

A Project entitled

**Public Relations: The Image Positioning of
The Education University of Hong Kong by
Publicity Elements and Channel Factors**

Submitted by
Wong Sze Wai

Supervisor: Dr. GÜMÜŞ, Emine

Submitted to The Education University of Hong Kong
for the degree of **Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Executive Management in April 2025**

Word Count: 7982

Table of Contents

	Page
Cover Page	1
Table of Contents	2-3
Declaration	4
Abstract	5
1 Introduction	6-9
1.1 Research Background	6-7
1.2 Research Purpose of Question	7-8
1.3 Significance of this study	8-9
2 Literature Review	10-13
2.1 The Definition of Public Relations	10
2.2 The Definition of Positioning	10
2.3 The Importance of Public Relations and Positioning	10
2.4 The Advantages of Public Relations for the Undergraduate Students	11
2.5 The current positioning and future development direction of The Education University of Hong Kong	11-12
2.6 The Challenges Universities Encounter in Managing Public Relations	12-13
3 Research Design and Implementation	14-17
3.1 Research Approach	14-15
3.2 The Participants	15

3.3 Instruments of data collection	16-17
3.4 Data Analysis	17
4 Findings/Results	18-45
4.1 Demographics of respondents	18-19
4.2 The results of quantitative	19-25
4.3 The results of qualitative	26-45
5 Discussion	46-49
6 Limitation and Implications	50-51
7 Conclusion	52
8 References	53-59
9 Appendixes	60-66
Appendix A: Interview Questions	60
Appendix B: Questionnaire	60-63
Appendix C: Description of questionnaire items	64-66

Declaration

I, *Wong Sze Wai*, declare that this research report represents my own work under the supervision of *Dr. GÜMÜŞ, Emine*, and that it has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

1.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I declare I did not use generative AI in my report (end of declaration)																					
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I declare I used generative AI in my report (Go to Q2)																					
[Please state the ways and tools you used generative AI in your report: (You can choose more than one option)]																							
		<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">Usages</th> <th style="width: 45%; text-align: center;">Tools</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top;">2.</td> <td style="padding-left: 5px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Translation </td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding-left: 5px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar checking </td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding-left: 5px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Data searching </td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding-left: 5px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Paraphrasing </td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding-left: 5px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Generating ideas </td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding-left: 5px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please state _____ </td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Usages	Tools	2.	<input type="checkbox"/> Translation			<input type="checkbox"/> Grammar checking			<input type="checkbox"/> Data searching			<input type="checkbox"/> Paraphrasing			<input type="checkbox"/> Generating ideas			<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please state _____	
	Usages	Tools																					
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> Translation																						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Grammar checking																						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Data searching																						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Paraphrasing																						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Generating ideas																						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please state _____																						

[Reminder: Please keep your draft(s) in case your supervisor asks you to explain the AI percentage in your report.]

Signature:

Wong Sze Wai
25/04/2025

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the various factors that influence students' decisions to enrol at the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK), the relative significance of these factors, and the university's current self-positioning. In this study, a mixed-methods approach was employed, comprising a quantitative survey of 100 undergraduate students who are aged between 18 and 30 and qualitative research involving in-depth interviews with six undergraduate students at EdUHK. The participants were required to complete an online questionnaire and participate in an in-depth interview lasting 15 to 30 minutes. The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS using analysis of variance test (ANOVA), exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and reliability test. The qualitative data were systematically coded and rigorously identified through content analysis and combined with quantitative results to compare the differences in understanding among students of different identities. The overall results were interpreted comprehensively to infer the cognitive differences between universities and students. The findings of this study indicate that the decision to enrol at EdUHK is primarily influenced by two crucial factors: the institution's academic reputation and the employment expectations. Secondly, promotion and marketing channels, on-campus facilities and services also have a certain influence. Financial incentives, such as grants and funding, were found to have differential impacts based on gender and student status. Additionally, the geographical location of the university and its accessibility were identified as supplementary considerations. The potential value of humanistic care jointly motivates students to choose to study at the Education University of Hong Kong.

Keywords: Factors influencing students' university choice, Undergraduates, Academic reputation, Employment expectations, Higher education competition

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

A study by Bălăşescu & Bălăşescu (2019) stated that society is increasingly paying attention to the public relations and educational marketing of universities. The competitive landscape among local universities within countries is already highly intense. After internationalization, the competition among universities around the world has intensified. Enrolment rates and student demographics have become critical factors for institutions, as they rely heavily on tuition and fees to maintain long-term development and operational stability (Jr., 2016). However, statistics from the University Grants Committee (2024) show that the overall number of students enrolled in UGC-funded programs is declining. The number of students decreased from 101,797 in the 2020/21 academic year to 101,467 in the 2021/22 academic year. Although it reflects a reduction of 330 students, the loss of economic and social benefits cannot be ignored and is not conducive to the overall development of Hong Kong universities. In the 2025 government budget of The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (2025), the government intends to strengthen the development of Hong Kong as an international education hub to obtain more students and cultivate potential talents. As one of the universities funded by the University Grants Committee (Education Bureau, 2024), The Education University of Hong Kong's current external publicity and promotion and positioning development of its university aroused my interest in its public relations development.

Banuelos (2021) demonstrated that appropriately strategically targeted marketing to students can help reduce remote barriers across geographies and keep universities connected to the outside world, thus influencing their willingness to join the university. Non-local students often need to pay higher tuition fees and related out-of-town expenses, which bring relatively more diverse income to the university (The Education University of Hong Kong, 2024c). Taking the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) as an example, a non-local undergraduate student living on campus can bring

the university a minimum income of HK\$181,090 in terms of tuition fees and accommodation fees in a single academic year. Based on four academic years, one non-local undergraduate student will bring the university at least HK\$724,360 in revenue (The Education University of Hong Kong, 2023). Furthermore, differentiating the factors that drive local and non-local undergraduate students to study at EdUHK will help enhance the competitiveness and characteristics of EdUHK, provide timely insights from students' perspectives, and promote EdUHK's awareness of its existing attraction factors in the eyes of students (Guan et al., 2023).

Consequently, conducting a comprehensive analysis of the current positioning of EdUHK and the broader factors influencing undergraduate students' university choices is of significant importance. This investigation provides EdUHK with vital insights into the key attributes valued by undergraduate students, guiding strategic efforts to improve the university's appeal and competitiveness. Such understanding is crucial for achieving sustainable growth and aligning with the changing needs and expectations of future students.

1.2 Research Purpose of Question

The aim of this study is to explore the similarities and differences between the factors influencing university choice as perceived by students and the institutional positioning of educational universities. The central research question examines whether a correlation exists between the criteria considered by undergraduate students at The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) when selecting a university and the university's current strategic positioning in this context. To address this question, the study will investigate the following supporting sub-questions.

1. To what extent do factors such as institutional academic reputation, campus facilities and support services, geographical location and accessibility, financial aid and scholarships, promotional and outreach strategies, and career prospects impact the decision-making process of undergraduate students when selecting The Education University of Hong Kong for their higher education?

2. What are the current strategic objectives and plans of The Education University of Hong Kong regarding its institutional positioning and alignment with the expectations and priorities of undergraduate students?

1.3 Significance of this study

This study is important in the following three ways. Firstly, it addresses a notable gap in research within the Hong Kong context. While Hong Kong universities have acknowledged the importance of attracting non-local students and enhancing the region's academic reputation (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2024), existing literature in the field of university marketing predominantly focuses on Western countries, such as Sweden (Seitl & Rejnö, 2022), Finland (Väliverronen et al., 2022), and Russia (Abakumov & Beresten, 2023). This study aims to contribute to the underrepresented body of research on Hong Kong's higher education landscape, offering insights that are both locally relevant and globally comparative. Hong Kong universities have relatively limited research in the field of educational marketing. Therefore, this research serves as a valuable supplement to the existing body of knowledge on public relations strategies within Hong Kong universities. It has the potential to assist EdUHK in formulating future development plans and gaining a deeper understanding of prospective students' preferences and expectations regarding public relations and institutional planning. By offering insights into these areas, the study provides actionable recommendations that can enhance EdUHK's strategic decision-making processes and align its offerings more closely with the needs and aspirations of potential students (Nuseir & El Refae, 2022).

Secondly, it is important to maintain a good relationship with the media. Effective information transmission through social media commonly used by students can more effectively establish the brand positioning of EdUHK among potential students and improve student satisfaction. In fact, universities and the business world are very similar. Scholars from different countries have gradually begun to conduct in-depth research on higher education marketing in their countries to promote the long-term development of

local academics. Regardless of analysing rational factors or perceptual factors, the goal is to attract more students to keep the continued operation of the university (Bălăşescu & Bălăşescu, 2019). This study provides some preliminary inspiration for the university to choose the main publicity channels and methods that can help improve the school's public relations personnel to formulate effective publicity for undergraduates from different regional backgrounds, which is beneficial to the brand promotion of the university.

Finally, our university's goal is to cultivate outstanding, community-caring educators and professionals who can contribute to the sustainable socio-economic development of Hong Kong and overseas (The Education University of Hong Kong, 2024e). However, according to the Census and Statistics Department (2023), Hong Kong's fertility level continues to decline, and the phenomenon of delayed childbearing has greatly affected the number of local admissions to Hong Kong universities. Therefore, in the globalized world, EdUHK also needs international students and mainland students from all countries to join in their community. This study analyses the differences in priorities of elements and cognition of undergraduates from different backgrounds in Hong Kong towards EdUHK.

