order to make better decisions.

1.4Research Scope

The research is limited to mainland of China. The research subjects include both Chinese people who are residing in mainland of China and also Chinese people who are temporarily staying out of mainland China. The field only focuses on early education since people would have different considerations on different education levels. The kindergarten in this paper includes children aged from 1.6 years old to 6 years old. It excludes institutions which only provide various classes instead of daycare.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The influence of School Attributes on parents' Choice

Previous studies show that parents tend to choose a particular school based on the school attributes they prefer. Dahari and Ya (2011) conducted research by the means of questionnaire and data analysis in Malaysia. They found that parents' choice of pre-schools tends to be influenced more by branding, private-run institutions, safety and security, quality of teaching and hygiene. Moreover, English language as a teaching medium and religion-based are added advantages for their choice. Branded pre-schools are able to maintain quality teachers, good facilities and invest more on advertisement, which leads them to charge a higher tuition fee than the other schools. Halstead (1994) argues that consumers usually perceive higher prices as implications of better quality. Therefore, branding becomes one of the main factors that can influence the parents' choice. Data in Malaysia show that 84% of parents would primarily choose branded schools.

Studies have also found that branded pre-schools are used to maintain social class. These branded pre-schools could concentrate parents who want their children to be in a group of equal social status and socialize with them (McDaniel, 2006). Burgess et al. (2014) found that social-economic composition is also one of the considerations for parents choosing a school based on research in Washington DC, which collected data from parents' behavior on online search for the schools. The research also shows that 30% of parents would look at student demographic information upon their school visit (Schneider and Buckley, 2002). Apart from quality and social-economic composition of

well-branded schools, branding also means long-lasting or even permanent memory in customers' minds as it can directly affect customers' loyalty as well (Allen and Rao, 2000).

Wolfson (2000) once suggested the six criteria parents should consider when choosing a pre-school, which are: location, hours of operation, educational philosophy, teachers' quality and styles, facilities and instinct. Research conducted in Malaysia shows that more that 50% of parents send their children to a pre-school close to their homes, and around 36% of parents choose a pre-school that is less than 3 kilometers away from their workplace. The study in England used economic models to analyze the parents' true preference for their children in private elementary schools, and they also indicated that parents strongly value the proximity to home. Parents prefer to send their children to schools near home. However, this aspect is not as important as academic performance of the school (Burgess et al.,2014). The study in Washington DC also shows that apart from student demographic information, parents are also most likely to look at the location of the school. Parents are concerned about the distance from home and access to public transportations (Schneider and Buckley, 2002). Carneiro, Das and Reis (2010) also conducted research on approximately 1800 households in the largest state in Pakistan. They claim that school distance is one of the most important attributes that influence the parents' choice. Moreover, the study of private elementary schools in Alberta indicates that 83% of parents who joined the research chose a neighborhood school and 47% of them made decisions without looking for other options. (Bosetti and Pyryt, 2008) Convenience is also mentioned by Keitz et al. (2000) in their research, they find that many schools do not provide transportation to and from schools. Therefore, travel convenience to school becomes a concern for parents.

In terms of academics, the research in Malaysia indicates that this aspect is one of the main factors that parents consider when choosing a pre-school for their children. Keitz et al (2000) also conclude that parents prioritize academics, followed by

convenience, school characteristics and safety. In Alberta, based on data analysis and the further interviews, it found that most parents choose private schools based on the schools' values and beliefs on education, as well as the schools' academic reputation. They also care about whether there is a particular approach to teaching (Bosetti and Pyryt, 2008). In Washington DC, many parents also claimed that they value this attribute of a school. However, based on results of their searching behaviors, it turns out that very few parents actually visited the school profile which provides this sort of information. They judge the quality of teaching by accessing the test score data (Schneider and Buckley, 2002). In contrast, test scores are not one of the important factors for parents' decisions in Pakistan as it is in US (Carneiro, Das and Reis, 2010).

Apart from what has been mentioned above, the attributes of price, class size, facilities, religion, child perception, the schedule of siblings, and the ability to meet the child's individualistic needs are also put forward in previous research.

In conclusion, the figure below shows the key school attributes which have been mentioned in previous research.

