What Factors Influence Students' Choice of Study Abroad Agencies?

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Abstract

Due to the limited higher education resources in China, more and more people no longer regard higher education as their only goal. The demand for study abroad is increasing year by year, which promotes the rapid development of study abroad agency business.

Based on this phenomenon, our research question is: What factors influence students' choice of study abroad agency? Targeted improvement and promotion will influence the choice of students who want to study abroad for study abroad agencies.

We assume that economic levels, GPAs and IELTS scores, writing abilities, preference for the agencies, degree of familiarity with the application process, friends' and parents' opinions will affect the choice of students in year 2 and year 3 who want to study abroad in China. We used correlation and linear regression analysis as our research methods to analyze the question.

For the results, we found that IELTS/TOEFL score, writing ability, students' preference of agency, and the degree of familiarity with the application process are correlated to their decision on choosing the agency.

Keywords: correlation, linear regression, students' preference of learning agency, writing ability

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

As China's socio-economic level continues to rise, so does people's need for a spiritual level, and therefore people are paying more and more attention to education. In addition, with the continuous advancement of economic globalization in the last half-century, international economic dependence has become more and more significant. As a result, the cultivation of international talents has become a top priority in the cultural strategy of each country. The demand for study abroad increases due to both social demand and government policies. According to the latest survey by UNESCO, China has become the largest exporter of international students today, ranking first in the number and scale of international students exported (Wang, 2017).

The demand for study abroad promotes the rapid development of study abroad agency business, which provides valuable information about foreign colleges and universities and helps students go through complicated procedures, which is welcomed by people who need to study abroad. However, study abroad agencies are still a sunrise industry in China, and the corresponding laws and regulations are not very sound. Serious homogenization of the market, abnormal market behaviors of illegal agencies, etc., have seriously disturbed the fair competition of the market order of study abroad services, making its service market one of the industries with the highest complaint rate in China in recent years (Xiang, 2015).

In this paper, we will study the factors influencing people (*university students*) to choose different study abroad agencies to clarify what formal study abroad agencies can do to improve themselves to seize a more significant market share.

The uneven quality of study abroad institutions make students in need hesitant when choosing, and they cannot fully understand whether the study abroad institutions they choose can meet their requirements, but it may be because they cannot handle complex procedures and do not know the study abroad procedures as well as professionals, being forced to choose some relatively passable study abroad institutions that cannot fully meet their own needs.

For overseas study institutions, in addition to the most basic overseas study services, how to better meet the needs of students, and what aspects to improve their service quality, to become a leader from many competitors through benign competition and improve the overall service quality of overseas study institutions.

Therefore, in this research, we can understand the factors that people (college students) choose to study abroad institutions and give them a clear direction. In addition, by collecting the needs of people (college students), the research can promote the improvement of the service of overseas study institutions, and make some changes for the future overseas study service industry.

1.2 Research Question

Research Question: What factors influence students' choice of study abroad agencies?

Due to the increasing number of study abroad agencies, the competition between traditional study abroad agencies and new private study abroad agencies with small studios is increasing. There is a problem that it is difficult for formal study abroad agencies to continuously improve their competitiveness in the new competitive situation. Therefore, to help study abroad agencies understand the actual demands of customers and improve their service quality correspondingly, we conduct research on the influencing factors of college students' choice of different study abroad agencies.

To solve this dilemma, we consider investigating in various directions. The first direction is the objective background of students. It includes students' economic background, geographical background, and academic background. Academic background includes students' college, academic performance GPA, and writing level. Subjective perspectives include students' own opinions and others' opinions. Students' own opinions are their favorable impression of study abroad agencies and their familiarity with the application process, while others' opinions include the opinions of their families and friends.

In the existing research, people tend to pursue the goal of studying abroad with high quality, which is a great challenge for China's overseas study consulting agencies (Dou, 2019). The most important is how study abroad agencies improve their service. Therefore, the solution is agencies need to satisfy different kinds of customers' demands, to become customer-oriented companies. First of all, agencies can adapt to customers' objective conditions by adjusting their external conditions such as hard service and price. In addition, agencies can attract more customers from a subjective point of view by increasing publicity and popularizing the application process. Thus, the research question is: What factors influence students' choice of study abroad agencies?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction of Study Abroad Agencies

2.1.1 Definition of Study Abroad Agencies

Study abroad agencies are educational service institutions, through cooperation with foreign schools, education departments, or other educational institutions, carry out intermediary activities related to citizens studying abroad.

The services of study abroad agencies include consulting on studying abroad and foreign education policies, contacting foreign schools, applying for visas, and so on. With the growing demand of Chinese students for overseas education, more and more study abroad agencies have appeared.

2.1.2 Justification

After studying the literature, it is found that the existing studies focus on the factors affecting students studying abroad. And the factors that affect studying abroad are also important factors that affect the choice of agencies. For example, a series of analyses and solutions of study abroad agencies can influence students who choose to study abroad because of these reasons, whether to choose the agencies. In terms of overseas study services, some students especially need to know information and introduction about the learning and living environment of foreign universities, admission procedures and standards, what characteristics foreign universities value in students, and how to prepare for overseas study (Li, 2020).

Therefore, for these problems, the corresponding services provided by study abroad agencies are the part that international students attach importance to, thus affecting whether students choose institutions. Only by first understanding students' needs and concerns about studying abroad can study abroad agencies customize their services and publicity according to these reasons. Targeted improvement and promotion will affect the choice of institutions for students who want to study abroad based on these reasons.

2.2 Influencing Factors that Impact the Choice of Studying Abroad

2.2.1 Social (Family and School) Background

Gao & Jiang (2019) conducted an empirical analysis based on the BCSPS long-term analysis survey and questionnaires for ten consecutive years on the influence and trend analysis of family background on undergraduates' choice of further study. The results show that the children of the socially advantaged class are more inclined to study abroad after graduation. The influence of family background on each variable over time presents different trends, students of high-income families choosing to study abroad advantages highlighted continued. It is concluded that the role of family economic capital has an important impact on college students' choice of further study.

Chen (2011) claimed that the students who choose agencies should really care about the future education of them. The intermediary provides only information, while the "study abroad service agency" provides a service to provide students with life or career planning. Through scientific and reasonable planning and design, help students successfully complete their study abroad and finally grow into an international talent useful to the society.

2.2.2 Major

Qu (2020) investigated and compared the decision-making of different Chinese students studying abroad from the perspective of ambiguous disgust. The degree of ambiguous aversion among students of different disciplines was compared through multiple linear regression models, KL divergence, and Ellsberg's experiments. Based on the vagueness aversion in behavioral economics, the study found various factors such as students in finance and economics universities have a higher appetite for risk and are keener to study abroad.

2.2.3 COVID-19

Liu & Ji (2021) COVID-19 has a huge impact on social, public health, the economy, and education. As the epidemic spreads around the world, international economic exchanges and relations have been hit. The study abroad service industry involves transnational personnel mobility and is greatly affected by international relations. By analyzing the impact of COVID-19 on study abroad in terms of entry and exit, standardized tests, and global school closures, we further discuss the expected development of the study abroad service industry after COVID-19.

Hu (2021) explained that the study abroad agency was affected by the COVID-19, but the business is getting better. According to a survey of 30000 international students conducted by qs2020, a global higher education analysis institution, more than half of the respondents said that the study abroad plan had been affected, of which the number of Chinese students was the largest, accounting for 66% of the total affected. Nearly half of the affected Chinese students decided to postpone their study abroad plans, and some decided to change their study destinations. However, although the proportion of Chinese students affected is the highest, the proportion of Chinese students who decide to give up studying abroad is the lowest, only 4%.