Overall, this study might have the potential to provide EdUHK with ways to carry out more targeted public relations, but it can still be a reference for other schools or universities to pay attention to the factors affecting school choice for students. Moreover, the findings of this study can be applied to other educational institutions to personalize changes based on the needs of different organizations, leading to further research and the development of practical strategies to promote marketing in the education industry.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Definition of Public Relations

Hutton (1999) believes that the definition of public relations is to guarantee that the mutual relationship between the public and the university is appropriately adjusted. Bernays (1947) supplemented the definition of public relations and noted that public relations were the activity of an organization using its communication system and different channels to release information, persuade and adjust to spread ideas and win public support for the organization.

2.2 The Definition of Positioning

Positioning is the process by which an institution of higher education locates itself within specific resource areas within the higher education system (Fumasoli et al., 2020). The university designs relevant peripheral souvenirs and images so that they occupy a unique and valuable place in the minds of target objects. It strives to find the proper "location" in the minds of students, and let students think about the undergraduate degree programmes offered by EdUHK from the "right" perspective (Keller, 2013).

2.3 The Importance of Public Relations and Positioning

Gibson et al. (2006) pointed out that public relations is the main and necessary aspect that constitutes a beneficial reputation. Public relations is arguably the most influential organizational intangible asset and is often linked to an organization's success. Every decision made by the public relations department profoundly impacts the external public's perception of the university's reputation. Keller (2013) emphasized that positioning helps EdUHK identify the needs and commonalities of target students, allowing the university to conduct more targeted public relations interactions and improve services, expanding the university's future development space (Lysytsia & Byelikova, 2022).

2.4 The Advantages of Public Relations for the Undergraduate Students

Aulia et al. (2022) indicate that public relations help to establish and maintain channels of mutual communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation, promote two-way interaction between the school and the outside world, and enable EdUHK to have better planning and development direction in future enrolment plans (Hutton, 1999). Good positioning is conducive to EdUHK establishing a strong and effective educational reputation, making potential students interested in enrolling and gaining trust, and comprehensively promoting the overall sustainable development of the university (Patawaran et al., 2024; Al-Hazmi, 2020). The most common element of concern among students is the educational services provided by universities, including types of educational courses, university rankings, and industry accreditation (Lysytsia & Byelikova, 2022). Moreover, Bacon et al. (2023) believed that providing other student benefits related to the university is more valuable than simply marketing programs. For example, tuition and scholarships, transportation and location to the university, environment and services of the university, opportunities for cooperation and exchanges with other universities, attractive internships, career guidance, and employment opportunities after graduation (Rogova & Shamin, 2020; Barbato et al., 2021; Al-Hazmi, 2020; La & Le, 2022). Promotional channels and external word-of-mouth will prompt students to have potential university impressions and preferences for the university (Nyagadza & Mazuruse, 2021).

2.5 The current positioning and future development direction of The Education University of Hong Kong

According to the Strategic Plan 2016-2025 of the Education University of Hong Kong (2022a), EdUHK positions itself as a government-funded university recognized by the Hong Kong government. It stems from the inheritance of the deep foundation of teacher education in many former normal colleges, mainly as a professional teacher education college. It is committed to cultivating excellent and ethically responsible educators and professionals and promoting educational innovation (Cheung, 2022). Its core strengths have gained international recognition in the field of education. In the latest ranking of

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Subjects in 2024, the field of education ranked 20th in the world and third in Asia. The scale of teacher training has reached about 1,000 professional teachers graduating every year, accounting for more than 80% of primary school teachers and 30% of secondary school teachers in Hong Kong. It also has a strong teaching team of more than 450 education scholars to attract undergraduate students interested in pursuing a career in the education field (The Education University of Hong Kong, 2025c; The University of Hong Kong, 2022b).

For the development plan, EdUHK intends to transform into a comprehensive university and offer interdisciplinary bachelor's degree programs such as artificial intelligence and educational technology, heritage education and art management, integrated environmental management and some diversity degrees to promote the development of multidisciplinary courses in the university (Cheung, 2022). Initiating more cooperation with well-known universities such as Sun Yat-sen University, Tsinghua University and Nanjing University in Mainland China to enhance its academic image in the Greater Bay Area, Mainland China and internationally. It has established cooperative relationships and conducted active academic exchange or student exchange programs with more than 200 global universities and institutions around the world (The Education University of Hong Kong, 2024b; The Education University of Hong Kong, 2025c). Reinforcing the social influence of the university, for example providing different types of courses or events for the elderly and children with special educational needs to help improve physical and mental health, designing innovative teaching resources in a series of animated short films for students to use when learning Chinese, history and mathematics, etc., demonstrating the positive philosophy of the university's humanistic care and social responsibility and its positive impact on human development (The Education University of Hong Kong, 2024a; The Education University of Hong Kong, 2021; The Education University of Hong Kong, 2025b).

2.6 The Challenges Universities Encounter in Managing Public Relations

As EdUHK continues to develop and grow, including enrolment growth, various
p.12

education-focused strategic initiatives and increasing market competition for potential students, this may have some impact on EdUHK's ability to effectively implement its planned strategies and initiatives. Although EdUHK has a clear positioning and development strategy, continuous efforts to showcase EdUHK's academic achievements and future vision are crucial to enhance EdUHK's reputation. The university needs to attract more stakeholders to participate in the publicity plan and institute a regular communication mechanism with various colleges to enhance the effectiveness of the plan. Strengthening the communication channels and increasing the visibility of each faculty and student's success data using multiple channels, such as an expanded social media presence, in-depth interviews, and surveys. Trying to enact crisis management emergency mechanisms and procedures and pay real-time attention to changes in public opinion on social media to enhance the university's perception of the dynamic external image. Building interactive channels for internal and external stakeholders to help promote the university's image and achievements to stakeholders (The Education University of Hong Kong, 2024a). This shows that EdUHK has a high demand for increasing public visibility and public participation. EdUHK is still looking for a suitable way.

3 Research Design and Implementation

3.1 Research Approach

The methodology used in this study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research models. For the quantitative component, data were gathered through an online survey, designed to capture measurable insights from participants. This mixed method guarantees a thorough and holistic analysis, merging quantitative data with rich qualitative insights to effectively achieve the study's research objectives. The main component of the questionnaire features a Likert scale comprising 31 descriptive items, where responses range from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). This section, along with questions capturing participants' basic background information, is designed to assess the perceived importance of various factors influencing university selection (Nuseir & El Refae, 2021). To reduce the possibility of misinterpretation and ensure the accuracy of the factors being examined, the questionnaire was presented to participants in both Chinese and English (Guan et al., 2023). On the qualitative side, first-hand information obtained through semi-structured interviews will enhance the credibility of the study. First-hand interviews allow for the collection of thorough qualitative data. Each respondent had a 15–30 minutes interview to ask about their views and understanding of EdUHK. The advantage of this approach is that it allows interviews to be conducted in a targeted manner while still allowing the investigator autonomy to explore possible connections that emerge during the interview. This will further deepen the understanding of the factors influencing undergraduates' choice of university at EdUHK (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021).

The mixed methods design combines quantitative and qualitative research methods to achieve complementary advantages and compensate for the shortcomings and defects of a single method (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015). The qualitative method helps to capture detailed and refined data through semi-structured interviews using participants to give sentence responses to insights into a complete understanding of EdUHK's positioning and a deeper understanding of the influencing factors. On the other hand,

the quantitative method focuses on data measurement and quantitative variables from questionnaire results. Fully utilize the benefits of both methods and balance the limitations of both to make the results more reliable and comprehensive. Moreover, the use of mixed methods is conducive to the expansion, support, and validation of research and can minimize the impact and distortion of data source conclusions due to the subjectivity of the researcher (Plano Clark, 2010; Morgan, 2007).

3.2 The Participants

This study used an online mode to recruit participants. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and invited to fill in the questionnaire via email, WhatsApp, and WeChat groups. WhatsApp was mainly for local students, while the WeChat group was only composed of non-local students in Mainland China. 50 students were invited for each group, for a total of 100 students. Students who voluntarily participated in this study could fill out the online questionnaire through the questionnaire link or QR code of the Microsoft Forms online survey collection platform. Students who participated in the interview were invited directly by face-to-face intercept, and the decision on whether to have a face-to-face interview or an online interview was made through communication and consultation. Three students were invited from each group, for a total of 6 participants. The most common admission age for undergraduate students is 18-20 (Newman-Ford et al., 2009), while mature students are 25 or above (The Education University of Hong Kong, 2024e). The normal duration of undergraduate study at The Education University of Hong Kong is 2-5 years, depending on the programme.

Selection Criteria:

The study included participants who met the following criterias: (i) aged between 18 and 55 years, (ii) categorized as either local or non-local students, and (iii) currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree program at The Education University of Hong Kong.

3.3 Instruments of data collection

The questionnaire employed a Likert scale instrument, as outlined in the appendix, originally developed by Nuseir and El Refae (2021). This instrument comprised five dimensions: academic reputation, grants and funding, location and proximity, facilities and services, and promotion and marketing channels. Additionally, a sixth dimension, focusing on future career expectations, was incorporated into the questionnaire, drawing on the framework established by Newman-Ford et al. (2009). Consequently, the final version of the questionnaire consisted of six dimensions in total. As Tatar and Oktay (2006) found that students attach great importance to the possibility of finding a well-paid job after graduation, so future expectations for careers are also one of the important factors affecting students' choice of university, which is related to the aim of this study that values university choice from the perspective of students.

The socio-demographic analysis involved collecting data on participants' age, gender, faculty of study, and study mode.

Furthermore, the semi-structured interview method was utilized to collect comprehensive first-hand data. Interviews, each lasting between 15 and 30 minutes, were conducted to examine the factors influencing students' decisions in choosing The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). This methodological approach facilitated a deeper exploration of participants' perceptions and attitudes toward the university's institutional positioning, as supported by Margareta et al. (2018). To accommodate diverse preferences and logistical considerations, the interviews were administered in two distinct formats: in-person face-to-face sessions and online virtual meetings.

