Innovation in the Education Export Industry

James Lonergan

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Unitec New Zealand, 2008.
Abstract

Innovation in the Education Export Industry

Most secondary schools in New Zealand have experienced an average drop of 40% in international student numbers since 2003. This multi-case study looks at three schools that have gone against the trend and had an increase in international student numbers during this period. The three schools involved in this multi-case study all introduced the Cambridge International Examination (CIE) qualification pathway from 2002. This study suggests that Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) push-pull model of international students studying at tertiary institutions could be applied to international students studying in New Zealand secondary schools. The study goes on to also suggest that the CIE could be an innovation that gives schools a competitive advantage in attracting international student, particularly students from Asian countries.
Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank all the schools and participants, who agreed to take part in this research study. In particular to the principal and Board of trustees of my school who have supported me throughout this time.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Senior lecturer, K. Asoka Gunaratne and Course director Dr. Simon Peel for their on-going support, advice and encouragement. You kept me going when times were difficult.

I would like to particularly thank my wife, Jackie, for her understanding, support and patience throughout this master’s degree.

Finally I would like to thank my parents. To my mother who passed away just prior to me starting this masters programme. She encouraged me to get back into study after over twenty years away from university. To my father who always inspired me to seek higher education and who passed away at the start of this dissertation.

Jim Lonergan

February 2008
Appendix A: Declaration

Name of candidate: James Lonergan

This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project entitled "Innovation in the Education Export Industry" is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

CANDIDATE’S DECLARATION

I confirm that:

- This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: 2007.763

Candidate Signature: ............................................... Date: 21/02/08

Student number: .................................
Table of Contents

Innovation in the Education Export Industry ................................................................. i
Abstract........................................................................................................................ ii
Acknowledgements....................................................................................................... iii
Table of Contents......................................................................................................... v
CHAPTER ONE........................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................... 1
  1.2 Chapter Outline ................................................................................................... 1
  1.3 Tomorrow’s Schools ......................................................................................... 2
  1.4 NCEA ................................................................................................................ 2
  1.5 Product Life Cycle ............................................................................................ 3
  1.6 Competitive Advantage in educational markets ................................................ 3
  1.7 Rationale ........................................................................................................... 4
  1.8 Aim .................................................................................................................... 5
  1.9 Research Objectives ......................................................................................... 5
  1.10 Hypotheses ..................................................................................................... 6
  1.11 Research Question ......................................................................................... 6
CHAPTER TWO.......................................................................................................... 7
  2.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 7
  2.2 Theoretical framework ..................................................................................... 7
  2.3 A History of International Students ................................................................ 8
  2.4 What are the main reasons for students choosing a country and then a particular
      destination within that country? ........................................................................ 9
  2.5 Chinese learning styles ................................................................................... 10
  2.6 So why did international students originally choose New Zealand as a destination?.. 12
  2.7 Decision Makers ............................................................................................ 13
  2.8 Problems in New Zealand ............................................................................... 13
  2.9 Competitive advantage .................................................................................. 15
CHAPTER THREE..................................................................................................... 17
  3.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 17
  3.2 Types of Research............................................................................................ 17
3.3 Case studies
Case study research design
3.4 Types of Case Studies
3.5 Triangulation
3.6 Reliability and validity
Construct Validity
Internal Validity
External Validity
Reliability
3.7 Research methods
Choosing the schools
3.8 Sampling
3.9 Interviews
3.10 Data Analysis
3.11 Ethics Issues
CHAPTER FOUR
Research Findings and Analysis
4.1 INTRODUCTION
4.2 Factual Information
4.2.1 Students
4.2.2 International student coordinators
4.3 Data Analysis – Obtaining key themes
4.4 Predominant themes obtained from student interviews
4.5 Data supporting these particular student themes
4.5.1 Theme 1) The students chose their particular school because of its academic reputation
4.5.2 Theme 2) Students and Parents were the major decision makers in which school was chosen.
“We why these students view the CIE as the premier qualification in New Zealand?”
4.5.3 Theme 3) The pathway they were studying was more challenging than the other pathway offered
4.5.4 Theme 4) The students all saw the CIE as the premier qualification when this qualification was compared to the NCEA
4.5.5 Theme 4) It was important to study an internationally recognised qualification
4.5.6 Theme 6) this qualification would allow access to most overseas universities
.................................................................................................................................35
4.5.7 Theme 7) The similarity between the CIE the pathway available back home
.................................................................................................................................36
4.5.8 Theme 8) Their school was seen as special because of the academic environment and the fact the school offered CIE..................37
4.5.9 Theme 9) The students liked an end of year exam that produced a mark, but there was also support for some internal assessment..................37
4.6 Predominate Themes obtained from the international Student Coordinators........38
4.7 Data supporting these particular international student coordinator themes. ........38
4.7.1 Theme 1) Their school is seen as academically strong..................38
4.7.2 Theme 2) Their school offers the CIE pathway which is recognised as a quality qualification that will get students into top overseas universities.....39
4.8 Document Analysis.........................................................................................40
4.9 Analysis within schools................................................................................40
4.10 Similarities and differences within Ethnic groups........................................41
4.11 Linking the themes to theory........................................................................41
4.12 Linking back to Hypotheses........................................................................42
4.13 Limitations of the research...........................................................................42
CHAPTER FIVE .............................................................................................................44
Summary and Conclusions.....................................................................................44
5.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................44
5.2 Summary of the results....................................................................................45
5.3 Key findings.......................................................................................................46
5.4 The significance of this research....................................................................46
5.4 Generalisations.................................................................................................47
5.5 Recommendations............................................................................................47
5.6 Additional research..........................................................................................48
5.7 Summary...........................................................................................................49
References ..............................................................................................................50
Appendices ..............................................................................................................57
Appendix 1 .............................................................................................................57
Appendix 2 .............................................................................................................58
Appendix 3 .............................................................................................................59
Data from schools offering CIE in New Zealand ..................................................60
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The number of international fee-paying students attending New Zealand secondary schools dropped by forty percent between 2002 and 2005. During this period, three schools that introduced the international Cambridge qualification pathway into their schools in 2002 experienced an increase in numbers of international fee-paying students in excess of twenty percent.

This research project sets out to investigate whether an innovation introduced into three New Zealand secondary schools in 2002 has assisted these schools in increasing their international fee-paying student numbers, particularly those from Asian countries. The innovation is the Cambridge International Examination qualification pathway, the CIE.

This innovation may be the way of to rejuvenate this declining education export market in other New Zealand secondary schools offering the CIE.

The research project is a multi-case study of three secondary schools that have gone against the trend and had an increase in international students numbers, in particular students from Asian countries. It investigates whether the introduction of the CIE has given these schools a competitive advantage in attracting international Asian students and whether other schools offering the CIE can also use this qualification as a marketing tool to attract further international Asian students to their schools.

1.2 Chapter Outline

The chapter starts with an introduction to the two most significant changes that have occurred in New Zealand secondary school education in the last 20 years. These are “tomorrow’s schools” and the National Certificate in Educational Achievement, the NCEA. The first one led to the rapid growth of this education export industry in the 1990s; the second has arguably assisted with the decline of this industry since 2002. This is followed by a review of the universal Product Life Cycle. It then explains one method of rejuvenating
a market in decline. The chapter continues with an explanation of one way of establishing a competitive advantage in educational markets. Finally the chapter details the rationale, aims, objectives and hypotheses of this research study.

1.3 Tomorrow’s Schools

In secondary schools, the education export industry started to grow rapidly in the early 1990s after the New Zealand government introduced “Tomorrow's Schools” in 1989 (Thrupp, M. 2001). The centralised bureaucratic system that had been present was largely removed and control was devolved to individual schools. An elected Board of Trustees, or BOT, controlled each school. Schools became self-managing. To assist with finances a majority of secondary schools took on international fee-paying students (from now on referred to as international students) in the 1990s. international students paid as much as $18,000 per year with an average closer to $10,000 per year. Consequently, international students quickly became the main secondary source of income for secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2001a).

There was a 500% increase in international secondary school student numbers between 1993 and 2001 (Ministry of Education, 2001b). The growth of offshore approvals peaked in 2002 and has been dropping since. A drop of 40% occurred in the secondary sector between 2003 and 2005. The tuition fees, excluding GST, collected by schools between 2003 and 2005 dropped from $135 million in 2003 to $96 million in 2005 (Ministry of Education, 2006). The ministry figures show that in excess of ninety percent of these students came from Asian countries.

1.4 NCEA

The second change was a new secondary school qualifications framework which was introduced by the New Zealand government in 2001 and fully implemented by 2004. It introduced a new “standards-based” assessment method with school subjects broken up into a series of achievement standards that could be internally or externally assessed (Fancy, 1999). These standards could be passed, passed with merit, passed with excellence or not achieved. The difficulty in setting a consistent standard in academic subjects caused major concern and there was considerable debate over the lack of moderation between schools (De Boni, 2002). The new system was seen as having a flawed methodology, particularly for
traditional school subjects. It was seen as lowering educational standards and watering down the high quality educational system that had previously been in place (Morris, 2001).

1.5 Product Life Cycle

The rapid growth in the 1990s followed by the decline from 2003, of international student numbers at New Zealand secondary schools, can be discussed in terms of the universal product life cycle of any product or service. All products go through four main stages; introduction, growth, maturity and decline (Bolton and Thompson, 2000). The rapid growth of international secondary school numbers occurred because New Zealand was promoted as an English speaking country; it had a low dollar and a quality education system (Thrupp, M. 2001). Movement up the life cycle curve is never guaranteed and many products or businesses fall off the curve and effectively die early. Decline is accelerated when customers’ mounting expectation for quality and service decreases (Allen, 1999).

There is a belief that the quality of New Zealand’s secondary school education has declined with the introduction of the NCEA qualification in New Zealand secondary schools (Morris, 2001). Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) found the main factor in attracting international Asian students to a particular country is the quality of its qualifications.

The key in any business is to know your customers and give them what they want. Bolton and Thompson (2000) maintain that some products or services effectively go on forever due to being renewed by innovation. The introduction of the International Cambridge Examinations could well be the innovation that renews or rejuvenates the New Zealand secondary school international market.