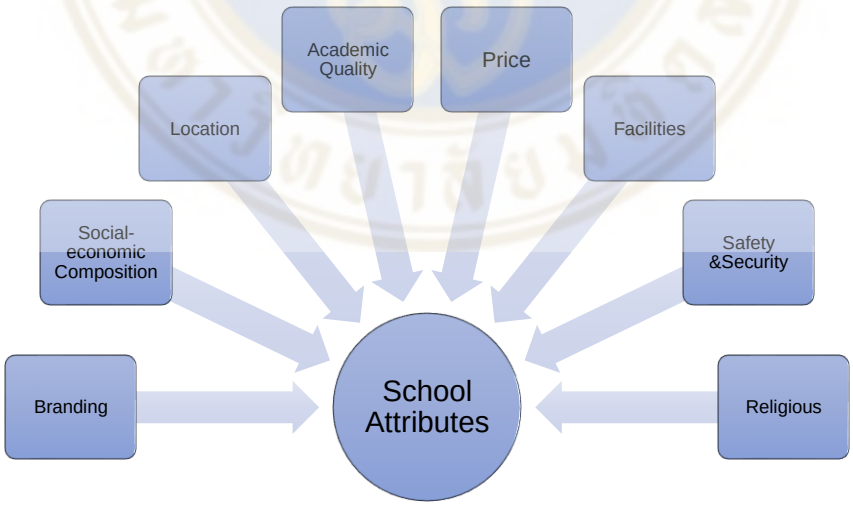

Figure 2.1 Factors of school attributes

2.2 Social Demographic Influences on Parents' Choice

Previous research also found that there is a relationship between the parents' social demographic and their choice of school. The studies of pre-schools in Malaysia show that parents' income is a significant factor that influences their choice. The reality of high price in private branded pre-schools would sometimes force parents to choose another affordable school instead of the one they prefer. Low-income parents and especially those who have more than one child are rarely able to afford private branded pre-schools (Dahari and Ya, 2011). The research in Alberta also indicates that parents who send their children to private schools have a higher income than the other groups. High income provides them with the most options to choose a school for their children (Bosetti and Pyryt, 2008). In addition to this, high-income parents seem more concerned about academic quality of the schools than low-income parents. Moe (1995) argues that low-income parents care more about practical concerns, such as the distance to school, rather than quality of education or effective schooling. According to Bosetti and Pyryt (2008) high-income parents actually also care about school distance, but they usually select famous schools when buying a house as they choose where to live based on whether there are branded schools in that particular area. Hastings et al. (2008) from England also proved the statement that richer people are much more likely to put their children in more academically intense schools (Burgess et al., 2014). Similarly, in Pakistan, wealthier parents have more children in private schools. They also tend to choose private schools with better infrastructures and slightly higher test scores. (Carneiro, Das and Reis, 2010)

In addition, parents' education background also plays a determinant influence on school selection for their children. In Pakistan, more educated parents are able to pay more on school fees and thus there is a higher percentage of them which send their children to private schools. They also care more about infrastructure, lower teacher absenteeism and slightly higher test scores (Carneiro, Das and Reis, 2010). Moe (1995) also claims that low-educated parents are hardly attracted by the academic school

attributes. Hastings et al. (2008) also found that more educated parents tend to choose schools with better academics. Besides, educated parents are more likely to be involved with their children's education at pre-school or at home. They would select a school that can help with children's growth and learning by importing global components, such as classroom practices, curriculums and environment (Ceglowski, 2007).

In conclusion, the figure below shows two main social demographic factors which can influence parents' choice of private pre-schools.

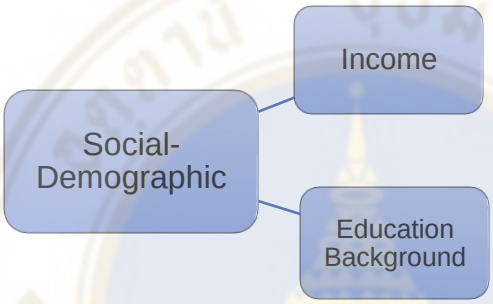

Figure 2.2 Factors of social-demographic

2.3 Contribution of My Research

According to previous research, I found that there is very little study on the influences of school attributes and parents' social demographic on choosing a private pre-school for their children, especially in China. Most research focuses on the elementary or higher level of private schools instead of pre-schools. Therefore, this research aims to uncover the gap of knowledge in this field by finding out the factors which influence the parents' choice for pre-schools. This research will also contribute to the private pre-schools education system in China by making suggestions on the improvement of existing private school structures in order to meet parents and children's

needs and satisfaction. It is also helpful for new marketing strategies in order to attract more students in the competitive environment.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Collection

This paper uses the quantitative method by conducting an online survey. A survey questionnaire is used because it can provide relevant information representing a large group of parents and show their interests based on different social demographics. It also allows the usage of statistical analysis to analyze which factors are more significant to parents, and which are relatively weak. This method is also convenient to reach more people living in different areas with various backgrounds, which help gain more objective results.

3.2 Sampling

The questionnaire survey is distributed to parents who have children aged from 1.6 to 6 years old and those who plan to have children in the future. This sample is selected because the research topic is most relevant to these two groups. The first group of parents already have or will have children enrolled in the pre-schools soon. There is no doubt that they ever thought or will need to consider choosing a school for their children. The second group of parents will have children sooner or later. This survey, to some extent, could push them to think forward on what attributes of private school they prefer for their children to be in.

In order to minimize exterior influence, such as culture, economic

conditions etc., this survey is limited to the mainland of China. Sample selection was based on availability and convenience since only people who consented to respond to the survey were selected. Candidates respond to the questionnaire in person. The minimum sample size is 100 respondents.

3.3 Questionnaire Design

Based on previous research and the situation in China, branding, convenience, academic curriculum, facilities and security are chosen as the school attributes to analyze. Some factors mentioned in previous research are combined into this survey, such as, hours of operation and class size are combined into academic curriculum to analyze. In terms of social demographic variables, it includes gender, age, residing city, education, occupation and income.

The questionnaire consists of three parts as detailed below:

Part (a) Introduction

Part (b) Influence of variables on parents' choice of private pre-schools

Part (c) Parents' social demographic background

3.4 Data Analysis

The collection data is analyzed by using SPSS. Basic descriptive statistics is used to analyze all variables. Correlation analysis is conducted to find out the relationships between school attributes and people's demographics. Besides, cross-tabulation is used in order to explore the details of the relationships. The regression analysis is to analyze how school attributes can influence the parents' motivations to send their children to private pre-schools.

CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH ANALYSIS

4.1 Research Findings

4.1.1 Target groups

The questionnaire was distributed online randomly by Wjx, which is a broadly-used online questionnaire website in China. This research managed to get 172 responses with 139 of them valid, the non-valid questionnaires were answered by people who do not have children aged from 1.6 to 6 years old and do not plan to have children in the future. For the valid responses, 79% were people who have children aged from 1.6 to 6 years old, and 21% who plan to have children in the future.