To ensure ethical compliance, the collected data were utilized exclusively for academic research purposes, in accordance with the guidelines established by The Education University of Hong Kong (2011). Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement, and strict confidentiality measures were maintained

throughout the study. Participants were represented anonymously, with each individual assigned a unique code name to protect their identity, as recommended by Bryman (2016).

3.4 Data Analysis

This study investigated six factors influencing students' decisions in university choice. Consequently, the quantitative data were systematically coded using Excel and subsequently analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29.0. Initially, frequency analysis was conducted on the respondents' demographic information to identify the distribution and proportional representation of various variables. Next, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to identify the factors. Additionally, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was employed to assess whether the factors considered by students of diverse backgrounds in their university choice process were accurately measured. Furthermore, the validity and reliability of the research instrument were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability measures, as outlined by Nuseir and El Refae (2022).

In terms of qualitative data processing, the content analysis method was used to make the data more concrete, and the interview records were carefully listed to determine the views and student tendencies that appeared in the data (Kondracki et al., 2002). The data handling procedure involved the collection of open-ended data, systematic data coding, rigorous content identification, and comprehensive interpretation of the overall results (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). All procedures were conducted in alignment with the specific objectives of the study, which aimed to compare the variations in perceptions among students with different identities and, consequently, infer discrepancies in understanding between the university and its students. By integrating the findings from the quantitative data analysis, a deeper comprehension of the research context was achieved, enabling the derivation of meaningful insights to address the research questions.

4 Findings/Results

4.1 Demographics of respondents

For the quantitative survey, a total of 100 participants successfully completed the questionnaire, with no missing data recorded as seen in Table 1. Frequency analysis of the participants' demographic profiles indicated that 46% of respondents were male (n = 46), 54% were female (n = 54), and 0% identified as other (n = 0). In terms of age distribution, 47% of participants were aged 18–20 years (n = 47), 46% were aged 21–24 years (n = 46), and 7% were aged 25–30 years (n = 7). No participants fell within the age ranges of 31–40 years or 41–55 years. As for the faculty of the respondents, 41% of them were from the Faculty of Education and Human Development (FEHD), only 34% of them were from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FLASS) and 25% of them were from the Faculty of Humanities (FHM). Among the respondents, 93% of the participants were full-time students and only 7% of them were part-time students. Besides, 53% of the respondents were local students and 47% were non-local students.

Regarding the qualitative study, a total of 6 participants were interviewed. The interviewees included 4 females and 2 males, aged between 18 and 20 years old, and all were full-time students. These participants were from the Faculty of Education and Human Development (FEHD), the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FLASS), and the Faculty of Humanities (FHM), with 2 participants from each faculty. In addition, in terms of student composition, there were 3 local students and 3 non-local students each. The identities and backgrounds of these participants were somewhat diverse, providing rich research materials for qualitative investigations.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Parameter	Characteristics	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	46	49.00
	Female	54	54.00
	Other	0	0.00
Age range	18-20	47	47.00
	21-24	46	46.00
	25-30	7	7.00
	31-40	0	0.00
	41-55	0	0.00
Faculty	Faculty of Education and Human Development (FEHD)	41	41.00
	Faculty of Humanities (FHM)	25	25.00
	Faculty of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (FLASS)	34	34.00
Mode of study	Full-time	93	93.00
	Part-time	7	7.00
Student Status	Local student	53	53.00
	Non-local student	47	47.00

4.2 The results of quantitative

Table 2 indicates the extent to which demographic factors influence these six constructs. Furthermore, Table 2 illustrates that the gender and status of the respondents significantly affect four constructs; the age range significantly affects three constructs; and the college and learning mode significantly affect two constructs. No factor

significantly affects all six constructs. The Appendix provides descriptive statistics for all items measuring different elements in choosing The EdUHK.

Table 2. The impacts of demographic factors on reasons for university choice

Constructs	By Gender		By Age range		By Faculty		By Mode of study		By Student Status		
	Sum of Squares	Sig.	Sum of Squares	Sig.	Sum of Squares	Sig.	Sum of Squares	Sig.	Sum of Squares	Sig.	
MR	Between Groups	2.884	0.011	0.960	0.146	0.044	0.757	2.232	0.026	3.587	0.004
	Within Groups	41.930		43.854		44.770		42.582		41.228	
	Total	44.814		44.814		44.814		44.814		44.814	
GD	Between Groups	54.231	0.000	4.625	0.213	5.396	0.178	11.151	0.052	8.101	0.098
	Within Groups	238.564		288.170		287.399		281.645		284.694	
	Total	292.795		292.795		292.795		292.795		292.795	
AC	Between Groups	10.520	0.005	0.000	0.989	0.003	0.961	0.037	0.871	0.000	0.988
	Within Groups	126.892		137.412		137.408		137.375		137.412	
	Total	137.412		137.412		137.412		137.412		137.412	
OFS	Between Groups	4.139	0.078	15.348	0.001	15.748	0.000	0.611	0.502	19.687	0.000
	Within Groups	128.238		117.030		116.629		131.766		112.691	
	Total	132.378		132.378		132.378		132.378		132.378	
PM	Between Groups	7.636	0.000	5.706	0.000	0.168	0.538	1.790	0.042	6.461	0.000
	Within Groups	35.678		37.608		43.146		41.524		36.853	
	Total	43.314		43.314		43.314		43.314		43.314	
EP	Between Groups	7.659	0.001	3.960	0.023	6.938	0.002	0.887	0.286	4.451	0.016
	Within Groups	68.886		72.586		69.607		75.658		72.094	
	Total	76.546		76.546		76.546		76.546		76.546	

MR = Academic reputation, GD = Grants and funding, AC = Address and convenience, OFS = On-campus facilities and services,

PM = Promotion, and marketing channels, EP = Employment expectations

This study conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA) based on the measurement data, aiming to systematically evaluate the importance of scale items and the extraction validity of factors. As a latent structure detection tool, EFA aims to reveal the theoretical construct network behind the observed variables. Its application scenario is mainly aimed at exploratory research and constructs an interpretable dimensional model by analysing the co-variation relationship between variables and respondents. Factor analysis is a multi-variable dimensionality reduction technique that aims to deconstruct the changing characteristics between observed variables with a set of potential variables, thereby simplifying the structure of complex data sets. Exploratory factor analysis procedures were conducted utilizing IBM SPSS Statistics 29.0. Principal component analysis extracted potential factors and rotated them with Varimax rotation to optimize the interpretability of the factor structure.

Table 3. Factor Analysis with Rotated Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
GD1	.770	
GD2	.591	
GD3	.357	
GD4	.743	
GD5	.831	
GD6	.848	
GD7	.887	
MR1		.818
MR2		.837
MR3		.837
MR4		.757
MR5		.617
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.		
Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.765
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	283.542
	df	15
	Sig.	.000
Total Variance Explained	76.059	

The analysis results display that the total explained variance of the first 2 factors (grants and funding, academic reputation) explained 76.06% of factor loading. The reliability of the measurement and the relevant appropriate properties of factor analysis were analysed through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy measure

supplemented by Bartlett's test of sphericity to determine the suitability of the correlation matrix for factor analysis. The results explained that the KMO value of 0.765 is greater than 0.70 and the Bartlett test is significant with $p < .001$ (Table 3). Hence, these items are reliable, eliminating the possibility that the results are due to chance, and the factor analysis can be continued.

As previously noted, the study identified two core latent constructs, with the first two factors collectively accounting for 76.06% of the total explained variance. The eigenvalues for these factors were 3.47 and 1.093, respectively, both satisfying the criterion of eigenvalues exceeding 1 for factor retention. With a sample size of $N = 100$, all items demonstrated factor loadings greater than 0.30 in the rotated component matrix, indicating that grants and funding and academic reputation emerged as the two primary constructs of greatest concern to respondents.

Furthermore, the reliability of the variables was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR), computed via Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics 29.0. As presented in Table 4, Cronbach's alpha values for all dimensions exceeded .70 (ranging from .705 to .900), meeting the established threshold for internal consistency. Although the Employment Expectations dimension yielded a slightly lower alpha value of .677, it remained within the acceptable range. Additionally, the composite reliability (CR) values for all constructs surpassed .80 (ranging from .823 to .888), further confirming the scale's strong measurement robustness and reliability (Table 4). These results underscore the instrument's validity and consistency in capturing the intended constructs.

Table 4. Data reliability

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Academic reputation	.900	0.883
On-campus facilities and services	.862	0.829
Address and convenience	.705	0.879
Grants and funding	.936	0.888
Promotion and marketing channels	.747	0.823
Employment expectations	.767	0.677

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was subsequently utilized to assess the potential risk of collinearity among the constructs. As illustrated in Table 6, all VIF values fell within the range of 2.1 to 2.7, with none exceeding the established threshold of 3.3 (Table 5). These results confirm the absence of collinearity among the latent variables, ensuring that each measurement item independently captured the significance students attributed to the six factors when selecting The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). This methodological rigour supports the robustness and reliability of the findings.

Table 5. Variance inflation factor (VIF)

Dimensions	Student Status
Academic reputation	2.101
On-campus facilities and services	2.188
Address and convenience	2.217
Grants and funding	2.161
Promotion and marketing channels	2.796
Employment expectations	2.033

4.3 The results of qualitative analysis

In this section, structured content analysis was used to analyse the interview texts of each participant. The third-person narrative derived from the interview content was coded to extract core themes, and the varied perspectives were organised into predefined frameworks based on thematic analysis. Subsequently, the data were categorised according to the student's identity attributes, and the constant comparative method was utilised to identify cognitive differences and common patterns between groups, thereby constructing a differential impact model of school choice decision-making. Data triangulation was performed between the respondents' cognitive data and the university's official development documents. Text comparison was conducted to uncover the semantic gap between the university's future development plans and the content of public relations communications, along with the information students expected and received.