1.6 Competitive Advantage in educational markets

Mazzarol and Soutar (1999) detail two distinctive competencies for generating competitive advantage for educational institutions within educational markets. These are: brand identity and coalition formation. The CIE is known world-wide and is a brand that uses the Cambridge University name to give an institution an image of quality and standing. CIE would also allow similar schools to form a coalition that could share external marketing costs. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), highlight the primary benefits of coalitions as: the ability to gain economies of scale, access to
distribution channels and local knowledge, reduction of risk, and an ability to shape competition. At present those schools offering CIE in New Zealand are all members of the Association of Cambridge Schools in New Zealand, the ACSNZ. The ACSNZ could coordinate a marketing strategy that promotes this quality product in Asian countries.

1.7 Rationale

The numbers of international students attending New Zealand secondary schools rapidly increased in the 1990s, peaked in 2002, and has been decreasing ever since. This suggests the life cycle of the market has passed through the growth and maturity stages and is now in decline.

Three Auckland schools, however, have gone against this trend and since 2002 have increased the number of international students attending their schools. The numbers of international students at each of these schools has increased by at least twenty percent between 2002 and 2005.

This increase in numbers of international students at each of these schools coincides with these schools introducing a new international qualification pathway, namely the CIE.

Is it the introduction of this innovation, the CIE qualification that has led to this increase in numbers?

Research into international students in the tertiary sector suggests students choose a particular institution because of a number of pull factors. The major pull factors are institutional reputation and international recognition of their qualification (Mazzarol and Soutar, 1999; 2002). There is very little current research on similar pull factors in the secondary school sector. There is no research on international secondary school students studying a rival qualification to the national qualification. This study investigates international students studying an alternative pathway and using the major pull factors obtained from Mazzarol and Soutar’s findings with tertiary students. It hypothesizes that Mazzarol and Soutar’s pull factors can be extended to international student decision-making within the secondary school sector.

This research investigates a group of students studying an alternative international qualification at three New Zealand secondary schools. It is restricted to international Asian students, as Asians make up over 90% of international secondary school students studying
in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2006). The research carried out by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), involved exclusively Asian students. This project seeks to identify whether international Asian students studying the CIE at three Auckland schools have chosen to study at these schools primarily because they offer the CIE qualification.

The information gained from this research could be used by the ACSNZ to prepare a marketing plan that promotes all New Zealand schools offering the CIE. Such a promotion should see all of these schools increase their international Asian student numbers and consequently improve their financial bottom line.

1.8 Aim

This project is a phenomenological investigation of international Asian students studying the CIE at three Auckland secondary schools. Against the national trend, these three schools have all experienced an increase in international student numbers attending their respective schools. This investigation will attempt to explore whether the fact that the school offers the CIE is the key pull factor for these students choosing to study at this school. Should this be the case the ACSNZ could market the CIE qualification as a way of attracting international Asian students to New Zealand. It will also allow those schools currently offering the CIE to form a strategic marketing alliance to attract more international students to their schools.

In particular, the project will investigate whether the introduction of the CIE is an innovation that can attract international Asian students into an ever decreasing New Zealand secondary school export education market.

1.9 Research Objectives

1) Why have international Asian students studying CIE at a New Zealand school, chosen this particular school to study at?
2) How do these students view the CIE compared to the NCEA which is the major qualification pathway offered in New Zealand secondary schools?
3) How do these students view the international creditability of the CIE?
4) Is there any similarity between the qualification system these students have experienced in their home country and the CIE qualification?
5) Are the views on CIE consistent across different Asian nationalities?
1.10 **Hypotheses**

1) International Asian students studying the CIE have chosen this particular school primarily because it offers the CIE qualification.
2) These students see the CIE as the premier qualification offered in New Zealand secondary schools.
3) These students see the CIE as a pathway that will allow them access to universities throughout the world.
4) The qualification is similar to the qualification system in their home country.
5) The opinions of the international Asian students studying CIE is independent of their nationality.

1.11 **Research Question**

Does the CIE give a New Zealand secondary school a competitive advantage in attracting international Asian students?
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the literature from both New Zealand and overseas that is relevant to international student reasons for choosing particular countries and educational institutions. The chapter begins with the theoretical framework that was developed during this research study. A brief history of international students and details of the current and future global market is followed by an investigation of the major reasons tertiary students have chosen a particular country and a particular institution within that country. A look at the major learning styles of the major international student market, the Chinese, follows. The situation in the New Zealand market over the last five years is investigated next, followed by a section on who are the decision makers when it comes to international student destinations. A review of concerns with the new secondary school qualification pathway, the NCEA follows. The chapter finishes with definitions of competitive advantage and ways of obtaining competitive advantage in educational institutions.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Yin (2003) maintains that qualitative studies are best grounded in current theory as an established model gives greater reliability. The purpose of theory is to explain and predict phenomena (Ghauri et al, 1982). Collis and Hussey, (2003) stipulate that a theoretical framework is a series of models and theories obtained from searching the relevant literature. They concur that in phenomenological studies the theoretical framework may be less clear than in a positivistic study.

In this study the literature suggests a number of models have been developed with respect to the decision-making process involved in international students choosing a particular institution. The key model that is quoted in many articles is the push-pull model developed by Mazzarol and Soutar (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). The international students involved in these researchers’ studies were studying at tertiary institutions and came from Asian countries. These researcher’s push-pull model concludes that the major reason international tertiary students choose a particular institution was that it offers quality qualifications.
This push-pull theory found in the literature has led to the research objectives of this study. These research objectives have been framed into a series of propositions that are investigated through a series of in-depth interviews (appendix 1). Collis and Hussey, (2003) maintain that in phenomenological studies the questions asked should involve “how” and “why” questions and that the researcher should avoid words like “cause” and “relationship” which are appropriate for positivistic studies. This framework uses a series of in-depth interviews to obtain the required data. The analysis of these interviews leads to a modified theory that is particularly important for schools offering the CIE. Such a theory suggests that the offer of a rival internationally recognised quality qualification will give a school a competitive advantage in attracting international Asian students. This study specifically looks at international Asian secondary students studying the CIE at three New Zealand secondary schools.

The literature details reasons why international Asian students originally chose New Zealand as a destination. It goes on to explain the reasons given for the drop in international student numbers over the past few years. In particular, it highlights the concerns over the quality of the NCEA. Such concerns regarding the NCEA open the door to a rival international qualification, the CIE, attracting international Asian students back into New Zealand. Will schools offering a recognised international qualification have an increased probability of attracting international students to their schools? This framework suggests that schools offering a quality qualification have more chance of attracting international students to their school. The CIE is such a qualification. Those secondary schools offering the CIE should have a competitive advantage in attracting international Asian students.

### 2.3 A History of International Students

In 2003 there were over two million international students studying at overseas educational institutions. This market is forecast to increase to 7.6 million by 2025 (Böhm, 2005). Böhm’s research predicts that Asia will continue to be the dominant customer with 70% of overseas students coming from Asia, most significantly from China, with India becoming a future emerging market.

Fee-paying international students were relatively rare before the Second World War. Subsequently, growth rates have fluctuated with significant increases in the 1960s, 1970s and again in the late 1990s. Growth was driven by limited access to higher education, particularly in African and Asian countries. Students from these less developed countries studied overseas in order to increase both their economic and social status by obtaining a
western degree (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). The English speaking countries, in particular Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, USA and to a smaller extent New Zealand, have attracted the largest population of international students (Mazzarol, 1998; Binssardi & Ekwulugo; 2003). Most of the research literature also originates from these countries. A significant amount of the research has been undertaken in Australian tertiary institutions. Baker et al., (1996), surveyed a number of university graduates and found the most significant factors attracting international students to Australia were the high quality of institutions, quality of courses, good reputation of courses in the field, and the potential for improved job prospects when returning home. Research involving international students in secondary schools is far less common.

2.4 What are the main reasons for students choosing a country and then a particular destination within that country?

The over-riding theme from all the literature suggests that international students predominantly choose educational institutions that they see as quality institutions and ones that offer qualifications that are recognised throughout the world.

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) carried out research studies in several Asian countries, (China, India, Indonesia and Taiwan) and developed a push-pull model for international education flows.

The push factors are generated by social and economic forces within the home country with a key driver having been a lack of access to quality higher education within that home country.

They found six main pull factors that attracted the students first to a particular country and secondly to a particular institution. These were; knowledge and awareness of the host country (this involved four areas: ease of obtaining information on this country, knowledge of this country, the quality of education and the recognition of the institution’s qualifications elsewhere); personal recommendations: cost issues (these included financial and social); the environment; geographic proximity to their home country and social links (this included presence of family and friends).
The researchers concluded that all factors had an influence on the student's choice but the following four factors were of most importance; the reputation for quality; expertise and quality of the teaching staff; the willingness to recognise the student’s previous qualifications and the recognition of the institution’s qualifications in their own country.

Mazzarol and Soutar (1999) had earlier developed a model for sustainable competitive advantage for attracting international students to educational institutions. They defined the core competencies required as having a strong reputation for quality, financial strength and a broad range of courses. Joseph and Joseph (2000) investigating Indonesian students in Australian tertiary institutions, Binssardi and Ekwulugo (2003) reviewing international students in UK universities and Russel (2005) researching international students in UK tertiary institutions also concluded that the quality of the institution is the most important factor in attracting international students.

Using Mazzarol and Soutar’s (2002) study along with numerous other international studies, Cubillo, Sanchez and Cervino (2006) developed a hypothetical model of student choice being dependent on five factors. These were: personal reasons, the effect of the country image, influence of the city image, institution image and the evaluation of the programme of study. Reinforcing the studies above, the researchers believed the last two factors were the most important. The researchers found that in general all Asian students attached importance to similar factors, although minor differences did occur between different ethnic groups. Chinese students made up the largest percentage of international Asian students.

### 2.5 Chinese learning styles

We have seen that a key driver in international students travelling to western countries is to gain a quality qualification from a quality institution. international Asian students, however, struggle with the more unstructured learning situation and the broad assignments they experience at western institutions. The different assessment expectations can cause learning difficulties for international Asian students studying in the western environment (McCallum, 2004). Littrell (2005) described a distinctive Chinese learning style characterized by the Confucian culture experienced in greater China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Vietnam.