2.2.4 Living Environment in the Target Country

Li (2020) sampled students in the Sino-foreign cooperative education program of Guizhou University and analyzed the factors affecting their willingness to study abroad, to provide some inspiration for student management and better management and service for overseas students. It can be seen that in terms of overseas study services, students need to know the study and living environment of foreign universities, the admission process and standards, and how to prepare for studying abroad.

Zhang et al. (2021) conducted a self-developed online survey on Chinese students who have studied in Korea. The study found that the choice of studying abroad is mainly affected by geographical location, China and South Korea relations, employment prospects, expenses for studying abroad, and other factors. This study showed the influencing factors of the choices of Chinese students studying abroad. And it will help to provide scientific and rational decision-making for students who want to study abroad.

2.3 Research About Study Abroad Agencies

2.3.1 The Condition of Study Abroad Market

Song (2007) Foreign cooperative education has been gradually established in many cities and regions at home and abroad. Among them, the education of studying abroad mainly takes the form of state public assignment and self-payment. Due to the regulation of the market economy, studying abroad at one's own expense has changed the traditional school running concept, supply mode, and operation mechanism, and gradually moved towards market-oriented competition.

Chen & Yue (2020) studied the trend of college students studying abroad and the impact of demographic characteristics, family background, human capital, and teaching satisfaction on college students studying abroad. The study found that the number of college students studying abroad increased steadily, and the rate of college

students studying abroad with different backgrounds changed differently; The better the family economic conditions, the higher the level of colleges and universities, and the better the academic performance, the greater the probability of studying abroad; The probability of college student party members studying abroad is low.

Jin et al. (2019) took the undergraduates of Sun Yat-sen University as the main analysis object, analyzing the willingness and influencing factors of college students to study abroad from a comprehensive perspective. According to the past research results, this paper summarizes three perspectives that affect individuals' willingness to further study, namely, individuals, families, and schools. The general factor analysis is carried out from these three angles, the corresponding policy suggestions are put forward, and the overall investigation is reflected and summarized.

2.3.2 Agencies Need to Actively Communicate and Coordinate with Students

Du (2020) explored how to make the value proposition more explicit and find suitable ways in which the company can further develop its business by using the value proposition canvas. The study concluded that customer needs to create value, and extend services to make sure that the scope of the company's services should be able to cover the needs of customers and enhance communication with customers.

Raby et al. (2021) conducted interviews and focus group discussions with 22 students at a U.S. university and with teachers and staff working at a study abroad agency in London. They found that students identified a lack of coordination and communication with study abroad agencies as a major barrier to their preparation to study abroad. Lack of advisor support and misinformation made some students feel alone in the application process, and the lack of information also exacerbated students' anxiety about studying abroad.

2.3.3 The Need for Relationship Marketing for Study Abroad Agencies

Zhou (2011) examined the current state of relationship marketing among agencies in the study abroad industry in Hubei, China, as a way to explore the sustainable development of study abroad agencies. The study found that the retention of large clients and the improvement of individual client satisfaction (through word-of-mouth) can provide a sustainable competitive advantage to Chinese self-funded study abroad consulting organizations based on commitment and trust mechanisms.

Peng (2017) explored the relationship between the study abroad training industry brand image and consumer purchase intention. This paper combined the BELL Brand image model and the characteristics of the industry, establishing the brand image of the measurement model. The results suggested that the study abroad training industry shapes brand image in the right way, and makes the direction of study in the training industry more accurate from the consumer will.

Shi (2017) used the SWOT analysis matrix to analyze the internal and external marketing environment of company A. It makes a statistical analysis of the survey results, summarizes the characteristics of consumer behavior and the factors affecting consumer behavior, analyzes the impact of consumer behavior on the marketing of company a, and then designs a marketing scheme for the company a combined with the theory of service marketing and relationship marketing.

Li (2021) told that it is of great practical significance to study how to find a more effective competitive strategy for the company, obtain sustainable competitive advantage and withstand the impact of some new enterprises and old competitors under the circumstances of today's volatile international situation, lower and lower information barriers, increasing information transparency, emerging new technologies and evolving industry pattern.

2.3.4 Applicants' Perception of the Agency Market Situation Matters

Wang (2013) analyzed the development of the service supply chain. This paper carried out education agents market research, comprehensively studies applicants' recognition of the extent of the market, and provided some support and help for people to know the industry. Moreover, this paper introduced the survey method, focused on the investigation and analysis of the cognitive status of Chinese applicants, and analyzed the applicants' selection standards and the charge feedback.

2.3.5 Service Quality of Agency

Liu (2011) based on service, used the service quality gap model to analyze the current service quality status and evaluate which service can impress customers most. This paper discusses the reasons for the gap in service quality, and puts forward strategic suggestions to improve service quality in combination with service process analysis and customer contact analysis. This paper makes an in-depth study on this subject from the aspect of the enterprise service quality gap.

Liu (2022) analyzed the pain points and difficult problems of industrial development based on the overall grasp of the basic situation of Ningbo overseas study service industry, analyzes, and puts forward targeted countermeasures and suggestions to promote the benign development of Ningbo overseas study service industry.

Lu (2013) took the government study abroad service institutions as the main body, classifying and analyzing the target public according to the actual situation in the work. Through the analysis of various overseas study cases, it is found that the government overseas study service institutions ignore psychological guidance for the early consultation of overseas students, lack of learning tracking mechanism, and the arrangement ability of returned overseas student needs to be improved. It is suggested to change passive service into active service, change short-term service into continuous service, and improve service level.

3. Hypothesis

H1: Students' High Economic Level Leads to Choosing a Study Abroad Agency.

Students have to pay a certain amount of money to the agency but it is not cheap. If the students or their families have strong economic strength, they will think the money is easy to afford which can enjoy good service and spend less time dealing with different application materials. If the students do not have extra money to afford it, they may not pay the agency.

H2: Students with Lower GPAs (Grade Point Average) Prefer to Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

Students with lower GPAs may need the help of an agency to help them improve other personal backgrounds like internship experience. In addition, the agency also provides more information and advice on choosing a university which not be strict for the score based on their experience. Higher GPA students have the confidence to handle the application process on their own and get an offer from the university. The students with lower scores prefer to study abroad to avoid the competition in the graduate student entrance examination (Ming, 2020). But they want to go to the big-name school. Therefore, we conjecture those students with lower scores have more difficulty going to famous schools and they want the aid by the agency.

H3: Students with Lower Expected or Actual IELTS/TOFEL Scores Prefer to Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

Students who have lower IELTS scores or even do not have an IELTS score will want to look for an agency to help them improve or promote other abilities to make up for it. Zheng C. (2017) said that most come for consultation on the English exam and seek advice from agencies according to the actual situation. We assume that higher IELTS score students consider themselves have enough attributes and excellent English skills to apply to university successfully. For this question's data collection, we will separate the score into different ranges at different level, we don't need students to write down the specific score.

H4: Students with Lower Writing Abilities Prefer to Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

There are two ways to apply for foreign graduate students, one is to apply by yourself, and the other is to find an institution to study abroad. In the process of applying for postgraduate, students need to submit a personal statement and resume which requires good writing skills to complete them. But the agency can provide ghostwriting services to ease students' concerns. Students will seek help from institutions when they have no confidence in their writing level (Likai, 2017).

H5: The Higher Level of Students' Preference for the Agency Makes Them Choose the Agency.