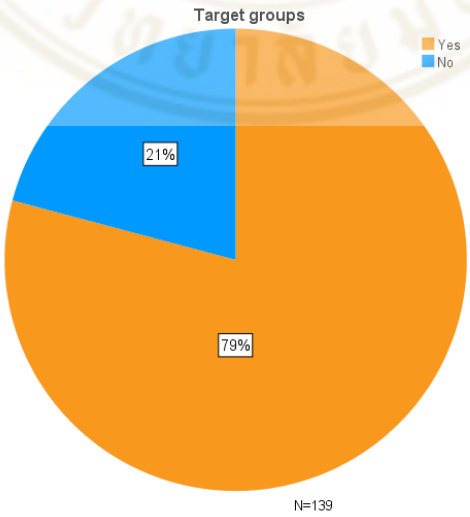

Figure 4.1 Target groups

4.1.2 Current Enrollment Situation of Private Pre-schools

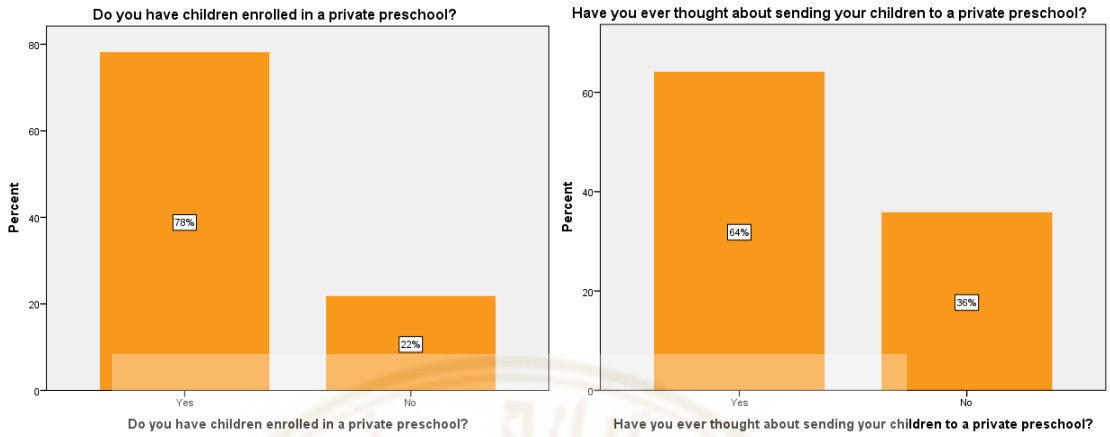

Figure 4.2 Current enrollment situation of private pre-schools

For people who have children aged from 1.6 to 6 years old, 78% of them have already enrolled their children in private pre-schools. For those who have not yet enrolled their children but plan to have children in the future, 64% of them indicated that they have thought about sending their children to private pre-schools. (For respondents who already enrolled their children in private pre-schools, they skipped the question "have you ever thought about sending your children to a private preschool. Vice versa, the respondents who plan to have children skipped the question whether they have children enrolled in a private pre-school.) The data shows that the majority of Chinese people would prefer to choose private pre-schools for their children.

4.1.3 Demographic Data

The following graphs show the demographic information of respondents. 54% of respondents were female and 46% were male with their age concentrated between 25-35 years old while attending this survey. Most of them live in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou or Shenzhen, which are seen as first-tier cities in China. More than half of the respondents obtain a bachelor's degree and work in either a public or private

company, which stands 43% and 42% respectively. The majority of respondents' income ranges between 6000-8000 RMB per month.

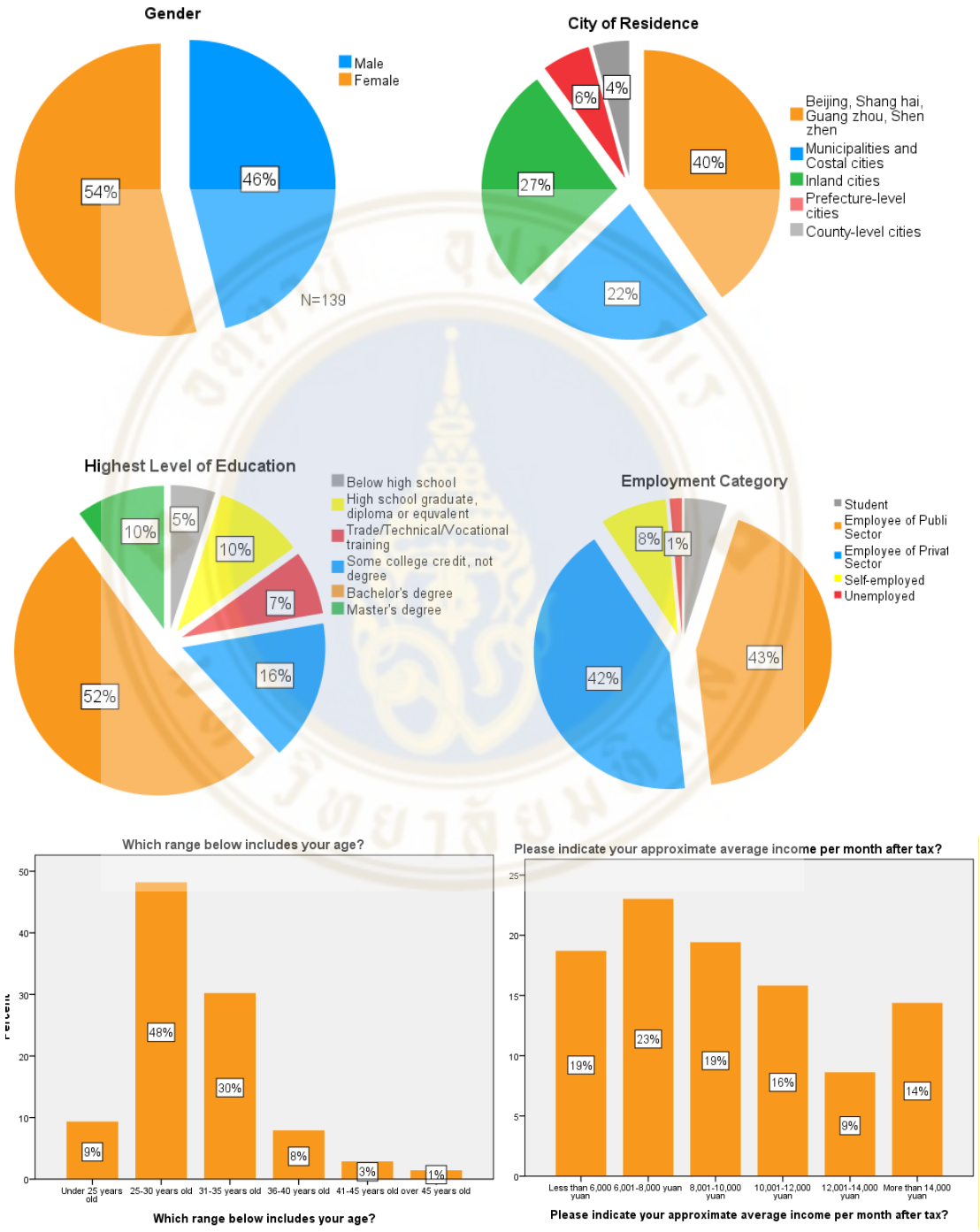

Figure 4.3 Respondents demographics

4.1.4 Motivations

Based on the previous studies and the situation in China, there are five factors included in the questionnaire that could potentially drive Chinese parents to enroll their children in private pre-schools. They are branding, academic curriculum, location, security and facility. The descriptive analysis is used to compare the average value of these factors in order to see which one is the most important.