Table 6- The Responds of Ms. A (Local student)

<p>What comes to your mind when you hear about the Education University of Hong Kong?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Her first reaction was that EdUHK's education major was very famous, and most of its students would become teachers in the future. ● Good campus environment
<p>Have you seen any news or hear any information about the Education University of Hong Kong before you made your university preference?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Her secondary school teacher is a graduate of EdUHK and said that the teaching staff of EdUHK was excellent and recommended her to study there. ● She has personally visited EdUHK to visit the university environment. ● She checked the official website of EdUHK to learn about the course information. There are internship opportunities directly provided, which is particularly attractive.
<p>Do you know which Bachelor's disciplines or programs the Education University of Hong Kong specializes in?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She knows that EdUHK focuses on education majors, and its special needs education, early childhood education, and subject education are more detailed than those of other universities. Although non-education majors are offered, she does not know much about them.
<p>Have you heard about any notable achievements or research conducted by the Education University of Hong Kong? If yes, by which platform did you hear about that information?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes. She had heard that EdUHK had a high QS ranking in the education field. ● She occasionally sees some collaborations between EdUHK and the community or schools in the news or on social media (such as Instagram).
<p>What aspects and factors of university life do you think are important for students and influence your decision to choose the Education University of Hong Kong?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Her first consideration: On-campus facilities and services, the library is well-equipped and there are many exchange student opportunities. ● Her second consideration: Humanistic care, communicating directly with the academic advisor and obtaining academic and career support. ● Her third consideration: Promotion and marketing channels, the reputation of EdUHK, and a good reputation among relatives and elders.

The responses and perceptions of the interviewee Ms. A divulge that Ms. A's perception of EdUHK is focused on its professionalism in the field of education, especially the refined curriculum design in special needs education, early childhood education and other subdivisions, which shows that its brand image of education disciplines is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. The advantages of high QS ranking, excellent faculty, and direct internship opportunities have further consolidated its position as a top institution in the field of education. It exposes that EdUHK has a clear brand positioning and differentiated advantages in education disciplines. Although Ms. A knows that EdUHK offers non-education courses, the specific content is vague, reflecting insufficient promotion of interdisciplinary majors, which limits students' willingness to choose multiple disciplines.

Miss A obtains information through effective channels like EdUHK's alumni recommendations, on-site campus visits and official websites, which are the main sources of information for Miss A. This shows that EdUHK's alumni network and open-day activities have a strong influence. The official website conveys practical information and has become a highlight to attract students, which proves the effectiveness of the official website content. The information transparency in the presentation and introduction of non-educational courses is insufficient, and it fails to break through the inherent cognitive needs to strengthen exposure to enhance the visibility of relevant interdisciplinary courses. The above content reveals that EdUHK has diversified information acquisition channels, which helps to promote students' trust and choice tendencies in EdUHK.

Moreover, both physical resources humanistic care, and academic advisory systems, are the key factors for Ms. A to choose EdUHK, which reflects that Ms. A values practical resources and personalized support. At the same time, EdUHK has gained exposure on social media through community cooperation projects which has enhanced the public's awareness of its social responsibility and gained recognition from the

elderly. This is also an important basis for Miss A's decision-making. The social reputation and reputation of the university also affect Miss A's final decision.

Miss A's school choice logic presents the duality of resource orientation and humanistic needs. She not only values physical facilities and international opportunities but also pursues personalized academic support and career guidance. EdUHK's traditional reputation (approved by elders) and modern communication (social media) jointly strengthened its credibility, prompting her to finally choose EdUHK.

Table 7- The Responds of Ms. B (Local student)

<p>What comes to your mind when you hear about the Education University of Hong Kong?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Her first reaction was to think of EdUHK as a university that specializes in training teachers. She visited the EdUHK official website and found out that there are more than just degree programmes in education and understood the admission requirements for different majors.
<p>Have you seen any news or hear any information about the Education University of Hong Kong before you made your university preference?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She referred to the further studies guide provided by the Hok Yau Club. ● She visited the EdUHK official website and found out that there are more than just degree programmes in education and understood the admission requirements for different majors.
<p>Do you know which Bachelor's disciplines or programs the Education University of Hong Kong specializes in?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She only knew about education-related majors and read online that EdUHK early childhood education is very famous.
<p>Have you heard about any notable achievements or research conducted by the Education University of Hong Kong? If yes, by which platform did you hear about that information?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Her friend shared with her that the EdUHK education major is ranked very high on QS, but she is not sure about the specifics.
<p>What aspects and factors of university life do you think are important for students and influence your decision to choose the Education University of Hong Kong?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Her first consideration: Grants and funding. Considering her family's financial factors, she prefers to study for a bachelor's degree in UGC. ● Her second consideration: Employment expectations. The major she studies improves her chances of employment. The employment scope is wide. ● Her third consideration: On-campus facilities and services, the opportunities for exchanges abroad, and the relevant financial assistance are all very helpful.

The feedback from the interviewee Ms. B exhibits that EdUHK's brand positioning is

highly focused on the education field, which makes Ms. B's perception of EdUHK highly focused on the teacher training function, especially the outstanding reputation of early childhood education, but she lacks awareness of non-education courses and fails to break through the inherent impression. Although she learned from the official website that EdUHK provides non-education courses, she did not form a clear impression, which shows that the current interdisciplinary courses are not well-known and lack effective publicity. Furthermore, Ms. B's main sources of information are the Hok Yau Club's Form 6 further studies guide and official website information inquiry, which disclose that traditional guidance platforms and official channels have a significant impact on local students' decision-making.

Ms. B's school selection decision is significantly reality oriented. She lists economic factors such as government-funded UGC degree tuition fees and financial support provided by the university as the first consideration, reflecting that local students are more sensitive to tuition fees and economic factors directly affect school selection decisions. Secondly, the career drive is clear, and employment expectations, especially the breadth of employment, are her second priority, indicating that Ms. B is more concerned about the direct connection between her major and the job market to ensure employment security, while the industry recognition of EdUHK's education major has become a key attraction, reflecting the pragmatic attitude of local students towards the return on investment in education. Although Ms. B knows that EdUHK has a high QS ranking in educational disciplines, she lacks a clear understanding of specific achievements in research results and cooperative projects. Information dissemination relies on interpersonal word-of-mouth among friends and lacks systematic transmission from authoritative platforms, for example, academic journals and official reports. This unveils that the publicity of EdUHK's achievements and research results needs to be strengthened.

Table 8- The Responds of Mr. C (Local student)

What comes to your mind when you hear about the Education University of Hong Kong?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● His first reaction was that most EdUHK students should become teachers after graduation and most of EdUHK bachelor's degrees include teacher qualification.
Have you seen any news or hear any information about the Education University of Hong Kong before you made your university preference?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes. His family thinks EdUHK is good. ● He has a friend who is studying at EdUHK. ● He referred to the publications published by the Hok Yau Club. ● He went to the EdUHK official website to learn more about the programmes.
Do you know which Bachelor's disciplines or programs the Education University of Hong Kong specializes in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● He has heard that there are many undergraduate courses related to education, especially in mathematics is very excellent. There are also non-education majors such as executive management and environmental management.
Have you heard about any notable achievements or research conducted by the Education University of Hong Kong? If yes, by which platform did you hear about that information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● He had seen newspaper interviews conducted by EdUHK professors in some newspapers (such as the South China Morning Post). ● He occasionally saw EdUHK professors' knowledge-sharing consultations and knowledge seminars on TV programs.
What aspects and factors of university life do you think are important for students and influence your decision to choose the Education University of Hong Kong?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● His first consideration: Promotion and marketing channels, and the reputation of the university from the outside world. ● His second consideration: Academic reputation, international recognition ● His third consideration: Employment expectations. His employment opportunities in the major he studies.
Do you have any other information you would like to share with me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● He believes that Hong Kong Metropolitan University can be used as a reference to cooperate with more diversified streaming media such as TV stations for educational programs to promote EdUHK.

The answer of the interviewee Mr. C shows that he has a comprehensive understanding

of the Education University of Hong Kong, but the core of his understanding is still around the teacher training function, especially the characteristics of its combination of education diploma and bachelor's degree, which consolidates its label as a "professional education university". Although he mentioned non-education majors, for instance, executive management and environmental management, his understanding remained at the level of existence but non-mainstream, reflecting that EdUHK has laid out multidisciplinary development, and interdisciplinary cognition has initially formed but lacks clear cases or employment data support.

Family recommendations, experience sharing of friends who are studying, Xueyou Club publications and official website inquiries constitute Mr. C's information sources, showing that the school is more diverse in information dissemination, and interpersonal communication and traditional media have played a certain role. The local student community has a high degree of trust in the network of acquaintances, family, and the local authoritative organization Hok Yau Club guidance, and EdUHK has strong local credibility. The media exposure of EdUHK professors has enhanced the public's recognition of academic ability, but research details and international cooperation lack in-depth dissemination. At the same time, Mr. C listed external reputation like family recognition and international academic recognition as the top two considerations, reflecting his emphasis on the social credibility and educational quality endorsement of the university.

Mr. C's school selection logic is driven by both reputation orientation and professional pragmatism. He relies on social reputation and international ranking endorsement and pays attention to the direct connection between majors and the employment market. Furthermore, Mr. C's suggestions also reflect students' expectations for university publicity innovation, and he hopes that EdUHK can consider further expanding publicity channels to enhance EdUHK's visibility and influence.