Students can learn all aspects of the agency's information from multiple channels. Whether students choose an agency, depends on the perception affected by agency products, services, and reputation. If most of the information is positive, they may trust the agency rather than apply by themselves.

H6: Students Who Have a Lower Degree of Familiarity with the Application Process Prefer to Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

The application process for the postgraduate can be complex and cost a lot of time to research and prepare. Students who do not clearly learn about the process may have no idea how to apply it and want to find professional people to help them implement it.

H7: The Positive Suggestions of Friends Makes Students Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

Friends sometimes may advise on selecting an agency to reduce the application pressure based on their own experience, it will influence the decision of students whether to choose an agency.

H8: The Positive Opinion of Parents on the Agency Makes Students Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

Parents' opinion is important to influence your evaluation of the agency. If they support you in choosing you will probably do it. But if they disapprove of the service provided by the agency, it will make some changes to students' decisions. Ming Y. (2020) mentioned that the job of parents affects the choice of students to study abroad. We can infer that their comments also play an important role in the process of choosing an agency.

4. Methodology

4.1 Questionnaire Development

4.1.1 Research Object

The research object is the year 2 and year 3 Chinese students who want to study abroad. The students come from different level schools and have different economic level.

4.1.2 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire design is based on our hypothesis. The participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire attached in Appendix. There are two parts to our questionnaire which are the personal background and questions related to the choice of a study abroad agency.

Firstly, we set the question to whether the respondents are willing to study abroad to screen our research objects. The personal background questions include nationality, grade, and school type. For the nationality, we set whether you are Chinese people. There are four options for the grade, from year 1 to year 4. We divided universities into 4 types, Ordinary college or below (excluding Sino-foreign cooperation in education), 211/985 (Key Universities), Sino-foreign cooperation in education, and Foreign universities.

The second part is related to our main research question. We set two questions about the students' economic level. We ask for the acceptable price range for an overseas study agency and the amount of total monthly expenditure. As for the score, we set two questions. There are different calculation methods of the score in different universities so we have to convert to a uniform standard. Students may not give the real score so we set the range of CGPA. The IELTS/TOEFL test has the problem that whether the students have taken it. If the students have taken it, they can choose the real score in the range we set. If the students haven't taken it, we ask for the score they expect to get. The English writing level is divided into five-level, from excellent to poor. The familiarity of the application process is divided into four levels, from very unfamiliar to very familiar. We also ask about the preference of the overseas study agency based on the students' perception. After that, we ask whether the friend and parents' advice will affect the choice of agency.

4.1.3 Questionnaire Analysis

We received 302 questionnaires, of which 215 were valid. We set up two identical questions at the beginning and the end, if the answers are inconsistent, the questionnaire will be regarded as invalid. The students in year 1 and year 4 and those who have no intention to go abroad are also invalid. Besides, we screened out those who answered the questionnaire in less than 30 seconds. Therefore, we have 215 valid questionnaires and analyze them based on these data.

4.2 Data Collection Method

The target population of the research is all students who plan to study abroad in China, while the sample frame is all the year 3 college students in China who plan to study abroad because this group is mainly the people who intend to study abroad and look for agencies. The sample frame is in public types according to a public survey online, which is cheap and fast to get answers.

We use snowball as our data collection method based on referrals. We decide to use a questionnaire to collect the data. The sample is to choose over 30 students in year 3 from the target population which is the year three students who want to study abroad in China. We need to choose the initial sample from our friends in year 2 and year 3 who want to study abroad, then they recruit their friends to complete the questionnaire. This process will continue to repeat based on existing subjects providing referrals to recruit samples until satisfying the requirement of our research.

4.3 Research Methods

Method 1:

To test our hypothesis, we will first calculate whether the dependent and independent variables within our hypothesis have a correlation using SPSS. A correlation is a non-deterministic relationship, and the correlation coefficient is a quantity that examines the degree of linear correlation between variables. The correlation coefficient, $r > 0$, means that the two variables are positively correlated, i.e., the two variables change in the same direction; when $r < 0$, they are negatively correlated, i.e., the two variables change in opposite directions; $r = 1$ is a perfectly positive correlation; $r = -1$ is a perfectly negative correlation, and $r = 0$ is no correlation. The value r ranges from 0.3 to 0.5 is called low correlation, from 0.5 to 0.8 is called significant correlation, and above 0.8 is a high correlation.

Value Range of *r*	Degree of Correlation
|r|=0	No Linear Correlation
0≤|r|<0.3	Low Linear Correlation
0.3≤|r|<0.5	Low or Medium Degree Linear Correlation
0.5≤|r|<0.8	Medium Linear Correlation
0.8≤|r|<1	Highly Linear Correlation
|r|=1	Perfectly Positive/Negative Correlation*
*If r>0, the two variables are positively correlated. If r<0, they are negatively correlated.	

Method 2 (Only if the two variables have correlated relationships):

In order to study the influence relationship, direction and degree of our hypothesis, we choose to use linear regression analysis. First, the model fitting was analyzed by R square value (representing the fitting degree of regression line to the observed value). Second, analyze the significance of X. When *t* test is performed on the model (used to test the significance of coefficients of various variables), if *p* (representing the value rejecting the null hypothesis) <0.05 or *t*> 2, it indicates that X has an influence on Y. When passing the *F* test (significance test of global regression equation), if the *p*<0.05, it indicates that the global regression is significant.

Adj R^2: improve the R square test to avoid the effect of increasing variables on R^2.

VIF: VIF = $\frac{1}{1-R^2}$ refers to the ratio of the variance of the estimator of the regression coefficient to that of the variance when the assumed independent variables are not linearly correlated. It is a measure of the degree of multicollinearity in multiple linear regression models. The range of variance inflation coefficient<10 is acceptable, indicating that there is no collinearity problem between independent variables.

Beta: regression coefficient.

Method 3

Binary logistic regression is a type of regression analysis that is useful for situations in which the outcome for a target variable can have only two possible types. It is used to estimate the relationship between a dichotomous dependent variable and dichotomous-, interval-, and ratio-level independent variables. This technique helps to identify important factors impacting the target variable and also the nature of the relationship between each of these factors and the dependent variable. When X affects Y, the mathematical model can be constructed as follows:

$$\ln\left(\frac{P}{1-P}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \cdots + \beta_m X_m$$

ln(p/1-p) obey binary logistic regression. In our case, p represents the probability of 1 for a study abroad agent was or will be chosen, and 1-p represents the probability of 0 for a study abroad agent was or will be selected.

Our analysis is according to the following data as the basic statistic.

Basic Statistic			
Items	Categories	Frequency	Percent (%)
Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agent?	Yes	128	59.53%
	No	87	40.47%
	Total	215	100
Yes=1, No=0			

5. Results

H1: Students' High Economic Level Leads to Choosing a Study Abroad Agency.

We hypothesized that students' high economic level leads to choosing a study abroad agency and test this hypothesis using correlation analysis.

•   **Correlation Analysis**

Variable Types	Variable Assignment Description
Independent Variable	
Have you chosen or will you choose a study abord agency?	Yes=1, No=2
Dependent Variable	
How much is your total monthly expenditure?	A. Less than ￥1500=1 B. ￥1501-￥3500=2 C. ￥3501-￥6000=3 D. ￥6001-￥1000=4 E. More than ￥1001=5

Linear Correlation		
		The Choice of Study Abroad Agency
Students' Economic Levels	Correlation Coefficient	0.027
	p value	0.69
*p<0.05 **p<0.01		

From the above table, it can be seen that the correlation analysis is used to study the correlation between DV and students' economic levels. The Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to indicate the strength of the correlation. Specific analysis shows that: The correlation coefficient value between DV and students' economic levels is 0.027, which is close to 0, and the p-value is 0.690>0.05. Therefore, DV is not correlated with students' economic levels, which means that this hypothesis of ours is not valid.