Table 4.1 Frequency of school attributes

Statistics

		branding	academiccurriculum	location	security	facility
N	Valid	139	139	139	139	139
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.1007	3.0384	3.2029	3.2386	3.2619
Std. Deviation		.37945	.40345	.38822	.37647	.36503
Minimum		2.20	2.17	2.20	2.17	2.20
Maximum		4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

From the table above, we can see that facility is the most significant one when Chinese parents select private pre-schools, followed by security and location. After the three factors, there is a slight drop. It turns out academic curriculum is the last factor which parents care about. However, in terms of Std.Deviation, academic curriculum is the highest. It means that there is a big difference among the aspects that people choose in this factor. This result is different from when we asked people directly which factor they think is most important. As the graph shows below, most people choose academic curriculum as the priority followed by location, then it comes to security. Facility is actually the factor that turns out last.

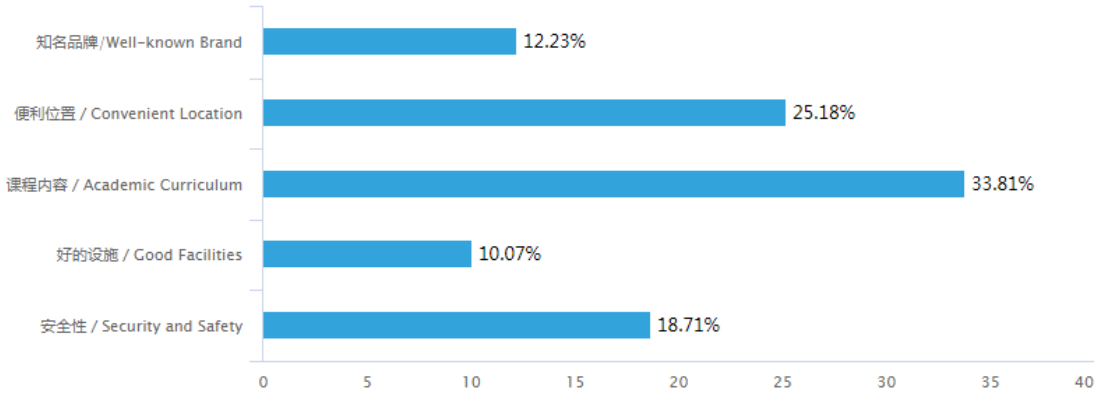

Figure 4.4 Percentage of school attributes

4.1.5 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is used to find out whether there are any relationships between school attributes and parents' different demographics. Besides, we can also see which factors of school attributes is related to the maximum price that parents can accept.

In terms of people's demographics and school attributes they valued, the tables below indicate that people's age is related to schools branding and academic curriculum, with older people caring more about the curriculum and branding of the school. There is also a relationship between people's income and schools academic curriculum, with higher income people being more concerned about the academic curriculum. For people's education and occupation, neither of them is related to any school attributes. Besides, the maximum price that people can accept does not depend on any school attributes either.

Table 4.2 Age with School Attributes

Correlations

		age	branding	academiccurriculum	location	security	facility
age	Pearson Correlation	1	.249**	.353**	.122	.081	.190*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003	.000	.154	.343	.025
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
branding	Pearson Correlation	.249**	1	.623**	.464**	.433**	.516**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
academiccurriculum	Pearson Correlation	.353**	.623**	1	.516**	.579**	.520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
location	Pearson Correlation	.122	.464**	.516**	1	.473**	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.154	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
security	Pearson Correlation	.081	.433**	.579**	.473**	1	.560**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.343	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
facility	Pearson Correlation	.190*	.516**	.520**	.457**	.560**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.3 Income with School Attributes

Correlations

		income	branding	academiccurriculum	location	security	facility
income	Pearson Correlation	1	.162	.212*	.109	.103	.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.056	.012	.203	.228	.489
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
branding	Pearson Correlation	.162	1	.623**	.464**	.433**	.516**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.056		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
academiccurriculum	Pearson Correlation	.212*	.623**	1	.516**	.579**	.520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
location	Pearson Correlation	.109	.464**	.516**	1	.473**	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.203	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
security	Pearson Correlation	.103	.433**	.579**	.473**	1	.560**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.228	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
facility	Pearson Correlation	.059	.516**	.520**	.457**	.560**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.489	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.4 Education Background with School Attributes

Correlations

		education	branding	academiccurriculum	location	security	facility
education	Pearson Correlation	1	.084	.081	.167*	.104	.101
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.327	.343	.050	.221	.237
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
branding	Pearson Correlation	.084	1	.623**	.464**	.433**	.516**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.327		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
academiccurriculum	Pearson Correlation	.081	.623**	1	.516**	.579**	.520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.343	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
location	Pearson Correlation	.167*	.464**	.516**	1	.473**	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
security	Pearson Correlation	.104	.433**	.579**	.473**	1	.560**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.221	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
facility	Pearson Correlation	.101	.516**	.520**	.457**	.560**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.237	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.5 Occupation with School Attributes