Table 9- The Responds of Ms. D (Non-local student)

<p>What comes to your mind when you hear about the Education University of Hong Kong?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Her first reaction was to think of EdUHK's environment and equipment, and EdUHK's academic reputation in the education community.
<p>Have you seen any news or hear any information about the Education University of Hong Kong before you made your university preference?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes. She learned about the existence of EdUHK through an education agency and went to the EdUHK official website to search for detailed information. Mainly check the academic reputation of EdUHK, student dormitories and graduates' sharing. Take a quick look at the course syllabus. ● Her relatives recommended she study at EdUHK.
<p>Do you know which Bachelor's disciplines or programs the Education University of Hong Kong specializes in?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She doesn't know much. She originally thought that EdUHK only offered education-related undergraduate courses, and was unclear about the language of instruction and the difference between the four-year and five-year university programmes.
<p>Have you heard about any notable achievements or research conducted by the Education University of Hong Kong? If yes, by which platform did you hear about that information?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She has seen on social media REDnote push mechanisms that EdUHK's education major is ranked third in Asia.
<p>What aspects and factors of university life do you think are important for students and influence your decision to choose the Education University of Hong Kong?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Her first consideration: Employment expectations. She aspires to work in the education industry after graduation. ● Her second consideration: Academic reputation, the university's academic reputation in the field of education. ● Her third consideration: Promotion and marketing channels, learning about degree course arrangements and graduate information through the EdUHK official website.

<p>Do you have any other information you would like to share with me?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She felt that the course information she saw on social media was not up to date, which led her to misunderstand the actual status of the course when registering. ● She hopes that universities can expand and develop more different types of majors, such as providing undergraduate degrees in broadcasting, minority languages, law and medicine. ● She believes that EdUHK's humanistic care and the good relationship between teachers and students make her like the university even more.
---	---

Ms. D's views show that her first association with EdUHK is focused on its academic reputation in the education sector and its facilities and services, indicating that its professional image as a top institution in the education field has successfully reached non-local students and that its hardware resources like dormitories have become a highlight in attracting international students. However, she mistakenly believed that EdUHK only offered education courses and that there was a clear information gap on non-education majors, for example, social entrepreneurship and development studies, sociology and community studies, reflecting insufficient publicity for interdisciplinary courses.

Education agencies, relatives' recommendations, and official website inquiries are Ms. D's core information sources, which shows that non-local students rely relatively on third-party institutions and official channels but lack active exploration of course details such as differences in academic systems and teaching languages. Although she knew about EdUHK's QS Asia ranking through REDnote, the delayed course information led to misunderstandings in the registration, reflecting that social media content is not updated promptly, which may damage the credibility of the university.

Ms. D ranked employment in the education industry and academic reputation as the top two decision-making factors, which are highly consistent with EdUHK's educational

professional advantages. She particularly mentioned EdUHK's humanistic care and teacher-student relationship, showing that the university's soft support like teacher-student interaction and student services can effectively enhance the sense of belonging of non-local students, becoming a key differentiator from other institutions. Ms. D's school choice logic is strongly career-oriented, and she attaches great importance to the implicit support of the university.

In addition, there is a conflict between the diverse needs of non-local students and the existing curriculum structure. Ms. D expressed her expectation that EdUHK will expand cross-field majors to reflect the potential needs of non-local students for diversified disciplines, which is in stark contrast to the current situation where courses are concentrated in the field of education.

Table 10- The Responds of Ms. E (Non-local student)

<p>What comes to your mind when you hear about the Education University of Hong Kong?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Her first reaction was to think of the word "education" in the name of EdUHK and the excellent academic performance of EdUHK in the field of education.
<p>Have you seen any news or hear any information about the Education University of Hong Kong before you made your university preference?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes. She mainly learned about EdUHK's application procedures and course information through an education agency. Then, she would learn about university life through social media, such as the university life shared by EdUHK students on the WeChat official account. Also, she went to the EdUHK official website to use a virtual tour to view the university's overall equipment and campus environment. She pays more attention to the green campus.
<p>Do you know which Bachelor's disciplines or programs the Education University of Hong Kong specializes in?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She didn't know the relevant content. She knew there were education majors available, such as early childhood education, which was very good.
<p>Have you heard about any notable achievements or research conducted by the Education University of Hong Kong? If yes, by which platform did you hear about that information?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes. She saw on the university's official website that EdUHK has a very high QS in the field of education.
<p>What aspects and factors of university life do you think are important for students and influence your decision to choose the Education University of Hong Kong?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Her first consideration: Academic reputation and international recognition of the university. ● Her second consideration: Employment expectations, employment opportunities. ● Her third consideration: On-campus facilities and services, the school's exchange opportunities to different regions or countries are very attractive.

Do you have any other information you would like to share with me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She thinks the university’s promotional video is very important, as it gives people a feeling that the school atmosphere is kind and friendly. She was attracted to enrol in EdUHK by the promotional video.
--	--

Ms. E’s awareness of EdUHK is highly centered on the “education” attribute in its name and the QS ranking in the education field, which shows that EdUHK’s subject positioning has formed a strong association among non-local students. She only knows about education courses, and her knowledge of non-education majors is blank, which reflects that EdUHK has not effectively conveyed the diversity of disciplines in international promotions, limiting its appeal to cross-field students.

At the same time, Ms. E learned about the EdUHK application procedures and course information through the education agency, which shows the important role of the agency in obtaining information for non-local students. Social media and the university's official website are also channels for her to obtain information. The virtual tour on the official website gave her a certain understanding of the campus's equipment and environment, and her emphasis on the green campus also reflects the concern of some students about the school's digital campus experience and environment.

Additionally, Ms. E believes that the exchange opportunities provided by the school to different regions or countries are very attractive, which reflects her need for international educational experiences. The friendly atmosphere of the EdUHK promotional video directly prompted Miss E to enrol, reflecting that emotional content, for instance, campus atmosphere and student interaction has a greater influence on the decision-making of some non-local students than purely information-based promotions. Ms. E’s school selection logic shows a dual orientation of internationalization and practicality. She not only pursues global endorsement of academic recognition but also focuses on career prospects and exchange opportunities for practical resources.

Table 11- The Responds of Mr. F (Non-local student)

<p>What comes to your mind when you hear about the Education University of Hong Kong?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● His first reaction was to think of a normal school, equivalent to Beijing Normal University in the Mainland, which has an excellent education major. ● The Education University of Hong Kong is one of the UGC-funded universities. It does not participate in the QS comprehensive ranking but has a high QS in the education field.
<p>Have you seen any news or hear any information about the Education University of Hong Kong before you made your university preference?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● He mainly understands through the information provided by study abroad agencies. ● He went to the EdUHK official website to learn about the course's admission requirements.
<p>Do you know which Bachelor's disciplines or programs the Education University of Hong Kong specializes in?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● He didn't know much about the relevant content. He only knew about education subject majors, preschool education and special education, and did not know that there were non-teaching majors available.
<p>Have you heard about any notable achievements or research conducted by the Education University of Hong Kong? If yes, by which platform did you hear about that information?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● He had never heard of this kind of information.
<p>What aspects and factors of university life do you think are important for students and influence your decision to choose the Education University of Hong Kong?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● His first consideration: Academic reputation, international recognition ● His second consideration: Promotion and marketing channels, recommendations from friends and study abroad agents. ● His third consideration: Employment expectations, a wide range of employment options, and different industries to choose from.

Mr. F's perception of EdUHK is predominantly focused on its positioning as a "normal

university”. He draws comparisons with Beijing Normal University and emphasizes EdUHK's status as “one of the university grants committee-funded universities”, revealing that its professional image in the field of education and international recognition has successfully attracted non-local students. However, this also highlights that the professionalism of EdUHK in education subjects has formed a strong label among non-local students, resulting in a vacuum in the promotion of interdisciplinary courses and research outputs, seriously limiting the diversity of students and international competitiveness. His information acquisition primarily depends on study abroad agencies and EdUHK official websites, demonstrating that these agencies play a crucial role in assisting non-local students in obtaining school-related information, though this may also result in students receiving incomplete or biased information. EdUHK official websites are mainly utilized to understand course admission requirements, evidencing that the role of EdUHK official websites in providing specific enrollment information has been recognized by students.

Furthermore, Mr. F is unaware of the academic achievements of EdUHK. This may be due to the school's ineffective outreach to Mr. F through its publicity channels, or he may not have actively considered this aspect during his information-gathering process. It also indicates that EdUHK has failed to effectively convey its research strengths, aside from the QS subject rankings in its international publicity. Mr. F's factors for selecting a university primarily include academic reputation, publicity channels, and career development. International recognition is Mr. F's foremost consideration and is directly linked to EdUHK's advantages in the education sector. Recommendations from friends and agents rank as secondary importance, revealing that non-local students place considerable trust in third-party authoritative opinions; however, this also underscores the weakness of the school's independent publicity channels.

Mr. F's reasoning in choosing a school presents a contradiction between a focus on reputation and the need for career flexibility. He seeks international academic recognition while anticipating a broad range of employment opportunities, but the

disconnect between his actual knowledge and the school's curriculum structure may create a gap.

Table 12- Differences in understanding among students with different statuses

Local students and non-local students	
Similarities	<p>Information acquisition channels: All interviewees searched for information through the EdUHK official website and were influenced by recommendations from others (relatives and friends/teachers/agents).</p> <p>Factors of importance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employment expectations (5/6, 2 local students, 3 non-local students). 2. Academic reputation (4/6, 1 local student, 3 non-local students). 3. Promotion and marketing channels (4/6, 2 local students, 2 non-local students). 4. On-campus facilities and services (3/6, 2 local students, 1 non-local student). <p>Understanding EdUHK's bachelor's degree programmes: All interviewees are aware that EdUHK offers education-related undergraduate majors and can mention the reputation of specific education majors, such as early childhood education and some subject education.</p>
Differences	<p>Information acquisition channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local students: Mainly through local educational resources (such as Hok Yau Club), in-person visits and local media. ● Non-local students: Mainly rely on study abroad agencies, social media (such as REDnote and WeChat official accounts) and virtual tours. <p>Understanding EdUHK's bachelor's degree programmes:</p> <p>- 1. Breadth of programmes knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local students: explore more about the specialised areas of education majors (special needs education, early childhood education, subject education). ● Non-local students: primarily know only a few major education disciplines.