H2: Students with Lower GPAs (Grade Point Average) Prefer to Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

- **Correlation Analysis**

We hypothesized that the level of students' GPA correlates with whether the student chooses a study abroad agency or not and tried to test it using correlation analysis. In this analysis, as shown in the table below, we obtained a more appropriate way of categorizing and assigning grades to integrate the different forms of calculating grades (4-point scale and 100-point scale).

Variable Types	Variable Assignment Description
Independent Variable	
Choose a study abroad agency	Yes=1, No=2
Dependent Variable	
Grade Point Average Points	A. 3.00 or below/60 or below=1 B. 3.00-3.30/61-70=2 C. 3.31-3.50/71-80=3 D. 3.51-3.69/81-90=4 E. 3.70-4.00/91-100=5

Using SPSS correlation analysis to investigate the correlation between whether or not they chose or will choose a study abroad agency and CGPAs, we can get a table as follows: the Pearson correlation coefficient value between whether or not they chose or will choose a study abroad agent and CGPAs is 0.022, which is close to 0, and the p-value is 0.746>0.05, thus indicating that there is no correlation between whether or not they chose or will choose a study abroad agent and GPA. Therefore, choosing a study abroad agent and GPA are not correlated, which means that this hypothesis of ours is not valid.

		Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agency?
CGPA	Coefficient	0.022
	p value	0.746
*p<0.05 **p<0.01		

H3: Students with Lower Expected or Actual IELTS/TOFEL Scores Prefer to Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

- **Correlation Analysis**

We hypothesized that students' low expected IELTS/TOEFL scores or students' actual IELTS/TOEFL scores would choose an overseas study agent and we conducted correlation analysis to calculate the correlation of the two variables. To ensure the accuracy of calculation as much as possible, we assign values to x variables and y variables, as shown in the following table.

Variable Types	Variable Assignment Description
Independent Variable	
Choose a study abroad agent	Yes=1, No=2
Dependent Variable	
IELTS/TOFEL Average Points	5.5 or below/0-59=1 6.0-6.5/60-93=2 7.0/94-101=3 7.5/102-109=4 8.0 or above/110-120=5

SPSS was used for correlation analysis to study the correlation between whether students choose or will choose an overseas study intermediary (Y dependent variable) and their IELTS/TOEFL scores (X independent variable), and correlation coefficient was used to indicate the strength of the correlation. The specific analysis is as follows: The correlation coefficient between Y and X is 0.758, and p-value less than 0.01 shows significance at the level of 0.01, which verifies that the correlation between the two is not random. Therefore, there is a significant positive correlation between whether students choose or will choose an overseas study agency and their IELTS/TOEFL scores.

		Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agent?
IELT/TOFEL Scores Level	Coefficient	0.758
	p value	0.000
*p<0.05 **p<0.01		

• **Linear Regression Analysis**

Through correlation analysis, we found that whether students choose or will choose an overseas study agency is highly positively correlated with their IELTS/TOEFL scores. In order to verify this answer again, we choose to study whether there is an influence relationship between them, the direction of influence and the degree of influence through linear regression. The analysis is as follows:

Y: Whether students choose or will choose an overseas study agency

X: student's expected or actual IELTS/TOEFL scores

The model formula is: Y=0.434+ 0.312*X

R	R^2	Adj R^2
0.758	0.574	0.572

As shown in table above, R square value is 0.574, which means that the model has a fitting degree of 57.4%, that is, X can explain 57.4% of the changes in Y.

	Sum of squares	df	The mean square	F	P-value
Regression	29.739	1	29.739	287.187	0.000

If the model passes the F test ($p<0.05$), indicating that the model is meaningful. As shown in table above, it is found that the model passes the F-test ($F=287.187$, $p=0.000<0.05$), indicating that X must have an influence on Y.

Parameter Estimates (*n*=215)						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	*t*	*p*	VIF
Constant	0.434	0.061	-	7.065	0.000**	-
IELTS/TOFEL Scores	0.312	0.018	0.758	16.947	0.000**	1.000
Dependent Variable: Have you chosen or will choose a study abroad agency?						
* *p*<0.05 ***p*<0.01						

The final analysis shows that: the regression coefficient value of students' IELTS/TOEFL score level is 0.312 (*t*=16.947, *p*=0.000<0.01), which means that IELTS/TOEFL score level has a significant positive influence on whether students choose or will choose an overseas study agent. The hypothesis of ours is not correct.

- **Binary Logit Regression Analysis**

This analysis only changes the yes and no assignment cases, i.e., yes = 1 and no = 0.

Items	Coefficient	Std. Error	z value	Wald χ^2	*p*	OR	OR 95% CI
IELTS/TOFEL Scores	-2.559	0.341	-7.513	56.446	0.000	0.077	0.404 ~ 0.151
Constant	8.706	1.134	7.677	58.935	0.000	6041.47	654.321 ~ 55782.163
Dependent Variable: Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agent?							
McFadden R Square: 0.557							
Cox & Snell R Square: 0.528							
Nagelkerke R Square: 0.713							

The original hypothesis for model testing here is: the model quality is the same in both cases with or without independent variables; Here, the *p*<0.05, which indicates that the original hypothesis is rejected, that is, the independent variables added in this model construction are valid, and this model construction is meaningful.

The final concrete analysis: The regression coefficient of students' IELTS/TOEFL score level was -2.559 and showed significance at 0.01 level (*z*=-7.513, *p*=0.000<0.01), which means that students' IELTS/TOEFL score level has a significant negative impact on whether students choose or will choose an overseas study agency. And the OR value is 0.077, which means that when X increases by one unit, Y changes (decreases) by 0.077 times.

χ^2	*df*	*p* value
0.901	3	0.825

As can be seen from the above table: the model fitting value is consistent with the observed value; *p*>0.05(χ^2=0.901, *p*=0.825>0.05), therefore, it indicates that the original hypothesis is accepted, the model passes HL test and the goodness of fit of the model is good.

H4: Students with Lower Writing Abilities Prefer to Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

We will analyze the relationship between students' writing ability and whether they choose an overseas study agency. Our hypothesis is that students with lower writing abilities are more likely to choose an overseas study agency. By analyzing the questionnaire data, we verified our hypothesis. We write "2. Have you chosen or will choose an overseas study agency?" as Q2 and "14. How do you think of your English writing level?" as Q14.

Variable Types	Variable Assignment Description
Independent Variable	
Choose an overseas study agency	Yes=1, No=2
Dependent Variable	
Writing levels	Excellent=1, Good=2, Average=3, Fair=4, Poor=5

		Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agency?
Student's English Writing Levels	Coefficient	-0.738**
	p value	0.000
*p<0.05 **p<0.01		

- **Correlation Analysis**

As can be seen from the table above, correlation analysis was used to study the correlation between student's English writing levels and whether the student chooses a study abroad agency or not. The Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to indicate the strength of the correlation. The correlation value between student's English writing levels and whether the student chooses a study abroad agency or not is -0.738 and shows significance at the level of 0.01. Therefore, there is a significant negative correlation between student's English writing levels and whether the student chooses a study abroad agency or not.