Correlations

		occupation	branding	academiccurriculum	location	security	facility
occupation	Pearson Correlation	1	-.032	-.059	-.071	-.127	-.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.704	.488	.405	.137	.986
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
branding	Pearson Correlation	-.032	1	.623**	.464**	.433**	.516**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.704		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
academiccurriculum	Pearson Correlation	-.059	.623**	1	.516**	.579**	.520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.488	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
location	Pearson Correlation	-.071	.464**	.516**	1	.473**	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.405	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
security	Pearson Correlation	-.127	.433**	.579**	.473**	1	.560**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.137	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
facility	Pearson Correlation	-.001	.516**	.520**	.457**	.560**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.986	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.6 Maximum Price Acceptance with School Attributes

Correlations

		maximumprice	branding	academiccurriculum	location	security	facility
maximumprice	Pearson Correlation	1	.064	.037	-.004	-.023	-.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.456	.666	.964	.789	.084
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
branding	Pearson Correlation	.064	1	.623**	.464**	.433**	.516**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.456		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
academiccurriculum	Pearson Correlation	.037	.623**	1	.516**	.579**	.520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.666	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
location	Pearson Correlation	-.004	.464**	.516**	1	.473**	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.964	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
security	Pearson Correlation	-.023	.433**	.579**	.473**	1	.560**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.789	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139
facility	Pearson Correlation	-.147	.516**	.520**	.457**	.560**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.084	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	139	139	139	139	139	139

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.1.6 Cross-tabulation Analysis

Cross-tabulation analysis is conducted to analyze the details of the relations between people's age with schools' branding and academic curriculum. It is also used to find out the relationship between people's income and academic curriculum. According to the data, it shows that people below 30 years old tend to agree less with English-medium pre-schools than older people. They are also somewhat less interested in play-based curriculum and after-school activities than older people.

Table 4.7 Age with English-medium Pre-schools

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.568[a]	3	.036
Likelihood Ratio	10.212	3	.017
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.328	1	.012
N of Valid Cases	139		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.70.

Crosstab

			I prefer a preschool with English medium.				
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
age	below 30 years old	Count	4	25	32	19	80
		% within age	5.0%	31.3%	40.0%	23.8%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with English medium.	100.0%	73.5%	50.8%	50.0%	57.6%
		% of Total	2.9%	18.0%	23.0%	13.7%	57.6%
	over 30 years old	Count	0	9	31	19	59
		% within age	0.0%	15.3%	52.5%	32.2%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with English medium.	0.0%	26.5%	49.2%	50.0%	42.4%
		% of Total	0.0%	6.5%	22.3%	13.7%	42.4%
Total		Count	4	34	63	38	139
		% within age	2.9%	24.5%	45.3%	27.3%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with English medium.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	2.9%	24.5%	45.3%	27.3%	100.0%

Table 4.8 Age with Play-based Pre-schools

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.208[a]	3	.011
Likelihood Ratio	11.724	3	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.354	1	.012
N of Valid Cases	139		

a. 1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.67.

Crosstab

			I prefer a play-based preschool.				
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
age	below 30 years old	Count	6	32	26	16	80
		% within age	7.5%	40.0%	32.5%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a play-based preschool.	54.5%	78.0%	53.1%	42.1%	57.6%
		% of Total	4.3%	23.0%	18.7%	11.5%	57.6%
	over 30 years old	Count	5	9	23	22	59
		% within age	8.5%	15.3%	39.0%	37.3%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a play-based preschool.	45.5%	22.0%	46.9%	57.9%	42.4%
		% of Total	3.6%	6.5%	16.5%	15.8%	42.4%
Total		Count	11	41	49	38	139
		% within age	7.9%	29.5%	35.3%	27.3%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a play-based preschool.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	7.9%	29.5%	35.3%	27.3%	100.0%

Table 4.9 Age with After-school Activities

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.419[a]	3	.002
Likelihood Ratio	15.460	3	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.940	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	139		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.97.

Crosstab

			I prefer a preschool with after-school activities.				
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
age	below 30 years old	Count	5	29	34	12	80
		% within age	6.3%	36.3%	42.5%	15.0%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with after-school activities.	71.4%	82.9%	50.0%	41.4%	57.6%
		% of Total	3.6%	20.9%	24.5%	8.6%	57.6%
	over 30 years old	Count	2	6	34	17	59
		% within age	3.4%	10.2%	57.6%	28.8%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with after-school activities.	28.6%	17.1%	50.0%	58.6%	42.4%
		% of Total	1.4%	4.3%	24.5%	12.2%	42.4%
Total		Count	7	35	68	29	139
		% within age	5.0%	25.2%	48.9%	20.9%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with after-school activities.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	5.0%	25.2%	48.9%	20.9%	100.0%

As for people's income and academic curriculum, it shows that people with high income agree more strongly with English classes offered than lower and middle income people. They also more strongly emphasize small-sized classes than the other groups of people.

Table 4.10 Income with English Classes Offered

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.219[a]	4	.037
Likelihood Ratio	10.178	4	.038
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.916	1	.009
N of Valid Cases	139		

a. 2 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.22.

Crosstab

			I prefer a preschool offering English classes.			
			Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
income	Below 8,000 RMB	Count	8	37	13	58
		% within income	13.8%	63.8%	22.4%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool offering English classes.	57.1%	46.8%	28.3%	41.7%
		% of Total	5.8%	26.6%	9.4%	41.7%
	8,001 RMB-12,000 RMB	Count	3	30	16	49
		% within income	6.1%	61.2%	32.7%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool offering English classes.	21.4%	38.0%	34.8%	35.3%
		% of Total	2.2%	21.6%	11.5%	35.3%
	Over 12,000 RMB	Count	3	12	17	32
		% within income	9.4%	37.5%	53.1%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool offering English classes.	21.4%	15.2%	37.0%	23.0%
		% of Total	2.2%	8.6%	12.2%	23.0%
Total		Count	14	79	46	139
		% within income	10.1%	56.8%	33.1%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool offering English classes.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	10.1%	56.8%	33.1%	100.0%

Table 4.11 Income with Small-sized Class

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.080[a]	6	.029
Likelihood Ratio	15.060	6	.020
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.727	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	139		

a. 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .69.