	<p>- 2. Awareness of programmes diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local students: recognise that EdUHK offers non-education majors (Mr C mentioned executive management and environmental management). ● Non-local students: generally unaware that EdUHK has non-education majors (Ms D originally thought there were only education-related courses). <p>-3. Understanding of programmes structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local students: Have a solid understanding of the curriculum structure, including the Post-graduate Diploma/Certificate in Education. ● Non-local students: lack of clarity regarding the differences between 4-year and 5-year programmes, the language of instruction, and other fundamental course structures.
--	--

Table 13- Differences in understanding between university and undergraduate students

Similarities	<p>Positioning: Both parties agree that the university has high-quality courses in the field of education. For instance, QS education ranking is 20th in the world.</p> <p>Promotion and marketing channels: Both parties use the main website and social media</p> <p>Planned development direction: Both sides attach importance to employment support like internships, and vocational training. Also, increase international exchange opportunities.</p>
Differences	<p>Positioning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The university hopes to emphasize interdisciplinary development. For example, artificial intelligence, and cultural heritage education. Promoting holistic education, social care, and entrepreneurial thinking, cooperate with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and become an international education hub. ● Students generally believe that EdUHK is a university dedicated to training teachers and have limited understanding of its interdisciplinary courses. Some non-local students mistakenly believed that the university only offers education majors. <p>Promotion and marketing channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The university provides press releases, media invitations, and printed publications and cooperates with the media to release research results and event information for publicity. ● Students tend to learn about universities through recommendations from others, guidebooks for further studies, or educational exhibitions. <p>Planned development direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The university plans interdisciplinary curriculum development and continues to promote research innovation, like knowledge transfer, and patent applications. ● Students expect more diversified non-education courses, such as broadcasting, and minority languages.

According to the comparative analysis of local and non-local students and the university's positioning in Tables 12 and 13, EdUHK has significant similarities and differences in positioning, image recognition and development direction. For the

commonalities, all students obtain course information through the official website and rely on recommendations to form initial trust; internship in employment expectations, academic reputation, and exchange student resources included in on-campus facilities and services are the core considerations for university selection. Both EdUHK and students recognize EdUHK's advantages in the education field. It has an international certification ranked 20th by QS and attaches great importance to international exchanges and vocational training.

The differences are reflected in three aspects:

1. Access to information: Local students are more likely to rely on traditional recommendations, focusing on participating in campus field trips and paying attention to local media reports, while non-local students mainly obtain information through social platforms, online advertisements and international intermediaries, resulting in a vague understanding of professional settings, interdisciplinary development opportunities and teaching resources. Although EdUHK uses official websites, press releases and traditional media for publicity (The Education University of Hong Kong, 2025a), only 12% of students strongly agree with print media and pay little attention to official activities. They prefer fragmented, highly interactive social platforms and word-of-mouth communication.

2. Image cognition dislocation: EdUHK hopes to create an image of a high level of internationalization, and equal emphasis on research and teaching through a systematic publicity strategy while emphasizing campus safety, historical heritage and regional influence (The Education University of Hong Kong, 2022a). But students generally regard EdUHK as a traditional teacher training school, and non-local students even mistakenly believe that it only provides education majors. Students have insufficient knowledge of non-education programmes, interdisciplinary achievements and patent applications, and information transparency needs to be improved.

3. Differences in development expectations: EdUHK's strategies focus on whole-person training, scientific research innovation, interdisciplinary integration, and cooperation with the Greater Bay Area to promote transformation and upgrading (The Education University of Hong Kong, 2022b). Students are more concerned about immediate needs and expect more diversified courses, optimized course structure descriptions and enhanced employment-oriented practical teaching to improve the learning experience.

Optimization:

- **Precise publicity:** For non-local students, launch short video course cases and alumni stories on social media to strengthen the interdisciplinary image; set up a non-education major column on the official website to clarify the course length and teaching language.
- **Enhance interaction:** display achievements in non-educational fields and international invention awards through open days and online live broadcasts to break the stereotype of a single normal school.
- **Transparent communication:** Regularly survey student needs, build a feedback system, combine short-term demands, and internship resources with long-term planning or scientific research cooperation, and ensure that the strategy is consistent with the experience.
- **Channel integration:** Strengthening and expand the operation of new media platforms, cooperate with external institutions or alumni for word-of-mouth communication, and bridge the gap between traditional publicity and fragmented information.

In general, EdUHK needs to maintain its advantages in the field of education while bridging the gap between the university's strategic positioning and students' cognition through differentiated publicity strategies and transparent communication, to attract a wider range of students and enhance global competitiveness.

5 Discussion

The findings indicate that academic reputation serves as a core driving force. The results of this study show that gender, learning mode and student status all have a significant impact on the perception of academic reputation, verifying its cross-group importance. The results of exploratory factor analysis further established the dominant position of this factor. As the main factor, "academic reputation" has an eigenvalue of 3.47 which is significantly higher than other dimensions. Interview data deeply reveals its mechanism of action: among the six respondents, four listed it as the top three decision-making factors, and two of them listed it as the first consideration. Specifically, QS ranking competitiveness and faculty quality constitute key cognitive factors. For example, Ms. D emphasized that "the academic reputation of the university in the field of education" is her second decision-making factor, while Mr. F puts "international certification" first. Many employers use the academic reputation of the university where students attend as a screening mechanism to evaluate, thus affecting selection and employment bias (Bacon et al., 2023). These findings suggest that academic reputation has evolved beyond a mere indicator of quality and has evolved into an endorsement of credibility expected of career advancement.

Secondly, there is the pervasive influence of employment expectations. The results of this study show that the career expectation construct is affected by multiple factors such as gender, age, faculty affiliation and student status, with a significance coefficient of 0.82. Qualitative interviews revealed the specific connotation of this dimension: five out of six respondents listed it as a priority, focusing on the breadth of employment fields (Ms. B) and industry matching (Ms. D). Typical cases include Ms. A's emphasis on the connection between internship projects, and Mr. F's desire for flexibility in cross-industry choices. It is worth noting that different student groups present differentiated demands - local students focus on career stability, while non-local students pay more attention to cross-regional/national employment opportunities. Ilie et al. (2021) mentioned that universities introduce students to their adaptation to the needs of the

labour market, which contributes to the creation of a unique image as a centre of academic excellence. This diversity of employment expectations reflects the functional transformation of higher education from academic certification to ability endorsement.

Third, there is the demand for precise promotion channels. The effectiveness of promotion and marketing channels shows significant group differences, and there is a strong correlation between demographic characteristics such as gender and age and the way information is received. Qualitative data reveals the duality of channel effectiveness: local student groups rely on traditional channels for instance, academic publications, and word-of-mouth recommendations, while non-local student groups use intermediaries and social media for example REDnote and WeChat to build awareness. According to Patawaran et al. (2024), digital education service marketing can quickly establish connections with students around the world based on the advantages of social media as a digital platform. It is worth pointing out that the quality of official website content directly affects the effectiveness of decision-making in the case of Ms. and Ms. E, but Ms. D pointed out that the lag in social media information may cause cognitive bias. This exhibits that there is a three-dimensional tension of channel-content-timeliness in information dissemination, and accurate delivery requires considering both group characteristics and media characteristics.

Fourth, it is the group attraction of on-campus facilities and services. The influence of facilities and services is selective, and its intensity is positively related to age and college background. The reliability test manifested that Cronbach's alpha values of relevant dimensions were all >0.70 , confirming the measurement validity of the scale. Interview data disclose that three-sixths of the respondents attach importance to hardware facilities, focusing on library resources, accommodation conditions and exchange programs. Individual cases have displayed that the immersive experience created by virtual tour technology can significantly improve decision-making effectiveness. Siagian et al. (2020) also supported the view that universities shape their image through the design of outdoor spaces. This uncovers that there is a conversion

mechanism from function to perception in the attractiveness of facilities, and physical resources need to realize value transfer through digital means.

Fifth, the targeting effect of funding strategies. Grants and funding show significant gender differences and its factor eigenvalue of 1.093 shows secondary importance. Interview data unveiled the group specificity of the effectiveness of funding. Only one local student, Ms. B, listed it as a core element, but a non-local student Ms. E made the final choice due to the exchange funding policy. The excessive cost of higher education and the declining real income of citizens have made it difficult for some local young people to pay education tuition (Rogova & Shamin, 2020). This difference reflects the safety net function of the funding system - it has a decisive impact on economically vulnerable groups while protecting the majority of students. The data also illustrates that non-local students are more sensitive to short-term funding projects than long-term scholarship systems.

Sixth, the auxiliary value of geographical factors. University address and convenience demonstrate limited influence, and its regression coefficient is lower than other core elements. Barbato et al. (2021) believed that the location of a university in a remote area will reduce the resources or opportunities it can obtain. However, in the interviews, the interviewees did not actively mention the geography and transportation aspects of the university, and most of them were related to transportation facilities like the school bus system. This exposes that the university is in a negative state in this regard, but in the competition of modern higher education, the location disadvantage can be eliminated through facility compensation strategies, and the geographical factors are changing from necessary conditions to sufficient conditions.