- **Linear Regression**

Parameter Estimates (n=215)									
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	VIF	R^2	Adj R^2	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta						
Constant	2.154	0.052	-	41.273	0.000**	-	0.544	0.542	F (1,213) =254.259, p=0.000
English Writing Levels	-0.252	0.016	-0.738	-15.945	0.000**	1.000			
Dependent Variable: Have you chosen or will choose a study abroad agency?									
D-W: 1.095									
* p<0.05 **p<0.01									

(1) Analysis

Taking students' English writing levels as independent variable and their choice of study abroad agencies as dependent variable for linear regression analysis, the model formula is: Y=2.154-0.252*X, R² is 0.544, which means that X can explain 54.4% of the changes in Y. The model passed the F-test (F=254.259, p=0.000<0.05), which also indicates that Q14 will definitely have an impact on Q2. Finally, the regression coefficient value of Q14 is -0.252 (t=-15.945, p=0.000<0.01), which means that Q14 has a significant negative influence on Q2.

(2) Regression Analysis

When Q14 is taken as the independent variable and Q2 as the dependent variable for linear regression analysis, the value of model R² is 0.544, which means that Q14 can explain 54.4% of the changes in Q2.

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Regression	28.184	1	28.184	254.259	0.000
Residual	23.611	213	0.111		
Total	51.795	214			

(3) F-test

Parameter Estimates (Detail) (*n*=215)							
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	*p*	95% CI	VIF
	B	Std. Error	*Beta*				
Constant	2.154	0.052	-	41.273	0.000**	2.052~2.256	-
English Writing Levels	-0.252	0.016	-0.738	-15.945	0.000**	-0.283~-0.221	1.000
Dependent Variable: Have you chosen or will choose a study abroad agency?							
* p<0.05 **p<0.01							

F-test is used to test whether the regression model is meaningful.

If the model passes the F test (p<0.05), indicating that the model is meaningful, at least one X will have an impact on Y. On the contrary, if the model does not pass the F test (p>0.05), indicating that model construction is meaningless, and X has no effect on Y. It can be seen from the above table that the model passes the F-test when (F=254.259, p=0.000<0.05), indicating that this model construction is meaningful.

Based on the analysis above, the hypothesis of ours is correct.

• **Binary Logit Regression Analysis**

In this section, the level of students' writing ability is the independent variable x. Whether or not a study abroad agent was chosen as the dependent variable y is analyzed in a binary logit regression. This analysis only changes the yes and no assignment cases, i.e., yes = 1 and no = 0.

Firstly, analyze the overall validity of the model. The original hypothesis of the model test here was that whether to put in the independent variable, i.e., students' writing ability not affect the quality of the model. As shown from the table below, the p-value of 0<0.05, thus rejecting the original hypothesis. This move indicates that the independent variables put in this model construction have validity and this model construction is meaningful.

Items	Coefficient	Std. Error	*z* value	Wald χ^2	*p*	OR	OR 95% CI
14.How do you think of your English writing level?	-1.887	0.244	-7.733	59.801	0	0.152	0.094 ~ 0.245
Constant	6.585	0.855	7.702	59.314	0	724.43	135.568 ~ 3871.141
Dependent Variable: 2. Have you chosen or will choose an overseas study agency? McFadden *R* Square: 0.514 Cox & Snell *R* Square: 0.501 Nagelkerke *R* Square: 0.676							

The table above shows that students' writing ability explains 0.514 of the variation in whether a study abroad agent was or will be selected, modeled as:

$$\ln(p/1-p)=6.585-1.887*x$$

The regression coefficient value for students' writing ability was -1.887. It showed a significance at the 0.01 level (z=-7.733, p=0.000<0.01), implying that students' writing ability has a significant negative effect on whether one chooses or will choose a study abroad agent. The dominance ratio (OR value) of 0.152 implies that a one-unit increase in students' writing ability is associated with a 0.152-fold change in whether one chooses or will choose a study abroad agent.

Hosmer-Lemeshow Goodness-of-Fit Test		
χ^2	*df*	*p* value
1.297	3	0.73

Finally, the Hosmer-Lemeshow Goodness-of-fit test was used to analyze the model fit. The original hypothesis of the model test here is that the model fit and the observed values are in agreement; here, the p-value is 0.730>0.05

(Chi=1.297), thus indicating that the original hypothesis is accepted, which means that this model passes the HL test, and the model fit is good.

H5: The Higher Level of Students' Preference for the Agency Makes Them Choose the Agency.

We will analyze the relationship between students' preference for agency and whether they choose an overseas study agency. Our hypothesis is that students with higher level of preference are more likely to choose overseas study agency. By analyzing the questionnaire data, we verified our hypothesis. We write "2. Have you chosen or will choose an overseas study agency?" as Q2 and "16. How do you like overseas study agency?" as Q16.

- **Correlation Analysis**

Variable Types	Variable Assignment Description
Independent Variable	
Choose an overseas study agency	Yes=1, No=2
Dependent Variable	
Preference for Overseas Study Agencies	Strongly Like=1, Like=2, General=3, Dislike=4, Strongly Dislike=5

		Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agency?
Preference for Overseas Study Agencies	Coefficient	0.548**
	p value	0.000
*p<0.05 **p<0.01		

As can be seen from the table above, correlation analysis was used to study the correlation between students' preferences for overseas study agencies and whether they have chosen or will choose a study abroad agency or not. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to indicate the strength of the correlation. The correlation coefficient value between students' preferences for overseas study agencies and whether they have chosen or will choose a study abroad agency or not was 0.548, and it was significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that there was a significant positive correlation between students' preferences for overseas study agencies and whether they have chosen or will choose a study abroad agency or not.

- **Linear Regression Analysis**

	Parameter Estimates (n=215)								
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	VIF	R^2	Adj R^2	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta						
Constant	0.738	0.075	-	9.810	0.000**	-	0.301	0.297	F (1,213) =91.546, p=0.000
Preferences for Overseas Study Agencies	0.237	0.025	0.548	9.568	0.000**	1.000			
Dependent Variable: Have you chosen or will choose a study abroad agency?									
D-W: 0.590									
* p<0.05 **p<0.01									

(1) Analysis

Taking students' preferences for overseas study agencies as independent variable and whether they have chosen or will choose a study abroad agency or not as dependent variable for linear regression analysis, the model formula is: Y=0.738 + 0.237*X, R² is 0.301, which means that X can explain 30.1% of the changes in Y. The model passed

the F-test (F=91.546, p=0.000<0.05), which also indicates that Q16 will definitely have an impact on Q2. Finally, the regression coefficient value of Q16 is 0.237(t=9.568, p=0.000<0.01), which means that Q16 has a significant positive influence on Q2.

(2) Regression Analysis

When Q16 is taken as the independent variable and Q2 as the dependent variable for linear regression analysis, the value of model R^2 is 0.301, which means that Q16 can explain 30.1% of the changes in Q2.

(3) F-test

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	95% CI	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
Constant	0.738	0.075	-	9.810	0.000**	0.590~0.885	-
Preferences for Overseas Study Agencies	0.237	0.025	0.548	9.568	0.000**	0.188~0.285	1.000
Dependent Variable: Have you chosen or will choose a study abroad agency?							
* p<0.05 **p<0.01							

Parameter Estimates (Detail) (*n*=215)

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	p value
Regression	15.570	1	15.570	91.546	0.000
Residual	36.226	213	0.170		
Total	51.795	214			

F-test is used to test whether the regression model is meaningful.

It can be seen from the above table that the model passes the F-test when (F=91.546, p=0.000<0.05), indicating that the model construction is meaningful.

• **Binary Logit Regression Analysis**

In this section, the level of students' preference for the agency is the independent variable x. Whether or not a study abroad agent was chosen as the dependent variable y is analyzed in a binary logit regression. This analysis only changes the yes and no assignment cases, i.e., yes = 1 and no = 0.