Chan (1999) maintains that there is a definite Chinese learning style. She concludes that Chinese students prefer more didactic teaching compared to the more dialogic style common in western schools and tertiary institutions. They prefer to have quiet and
controlled classrooms with limited questions and discussions. Chan (1999) also concludes that Chinese students prefer written examination assessments. Nield (2004) in his paper “Questioning the Myth of the Chinese Learner” used qualitative methods to investigate the learning and teaching preferences of 25 Hong Kong distance learners at Sheffield Hallam University in the United Kingdom. His literature review and research backed up Chan’s findings that Chinese students prefer passive learning; however, his research contradicted his literature findings that Chinese students have a preference for examinations. His case study found that his students disliked examinations and had a preference for group projects. Nield’s (2004) result is contrary to much of the other research and may be due to the fact his case study involved distance learning and not students in a normal classroom setting.

Numerous other articles highlight the learning difficulties experienced by international Asian students, in particular, Chinese students, studying in western countries. Ryan and Hellmundt (2003) note these students find difficulty with both the teaching methods and assessment practices common in Australian universities. Coortazzi and Jin (1997) also found expectation differences between British and international students studying at British universities. In particular they found that the international students saw the lecturer’s role as one of an authority or expert, whereas domestic students saw the lecturer as a facilitator and organiser. These researchers go on to conclude that these differing cultural experiences could lead to confusion and poor learning for Asian students. Zhang, Sillitoe and Webb (2003) studied international students at Victoria University in Melbourne. They noted that Chinese students found it very difficult to speak freely and make contributions in the classroom, as this was not what they had experienced back home in China. These students also preferred a traditional teaching format, dominated by lecturing from the teacher. Li (2004) studied 40 students at language schools in Auckland between December 2002 and March 2003 and concluded that the interactive teaching methods adopted by New Zealand teachers are culturally incompatible with Asian students’ learning conceptualisations. Holmes (2004) researched ethnic Chinese students at a New Zealand university and found that the students were not prepared for the dialogic teaching style of the university.

Ballingall and Smith (2004) reviewed the New Zealand literature on international students. This project was administered by the Ministry of Education and funded by the Education Export Levy. The first part of the review consists of a literature review of articles on cultural differences in teaching and learning in the classroom. The authors also concluded that new immigrant or international Asian students in general prefer a didactic teaching style. They prefer teacher-centred lessons and examination focused courses. In contrast, in New Zealand they are more likely to experience a dialogic teaching style with student-centred learning experiences. The lessons are more likely to be discussion-based and less
examination-focused. Wong (2004) researched Asian international students at a South Australian University and found that one of their main difficulties was the different learning styles they experienced compared to back home. Gerbic (2005) looked at online learning and comparisons between international and local students. He noted the recurrent theme that technology by itself is insufficient to promote cross-cultural learning. He also found that the Chinese students did not like debate activities and they preferred teacher direction and a structured approach to learning. Birt, Borland, Lodhia and Sherry (2005) investigated the learning style differences between international and domestic students at a New Zealand tertiary provider and compared their results to a similar study at an Australian tertiary provider. They found in both cases international students have a greater expectation of theoretical content rather than their local counterparts.

2.6 So why did international students originally choose New Zealand as a destination?

New Zealand has been a sought after destination because it was seen as safe, cheap and its education system at all levels was seen as first class (Ward and Masgoret, 2004). New Zealand’s old secondary school qualification system, of School Certificate and Bursary, was universally understood and accepted at universities across the globe (Ministry of Education, 2001b).

Ward and Masgoret (2004) surveyed 2,736 international students, of which 1,745 were secondary school students. They investigated why the students had chosen New Zealand and the level of satisfaction with the educational experience they had received. Almost two-thirds of the students had chosen New Zealand as their first destination. The main reasons they had chosen New Zealand were because it was an English speaking country, it was safe, it had quality education, there was international recognition of its qualifications and the cost was reasonable. Students from China were more concerned with getting a high quality education. These reasons agree with the research of other researchers in both New Zealand and Australia. Interestingly, the authors found that the main academic concerns of international students occurred with writing assignments and making oral presentations. Ward and Masgoret’s research was undertaken in 2003. 2002 was the peak of international student numbers in New Zealand secondary schools. 2004 was the first year that the NCEA was fully implemented in New Zealand secondary schools. Ward and Masgoret, like all other authors, did not investigate whether there was any concern with this “new” New Zealand secondary school qualification and whether international students still saw this as a
prestigious qualification. To date, I could find no published material investigating the views of international students concerning the NCEA qualification. Paewai and Meyer (2004) investigated the academic achievement of students at 13 secondary schools and 15 tertiary providers. Comparisons were made with domestic students. At tertiary level, international students completed their qualifications within a shorter time frame and their completion rates were also higher than domestic students. The performance of international students at secondary schools, however, they concluded was not nearly as good.

Hunter and Pickering (2002) found that the performance of international students attending Canterbury University had declined over recent years. Some departments were finding it necessary to change their teaching methods to help their international students who struggled with the lack of teacher-directed learning.

### 2.7 Decision Makers

Ward and Masgoret (2004) also investigated who influenced student decisions in choosing New Zealand as a destination. The researchers found that for a majority of students their own preference in choosing New Zealand as a destination of study was more important than their parents. The researchers did go on to note that for secondary school students, who made up the majority of the respondents, family influences were still of significant importance. The researchers cited similar studies by Ashton in 2006. Ashton found that the student/parent influence on country of study differed with their country of origin. Japanese secondary school students had more influence than their parents, whereas with Malaysian, Singaporean and Korean students the decision-making was equally shared, while for Taiwan and Hong Kong students the parents were the main decision makers on destination of study. This research justifies my decision to interview the students about their reasons for studying CIE rather than choosing the parents as the interviewees.

### 2.8 Problems in New Zealand

Government statistics showed that there was a significant drop in international students studying at New Zealand secondary schools and language schools from 2003 onwards (Ministry of Education, 2006). This significant decrease in international numbers at New Zealand secondary schools over the last four years has not been directly researched.
The introduction of the NCEA has created much controversy within education circles. (Hall, 2000; Dye, 2005). The move away from an examination based system is not as attractive to Asian students (Chamberlain, 2000). There has also been significant public debate over the quality of the new secondary qualification, the NCEA (Irwin, 1999; Morris 2001; De Boni, 2003; Richardson; 2006). It is possible this is a reason for the international student downturn.

With this sudden drop in international student numbers at the end of 2003, a number of media articles appeared giving reasons for this downturn. Warren (2004) highlighted the major concerns as bad Chinese media reports concerning the safety of Chinese international students and a rising New Zealand dollar. Thompson (2004) highlighted concerns over the dissatisfaction of Chinese students with the method of teaching they received in New Zealand. Senior Ministry of Education officials were also concerned. Acceptance of the NCEA may be partly to blame. In 2004, the Secretary for Education, Howard Fancy, attempted to reassure the international market with a keynote address at the New Zealand International Education Conference. He emphasised that quality was the key to the New Zealand education industry. He maintained that New Zealand should not compete by aggressive price cutting; rather New Zealand’s reputation should be maintained as a provider of high quality learning experiences (Fancy, 2004). This quality image was being attacked both overseas and in New Zealand. At the end of that year the New Zealand Herald published an AC Neilson survey that showed that public confidence in the new national examination system was plummeting. Of major concern was the increasing public opinion that the NCEA was not a qualification that would be recognised internationally (Dye, 2004). Warren (2005) noted concern from the national advocacy group for international students, Education New Zealand, that the NCEA debate was risking New Zealand’s quality education reputation. Continual attacks on the NCEA on the front pages of New Zealand’s leading newspapers were a negative marketing tool. That year, 2005, a further downturn in student numbers occurred and again further concerns over the NCEA surfaced, both in New Zealand and China (Richardson, 2005).

Later that year, Robert Stevens, the Chief Executive Officer of Education New Zealand also noted that the 2005 Ministry of Education figures showed a sharp decline in the number of international students in English language and secondary schools, while tertiary institution numbers remained steady (Stevens, 2005a). He maintained that there was a need for better market research on our international students. He also believed that we needed greater international recognition of our new NCEA qualification framework. He saw an internationally recognised qualification as essential in continuing to attract international students. It was the CIE was such a qualification.
Hann (2006) reported that the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Michael Cullen, acknowledged that the problems with the NCEA examinations had given New Zealand a poor reputation with overseas students studying and intending to study in New Zealand schools. Later, in 2006, Karen Poutasi, the new head of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), addressed the Education New Zealand conference. She explained that the NCEA had now moved into its second cycle and the NZQA was working to create further confidence in this system. The NZQA needed to profile the NCEA as an internationally recognised and valued qualification. She maintained the NCEA had widespread international recognition and further recognition was being addressed on. She also tried to silence NCEA critics by implying that their public concerns were doing real damage to our international education market (Poutasi, 2006). These comments from New Zealand’s two most senior education state servants and from the Deputy Prime Minister suggested that government was concerned that the NCEA was not universally recognised as the high quality qualification international students sought.

Robert Stevens (2005b) was also pushing for international marketing of the NCEA. This also suggested Stevens believed that there was poor acceptance of the NCEA as a requisite international qualification.

It is possible an examination based, internationally recognised qualification like the CIE taught in New Zealand would attract international students back to New Zealand. So far no research has been published investigating this possibility. This qualitative research adds support to this argument.

2.9 Competitive advantage

Barney (1986) describes competitive advantage as the differential in any business that allows the business to better serve the customers than others and hence create better customer value and achieve superior performance. Competitive advantage usually arises from one or more of the following three sources: ownership-based; proficiency-based; and access-based. That is, a business can gain advantage by ownership or possession of certain valuable assets or factors, such as strong market position, unique resource endowment, or reputation; by opportunity to gain superior access to inputs and markets; by superior knowledge, competence, or capabilities in conducting and managing its business processes or by producing quality products at lower costs and delivering the right products and/or service to its customers in the right place at the right price and time through the right
channels. The CIE qualification could be seen as a quality product that is offered to its customers, international Asian students.

Innovation involves the generation of new processes and products and the implementation of these ideas in order to develop competitive advantage for the enterprise. The innovation can be incremental, synthetic or discontinuous. The first type involves gradual changes to products or processes; the second involves the combining of existing ideas in new ways while the third involves the creation of radically new ideas. Innovation is also strongly linked to risk taking. Innovation, therefore, involves not only new ideas and their development, but also change and risk (Barney, 1986). The CIE qualification could be seen as the way a school offers a change in a product, namely the qualification pathway it offers its students. This product is seen as a quality product that will attract customers from overseas.