Finally, the potential value of humanistic care. The investigation unexpectedly discovered the hidden role of humanistic care, which is specifically reflected in the quality of teacher-student interaction, such as the support Ms. A received from her academic mentor and Ms. D's emphasis on maintaining interpersonal relationships and

campus atmosphere. Nyagadza and Mazuruse (2021) underlined that participating in more social welfare activities in the name of the university can indirectly establish connections between students and the Hong Kong community and increase students' trust and loyalty to the university. Although an independent measurement dimension has not been formed, it indirectly affects the decision-making process by enhancing the sense of belonging, which provides new ideas for differentiated enrollment strategies.

Overall, the student decision-making model presents a dual-core drive-multi-level support structure. Academic reputation and employment expectations constitute the dual cores of decision-making, grants and funding, promotion and marketing channels form the secondary core considerations, and university address and convenience and humanistic care play a regulating role. Demographic characteristics analysis shows that gender has a significant impact on five constructs. Age differences are mainly reflected in the dimension of career expectations, while differences in student status have a comprehensive impact on multiple aspects such as information reception and facility evaluation. This prompts colleges and universities to build a data-driven, group segmentation, and dynamic feedback enrollment strategy system, such as strengthening the real-time nature of social media operations for non-local students, designing flexible grants and funding plans for economically sensitive groups, and improving facility awareness through virtual reality technology. The study also found that there is an interactive mechanism of rational calculation and emotional identification in student decision-making. The former is reflected in the systematic evaluation of quantitative indicators, and the latter is reflected in the implicit attraction of university culture. This dual mechanism provides a theoretical basis for university brand building.

6 Limitations and Implications

This study is constrained by limitations in both the research duration and sample size. Future research should address these limitations by expanding the sample size and extending the observation period to one or two academic years to better capture the dynamic evolution of decision-making factors over time.

Additionally, the current study is restricted to undergraduate students enrolled at The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK), which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future investigations could broaden the scope by including a more diverse range of participants from different academic levels or institutions.

In the future, cross-institutional comparative studies can be conducted, especially research on decision-making mechanisms at the postgraduate education stage, to test the moderating effect of education-level variables on the choice model.

Similarly, the construction of the explanatory variable system in this study is limited to specific factors, leaving other potential determinants unexplored. Future research could enhance the analytical framework by incorporating internal factors for latent class analysis, such as students' value systems (e.g., utilizing the Schwartz Personal Values Scale), belief structures, core values, or lifestyle preferences. Investigating these latent factors could elucidate their role in shaping decision-making pathways, offering deeper insights into the mechanisms underlying students' university choices. Additionally, such an approach could facilitate cross-cultural validity testing, enabling the development of differentiated enrolment strategies tailored to diverse student populations. These avenues represent promising directions for further exploration in subsequent studies.

The significance and findings of this study have implications for understanding the student university selection process at the regional and global levels. Exploring how different elements affect the university choice preferences of different student identity groups, it is possible to clarify identity differences and their impact on the elements that are valued in school selection. From a practical perspective, the results of this study can provide a reference for admissions staff at EdUHK to help them understand

undergraduate students' university choice preferences. Such surveys can help university admissions staff gain deeper insights into the factors that influence the dynamic relationship between students and universities, as well as the effectiveness and implementation impact of development strategies. By identifying some of the social and demographic factors that influence decision-making, understanding which elements and development plans support or undermine the external positioning image and overall enrolment potential of EdUHK will help the university formulate development plans, improve the quality of public relations response strategies, and enhance the effectiveness of external publicity. This study contributes to the empirical knowledge of student university selection in higher education, especially in the absence of similar research in the Hong Kong region.

7 Conclusion

In summary, this study identified several factors that significantly influence university choice among students at The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). The findings reveal that academic reputation and employment expectations are pivotal elements in students' decision-making processes, playing a substantial role in determining their choice of institution. Furthermore, a strong correlation was observed between promotion and marketing channels and students' awareness of course-related information. While grants and funding were also found to be associated with university choice preferences, their impact varied across different student demographics. These findings underscore the need for further research across diverse universities and educational contexts to explore additional potential factors. Such investigations could inform more effective public relations strategies and institutional development planning, ultimately enhancing the alignment between university offerings and student expectations.

8 References

- Abakumov, E., & Beresten, S. (2023). Green Campus as a Part of Environmental Management of St. Petersburg State University. *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland)*, 15(16), 12515-. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151612515>
- Adeoye-Olatunde, O. A., & Olenik, N. L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. *JACCP: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF CLINICAL PHARMACY*, 4(10), 1358–1367. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1441>
- Al-Hazmi, N. M. (2020). The effect of total quality management on marketing educational services in Saudi universitie. *Management Science Letters*, 2329–2336. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2020.3.002>
- Aulia, A. T., Satyawan, I. A., & Naini, A. M. I. (2022). The influence of social media of Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta Gunungkidul Campus to create brand image on student decision making. *Informasi*, 52(1), 83–96. <https://doi.org/10.21831/informasi.v52i1.49375>
- Bacon, D. R., Stewart, K. A., Hartley, S. W., & Paul, P. (2023). Exploring the Value of Educational Options in Marketing. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 45(2), 109–122. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02734753231170840>
- Bălăşescu, M., & Bălăşescu, S. (2019). Ways to create an effective positioning of Romanian universities through identity, image and promotion elements. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business Excellence*, 13(1), 47–55. <https://doi.org/10.2478/picbe-2019-0006>
- Banuelos, M. (2021). The Value in Marketing : The Influence of Memory on Marketing Campus Activities. Thesis (M.A.)--Rowan University, 2021.
- Barbato, G., Fumasoli, T., & Turri, M. (2021). The role of the organisational dimension in university positioning: a case-study approach. *Studies in Higher Education (Dorchester-on-Thames)*, 46(7), 1356–1370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1688284>

- Bernays, E. L. (1947). The Engineering of Consent. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 250(1), 113–120.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/000271624725000116>
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Census and Statistics Department, T. G. of the H. K. S. A. R. (2023, February). *Fertility Trend in Hong Kong, 1991 to 2021*. Fertility Trend in Hong Kong.
<https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/tc/EIndexbySubject.html?scode=160&pcode=FA100090>
- Cheung, Y. (2022). *President's Message*. EDUHK strategic plan 2016-2025.
<https://www.eduhk.hk/sp2016-25/presidentsmessage.html>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design : qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Sixth edition.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Education Bureau, T. G. of the H. K. S. A. R. (2024, March 25). *Institutions*.
<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/postsecondary/local-higher-edu/institutions/index.html>
- Fumasoli, T., Barbato, G., & Turri, M. (2020). The determinants of university strategic positioning: a reappraisal of the organisation. *Higher Education*, 80(2), 305–334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00481-6>
- Gibson, D., Gonzales, J. L., & Castanon, J. (2006). The Importance of Reputation and the Role of Public Relations. In *Public relations quarterly* (Vol. 51, Number 3, pp. 15-). Public Relations Quarterly. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/importance-reputation-role-public-relations/docview/222401548/se-2>
- Guan, L., Mok, K. H. J., & Yu, B. (2023). Pull factors in choosing a higher education study abroad destination after the massive global immobility: A re-examination from Chinese perspectives. *Cogent Education*, 10(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2199625>
- Halcomb, E., & Hickman, L. (2015). Mixed methods research. *Nursing Standard*, 29(32), 41–47. <https://doi.org/10.7748/ns.29.32.41.e8858>

- Hutton, J. G. (1999). The definition, dimensions, and domain of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 25(2), 199–214. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111\(99\)80162-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(99)80162-3)
- Ilie, P., Sandu, D., Damian, D., & Matis, C. (2021). Educational Management and Marketing. *The International Conference “The Risk in Contemporary Economy” (“Dunarea de Jos” University. Faculty of Economics)*, 1(1), 426–431. <https://doi.org/10.35219/rce20670532136>
- Jr., A. R. (2016, July 18). *Enrollment numbers can mean a lot to universities*. The Edwardsville Intelligencer. <https://www.theintelligencer.com/commentary/article/Enrollment-numbers-can-mean-a-lot-to-universities-10649315.php>
- Keller, K.L. (2013). *Strategic brand management*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Kondracki, N. L., Wellman, N. S., & Amundson, D. R. (2002). Content Analysis: Review of Methods and Their Applications in Nutrition Education. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 34(4), 224–230. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1499-4046\(06\)60097-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1499-4046(06)60097-3)
- Lysytsia, N., & Byelikova, YU. (2022). Development of marketing of educational services based on application of Netiquette principles in distance learning. *Economics of Development*, 20(1). [https://doi.org/10.57111/devt.20\(1\).2022.25-34](https://doi.org/10.57111/devt.20(1).2022.25-34)
- Margareta, R. T. E., Ismanto, B., & Sulasmono, B. S. (2018). Strategi Pemasaran Sekolah Dalam Peningkatan Minat Peserta Didik Berdasarkan Delta Model. *Kelola: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 5(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.24246/j.jk.2018.v5.i1.p1-14>
- Morgan, D. L. (2007). Paradigms lost and Pragmatism regained. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), 48–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2345678906292462>

- Newman-Ford, L., Lloyd, S., & Thomas, S. (2009). An investigation in the effects of gender, prior academic achievement, place of residence, age and attendance on first-year undergraduate attainment. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 1(1), 14–28.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/17581184200800002>
- Nuseir, M. T., & El Refae, G. A. (2022). Factors influencing the choice of studying at UAE universities: an empirical research on the adoption of educational marketing strategies. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 32(2), 215–237. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2020.1852467>
- Nyagadza, B., & Mazuruse, G. (2021). Embracing public relations (PR) as survival panacea to private colleges' corporate image & corporate identity erosion. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 7(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.1974179>
- Patawaran, N., Purwanty, R., Nirtha, E., & Ismail, M. (2024). Digitalization of Educational Services Marketing Program on the Primary School teacher of Musamus University. *International Journal of Business, Law, and Education*, 4(2), 1537–1543. <https://doi.org/10.56442/ijble.v4i2.422>
- Plano Clark, V. L. (2010). The adoption and practice of mixed methods: U.S. trends in federally funded health-related research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), 428–440. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410364609>
- Rogova, V. A., & Shamin, R. V. (2020). Optimization procedures in the problem of marketing educational services at the stage of forming a policy for recruiting applicants to universities. *Rossiiskij Tehnologičeskij Žurnal*, 8(5), 91–102.
<https://doi.org/10.32362/2500-316X-2020-8-5-91-102>
- Seitl, C., & Rejnö, Å. (2022). Marketing of educational programs - a study of Swedish universities through presented images. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print), 1–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2022.2158988>