Firstly, analyze the overall validity of the model. The original hypothesis of the model test here was that whether to put in the independent variable, i.e., the level of students' preference for the agency does not affect the quality of the model. As shown from the table below, the p-value of 0<0.05, thus rejecting the original hypothesis. This move indicates that the independent variables put in this model construction have validity and this model construction is meaningful.

Items	Coefficient	Std. Error	z value	Wald χ^2	p	OR	OR 95% CI
16. How do you like overseas study agency?	1.36	0.203	6.69	44.75	0	3.895	2.615 ~ 5.801
Constant	-3.803	0.64	-5.946	35.359	0	0.022	0.006 ~ 0.078
Dependent Variable: 2. Have you chosen or will choose an overseas study agency? McFadden R Square: 0.257 Cox & Snell R Square: 0.293 Nagelkerke R Square: 0.395							

The table above shows that the level of students' preference for the agency explains 0.257 of the variation in whether a study abroad agent was or will be selected, modeled as:

$$\ln(p/1-p)=-3.803 + 1.360*x$$

The regression coefficient value for the level of students' preference for the agency was 1.360. It showed a

significance at the 0.01 level (z=6.690，p=0.000<0.01), implying that the level of students' preference for the agency has a significant positive effect on whether one chooses or will choose a study abroad agent. The dominance ratio (OR value) of 3.895 implies that a one-unit increase in the level of students' preference for the agency is associated with a 3.895-fold change in whether one chooses or will choose a study abroad agent.

Hosmer-Lemeshow Goodness-of-Fit Test		
χ^2	df	p value
4.642	3	0.2

Finally, the Hosmer-Lemeshow Goodness-of-fit test was used to analyze the model fit. The original hypothesis of the model test here is that the model fit and the observed values are in agreement; here, the p-value is 0.200>0.05 (Chi=4.642), thus indicating that the original hypothesis is accepted, which means that this model passes the HL test, and the model fit is good.

H6: Students Who Have a Lower Degree of Familiarity with the Application Process Prefer to Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

• **Correlation Analysis**

We hypothesized that students' familiarity with the application process is correlated with whether students choose an agent and test this using correlation analysis. We begin by quantifying the data we received from the questionnaire, as shown in the table below.

Variable Types	Variable Assignment Description
Independent Variable	
Choose a study abroad agent	Yes=1, No=2
Dependent Variable	
Application Process Familiarity	Very familiar=1, Familiar=2, General=3, Unfamiliar=4, Very unfamiliar=5

Using SPSS correlation analysis to investigate the correlation between whether they chose or will choose a study abroad agent and familiarity with the application process, we can obtain a table as follows: the correlation coefficient is -0.445, and the p-value of 0<0.01 shows a significance at the 0.01 level, verifying that this correlation is not random. Thus, there is a significant negative correlation between whether you have chosen or will choose a study abroad agent and your familiarity with the application process. The less familiarity with the study abroad application process, the more inclined to select a study abroad agent.

		Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agency?
Application Process Familiarity	Coefficient	-0.445**
	p value	0
*p<0.05 **p<0.01		

• **Linear Regression Analysis**

We can do further linear regression analysis because this hypothesis passes the correlation test. The fact that the dependent variable is correlated with the independent variable is a prerequisite for linear regression analysis. As can be seen from the table below, a linear regression analysis with familiarity with the application process as the independent variable x and whether a study abroad intermediary has been or will be chosen as the dependent variable y leads to the formula:

$$y=2.137-0.174*x$$

The regression coefficient value of familiarity with study abroad application is -0.174 (t=-7.243, p=0.000<0.01), implying that familiarity with the study abroad application process has a significant negative effect on whether one has chosen or will choose a study abroad agent. The model R-squared value of 0.198 implies that familiarity with the study abroad application process can explain 19.8% of the variation in whether they chose or will choose a study abroad agent. In addition, the model passed the F-test (F=52.463, p=0.000<0.05), which means that the

model construction is meaningful and familiarity with the study abroad application process must influence whether to choose or not choose a study abroad agent.

| | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | p | VIF | R^2 | Adj R^2 | F |
		B	Std. Error	Beta						
Constant	Constant	2.137	0.081	-	26.500	0.000**	-	0.198	0.194	F(1,213)=52.463, p=0.000
Application Process Familiarity		-0.174	0.024	-0.445	-7.243	0.000**	1.000			
Dependent Variable: Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agent?										
*p<0.05 **p<0.01										

- **Binary Logit Regression Analysis**

In this section, familiarity with the study abroad application process is the independent variable x. Whether or not a study abroad agent was chosen as the dependent variable y is analyzed in a binary logit regression. This analysis only changes the yes and no assignment cases, i.e., yes = 1 and no = 0.

Firstly, analyze the overall validity of the model. The original hypothesis of the model test here was that whether to put in the independent variable, i.e., familiarity with the study abroad application process does not affect the quality of the model. As shown from the table below, the p-value of 0<0.05, thus rejecting the original hypothesis. This move indicates that the independent variables put in this model construction have validity and this model construction is meaningful.

Items	Coefficient	Std. Error	z value	Wald χ^2	p	OR	OR 95% CI
Application Process Familiarity	-0.865	0.144	-6.012	36.143	0.000	0.421	0.317~0.558
Constant	3.205	0.516	6.212	38.588	0.000	24.644	8.966~67.736
Dependent Variable: Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agent?							
McFadden R Square: 0.160							
Cox & Snell R Square: 0.194							
Nagelkerke R Square: 0.262							

The table above shows that familiarity with the study abroad application process explains 0.16 of the variation in whether a study abroad agent was or will be selected, modeled as:

$$\ln(p/1-p) = 3.205 - 0.865 * x$$

The regression coefficient value for familiarity with the study abroad application process was -0.865. It showed a significance at the 0.01 level (z=-6.012, p=0.000<0.01), implying that familiarity with the study abroad application process has a significant negative effect on whether one chooses or will choose a study abroad agent. The dominance ratio (OR value) of 0.421 implies that a one-unit increase in familiarity with the study abroad application process is associated with a 0.421-fold change in whether one chooses or will choose a study abroad agent.

Hosmer-Lemeshow Goodness-of-Fit Test		
χ^2	df	p value
4.248	3	0.236

Finally, the Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test was used to analyze the model fit. The original hypothesis of the model test here is that the model fit and the observed values are in agreement; here, the p-value is 0.236>0.05 (Chi=4.248), thus indicating that the original hypothesis is accepted, which means that this model passes the HL test, and the model fit is good.

H7: The Positive Suggestions of Friends Makes Students Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

We hypothesized that the positive suggestions of friends make students leads to choosing a study abroad agency and test this using correlation analysis.

- **Correlation Analysis**

Variable Types	Variable Assignment Description
Independent Variable	
Have you chosen or will you choose a study abord agency?	Yes=1, No=2
Dependent Variable	
Do you think friends' positive comments will influence your choice of agency?	A. have no influence (1) B. have a little influence (2) C. have a large influence (3) D. have a decisive influence (4)

		Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agency?
Friends' Suggestions	Coefficient	0.067
	p value	0.332
*p<0.05 **p<0.01		

From the above table, it can be seen that the correlation analysis is used to study the correlation between DV and friends' suggestions, respectively, and the Pearson correlation coefficient is used to indicate the strength of the correlation. Specific analysis can be seen: DV and friends' suggestions have a correlation value of 0.067, which is close to 0, and a p-value of 0.332>0.05, thus illustrating the choice of study abroad agency. There is no correlation between DV and friends' suggestions. This means that this hypothesis of ours is not valid.