An important aspect of sustainable competitive advantage is the ability of an enterprise to develop strategies that cannot or will not be imitated by competitors (Allen, 2000). New Zealand has a total of 334 secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2007); 42 of these schools offer the CIE to some extent. Full Introduction of CIE into a school usually takes three years. Schools normally offer the IGCSE in the first year, the AS course in the second year and the A level course in the third year (Morris, 2005). Thus for other schools to enter the CIE market and use this qualification to compete in attracting international students would take a minimum of three years. Those schools already offering the CIE have a significant jump on their competitors and accordingly have a competitive advantage by their ability to offer a quality product. The ability to offer this quality product to international students should increase the prestige of the school in the eyes of the international student. Kotler and Fox, (1995) suggest that the public forms images of higher educational institutions on limited and even inaccurate information, and that these images will affect the likelihood of people attending or recommending institutions to others. An institution's actual quality is seen by Gavin as cited by Kotler and Fox, (1995) as often being “less important than its prestige, or reputation for quality, because it is the university's perceived excellence which, in fact, guided the decisions of prospective students and scholars considering offers”. Gavin suggests that the main focus of attention should be on the customers perceived service quality in order to assist in differentiation. The CIE would certainly give a school more prestige in the eyes of international student decision makers.
CHAPTER THREE

Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion on the types of approaches used in research. This research is essentially analytical. It is attempting to explain why a particular phenomenon has occurred. The chapter continues with a description of the case study methods and explains why a multi-case study method has been used in this particular research. The case study sections lead on to issues relating to triangulation, reliability and validity. This is followed by an account of research methods used in this study with specific sections on sampling and interviews. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethics issues involved in this study.

3.2 Types of Research

There is no one definition of business or academic research. There is, however, general agreement that such research needs to be systematic and methodical and it involves a process of enquiry and investigation that increases knowledge (Collis and Hussey, 2003). Research in the education field is seen as a disciplined attempt to address questions or solve problems through the collection of empirical primary data (Cohen and Manion, 1997).

Two major methodological philosophies exist, phenomenology and positivism. The positivist sees the world described by measurable properties that are independent of the observer. “The positivistic approach seeks the facts or causes of social phenomena, with little regard to the subjective state of the individual” (Collis and Hussey, 2003, p. 52).

The phenomenologist sees the world relative to the perspective of the observer. The observer interprets and contextualizes what is observed. “A reaction to the positivistic paradigm, it is assumed that social reality is within us; therefore the act of investigating reality has an effect on that reality” (Collis and Hussey, 2003, p.53).

Phenomenological studies interpret the experiences of the participants in order to understand their experience from their point of view. The individuals are selected on the basis of the phenomena being studied and on their willingness to participate and to be interviewed or to be observed (McMillan and Wergin 1998).
The positivistic paradigm is often seen as quantitative while the phenomenological paradigm as qualitative. Quantitative paradigms tend to concentrate on collecting objective data which can be turned into numbers that can be statistically analysed, whereas the qualitative paradigm involves the collection of people’s perceptions, which are subjective and are harder to statistically analyse.

The intention of this research is to analyse the attitudes and beliefs of international Asian students studying the Cambridge International Examinations and see if there is any link to the pull factors described by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002).

My research approach draws on the normative, phenomenological approach. I am trying to understand a particular phenomenon in the international export business, the attraction of international Asian secondary school students to New Zealand to study the CIE course.

I do not accept the premise that things are only meaningful if they are observable and verifiable and maintain that to understand the behaviour of international students studying the CIE, it is important to explore their intentions and feelings.

### 3.3 Case studies

Creswell defines a case study as follows; “a case study is a problem to be studied, which will reveal an in-depth understanding of a case or bounded system, which involves understanding an event, activity, process, or one or more individuals” (Creswell, 2002, p.61). VanWynsberghe and Khan 2007 go further when they clarify that case studies are neither method, methodology or research design rather a transparadigmatic heuristic that enables the circumscription of the unit of analysis. Case studies have an important role in explanatory research. The most important of these is to explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the experimental or survey strategies (Yin 2003). They are important in analyzing events or situations that have not been investigated before. No previous research has been found on international secondary school students studying non – NCEA courses in New Zealand secondary schools.

This researcher has chosen a case study approach as case study is the preferred method when “how” and “why” questions are to be answered and when the focus is on a current phenomenon in a real-life context (Yin, 2003).

### Case study research design

Yin (2003) describes five components as being important in carrying out case studies:
1) The study’s question
2) Its propositions
3) Its units of analysis
4) The logic linking the data to the propositions
5) The criteria for interpreting the findings

The case study explains why the introduction of the CIE qualification into three New Zealand secondary schools has led to an increase in international Asian attending these schools.

The propositions in this case study are based on Mazzarol and Souter’s (2002) push-pull model that suggests international students will choose what they perceive to be a quality, qualification that is internationally recognised and has some similarity to the qualification they experienced back home. These propositions lead to a series of “why” and “how” questions that are the basis of the semi structured interviews (see appendix 1 and 2). The particular phenomenon being studied is the increase of international Asian students studying at schools offering the CIE qualification.

In this research project the unit of analysis involves international Asian students studying CIE. Case studies gather information about the unit of analysis, with the intention of gaining in-depth knowledge (Collis and Hussey, 2003).

Yin (2003) describes three strategies for analyzing case studies: relying on theoretical propositions, setting up a framework based on rival explanations and developing case descriptions. He notes that the most preferred strategy is the first one, which involves following the theoretical propositions that led to the case study. The theoretical propositions produce the research question and hypotheses. Yin (2003) goes on to suggest that best technique for case study analysis is using a pattern-matching logic. The linking of the data to the proposition uses pattern-matching which is described by Donald Campbell (1975) in Yin 2003. Pattern-matching involves selecting recurring themes that answer these “how” and “why” questions.

A special type of pattern-matching logic is explanation building. The explanation building reflects an initial theoretical proposition and then compares the initial case findings to this proposition. The proposition is revised and then used in further cases.

In this research study there has not been time to analyse the initial case, revise the propositions and compare to other cases. Yin (2003) also maintains that if there are two sufficiently contrasting patterns for interpreting the data rival propositions can be established. In this case a rival proposition is not found that fits each of the three schools.
This case study has been based on the initial theoretical proposition that international students will be drawn towards an institution that offers a quality qualification that is internationally recognised.

### 3.4 Types of Case Studies

Yin (2003) describes two types of case studies: single and multiple-case studies.

Single cases require more depth and are more appropriate for a critical case situation for testing a current theory or where there are extreme or unique circumstances.

Multiple case studies are more desirable for studies not involving critical or unique situations. Multiple case studies are considered to be more robust or compelling. They have the disadvantage of taking more time and resources.

In this research a multiple case study has been used. The three schools chosen are different in size and type. As the contexts of each school are different there is more chance of generalising the findings that are obtained.

### 3.5 Triangulation

Using different research approaches, methods and techniques within the same study is referred to as triangulation (Collis and Hussey, 2003). Triangulation can improve the accuracy of judgement of results by collecting data through different methods. There are four types of triangulation described by Yin, 2003:

1. Data triangulation
2. Investigator triangulation
3. Theory triangulation
4. Methodological triangulation

In this study the first and fourth methods have been used. As well as interviewing selected students at each school, the international student coordinators have also been interviewed with the aim of comparing their views with those obtained from the students. This is a form of data triangulation. As a further method of triangulation a document review was completed, which is a form of methodological triangulation. Stake, 1995, describes a document review as following the same track as observations or interviews.
3.6 **Reliability and validity**

The extent to which the research findings accurately portray what is really happening in the study is referred to as validity. A positivistic paradigm, which relies on the ability to replicate the measurements taken, has lower validity than a phenomenological paradigm which is aimed at digging deeper and gaining data which is rich in explanation and analysis (Collis and Hussey, 2003). The use of a phenomenological approach has therefore increased the overall validity of the research.

There are four tests that have been commonly used to establish the quality of research that are relevant to case studies (Yin, 2003). They are construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability.

**Construct Validity**

Critics of case studies suggest that “subjective” judgements’ are used to collect data and that the researcher fails to develop a sufficiently operational set of measures (Yin, 2003). To overcome this I have used one of the remedies suggested by Yin (2003). That is the use of multiple sources of evidence; I interviewed both students and the international student coordinators at the schools, I also completed a document review of the schools web sites and promotional brochures.

**Internal Validity**

Yin (2003) also explains that there is a concern of internal reliability with explanatory case studies. This can be overcome by doing pattern-matching. In this multi-case study the fact that a similar rival pattern was not apparent in each of the three schools increases the likelihood of internal validity.

**External Validity**

By using a multiply case study I have increased the possibility of this research being generalised beyond this particular study.
Reliability

The objective is to be sure that if someone else was to repeat the same case study in the future they would obtain the same findings and conclusion (Yin, 2003). This is often referred to as replication. Replication is increased by using a case study protocol and by keeping a case study database (Collis and Hussey, 2003). For this multiply case study I used the same semi-structured questions with all the interviewees and I personally recorded and transcribed all interviews. The use of more than one interviewer can decrease the reliability of the data. Adhering to this protocol and keeping an audit trail as I went has increased the reliability of the study.

3.7 Research methods

These are the approaches used to gather, manage and interpret the data needed to answer the research question (Cohen & Manion, 1997).

For this research project I have chosen interviews as the main tool to address the research question. I have also used document review to challenge or support the information I gained from the interviews. Collis and Hussey (2003) maintain that it is acceptable in business research to use a mixture of methods in collecting and analyzing data. The data collection has been predominately of a qualitative nature.

The target market is international Asian students studying the CIE examinations in New Zealand.

Choosing the schools

The principals of the fifteen schools in the greater Auckland area were approached to participate in this research study (appendix 3). Schools outside Auckland, teaching the CIE, were not chosen. This was because of time constraints; the researcher was not able to travel outside Auckland to interview students. Five Auckland schools agreed to allow me to do an in depth interview with their students, but two of these schools were not suitable, as they only had only partially introduced the CIE in the last two years. The three schools chosen fulfilled all of the criteria below.

Firstly, they offered the CIE qualification across its three levels and they had a number of international Asian students following this pathway.

Secondly, the three schools had all experienced an increase in international student numbers over the last four years.
Thirdly, the three schools represented a cross-section of New Zealand secondary schools; state and private, co-educational and single sex.

The first was a single sex state school, the second a co-educational state school and the third a co-educational private school.