- Siagian, M., Sitorus, R., & Eddy, F. (2020). The production of the new space as the solution of outdoor space planning problem. *IOP Conference Series. Earth and Environmental Science*, 452(1), 12152-. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/452/1/012152>
- Tatar, E., & Oktay, M. (2006). Search, choice and persistence for higher education: A case study in Turkey. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 2(2), 115–129.
<https://doi.org/10.12973/ejmste/75459>
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2011). *University's Guidelines on Ethics in Research*. Human Research Ethics Committee.
https://www.eduhk.hk/human_hrec/view.php?secid=2550
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2021, November). *Breakthroughs and Achievements*. Facts & Figures.
https://www.eduhk.hk/cms/f/content_block/19998/33715/EdUHK%20Fact%20Sheet%202021.pdf
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2022a). *Our Vision, Our Mission, Our Core Values*. EDUHK strategic plan 2016-2025.
<https://www.eduhk.hk/sp2016-25/vision.html#>
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2022b). *The Planning Context*. EDUHK strategic plan 2016-2025. <https://www.eduhk.hk/sp2016-25/theplanningcontext.html>
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2023). *Global Affairs Office: Budget & Scholarships*. The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK).
<https://www.eduhk.hk/gao/articles/44>
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2024a). *EDUHK Annual Report 2023-2024*. University Publications.
https://www.eduhk.hk/ar/annual2324/EdUHK_Annual_Report_2023-2024.pdf

- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2024b, July). *Shaping the future of education: EDUHK futures*. Shaping the future of education | EdUHK Futures. <https://www.eduhk.hk/cms/f/publication/28223/2024Magazine.pdf>
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2024c). *Fees: Undergraduate programmes: The Education University of Hong Kong*. Undergraduate Programmes | The Education University of Hong Kong. <https://www.apply.eduhk.hk/ug/fees>
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2024d). *Non-JUPAS (year-1 admissions) - entrance requirements: Undergraduate programmes: The Education University of Hong Kong*. Undergraduate Programmes | The Education University of Hong Kong. <https://www.apply.eduhk.hk/ug/nonjupas>
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2024e). *Vision & Mission*. The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). <https://www.eduhk.hk/en/about/vision-and-mission>
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2025a). *Communications Office - Brand Management*. The Education University of Hong Kong. <https://www.eduhk.hk/co/view.php?secid=50504&u=u>
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2025b). *Calendar 2024/25: ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY*. The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). https://www.eduhk.hk/re/eduhk_calendar/pdfall?lang=en&siteid=eduhk_calendar&status=I
- The Education University of Hong Kong. (2025c). *The Education University of Hong Kong (eduhk)*. <https://www.eduhk.hk/en/>
- The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. (2024). *Bolstering Confidence*. The 2024-2025 Budget. <https://www.budget.gov.hk/2024/eng/bc.html>
- The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. (2025). *Budget speech*. The 2025-26 Budget - Budget Speech. <https://www.budget.gov.hk/2025/eng/budget17.html>

The University Grants Committee. (2024, June 12). *UGC Annual Report 2021-22*.

The University Grants Committee (UGC).

<https://www.ugc.edu.hk/doc/eng/ugc/publication/report/AnnualRpt2122/full.pdf>

Väliverronen, E., Sihvonen, T., Laaksonen, S.-M., & Koskela, M. (2022). Branding the “wow-academy”: The risks of promotional culture and quasi-corporate communication in higher education. *Studies in Communication Sciences*, 22(3), 493–513. <https://doi.org/10.24434/j.scoms.2022.03.3285>

9 Appendixes

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. What comes to your mind when you hear about the Education University of Hong Kong?
2. Have you seen any news or hear any information about the Education University of Hong Kong before you made your university preference?
3. Do you know which Bachelor's disciplines or programs the Education University of Hong Kong specializes in?
4. Have you heard about any notable achievements or research conducted by the Education University of Hong Kong? If yes, by which platform did you hear about that information?
5. What aspects and factors of university life do you think are important for students and influence your decision to choose the Education University of Hong Kong?

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

The Education University of Hong Kong

Honours Project (II): Research report for executive management

“Public Relations: The image positioning of The Education University of Hong Kong by publicity elements and channel factors”

I am a Year four student from The Education University of Hong Kong. I am researching Public Relations: The image positioning of The Education University of Hong Kong by publicity elements and channel factors for the Final Year Project. The data collection will be for research purposes only and will be anonymously recorded. Please follow the instructions below and take a moment to complete the survey. Thank you for participating.

1. Gender

- a) Female 20 b) Male c) Other

2. Age Range

- a) 18-20 b) 21-24 c) 25-30 d) 31-40 e) 41-55

3. Faculty of study

- a) Faculty of Education and Human Development (FEHD)
 b) Faculty of Humanities (FHM)
 c) Faculty of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (FLASS)

4. Mode of study

- a) Full-time b) Part-time

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? (1: Strongly Disagree, 5: Strongly Agree)

	Items	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1	N/A
Academic reputation	I joined the university because of its academic reputation.						
	I joined the university because it offered the major that I wanted.						
	I joined the university because the major I wanted to study is locally accredited.						
	I joined the university because the major I wanted to study is internationally accredited.						
	I joined the university because its programs are available in the morning and evening periods.						

Grants and funding	I joined the university because of the high school deduction granted by the university.						
	I joined the university because of the grants and aid system provided by the university.						
	I joined the university because of the system of grants given to outstanding students during the study.						
	I joined the university the major because of its tuition fees.						
	I joined the university because of donors.						
	I joined the university as a son or daughter of a member of staff.						
	I joined the university because my siblings attend there.						
Location and proximity	I joined the university due to its proximity to my residence.						
	I joined the university due to its proximity to my workplace.						
	I joined the university due to transportation availability.						
	I joined the university the major because of the student accommodation.						
Facilities and services	I joined the university because of its extracurricular activities.						
	I joined the university because of its student exchange program.						
	I joined the university because of its health and sports facilities.						

	I joined the university because of its study facilities.						
Promotion and marketing channels	I learned about the university through its website.						
	I learned about the university through its students.						
	I learned about the university through print media and radio broadcasting.						
	I learned about the university through social media.						
	I learned about the university through educational exhibitions.						
	I learned about the university through student recruitment unit.						
	I learned about the university through friends.						
	I learned about the university through my family's recommendation.						
Future expectations for career	I joined the university because it has greater job opportunities for students matching my major.						
	I joined the university because of its wide scope of employment.						
	I joined the university because of the internships provided by the university.						

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for your participation!

Appendix C: Description of questionnaire items

	Items	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1	N/A
Academic reputation	I joined the university because of its academic reputation.	27	59	10	1	3	0
	I joined the university because it offered the major that I wanted.	31	62	4	3	0	0
	I joined the university because the major I wanted to study is locally accredited.	19	65	13	3	0	0
	I joined the university because the major I wanted to study is internationally accredited.	16	55	25	4	0	0
	I joined the university because its programs are available in the morning and evening periods.	17	17	52	10	3	1
Grants and funding	I joined the university because of the high school deduction granted by the university.	8	15	13	4	11	49
	I joined the university because of the grants and aid system provided by the university.	13	10	29	12	9	27
	I joined the university because of the system of grants given to outstanding students during the study.	12	25	27	4	6	26
	I joined the university the major because of its tuition fees.	13	15	20	14	25	13
	I joined the university because of donors.	7	6	12	10	27	38
	I joined the university as a son or daughter of a member of staff.	8	3	4	8	12	65

(Continued)

Continued.

	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
		5	4	3	2	1	
	I joined the university because my siblings attend there.	7	5	3	13	12	60
Location and proximity	I joined the university due to its proximity to my residence.	7	6	32	7	26	22
	I joined the university due to its proximity to my workplace.	7	3	14	11	19	46
	I joined the university due to transportation availability.	7	7	18	22	17	29
	I joined the university the major because of the student accommodation.	21	20	14	15	11	19
Facilities and services	I joined the university because of its extracurricular activities.	20	36	15	17	5	7
	I joined the university because of its student exchange program.	22	37	12	12	8	9
	I joined the university because of its health and sports facilities.	10	13	44	14	8	11
	I joined the university because of its study facilities.	17	46	24	10	1	2
Promotion and marketing channels	I learned about the university through its website.	45	37	18	0	0	0
	I learned about the university through its students.	13	42	37	7	1	0
	I learned about the university through print media and radio broadcasting.	14	25	53	7	0	1

(Continued)

Continued.

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
	5	4	3	2	1	
I learned about the university through social media.	19	47	29	4	0	1
I learned about the university through educational exhibitions.	23	16	47	10	1	3
I learned about the university through student recruitment unit.	18	28	42	2	6	4
I learned about the university through friends.	9	34	46	10	0	1
I learned about the university through my family's recommendation.	8	23	15	13	5	36
Future expectations for career I joined the university because it has greater job opportunities for students matching my major.	35	41	20	4	0	0
I joined the university because of its wide scope of employment.	15	53	19	12	0	1
I joined the university because of the internships provided by the university.	13	41	26	9	3	8