Crosstab

			I prefer a preschool with small sized classes.				
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
income	Below 8,000 RMB	Count	3	8	32	15	58
		% within income	5.2%	13.8%	55.2%	25.9%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with small sized classes.	100.0%	53.3%	46.4%	28.8%	41.7%
		% of Total	2.2%	5.8%	23.0%	10.8%	41.7%
	8,001 RMB-12,000 RMB	Count	0	4	27	18	49
		% within income	0.0%	8.2%	55.1%	36.7%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with small sized classes.	0.0%	26.7%	39.1%	34.6%	35.3%
		% of Total	0.0%	2.9%	19.4%	12.9%	35.3%
	Over 12,000 RMB	Count	0	3	10	19	32
		% within income	0.0%	9.4%	31.3%	59.4%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with small sized classes.	0.0%	20.0%	14.5%	36.5%	23.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	2.2%	7.2%	13.7%	23.0%
Total		Count	3	15	69	52	139
		% within income	2.2%	10.8%	49.6%	37.4%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with small sized classes.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	2.2%	10.8%	49.6%	37.4%	100.0%

When it comes to the relations between age and branding, we can see that younger people would not like to choose new-established pre-schools. In contrast, they prefer the pre-schools' name to be familiar to them. For people over 30 years old, they are more flexible towards new-established pre-schools.

Table 4.12 Age with New-established Pre-schools

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.695[a]	3	.005
Likelihood Ratio	13.219	3	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.324	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	139		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.70.

Crosstab

			I prefer a new established preschool.				
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
age	below 30 years old	Count	2	32	39	7	80
		% within age	2.5%	40.0%	48.8%	8.8%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a new established preschool.	50.0%	78.0%	53.4%	33.3%	57.6%
		% of Total	1.4%	23.0%	28.1%	5.0%	57.6%
	over 30 years old	Count	2	9	34	14	59
		% within age	3.4%	15.3%	57.6%	23.7%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a new established preschool.	50.0%	22.0%	46.6%	66.7%	42.4%
		% of Total	1.4%	6.5%	24.5%	10.1%	42.4%
Total		Count	4	41	73	21	139
		% within age	2.9%	29.5%	52.5%	15.1%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a new established preschool.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	2.9%	29.5%	52.5%	15.1%	100.0%

Table 4.13 Age with Familiar Pre-schools Name

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.948[a]	3	.030
Likelihood Ratio	9.342	3	.025
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	.992
N of Valid Cases	139		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .42.

Crosstab

			I prefer a preschool with a name familiar to me.				
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
age	below 30 years old	Count	1	5	52	22	80
		% within age	1.3%	6.3%	65.0%	27.5%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with a name familiar to me.	100.0%	31.3%	66.7%	50.0%	57.6%
		% of Total	0.7%	3.6%	37.4%	15.8%	57.6%
	over 30 years old	Count	0	11	26	22	59
		% within age	0.0%	18.6%	44.1%	37.3%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with a name familiar to me.	0.0%	68.8%	33.3%	50.0%	42.4%
		% of Total	0.0%	7.9%	18.7%	15.8%	42.4%
Total		Count	1	16	78	44	139
		% within age	0.7%	11.5%	56.1%	31.7%	100.0%
		% within I prefer a preschool with a name familiar to me.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.7%	11.5%	56.1%	31.7%	100.0%

4.1.7 Regression Analysis

The regression analysis is used to find out how school attributes can influence the parents' motivations to send their children to private pre-schools. According to the tables shown below, for people who have already enrolled their children in private pre-schools, their decision depends on the school's branding and security. It shows a strong negative relationship between branding and children enrollment, implying that branding is less of a concern for people who already have children in a preschool. It also indicates a positive relationship with security, meaning that people with children in a pre-school are more concerned about security than others. However, for people who do not have children in private pre-schools but have thought about sending them, school attributes do not have a significant impact on their decisions.

Table 4.14 School Attributes with Children Enrollment in Private Pre-schools

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	99.055[a]	.138	.213

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	branding	-.574	.198	8.449	1	.004	.563
	academiccurriculum	-.149	.185	.647	1	.421	.862
	location	.009	.182	.002	1	.962	1.009
	security	.336	.167	4.027	1	.045	1.399
	facility	-.050	.178	.078	1	.780	.952
	Constant	4.458	2.653	2.823	1	.093	86.342

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: branding, academiccurriculum, location, security, facility.

Table 4.15 School Attributes with Willingness to Enroll Children in Private Pre-schools

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	52.568[a]	.269	.369

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 6 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	branding	-.461	.326	2.005	1	.157	.631
	academiccurriculum	-.186	.184	1.028	1	.311	.830
	location	.080	.195	.170	1	.680	1.084
	security	-.301	.197	2.343	1	.126	.740
	facility	-.064	.213	.090	1	.764	.938
	Constant	14.602	5.274	7.666	1	.006	2194578.884

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: branding, academiccurriculum, location, security, facility.

4.2 Discussion

According to the data, it shows that there is a promising market for private pre-schools in China, since most people have either already enrolled their children in or thought about sending them to private pre-schools. Besides, only around 5% of people disagree with sending their children to private pre-schools. Other respondents all prefer private pre-schools as long as it can reach their expectations.