H8: The Positive Opinion of Parents on the Agency Makes Students Choose a Study Abroad Agency.

We hypothesized that the positive opinion of parents on the agency make students leads to choosing a study abroad agency and test this using correlation analysis.

- **Correlation Analysis**

Variable Types	Variable Assignment Description
Independent Variable	
Have you chosen or will you choose a study abord agency?	Yes=1, No=2
Dependent Variable	
Do you think parents' advice will influence your choice of agency?	A. have no influence (1) B. have a little influence (2) C. have a large influence (3) D. have a decisive influence (4)

		Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agency?
Parents' Suggestions	Coefficient	-0.018
	p value	0.797
*p<0.05 **p<0.01		

From the above table, it can be seen that the correlation analysis is used to study the correlation between DV and parents' suggestions, respectively, and the Pearson correlation coefficient is used to indicate the strength of the correlation relationship. Specific analysis shows that: DV and parents' suggestions have a correlation value of -0.018, which is close to 0, and a p-value of 0.797>0.05, indicating that there is no correlation between DV and parents' suggestions. This means that this hypothesis of ours is not valid.

- **Multiple Linear Regression Analysis**

In this section, the data of the hypothesis with the linear relationship will be analyzed uniformly to derive a multiple linear regression model. Set the independent variable application process familiarity as x_1, English writing level as x_2, favorability of overseas study agency as x_3, and IELTS/TOEFL score level as x_4. Finally, the dependent

variable Application Process Familiarity is set to y. The model equation can be derived as follows:

$$y=1.620-0.044*x_1 + 0.14* x_2 + 0.074* x_3 -0.173* x_4$$

The model R-squared value of 0.766 implies that these independent variables explain 76.2% of the variation in whether they have chosen or will choose a study abroad agent. Furthermore, when the F-test was performed on the model, the model passed the F-test (F=171.577, p=0.000<0.05), which means that at least one of these independent variables will have a meaningful relationship on whether they chose or will choose a study abroad agent. The model was constructed in a meaningful way.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	VIF	R^2	Adj.R^2	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta						
Constant	1.62	0.108	-	15.055	0.000**	-			
Application Process Familiarity	-0.044	0.014	-0.113	-3.071	0.002**	1.221			
English Writing Level	0.14	0.014	0.41	10.038	0.000**	1.496	0.766	0.761	F (4,210)=171.577,p=0.000
Favorability of Overseas Study Agency	0.074	0.017	0.172	4.45	0.000**	1.338			
IELTS/TOEFL Score Level	-0.173	0.018	-0.42	-9.801	0.000**	1.65			
Dependent Variable: Have you chosen or will you choose a study abroad agent?									
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01									

6. Research Limitation and Discussion

6.1 Research Limitation

First, for Question 7 in the questionnaire — "How much is your total monthly expenditure?", it is created for testing H1: students' high economic level leads to choosing a study abroad agency. Considering that most students do not know about their families' annual income, students' total monthly expenditure can measure their economic level to a certain extent.

However, the total monthly expenditure of students cannot fully represent the actual economic level of each student's family. It is very likely that some students with high family economic levels will not spend a large amount of money in their daily lives and some students' families with high financial levels will prefer to save more money rather than spending money, which can cause the exception that students' total monthly expenditure is relatively small, but their family economic level is high actually. Also, students with low economic levels can have large total monthly expenditures (for example, large expenses for serious illness of students' family members). Concerning this situation, the total monthly expenditure of students is assumed to represent students' family economic level in our research, but it will possibly lead to a certain degree of biases in our research results.

What's more, according to the results of our research, responses from Question 7 indicate that students' economic level will not have a great impact on their choice of study abroad agencies. However, students with higher economic levels will have greater access to our questionnaire QR code that is spread on WeChat through computers, mobile phones, and so on, while students with lower financial levels will have fewer opportunities to answer questions in the questionnaire, which could cause a bias on the result of the relationship between students' economic level and whether they will choose or choose a study abroad agency or not.

Second, for Question 9 — "Which of the following ranges is your CGPA (cumulative grade point average)?" and Question 12 and Question 13 about students' expected and actual IELTS and TOEFL scores in the questionnaire, which are designed to test H2: students with lower CGPAs prefer to choose a study abroad agency and H3: students with lower expected or actual IELTS/TOEFL scores prefer to choose a study abroad agency respectively, students who are sensitive to this kind of private information will not give true responses to these questions, although we have stated clearly that their personal information, such as CGPAs, IELTS scores, TOEFL scores, and so on will not be disclosed in the introduction of our questionnaire. For our research, our solution is that we assume that the responses to these sensitive questions are all true, but it will cause problems in data authenticity and lead to some biases in our research results as well.

The third limitation is research results based on responses from Question 12, Question 13, and Question 14 — "How do you think of your English writing level?" in the questionnaire. Question 14 is created to test H4: students with lower writing abilities prefer to choose a study abroad agency. Also, considering that there are some students have not taken IELTS and TOEFL exams, our research asks questionnaire participants for their expected ILETS and TOEFL scores to avoid blank answers.

However, students' answers to the three questions mentioned above are influenced by their personalities because these questions are all about their perceptions of their IELTS/TOEFL scores and English writing levels. Students who are more confident or even arrogant can probably overestimate their scores of IELTS/TOEFL and their English writing levels, while students who are less confident and diffident can underestimate their IELTS/TOEFL scores and English writing levels. Thus, it will cause problems in data accuracy and result in biases since we assume that students' self-judgement is accurate when we analyze the data collected from these questions.

6.2 Discussion

To solve our research question: what factors influence students' choice of study abroad agencies, we have analyzed

data collected from our questionnaire and we have found that students' IELTS/TOEFL scores, English writing levels, levels of preference to the study abroad agencies, and degree of familiarity with the application process will influence students' choice of study abroad agencies according to our research results, while students' economic levels, students' CGPAs, and suggestions from their friends and parents will not greatly influence their choices of study abroad agencies (the correlation value is close to 0).

Furthermore, for the four factors greatly influencing students' choice of study abroad agency mentioned above, students with higher expected or actual IELTS/TOEFL scores and higher levels of preference for the study abroad agencies will be more likely to choose study abroad agencies. However, students with lower writing abilities and lower degrees of familiarity with the application process will prefer to choose study abroad agencies.

According to our multiple linear regression analysis, students' IELTS/TOEFL scores will have the greatest impact on whether students will choose a study abroad agency or not.

Relating back to our literature review, for students' economic levels and suggestions from their parents, our research results are different from Wenjuan G. et al. (2019) who found that family background would influence students' choice of studying abroad and students of high-income families are more inclined to study abroad, which can possibly influence their choice of study abroad agencies. But for students' familiarity with the application process, our research results are in accordance with Wei L. (2020) and Rosalind L. et al. (2021), who found that students were lack of information about the application process and did not want to be alone in this process, which can be a reason of choosing a study abroad agency.

Based on these findings of our research, our research objectives mentioned in the introduction can be achieved, which means that study abroad agencies can focus on attracting students who have higher expected or actual IELTS/TOEFL scores, higher level of preference for the study abroad agencies, lower writing abilities, and lower degree of familiarity with the application process to increase their customer base and better meet the needs of these students.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

7.1 Research Conclusions

Based on the correlation analysis, we found that some factors in students' social background, individual academic ability, and individual cognitive dimensions have an influence on whether students choose or will choose an overseas study agency. After determining the correlations of these variables, the direction and degree of influence were determined by testing the regression coefficient values of each variable through linear regression.