### 3.8 Sampling

Collis and Hussey (2003) describe a good sample as one that can be seen as representative of the whole population. Such a sample is best chosen at random. The schools chosen in this research needed to be in the Auckland area to allow me to easily travel to them to complete the interviews. The interviews were carried out during the students’ end of year CIE examinations. This meant I had to arrange interviews that fitted in with their examination schedule. Several interviews had to be carried out immediately after some of the students’ examinations. This meant that a one-off visit to each school was not possible. The return travel added to the time put aside for interviews. The chosen schools also had to fulfill the criteria of having an increased international student roll over the last four years and they needed to be offering the CIE qualification. They were not a random sample of New Zealand secondary schools. The students within each school were chosen randomly by their international student coordinators. This was done by placing the names of all of the target market, viz. international Asian students studying CIE, into a hat and then pulling out at random the appropriate number of candidates. In my case I also wished to see if the opinions on CIE were consistent across different Asian nationalities. Collis and Hussey, 2003, note that with small populations, simple random sampling can lead to one group, in this case Chinese students, being significantly over-represented. To overcome this problem, they suggest stratified sampling. Here all groups are identified and selection continues until you have a certain representation of your desired groups.

A stratified sample of five students from each of these schools was chosen from a random sample of all international Asian students, at each of these targeted schools studying the CIE. The student coordinator drew, as in a raffle, names of five international Asian students who were studying the CIE. At least two of these students had to be non Chinese Asian students. Chinese students make up just over 50% of international Asian students (Ministry of Education, 2006). If more than three of the students drawn were Chinese, further students were drawn until there were at least two non-Chinese students in each school’s sample. Obtaining such a stratified sample allowed me to make some comparisons between Chinese and non-Chinese students. Once the five students from each school with a mix of
Asian ethnicities had been selected at random, I proceeded to complete an in-depth interview with each of these students.

3.9 Interviews

Remenyi, Williams, Money and Swartz (1998) describe interviews as a type of survey that gives in-depth evidence of the participant’s views. Research interviews are of two types: structured and unstructured. The phenomenological approach suggests unstructured questions (Collis & Hussey, 2003). In this case, however, I had a series of set questions (appendix 1) as I wanted to make sure I covered the key reasons the students gave for choosing to study the CIE qualification. Also, as the interviews were being carried out across three sites, I wished to be able to have some consistency in approach that would allow me to make some generalizations from the information I gained. The interviews were tape recorded to assist me with my analysis at the end of the interviews. I transcribed each interview and then analysed the written text for re-occurring themes.

I attempted to conduct the interviews in as relaxed and friendly an atmosphere as possible. I was aware that I was an adult interviewing students and this would result in a somewhat formal situation. I attempted to remain neutral in the interview and attempted to minimize voice and body language changes.

To triangulate the research, I interviewed the three international student coordinators from each of the schools the students were attending. The purpose was to investigate their views on why international Asian students had chosen to study at their school. Finally, I analysed each school’s web sites and international student marketing brochures to review how they promoted their school.

3.10 Data Analysis

In the positivistic paradigm, quantitative data is collected and analysed by conducting a range of statistical techniques (Collis and Hussey, 2003). Morse, cited by Collis and Hussey (2003) maintains that while there are many texts explaining the techniques for conducting quantitative research the subject of qualitative data analysis is poorly described. Robson also cited by Collis and Hussey (2003) notes that while quantitative data analysis has clear conventions, such conventions are neither clear nor accepted in the case of qualitative data.
One way of analyzing qualitative data is to quantify it by turning the data into numbers that can be manipulated by a range of statistical packages (Ghauri et al., 1995). In this research such methods of quantizing the data are not considered appropriate as all emerging themes are considered important.

In this research study the transcribed interviews are analysed by using thematic content analysis. Boyatzis (1998) presents thematic content analysis as a descriptive presentation of qualitative data.

3.11 Ethics Issues

All participants in this research were aged 16 or over. Under New Zealand law children are not considered to be adults until they reach the age of 18. However for informed consent, tertiary institutions consider a research participant to be a child if they are under the age of 16 (Powell and Smith, 2006). These authors went on to note that most tertiary institutions only require parent or guardian consent if the child is under 16.

With these guidelines in mind, firstly I gained written permission from the principal of each of the schools (appendix 4). Secondly, the student coordinators or principal's representative counter signed the participant consent form (appendix 5). Each of these schools is legal guardian for a number of international students and would be considered to be responsible and act in the student’s best interest. They would not have allowed my interviews to have occurred had they considered them to be harmful to the student involved.

I also gave each interviewee an, “information for participants” form (appendix 6) and obtained written consent from each of these participants. My information for the participant’s sheet that accompanied the consent form contained my name, contact details, reasons for the research and a guarantee of anonymity. These are all ethical requirements outlined by Tolich (2001). The participants were reminded at the end of the interview stage about the focus of the research that their participation was voluntary and there was a guarantee of total anonymity. All interview material was kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home. Information held on my computer is password protected.

Not withstanding this written consent I also took the ethical considerations of Smyth and Williamson, (2004) into account. These authors maintain that researchers must be ethically accountable. In the first case their data must be recorded, analysed and reported accurately. Secondly, any material from their interviews must be kept confidential including
the identity of the interviewees. Thirdly, the researcher must be aware that he or she may be in a position of power, if so this power situation should be minimized.

Ethics approval was obtained from the Unitec ethics committee, No 2007.763. There were no sensitive cultural, medical or personal questions being asked or discussed. The identity of the student was guaranteed to remain confidential at all times and there was no financial incentive for the students to participate. I accepted that I was in a power relationship as I could be seen as a senior teacher interviewing a student. At all times I was careful not to abuse this relationship and use my position of authority to pressure the interviewee into answering questions they were not prepared to answer. I interviewed most of the students in a guidance department office as this was seen to be the least threatening area in the school. One student withdrew at start of the interview, apologizing that he needed all available time to study for his next examinations.
CHAPTER FOUR

Research Findings and Analysis

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter details the results and analysis of this research project. This study has sought to explain why international Asian students studying the CIE have chosen their particular school to study at. Generalisations from these results could lead to other schools offering the CIE, setting up a marketing alliance to attract further international Asian students.

The findings are based on the answers provided by the participants during an in-depth interview. The analysis initially involves a cross-case study and at the end of the chapter analysis of the individual cases is completed.

The results are based on the interviews of 14 students at three different secondary schools that offer the Cambridge examinations. The results are triangulated, firstly, by using perceptions gained by interviewing the student coordinators at these schools and secondly, by reviewing the websites and international brochures produced by these schools.

The chapter begins with factual data, in the case of the students, their school, gender and country of origin. In the case of the coordinators, it is the school they are associated with. The chapter then describes the data analysis process and how the key themes were obtained. These key themes are presented followed by specific Interviewee responses from the transcribed interviews. This follows with the two major themes obtained from the transcribed interviews with the student coordinators. Again, specific responses from the student coordinators are quoted to justify how the student coordinator themes were generated. A summary of the results of the document analysis is followed by an analysis within each of the three schools. Next there is a discussion of how the themes obtained from the data analysis link with current theory occurs. The findings are then linked back to the original hypotheses. The chapter finishes with a discussion of limitations of the research.

4.2 Factual Information

4.2.1 Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>B - Coeducational Public</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>B - Coeducational Public</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>B - Coeducational Public</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>B - Coeducational Public</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>B - Coeducational Public</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>C - Coeducational Private</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>C - Coeducational Private</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>C - Coeducational Private</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>C - Coeducational Private</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>C - Coeducational Private</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>A - Single Sex Public</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>A - Single Sex Public</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>A - Single Sex Public</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>A - Single Sex Public</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethnic breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese and Hong Kong</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Asian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In total fourteen of the selected students were interviewed. The fifteenth student withdrew at the start of his interview as he said he required all his spare time to study for his exams. He had left the country when an attempt was made to interview him at the end of his exams. The numbers from each ethnic group are not large enough to give any significant generalisations.

4.2.2 International student coordinators

The three school coordinators are coded as follows

BS school B, CS school C, AS school A

Two of the student coordinators, BS and AS, had been in their role for over three years, the other student coordinator, CS, had only taken up the position four weeks prior to the interview.

The semi-structured interviews questions can be found in the appendices. The student in-depth interviews are in appendix one and the international student coordinator in-depth interviews are in appendix two.

The questions sought to find out how and why the students came to be studying the CIE qualification in their particular school.

4.3 Data Analysis – Obtaining key themes

In this research study the transcribed interviews are analysed by using thematic content analysis. Boyatzis (1998) presents thematic content analysis as a descriptive presentation of qualitative data.

There are a number of steps involved in obtaining the themes. The following steps outlined by Anderson (2007) were followed to obtain the nine themes presented.

All interviews were transcribed and multiple copies were made.

Using a highlighter all descriptions relevant to this study were highlighted in different colours. The highlighted areas were broken into distinct units of meaning. Distinct units of meanings are separated by a break or change in meaning.
These units were next cut out and similar units were put in a pile. Each pile was labelled as an initial category or theme.

After a few days the original interviews were reread. The categories were now reviewed and some resorting occurred. The categories were now combined to give key themes.

These themes were then reconsidered. The final themes presented are the ones that were supported by similar quotes from at least several interviewees.

In the data analysis, each of the nine final themes has some of the interview quotes included that generated this particular theme.

This method of obtaining themes is similar to the general analytical procedure designed by Miles and Huberman (1994) as cited in (Collis and Hussey, 2003). Their key steps involves referencing all material obtained from interviews or other sources. This data is the coded as specific variables, concepts or themes as this allows the data to be retrieved and reorganised as necessary. The coded data can then be grouped into smaller categories appropriate to the themes or patterns which emerge. These themes can be used to construct generalisations that may question existing theories or construct a new theory.

4.4 Predominant themes obtained from student interviews

The following themes came through from the thematic content analysis of the student interviews:

1) The students chose their particular school because of its academic reputation and because the school offered the CIE qualification.

2) Students and parents were the major decision makers in which school was chosen.

3) The academic pathway they had chosen, the CIE, was more challenging than the other pathway offered, the NCEA.

4) The students all saw the CIE as the premier qualification when this qualification was compared to the NCEA.

5) It was important to study an internationally recognised qualification.

6) This qualification would allow access to most overseas universities.
7) There was a strong similarity between the qualification they studied and the qualification that was available back home.

8) Their school was seen as special because of the academic environment and the fact the school offered CIE.

9) The students preferred an end of year examination that produced a mark, but there was also support for some internal assessment.