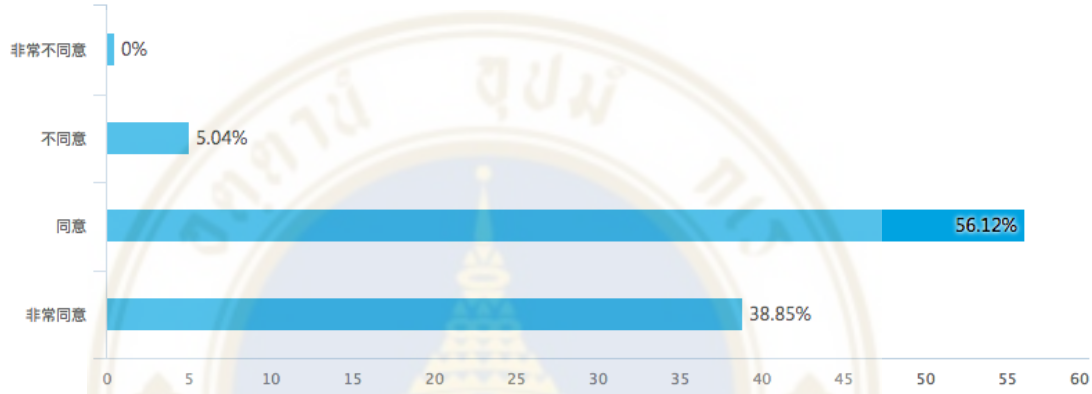

Figure 4.5 Intention to send children to private pre-schools

Besides, based on Figure 6, this research is consistent with some previous research which indicated that parents put schools' academic performance as priority followed by convenient location. Moreover, Chinese people also care about the school's security, which turns as the third in the ranking.

In addition, this research has also shown that there is a relationship between parents' demographics and their choice of private pre-schools. Same as what previous research found, people with higher income tend to care more about schools' academic curriculum. They focus more on their children's language skills and on whether their children have enough attention due to the class size. However, in contrast to Malaysia, Chinese parents with high income prefer private schools offering English classes rather than English as the main instruction language.

Besides, the data also indicates that people's age have an impact on the value

they assign to the academic curriculum. It shows that people who are below 30 years of age appreciate a bit less of play-based private pre-schools with English as instruction language, as well as after-school activities, compared to the over 30 years age group. However, this research did not find the relations between people's educational background and the school attributes they care for.

Moreover, it has also shown a relationship between people' age and schools' branding. Younger people are more unlikely to choose a newly-established private pre-school. They prefer a school's name they feel familiar with. In contrast, people who are over 30 years old are more open-minded to whether the school is new or not.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of Findings

According to this research, we can see that Chinese people also emphasize academic curriculum and location as people do in other countries. The difference is that Chinese people care more about the private pre-schools' security. Therefore, academic curriculum, location and security are the three main factors of private pre-schools that Chinese people care about. Nevertheless, the maximum price that people can accept is not related to any school attributes.

In addition, the data also found relations between people demographic and school attributes. People's ages are related to schools' branding and academic curriculum, and people's income is also related to schools' academic curriculum. As people's age increases, Chinese parents are more open-minded to whether the private preschool is new or not. They also more prefer their children to be in a play-based preschool which offer after-school activities as well. For people with higher income, they show stronger preference to English classes and small-sized classes than relatively lower and middle income people. In this research, it does not show the relationship between Chinese people's educational background and their occupation with the school attributes they care about.

5.2 Recommendations for the Development of Private Pre-schools in China

According to this research, academic curriculum is a significant factor for Chinese parents. Therefore, private pre-schools in China should put more effort on their curriculum design in order to make sure it can meet Chinese parents' expectations and the Chinese market. In terms of the findings, learning through playing is a possible concept suitable for the Chinese market right now. Since it not only meets the Chinese parents' preference for play-based pre-schools but it can also show them and future parents their children's academic progress. Besides, English classes should definitely be included into curriculum, and it would be better to have small-sized classes.

In addition, security is also very important for Chinese parents to choose a private preschool. This aspect could be both invisible and visible. The invisible parts include factors such as teachers' class management, knowledge to emergency situations etc., it is hard to present to the parents and attract them. However, in terms of the visible parts, such as CCTV installed, security guards, classrooms design for security etc., these could be shown to parents while introducing the school.

Last but not least, location is also a significant factor for Chinese people to choose private pre-schools. Therefore, it would be the best to have more campuses if it's well-funded. If not, the location where can reach as many residence areas as possible should be considered.

5.3 Limitations of Research

The limitation of this research is that the scope is still limited, which is unable to reach enough people with larger demographic differences. For example, the respondents' educational background is concentrated in the bachelors' degree level. Few

respondents got their master's degree and none of them have a PhD. Besides, the survey also excludes people who do not have children aged from 1.6 to 6 years and no plan to have children in the future, but they might have children already graduated from private pre-schools.

5.4 Future Research

The research in the future could be conducted more specifically. For example, it can focus on municipalities and coastal cities or in inland cities, since these cities probably have different situations from first-tire cities which are Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. Besides, comparing with the competitive market in first-tier cities, these cities have broader markets to develop. In addition, it could also be conducted by doing in-depth interviews in order to find out the reasons behind people's choices and whether there are any other aspects not covered in this questionnaire that can influence Chinese people to choose private pre-schools for their children.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

私立学前教育调查 / Consumer Behavior on Private Preschool Selection

您好，我们正在进行一项关于父母为孩子选择私立学前教育的调查。非常感谢您用几分钟时间帮忙填写这份问卷。

I am currently conducting a research regarding customers' motivations to choose a particular private preschool for their children. Please answer the questions as followed. This questionnaire should only take 5-10 minutes.

[第 1 页/共 7 页]

1.您是否有年龄在一岁半到六岁的孩子？ / Do you have children aged from 1.6 to 6 years old?*

- ☐ 有 / Yes (跳转到第 3 题)
- ☐ 没有/No

[第 2 页/共 7 页]

2.您是否计划未来要小孩？ / Do you plan to have children in the future?*

- ☐ 有 / Yes (跳转到第 4 题)
- ☐ 没有/No (结束作答)

[第 3 页/共 7 页]

3.您是否有孩子入读私立幼儿园？ / Do you have children enrolled in a private preschool?*

- ☐ 有 / Yes (跳转到第 5 题)
- ☐ 没有/No

4.您是否曾经考虑将孩子送读私立幼儿园？ / Have you ever thought about sending your children to a private preschool?*

- ☐ 有 / Yes
- ☐ 没有/No

5.请选择您在多大程度上同意以下选项。 / Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.*

	非常不同意 Strongly disagree	不同意 Disagree	同意 Agree	非常同意 Strongly agree
我愿意选择新成立的学校。 / I prefer a new established preschool.				
我愿意选择名字听起来熟悉的学校。 / I prefer a preschool with a name				

familiar to me.