Among them, a total of two variables were positively correlated with students' choice or will choose overseas study agencies, which concluded that the lower the students' expectation of IELTS/TOEFL scores, the lower the preference for the overseas study agency, and the lower the likelihood that they will choose study abroad agencies. In addition, a student's actual or expected IELTS/TOEFL score is more influential in choosing an overseas study agency than a student's preference for the oversea study agency.

Two variables were negatively correlated with students' choice or will choose overseas study agents: students' perceived personal English writing ability and students' familiarity with the study abroad application process, respectively; the higher the students' English writing ability and familiarity with the study abroad application process, the lower the likelihood of choosing a study abroad agent instead. Among them, students' English writing skills are more likely to have a reverse effect on their choice of study abroad agent than their familiarity with the application process.

No significant correlations were detected between the remaining four variables: students' financial level, students' GPA, positive advice from friends, and positive parental opinions about study abroad agents and whether students chose study abroad agents.

7.2 Research Recommendation

7.2.1 Recommendation for Abroad Study Agencies

First of all, our research has certain reference significance for the Study Abroad Agencies themselves. Our research shows that students with higher expected and actual scores of IELTS or TOEFL and higher preference for agencies prefer to choose study abroad agency. Students who are not familiar with the results of the process and have weak writing skills are also more inclined to choose study abroad agency. The Study Abroad Agency can grasp these four directions to attract customers.

First of all, students with high IELTS scores may choose study abroad agency because they hope to apply for a better college by their high capability. For this kind of students, the agency needs to know the IELTS score of the students and emphasize the possibility of these students of applying to higher level colleges to attract customers.

In addition, the agency needs to build a good image to the public. In every time of contacting with students,

agencies should maintain a good faith and sincere attitude. It is very important to build up students' trust towards the agency. In addition, every customer agency cooperates with will have an impact on the reputation and image of the agency that the agency should treat every customer equally. In this way, students can leave a good impression on the agency and thus have a high preference.

The agency should be familiar with the application process of each country and university, and should inform students of the study abroad application process and timeline before signing the contract with customers. After students put forward their preference to apply for the college or country, agency should tell the specific application process of that college or country to students. This can not only make students familiar with the application process, which is conducive to their future application, but also let them know that the agency is very familiar with various universities and application process, which can increase students' trust in the agency and improve the probability of signing a contract.

Writing the application is a very important part of the application process, and it is also a job that most students need the Study Abroad Agency to complete for them. The Agency should pay attention to the cultivation of its clerical teachers and hire professional teachers with high writing skills, such as a teacher with IELTS score of 9 who has studied abroad and is familiar with the application process and requirements. When the agency introduces itself to students, it can focus on introducing its competence as a teacher who is responsible for writing documents, so as to meet customers' needs and attract customers.

7.2.2 Recommendation for Students and Parents

Students need to assess whether they need to choose a study abroad agency from a variety of perspectives and should not make decisions based on one factor alone; sometimes it is also helpful to take appropriate advice from friends and parents. In the process of applying to study abroad, whether you prepare yourself or choose a study abroad agency, the goal is to maximize the success of your application. In addition, whether you choose a study abroad agency or not, students need to know the details of the application process on their own, and they also need to improve their academic performance and English writing skills. When choosing a study abroad agency, you need to be careful in choosing one that is professional, highly recognized, and has the relevant business license.

For parents, our studies have shown that parental opinions rarely have an impact on whether or not a student chooses a study abroad agency, probably because as college students, they already have a sense of independence and some parents are not wise enough in the way they give advice to their children, leading to psychological resistance to their parents' opinions. Therefore, parents should also learn about the study abroad application process and the information of overseas study agencies, and after learning they should give their children advice in an equal manner, so that the advice may be better accepted.

7.2.3 Recommendation for Regulatory Authorities

At present, the quality of study ahead agency is uneven. Through our research, students who are not familiar with the study abroad application process are more willing to choose institutions and let them control the process for themselves. However, because these students are not familiar with the application for studying abroad, there will be a blind spot in the choice of different agencies, and there may be a situation of blindly believing in a study abroad institution, whether that institution truthfully explains and puts forward a reasonable price or not. Therefore, the regulatory authorities need to formulate corresponding industry regulations, crack down on dishonest institutions and force them to close down, regulate market prices, and adjust excessive institutional prices and monopoly institutions.

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Appendix

Investigation on factors influencing students' choice of study abroad agencies
Dear students, Hello! We are students of UIC-CCM. Thank you for filling in this questionnaire. In order to better understand the factors influencing students' choice of study abroad agencies and complete the research report according to the results, we need to collect your information through this questionnaire. This survey will take about 2 minutes. We will keep the information you fill in strictly confidential. The survey results will only be used for statistical analysis. Your personal information is very important to the accuracy of this survey result. Thus, we hope you can fill in the questionnaire with your opinions and actual situation. You just need to choose the answer based on the actual situation, and we guarantee that no overseas study agency can harass you through the content of the questionnaire. Thank you for your participation! April, 2022
1. Do you have the intention of studying abroad? A. Yes B. No
2. Have you chosen or will choose an overseas study agency? A. Yes B. No
3. What's your nationality? Are you Chinese? A. Yes B. No
4. What's your grade?

A. Year 1

B. Year 2

C. Year 3

D. Year 4

5. What is your school type?

A. Ordinary college or below (excluding Sino-foreign cooperation in education)

B. 211/985 (Key Universities)

C. Sino-foreign cooperation in education

D. Foreign universities

6. What is your acceptable price range for overseas study agency?

A. 10000 yuan or less

B. 10001 yuan-20000 yuan

C. 20001 yuan-30000 yuan

D. 30001 yuan or more

7. How much is your total monthly expenditure?

A. Less than 1500 yuan

B. 1501-3500 yuan

C. 3501-6000 yuan

D. 6001-10000 yuan

E. More than 10001 yuan

8. How will your grades be calculated?

A. 4-points

B. 100 points (5-points)

9. Which of the following ranges is your cGPA? (4-points)

A. 3.00 or below

B. 3.00-3.30

C. 3.31-3.50

D. 3.51-3.69

E. 3.70-4.00

10. Which of the following ranges is your cGPA? (100 points /5-points)

A. 60 or below

B. 61-70

C. 71-80

D. 81-90

E. 91-100

11. Have you taken the IELTS/TOEFL?

A. Yes

B. No

12. What is your IELTS/TOEFL score level?

A. 5.5 or below / 0-59

B. 6.0-6.5 / 60-93

C. 7 / 94-101

D. 7.5/ 102-109

E. 8.0 or above / 110-120

13. What is your expected IELTS/TOEFL score level?
A. 5.5 or below / 0-59
B. 6.0-6.5 / 60-93
C. 7 / 94-101
D. 7.5/ 102-109
E. 8.0 or above / 110-120
14. How do you think of your English writing level?
A. Excellent
B. Good
C. Average
D. Fair
E. Poor
15. How familiar are you with the application process for studying abroad?
A. Very unfamiliar
B. Unfamiliar
C. General
D. Familiar
E. Very familiar
16. How do you like overseas study agency?
A. Strongly dislike
B. Dislike
C. General
D. Like
E. Strongly like
17. Do you think friends' positive comments will influence your choice of agency?
A. No influence
B. A little influence
C. A great influence
D. A decisive influence
18. Do you think parents' advice will influence your choice of agency?
A. No influence
B. A little influence
C. A great influence
D. A decisive influence
19. How familiar are you with the application process for studying abroad?
A. Very familiar
B. Familiar
C. Unfamiliar
D. Very unfamiliar