4.5 Data supporting these particular student themes

“Why did you choose your particular school?”

The key theme coming through was

4.5.1 Theme 1) The students chose their particular school because of its academic reputation

Specific quotes from each of the students all support this theme of academic strength

B1 Magazine says it is a good school.

B2 Has good reputation and good academic results

B3 Beautiful, teacher friendly high academic level

B4 Best – system of education, one of the best schools in NZ

B5 it is multicultural and there is a lot of after school activities (In terms of the qualification or the academic side of the school was that important?) That was as well, that was one of the highlights by the agent

C1 It was a very good school and the surroundings is very natural

C2 I choose this school because my Mum and I choose this school because of the system of examination and their teaching methods.

C3 The teacher is really good and they always help me
C4  I think education system in our school – does CIE – I like studying CIE

C5  I just love the environment here because it is so relaxing, the teachers are really nice and they more attention to you, more like one to one tutorial or individual help and it’s the whole CIE thing as well. (Had changed from another Auckland that did only NCEA)

A1  the teachers are superb there is a lot of competition going on in the top level classes (had moved from another school in Auckland school doing NCEA)

A2  has always had a history of Academic excellence

A3  Competition, gives you many options in both academic and cultural

A4  it’s competitive

Nine of the fourteen students specifically mentioned the CIE as the major reason for choosing this particular school.

4.5.2  Theme 2) Students and Parents were the major decision makers in which school was chosen.

In this research eight of the fourteen students were the key decision makers (students B2, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, A1, A3). For three of the students; B3, B5 and A2, the parents were the major decision makers. For the other three students; B1, B4 and A4 a mixture of relatives along with parents and others were the key decision makers.

“Why do these students view the CIE as the premier qualification in New Zealand?”

The key themes that came through here were once the importance of quality, but also that the qualification was seen as an internationally recognised qualification and that this qualification would be recognised overseas.

The strengths of the CIE were articulated by all the students. The idea of the CIE being the standout qualification in New Zealand was a common comment.
4.5.3 Theme 3) The pathway they were studying was more challenging than the other pathway offered

There were a number of students who expressed concerns about the NCEA. Most had not heard of the NCEA before they arrived in New Zealand, but all of them had developed their own opinions on this qualification through dialogue with friends and what they had heard through the media.

Concerns about the NCEA

C1 I heard it has some problems that is one of the reasons I choose CIE

C1 I might be biased because I have heard a lot of bad aspects of NCEA such as like 2 years ago the chemistry exam was too hard for the Professor could not do it on time and things like that

C2 I heard, I saw from the newspaper that the NCEA is really easy to get credits and achievement and this made me think like the NCEA is really easy.

C2 if you are finding a job you need a qualification to that the employer to look at and they might not understand what the NCEA stands for

C3 I don’t think a lot of international students understand NCEA.

C4 Actually some of my friends in university – now one person did NCEA last year and one person did CIE last year – comparing with these two people – one person who did CIE found easier in university but another person who did NCEA found quite hard in university – so I think CIE is quite good to practice to go to University.

When detailing what they knew about NCEA the following comments were made:

B1 most friends take CIE they say it is more challenging,

B2 (NCEA) more on going, lots of assessment easier than CIE

B2 NCEA doesn’t teach us very much

B5 More relaxed compared to the CIE – more assessment based and a bit of the exams
C1 the CIE as the stand out examination, so it very flexible and cause its quite challenging – its good for you really

C5 I don’t know much but I think it’s a lot easier than CIE

A1 just that what the NZ government invented and that there are many problems and they are kind of adjusting it

A3 People say it’s easier than Cambridge

4.5.4 Theme 4) The students all saw the CIE as the premier qualification when this qualification was compared to the NCEA.

B1 most friends take CIE they say it is more challenging

B3 CIE – learn more

B5 the CIE – one is because it’s just more in-depth, the things they are assessing,

C1 CIE as the stand out examination, so it very flexible and cause it’s quite challenging – its good for you really

C4 this is quite higher qualification and people who have done CIE could do well in university as well

C5 it’s harder than NCEA and its challenging

A1 CIE is definitely the better choice and also by doing NCEA Japanese and CIE Japanese I think the CIE is better than NCEA

A4 I guess CIE would have played a more important part in what you learn – it is broader than NCEA subjects

4.5.5 Theme 4) It was important to study an internationally recognised qualification

Every student saw the CIE as an internationally recognised qualification

B5 the intention for me coming to NZ is to get a qualification that would be internationally recognised.
A2 Yes CIE is an international qualification and I believe it is recognised anywhere around the world and that is one of the reasons which attracted me to do CIE

B4 Most countries will recognise the CIE like IELTS – it is recognised internationally

(Is the recognition fact important in choosing this qualification?) Yes – one of the most important reason is CIE system is similar to the Chinese system and I don’t need to switch from one system to the other.

Is the recognition fact important in you choosing this qualification?

4.5.6 Theme 6) this qualification would allow access to most overseas universities

All of the students intended to follow up their secondary school education at university. The choice of university destination was widespread, a few intended staying in NZ while others were looking at studying in Australian, British or American universities. They saw the CIE qualification as allowing them access to universities world-wide, conversely some saw the NCEA as lacking recognition in many overseas universities.

B1 (Will your qualification be recognised in China?) Yeah I think because they do CIE in the Hong Kong. England definitely but for US probably have to take SATs.

C2 I don’t think it (NCEA) would be recognised at all because NCEA is like for domestic students to go to university

C3 I think any university in the world would accept it

C4 (Will your current qualification be recognised in other countries?) Yes I think so – that’s why I’m doing CIE

C5 In Thailand a couple of years ago if you got IG (CIE) you could be in one of the best universities in the country – so that won’t happen with NCEA

A1 Yes – basically that why I am thinking of England, if I didn’t do CIE and I want to the States rather than NZ I would of going to University in the States not England

A3 I have heard some Cambridge students have been accepted by universities in America with their Cambridge scores
A4 In America would be one of my choices; I might choose to go to some other countries that accept CIE qualifications – as it is quite a global one

What type of qualification system have you experienced in your home country?

4.5.7 Theme 7) The similarity between the CIE the pathway available back home

All students other than the Korean students saw the CIE as being very similar to the qualification they had or would have studied in their home country.

The students were asked to comment on the qualification system back home – most saw the CIE as a similar system

B1 (What is good about the CIE qualification?) more like the system I had in China

B4 (Describe the qualification back in China) More like CIE – 2 exams one at the end of each two terms – Not with many internals although we do have exams during the term but they are not really important

B5 (Compared to back home what would you do back there?) it’s sort of like the A level and O level – it’s combined

C2 Hong Kong is like referenced to the Cambridge examination – really similar to Cambridge exam

C3 Yeah I think it is much similar but just different in that CIE only 1 exam at the end of the year that decide whether you go to next year or not but in my country it is like during the year

C5 there’s this major exam at the end of the year, pretty much like CIE – you have to get certain percentage to get into certain universities – that’s all you do

A2 We have something very similar to A levels back in Malaysia for the last two years – it is know as STPM – it is one and half year programme . It follows a similar approach to CIE so it is external assessment as well.

A4 Back in Taiwan the exams were shorter as we only get one exam for each subject and there will be no more than one hour and its compulsory to take most of the subjects instead of here where we can choose what we want to do.
B2  (What system have you experienced back in Seoul – is it more like the NCEA or CIE?)
   More like NCEA

C1  We sit two exams in a year but it’s not really like a CIE – where the government, yeah
     maybe it’s changed. The government gives out the tests I think and they make people
     sit and they give grades

C4  I don’t know the specific name for that we doing – but we got 12 subjects that we have
     to do – it is hard. We’ve got assessments during the year and we’ve got also exams – I
     think its 2 exams per year

A3  You do exams same as NZ at the end of the year, little assessments at the end of the
     year.

What is special about this school?

4.5.8 Theme 8) Their school was seen as special because of the academic environment and the fact the school offered CIE.

When asked what made their school special, all students commented on the fact the school offered the Cambridge exams.

4.5.9 Theme 9) The students liked an end of year exam that produced a mark, but there was also support for some internal assessment.

B3  (CIE has) different grades A B C D E and a mark – enjoy having mark

C1  I quite like this system because its really tried – it makes you work throughout the year, you
     what I mean, One system one exam and you get the mark – that’s a good thing and if you don’t
     do well in the exam you can have another chance by re-sitting that exam – so Don’t think there
     is any problem with it.

C3  I prefer assessment during the year because end of year is like heaps of stuff and heap of work
     to spend through to grade and practice. So I prefer assessment every like during the year, is
     much easier.

A2  I personally prefer the approach CIE going for which is the end of year exams – although would
     just like to say I don’t think internal assessments are a bad option either – it is also means that
you have put in the hard work throughout the year and not just rely on your end of year exams which may have a chance of not doing well and that is reflected in your results.

A4 I guess it is better to have more like small assessments as you get to practice more and that might increase your confidence

4.6 **Predominate Themes obtained from the international Student Coordinators**

The international student coordinators interviews were also analysed using thematic data analysis.

There were two key themes that came through.

**Theme 1) Their school is seen as academically strong.**

**Theme 2) Their school offers the CIE pathway which is recognised as a quality qualification that will get students in to top overseas universities.**

4.7 **Data supporting these particular international student coordinator themes.**

The key question the student coordinators were asked were;

“What do you see as the major reasons international students have chosen to study at your school/ what is special about your school?”

Some of the comments expressed are as follows;

4.7.1 **Theme 1) Their school is seen as academically strong.**

AS School A has a reputation within New Zealand.
AS the school has an academic record the Asian population want the best academic school, they want to see results.

BS The thing that comes to mind is that (school B) is regarded as a top academic school in NZ.

BS one major competitive advantage that is we offer the Cambridge pathway – which many schools in NZ don’t do that and we are able to sell that point very strongly in overseas markets.

BS we can guarantee a very good education – very high, very highly motivated and achievement motivated school.

BS we are top academic school with Cambridge pathway for them.

BS Very much so for the Asian students – their parents look at how we perform academically and they will normally ask for rankings – how we rank against other schools – what kind of achievements – what kind of opportunities for their kids – so academic performance for us is most crucial for the Asian kids.

CS Some of the reasons the international students come here are the same as the reason I have come to this school too.

CS I think the Cambridge examination system gives a much wider range of opportunities for the students who possibly return to their own countries.