我愿意选择在国内有分校

的学校。 / I prefer a

preschool with branches in

China.

我愿意选择在海外有分校

的学校。 / I prefer a

preschool with branches in

other countries.

我愿意选择网上信息丰富

的学校。 / I prefer a

preschool with plenty of

information online.

6.请选择您在多大程度上同意以下选项。 / Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.*

我愿意选择全英语教学的学校。 / I prefer a

preschool with English medium.

我愿意选择提供英语课程（非全英教学）

的学校。 / I prefer a preschool offering

English classes.

我愿意选择学习为主的学校。 / I prefer an

academic-based preschool.

我愿意选择游戏为主的学校。/I prefer a

play-based preschool.

我喜欢学校提供放学后的额外课程。/I

prefer a preschool with after-school activities.

我喜欢学校为小班教学。 / I prefer a

preschool with small sized classes.

7.请选择您在多大程度上同意以下选项。 / Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.*

我愿意选择离家近的学校。 / I prefer a

preschool near home.

我愿意选择离我工作单位近的学校。 / I

prefer a preschool near my workplace.

我愿意选择离我配偶工作单位近的学校。

/ I prefer a preschool near my spouse's

workplace.

我愿意选择提供校车的学校。/I prefer a

preschool offering school bus services.

我愿意选择便于搭乘公共交通的学校。 / I

prefer a preschool easily accessed to by public

transportation.

8.请选择您在多大程度上同意以下选项。 / Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.*

我愿意选择没有楼梯的学校。 / I prefer a

preschool without staircase.

我愿意选择安装监控的学校。 / I prefer a

preschool with CCTV installed.

我愿意选择使用门卡的学校。 / I prefer a preschool using a key-card system.

我愿意选择登记固定接送孩子者姓名的学校。/I prefer a preschool which registers the people who pick up children.

我愿意选择在校时间校门上锁的学校。 / I prefer a preschool with a locked gate during school hours.

我愿意选择有保安的学校。 / I prefer a preschool with security guards.

9.请选择您在多大程度上同意以下选项。 / Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.*

我愿意选择接近自然的学校。 / I prefer a preschool with access to nature.

我喜欢学校有大的操场。 / I prefer a preschool with a big playground.

我喜欢学校有不同活动区域划分。 / I prefer a preschool with space divided into separate activity areas.

我愿意选择有游泳池的学校。/I prefer a preschool with a swimming pool.

我愿意选择有不同活动器械的学校。 / I

prefer a preschool with various playing

facilities.

10.您认为影响您选择某所私立幼儿园最重要的因素是什么。 / Please indicate which factor is the most important for you to choose a private preschool.*

- 知名品牌/Well-known Brand
- 便利位置 / Convenient Location
- 课程内容 / Academic Curriculum
- 好的设施 / Good Facilities
- 安全性 / Security and Safety

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11.如果一所私立幼儿园能满足我的需求，我会将孩子送入私立幼儿园。/If a private preschool reaches my expectations, I would likely enroll my children.*

- 非常不同意
- 不同意
- 同意
- 非常同意

12.请选择您最多可以承受的学费范围。/Please indicate the maxmum price range you can accept for a private preschool fee for your child.*

- 每年少于 5 万元/Less than 50,000 yuan per year
- 每年 5 到 10 万元之间/50,001-100,000 yuan per year
- 每年 10 到 15 万元之间/100,001-150,000 yuan per year
- 每年 15 到 20 万元之间/150,001-200,000 yuan per year
- 每年 20 万元以上/More than 200,000 yuan per year

13.请选择您的性别。/Please indicate your gender.*

- 男 / Male
- 女/Female

14.请选择您的年龄范围。/Which range below includes your age?*

- 25 岁以下 / Under 25 years old
- 25 到 30 岁 / 25-30 years old

- [ ] 31 岁到 35 岁 / 31-35 years old
- [ ] 36 岁到 40 岁 / 36-40 years old
- [ ] 41 岁到 45 岁 / 41-45 years old
- [ ] 45 岁以上 / over 45 years old

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15.请选择您主要居住的城市划分。/Please indicate your city of residence?*

- [ ] 北京、上海、广州、深圳/Beijing, Shang hai, Guang zhou, Shen zhen
- [ ] 直辖市及沿海城市/Municipalities and Costal cities
- [ ] 内陆城市/ Inland cities
- [ ] 地级市/Prefecture-level cities
- [ ] 县级市/County-level cities

16.请选择您的最高学历背景？ / What is the highest level of education you have completed?*

- [ ] 高中以下 / Below high school
- [ ] 高中或同等级学历 / High school graduate, diploma or equvalent
- [ ] 职业技术学校 / Trade/Technical/Vocational training
- [ ] 大学肄业 / Some college credit, not degree
- [ ] 学士学位 / Bachelor's degree
- [ ] 硕士学位 / Master's degree
- [ ] 博士学位 / Doctorate degree

17.请选择您的职业？ / Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?*

- [ ] 学生 / Student
- [ ] 国有企业员工及公务员 / Employee of Public Sector
- [ ] 私有企业员工 / Employee of Private Sectoral training
- [ ] 自由职业者 / Self-employed
- [ ] 暂无职业/Unemployed
- [ ] 退休/Retired

18.请选择您的月工资范围（税后）？ / Please indicate your approximate average income per month after tax?*

- [ ] 6000 元以下 / Less than 6,000 yuan
- [ ] 6000 到 8000 元之间 / 6,001-8,000 yuan

- 8000 到 1,0000 元之间 / 8,001-10,000 yuan
- 1,0000 到 1,2000 元之间 / 10,001-12,000 yuan
- 1,2000 到 1,4000 元之间 / 12,001-14,000 yuan
- 1,4000 元以上 / More than 14,000 yuan

感谢您抽出时间完成这份调查。您所提供的宝贵信息将贡献于中国私立早教行业的研究。

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. I truly value the information you have provided. Your responses will contribute to private preschool research in China.