CS I think we have very good support systems here – it’s quite a flexible programme, where they are very carefully monitored on an academic basis.

4.7.2 Theme 2) Their school offers the CIE pathway which is recognised as a quality qualification that will get students into top overseas universities.

AS The Koreans want to see where they go to university – they want to get them into Ivy League schools and see (school A) offering an exam system that gives them entry to international universities.

AS They will always ask will this exam get me into an Ivy league school in America or a school in the UK and that’s why these internationally recognised examinations, in particular the Cambridge exams has encouraged more students to come to this school.
BS  We spend a lot of resources on marketing and when they are here we show case them our Cambridge successes and the opportunities the kids have to do international recognised. So Cambridge has been a key for us in terms of a selling point. That's what they like to hear – and where we have been successful.

4.8  Document Analysis

As a further method of triangulation the websites and international student marketing brochures were read and studied.

Each of the schools highlights their academic focus and the fact they offer an internationally recognised qualification, the CIE.

Two of the three schools highlight on the front page of their websites that they are top academic schools in New Zealand and that their students have obtained top in the world performances in CIE subjects. The third school does not offer the NCEA, only the CIE. Its website has numerous references to academic excellence and the CIE pathway. (References to these websites are not included in the bibliography as these references would identify the names of the schools chosen in this case study).

The importance of academic excellence and the availability of the Cambridge pathway mirror the opinions of both the student co-ordinators and the interviewed students.

4.9  Analysis within schools

All the above themes were very similar amongst the three schools. The academic strengths of the three schools and the fact they offered CIE were the consistent themes that came through

Additional themes for each of the schools can be summarised as follows:

School A

The students here saw the competition factor as being particularly important, perhaps because this is more typical of a boy’s school. The international student coordinator also very much stressed the reputation of the school, its previous successes and drive for excellence.
School B

The students also highlighted the extra curricular activities available in the school, its view and its reputation. The international student coordinator highlighted in particular the academic reputation, extra curricular activities and its safe environment.

School C

The students highlighted the size of the school, its country setting and the helpfulness of the staff. The international student coordinator stressed the support programmes and mentoring given by the College.

4.10 Similarities and differences within Ethnic groups

All groups were consistent on seeing the CIE qualification as the premier qualification offered in New Zealand. They saw a way of getting into overseas universities and preparing them better for tertiary study.

The significant difference occurred when the Korean students’ previous qualification was compared to the CIE qualification. All the other ethnicities saw strong similarities between the qualification they studied back home and the CIE qualification. The Korean system however was perceived by the Korean students as having some similarity with the New Zealand NCEA system. The Korean students preferred the CIE system and the international student coordinator at school A noted that Korean parents in particular wanted an examination-based qualification.

4.11 Linking the themes to theory

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), maintained the major pull factor for overseas students choosing a particular location is that of a quality education.

The following themes from the student interviews support this theory: themes one, four and eight.
The other major pull factor, found by Mazzarol and Souter (2002) was the recognition of the qualification they were studying. They found students wanted a quality education that challenged them and a qualification that would allow them entry to host of overseas universities. The themes that supported these pull factors were themes three, five and six.

An unexpected result was who were the decision makers on the choice of school? Ward and Masgoret (2004) research suggested that for the majority of international students, their own preference in choosing New Zealand as a destination of study was more important than their parents. The fact that the in six of the cases the student was not a major decision maker in the choice of destination does question how valid the results of the answers to the question “why did you choose this particular school?”

4.12 **Linking back to Hypotheses**

Five hypotheses were generated at the start of this research study:

1) International Asian students studying the CIE have chosen this particular school primarily because it offers the CIE qualification.
2) These students see the CIE as the premier qualification offered in New Zealand secondary schools.
3) These students see the CIE as pathway that will allow them access to universities throughout the world.
4) The qualification is similar to the qualification system in their home country.
5) The opinions of the international Asian students studying CIE is independent of their nationality.

In the case of the students interviewed these hypotheses have all been supported by the student responses.

4.13 **Limitations of the research**

This research involves an investigation into why international Asian students studying the CIE have chosen a particular school to study at. It involves a multi-case study and is attempting to explain a particular phenomenon that has gone against the national trend. It is not attempting to statistically generalise its results to other schools. Rather, it is attempting to show that Mazzarol and Soutar’s (2002) push-pull theory of international tertiary students is applicable to New Zealand secondary schools. The fact that three schools have been
chosen increases the ability to generalise these results to other schools offering CIE. While an attempt was made to choose three different schools, the researcher acknowledges that two of the schools are regarded as two of the top academic schools in New Zealand. The third school is unique in that it is a private school located in the country and offers exclusively the CIE qualification. Despite this, the findings support the major hypothesis that international Asian students want to study an internationally recognised qualification.

The fact that not all the students were the key decision makers in choosing their present destination does question the reliabilities of these students’ answers to the question “Why did you chose your particular school?”

Eight of the fourteen students were the key decision makers in choosing their particular school. The other six students’ destination was chosen predominately by parents or relatives. The opinions of these students on why their particular school was chosen must be considered with some caution as the information given is of a secondary nature. Despite this concern the opinions of all students on the two qualification systems are both valid and meaningful.

Data was obtained from only 3 of the 40 schools offering CIE so these three schools could be considered as special cases. Two of the schools are considered as two of the best academically performing schools in New Zealand.
CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

The research question at the start of this study asks “Does the CIE give a New Zealand secondary school a competitive advantage in attracting international Asian students?” A positive response to this question would lend support for those New Zealand schools offering the CIE, to use this qualification as a marketing tool to attract further international Asian students to their schools.

Studies of international students choosing tertiary destinations led Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) to develop a push-pull theory. Their theory suggests students choosing overseas institutions chose institutions that offer what the student perceives to be a quality qualification that is globally recognised. Conversely if the students perceive the institution offers an inferior qualification they are likely not to choose that institution.

Ward and Masgoret (2004) researched both international secondary and tertiary students studying in New Zealand. They found the main reasons international students had chosen New Zealand were because it was an English speaking country, it was safe, it had quality education, there was international recognition of its qualifications and the cost was reasonable. Their study supported the push-pull theory of Mazzarol and Soutar (2002). Ward and Masgoret’s (2004) study was carried out in 2002. This is prior to the introduction of the NCEA, which was introduced between 2002 and 2004, and prior to the rapid decline in international students in New Zealand secondary schools. No research has been carried out on international secondary school students studying an alternative qualification at a secondary school.

This research investigated whether international Asian students studying the CIE pathway at three New Zealand secondary schools are drawn to these schools because of pull factors described by Mazzarol and Soutar.
5.2 **Summary of the results**

The findings from the student interviews are summarized below.

All the students viewed the CIE qualification as a globally recognised qualification that would allow them entry to universities throughout the world. They had heard of significant negative comments about the quality and rigour of the major New Zealand secondary qualification pathway the NCEA. Two of the students had left schools that exclusively offered the NCEA to attend a school that offered the CIE. Many had perceptions that the NCEA did not have global recognition. All the students interviewed saw the CIE as the premier qualification offered in New Zealand secondary schools. Eight of the fourteen students were the key decision makers in choosing to come to this particular school. All of these students chose their particular school because of its academic reputation; six of these eight students also chose their particular school because it offered the CIE pathway. For the other six students’ parents, relatives or friends of the parents were the key decision makers. Four of these decision makers chose the school because it offered the CIE, the other two because of its academic status.

In summary the key reasons for choosing the particular school was firstly it offered CIE and secondly, it was seen as an academic school. The major reasons the students saw the CIE as the best pathway available in New Zealand were: it was more challenging than the NCEA pathway, it was recognised globally, it would get them into a range of overseas universities and it was based on an examination system. These views were consistent across each of the Asian ethnicities. The only differences between Asian ethnicities noted were that the Korean students saw the NCEA as having some similarity to the qualification they would have studied back home. In the case of all of the other Asian ethnicities the CIE was seen as similar to the qualification back home.

These student opinions were consistent across the three schools. The international student coordinators reinforced the importance of offering the CIE in attracting international Asian students. They saw the fact their school offered CIE as a way attracting international Asian students. Each of the school’s web pages and promotional material highlighted the fact their schools offered an international qualification, the CIE.

These results obtained from three New Zealand secondary schools support Mazzarol and Soutar’s (2002) push-pull theory for tertiary institutions, that international students are attracted towards institutions that are seen as having a quality qualification that is recognised internationally.
The results of this research answers in an affirmative way the initial research question, “Does the CIE give a school a competitive advantage in attracting international Asian students?”

This research suggests that other schools teaching the CIE could use these findings to promote the fact they offer CIE to overseas Asian markets with the likelihood of subsequently attracting further international Asian students to their schools.

5.3 Key findings

International Asian students studying CIE at the three target schools have chosen these particular schools predominately because the schools offer an international qualification, the CIE. These students perceive this qualification as superior to the major New Zealand qualification the NCEA. They see the CIE as more rigorous than the NCEA, more internationally recognised and allowing the student more chance to get into the University of their choice. The reasons for international students choosing these schools that offer the CIE supports the push-pull model developed by Mazzarol and Soutar (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002).

This research suggests this push-pull model can be extended to apply to international Asian students choosing to study in New Zealand secondary schools.

From these key finding this researcher suggests other schools in New Zealand offering the CIE, should be able to attract international Asian students to their school by marketing the fact they offer this internationally recognised qualification, the CIE. Further, the evidence obtained from this research should encourage the ACSNZ to prepare a marketing plan that promotes all New Zealand schools offering the CIE. Such a marketing plan promoting the CIE should see all of these schools increase their international Asian student numbers and consequently improve their financial bottom line.

5.4 The significance of this research

The number of international students attending New Zealand secondary school has dropped by 40% since 2002 (Ministry of Education, 2006). This suggests that the international student market in New Zealand has moved to the fourth stage of the product life cycle and is in decline. One reason for this decline is a perceived decrease in the quality of the New
Zealand qualification system (Chamberlain, 2000; De Boni, 2003; Dye, 2005; Hall, 2000; Hann, 2006; Irwin, 1999; Morris, 2001; Richardson, 2006; Warren, 2005). The introduction of a globally recognised quality qualification is an innovation that has rejuvenated this market in three New Zealand secondary schools. Bolton and Thompson (2000) note that many declining markets go on forever if they are renewed by innovation. Other schools offering the CIE could use this research to market their school as a CIE school and accordingly look at attracting further international Asian students to their schools.

5.4 Generalisations

This research study has not attempted to generalise these results to all schools offering the CIE pathway. It does, however, suggest that other schools that already offer the CIE qualification use this qualification as a marketing tool, particularly in Asian countries. Whether these schools will be successful in attracting additional overseas students will depend on the extent to which they offer the CIE qualification. Some CIE schools do not offer the full range of CIE subjects. Two of the schools in this study were seen as two of the very top academic schools in New Zealand. This academic ranking may have had some influence in the attraction of international Asian students to these schools. Other schools offering the CIE could well attract international Asian students in the short term. Maintaining this attraction would depend on a number of factors not least of all would be how these students performed in the CIE qualification.

5.5 Recommendations

At present the ASCNZ promotes the CIE qualification to all schools throughout New Zealand. It does not promote this qualification to overseas agents or New Zealand education export agencies. This study recommends that the association should promote through the education export sector the CIE qualification particularly in Asian countries. The association needs to set up an alliance amongst its members to market this “quality” product. Mazzarol and Soutar (1999) detail two distinctive competencies for generating competitive advantage for educational institutions within educational markets. These are: brand identity and coalition formation. Such an alliance would be a win/win situation for Cambridge University, which administers both the CIE and funds the ASCNZ. Not only would more students sit the CIE and generate revenue for the university, but the New Zealand CIE
schools would be likely to attract further international students and further revenue to their schools.

The New Zealand government should also promote the fact some New Zealand schools offer the CIE qualification through such agencies as; New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Export New Zealand. The government needs to acknowledge that a dual qualification pathway is available in some New Zealand schools. At present the government promotes the current NCEA qualification as the only major pathway available in New Zealand secondary schools. This study has shown that there are some international students not prepared to study the NCEA qualification as they do not perceive it as a global qualification. With the significant drop in the number of international students studying in New Zealand secondary schools since 2002, it is important that students that want to study the CIE qualification are encouraged to study this qualification in New Zealand rather than in another country. The value of these extra students studying in New Zealand is an important export earner not only for the particular school but also for New Zealand in general.

5.6 Additional research

The Ministry of Education does not have data available on which qualification pathways individual international students study. This data can only be obtained directly from individual schools. It would only require a minor alteration to the July 1st annual returns of students at Secondary schools, for the Ministry of Education to obtain and collate this data. Such data would allow additional research to be carried out in this important export industry.

Further research on satisfaction levels of international students studying both the CIE and NCEA qualifications would be a valuable continuation and expansion of this study.

This study has focused on international Asian students. As the CIE is a UK based qualification New Zealand schools offering the CIE may also attract students from the UK and other European countries to study this qualification. At present over 90% of the international secondary school students come from Asian countries (Ministry of Education, 2006). Research in this area would be another worthwhile extension of this study and could lead to a niche market being developed with students from such countries.
5.7 Summary

The decline in the number of international secondary schools has had a major financial impact on both New Zealand and on individual secondary schools. International students have been the main secondary source of income for New Zealand secondary schools since the 1990s (Ministry of Education, 2001a). This study suggests that international Asian students choose an institution that offers what they perceive to be a quality qualification pathway. In the view of the students involved in this case study, the CIE is a superior qualification to the other major New Zealand qualification pathway the NCEA. This study should encourage other schools offering the CIE to form an alliance to market this qualification in particular in Asian countries.

The old business saying, that the customer is always right, needs to be taken on board by the New Zealand secondary schools if they wish to attract international students back into their schools.
References


http://www.fyhe.qut.edu.au/FYHE_Previous/papers02/Hunter-PickeringPaper.doc


Appendices

Appendix 1

In-depth Interview Questions Students

Intended semi structured interview sequence – the major questions are numbered – possible supplementary questions are then included to draw out opinions that may not initially surface.

1. What are your views of the secondary qualifications available in New Zealand?
   a) What are the major qualification pathways available in New Zealand secondary schools?
   b) What do you know about the NZ education secondary school qualification system, the NCEA?
   c) What comments had you heard about this NZ secondary school qualification system before you came to NZ?
   d) What have you heard about this NZ secondary school qualification system since you have come to NZ?

2. Why did you choose to study at this school?
   a) What is special about this school?
   b) What does this school offer that many other NZ secondary schools don’t offer?
   c) What words come to mind when you think of your current school?

3. Please tell me about the course you are currently studying
   a) Describe the CIE qualification
   b) Describe the way it is assessed.
   c) What is good about this qualification?
   d) Comparing NCEA and CIE which do you see as the premier qualification?
   e) Why do you say this?

4. What type of qualification system have you experienced in your home country?
   a) What was good about this qualification?
   b) What didn’t you like about this qualification system?
   c) How does it compare to the CIE?

5. Where will you go when you have finished your studies at your school?
   a) University?
   b) In New Zealand or Overseas?

6. Recognition of your qualification.
   a) Will your current qualification be recognized in your home country?
   b) Will your current qualification be recognized in other countries?
   c) Is the recognition fact important in choosing this qualification?

7. In summary what was the major reason for you choosing this particular school to study at?

8. Are there any other opinions you have about secondary school education that you would like to mention?

Thank you for assisting me with my research which is looking at International students taking the CIE qualification in New Zealand. Your identity will not be disclosed at time prior to or in the final write up of this research.
Appendix 2
In-depth Interview Questions International Student Coordinators

Intended semi structured interview sequence – the major questions are numbered – possible supplementary questions are then included to draw out opinions that may not initially surface.

1. What do you see as the major reasons International students have chosen to study at your school?
   a. What is special about this school?
   b. What does this school offer that many other NZ secondary schools don’t offer?
   c. What words come to mind when you think of your current school?

2. When you are marketing your school overseas, what are the key statements you would use to describe your school?

3. In feedback from overseas agents what are the major selling points they use to attract International students to your school?

4. In talking to departing International students what are the main reasons they give for originally choosing to study at your school.

5. In comparison to most other New Zealand schools, what do you see as the competitive advantages your school has in attracting International students?
   a) Can you rank these advantages?

6. Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding the recruitment of International students to your school?

Thank you for assisting me with my research which is looking at International students taking the CIE qualification in New Zealand.

Your identity will not be disclosed at time prior to or in the final write up of this research.
Appendix 3
Letter to principals requesting information on their International student numbers and requesting permission to interview a small group of international students.

The Principal

Dear ….

At present I am completing an MBIE (Master of Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship from Unitec). I am researching the following question; “Does the CIE give a school a competitive advantage in attracting International fee paying Students?”

Nationally secondary schools have experienced more than a 40% decrease in International student numbers in the last four years. I wish to obtain data on whether this downturn has been as severe in schools that offer the CIE.

I would be grateful if you would complete the four questions in the attached form and return it in the self addressed envelope. I am writing to the principals of the 44 schools offering CIE in New Zealand. This data will allow me to complete the first part of my data analysis.

Could you also please indicate if you would allow me to complete an in depth interview of five of your International students on why these students have come to New Zealand and to your particular school.

While in no way will your school be identified in my report, I would appreciate you entering your school’s name on the return sheet. This will allow me to send you the results of my study.

Thank you in anticipation of your assistance

Yours sincerely

Jim Lonergan
Data from schools offering CIE in New Zealand

1) Number of International Students at your school (March 1st Return)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Year your students first entered in CIE examinations ..........

3) 2006 % of year 11, 12, 13 students (domestic and international) entering one or more CIE subjects. (Please tick one box)

- 0 – 10%
- 11 – 20%
- 21 – 30%
- 31 – 40%
- 41 – 50%
- 51 – 60%
- 61 – 80%
- 81 – 100%

4) Name of your school ........................................

Thank you again for your assistance.

Please return in the accompanying envelope to;

Jim Lonergan
Appendix 4

Innovation in the Education Export Industry

In signing this form you are agreeing to participate in an interview concerning your school currently offering the CIE qualification.

I have had the research project explained to me and have understood the information sheet provided.

I agree to take part in this project, and understand that the interview will be audio-taped. I can ask for this tape to be turned off at any time.

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw my consent up to two weeks following my interview.

I understand the school I am studying at has agreed to this research being carried out and has given permission for this interview.

I understand my participation will be confidential and no direct identifiable information will be made to anyone other than the researcher or his supervisors. The information will be held on a password protected computer for five years. The audio tapes will held in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s residence.

I understand that short anonymous quotes from my interview may be included in the final research write up.

I understand that I may contact the researcher, Jim Lonergan on 021172292 or his supervisor Asoka Gunaratne at Unitec, on 8154321 ext 7035 if I have any queries about the research.

I have had time to consider my participation and hereby give consent to do so.

I have already turned 16 years of age.

Participant Signature………………………………………Date…………

Researcher Signature………     …………

……………….Date………….

Guardian Signature……………………………………….Date ………..

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2007.763)

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (15/11/2007) to (15/11/2008). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 5

Information for participants

Innovation in the Education Export industry

My name is James Lonergan and I am completing a Master of Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Unitec. To finish this Masters degree I need to complete an industry based research topic of my choice. My research is looking at what attracts international Asian students, studying the International Cambridge examinations (CIE), to New Zealand secondary schools. I am doing this research in three Auckland schools and will interview five students from each of these schools.

What am I doing?
I am trying to find out why internationals students are choosing to study the CIE in New Zealand. The research will be particularly useful for New Zealand schools offering the CIE.

What it will mean for you
I will interview you and ask you questions about the current qualifications that can be taken at New Zealand secondary schools and why you have chosen the CIE qualification. This interview will occur at your school and take about thirty minutes; it will be in school time. It will be tape recorded so that I can replay the interview and go over your responses. Your school has given me permission to carry out this interview. Your school, however, will not be able to listen to the tape recording or link you to any statements I may make in my final report. The tape recording will be erased after I have taken transcripts (typed out parts of the conversation) from it. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a Consent Form. This does not stop you from changing you mind if you wish to withdraw from the project. However, because of the need to write up the report, any withdrawals must be made within two weeks of the interview. Your name and any information that could identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information I collect will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my house or on a password protected computer. Only you, I and my researchers will be allowed access to this information.

Please contact me if you more information about this project. If you have any concerns about the research you may contact my supervisor:

My supervisor is Asoka Gunaratne, phone 815 4321 ext 7035 or e-mail kgunaratne@unitec.ac.nz

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2007.763)

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (15/11/2007) to (15/11/2008). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.