

FACTORS INFLUENCING CHINESE PARENTS' INTENTION TO SELECT PIANO TEACHING SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN IN BEIJING CITY, PRC.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the factors influencing Chinese parents' intentions to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC. This study collected data from 100 Chinese parents in Beijing City using a questionnaire. The data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics, Chi-Square (χ^2 -test) and correlation analysis.

The findings reveal that the Chinese parents' in Beijing City, PRC from different socio-demographic profiles (e.g. gender, age, status, education level, occupation, average income per month and religion) have different intentions to select piano teaching schools for their child. It was also found that there is a significant relationship between marketing mix strategy (4P's) (i.e. product, price, distribution channel, and promotion) on the intention to select piano teaching schools in Beijing City, PRC at a significant level of 0,05.

These results can be used as a marketing guideline for the piano teaching school to better capture the changes and demands of the parents.

Keyword: Factors Influencing, Chinese parents, Piano, Children in Beijing City.

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Introduction

While learning to play the piano remains as popular as ever among Chinese children, the reasons for doing so are continually evolving, Zhou Wenting reports in Shanghai. Learning to play piano has been popular in China since its reform and opening-up. But the reasons for doing so for students, but more often than not, for their parents have, according to music-education experts, changed over time. "At first, parents just sent their children to learn to play the piano out of a passion for music. In the 1990s, attitudes changed. In many regions in the country, students with exemplary piano skills would be prioritized for enrollment in elite junior and senior middle schools," says 90-year-old Zhu Yafen, who chaired the jury of the competition. Zhu is a former dean of the piano department at the Shenyang Conservatory of Music.

Changing Attitudes - In recent years, experts claim there has been another shift in the reasons for the popularity of the instrument, learning to play the piano as a way of self-enrichment and comprehension improvement, as well as developing persistence.

"Chinese parents and society as a whole, nowadays pay growing attention to the overall development of the younger generation, rather than just encouraging them to pursue academic excellence," says Zhu, who once taught internationally renowned Chinese pianist Lang Lang. "Music has been proven, scientifically, to make people smarter and to form aesthetic sensibilities. Even if some quit learning after a couple of years, there will be long-lasting benefits. It nurtures their character and helps them explore more about themselves and the world," she says.

Recent articles in the Asia Times and The Independent assert that approximately thirty-six million Chinese children study piano today, compared to 6 million in the United States (Becker 2004) (Spengler 2008). Another article in the Philadelphia Inquirer notes that another 50 million children in China study the violin and that "Chinese parents urge their children to excel at instrumental music with the same ferocity that American parents push theirs to perform well in soccer or Little League" (Lin 2008).

Therefore, this research study aims to determine the effect of socio-demographic profile of Chinese parents' intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC and to identify the influence of Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's) of Chinese parents' intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC. The conceptual framework of this study is showed in Figure 1.

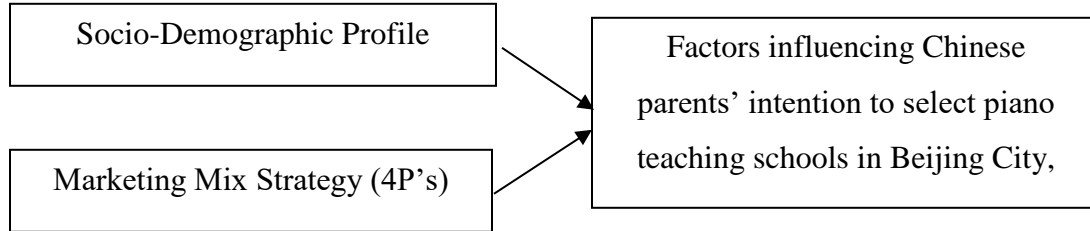


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Base on the relationship shown in the conceptual framework of the research study, the study hypotheses are:

- **H1:** Chinese parents with different socio-demographic profiles will have different intentions to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.
- **H2:** Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's) has an effect on Chinese parents' intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.

Research Methodology

This research study discussed the relationship between Socio-Demographic, Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's) and the factors that influence Chinese parents' intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC using the following constructs;

1. Socio-Demographic: gender, age, status, education level, occupation, average income per month and religion.
2. Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's): product, price, distribution channel and promotion.
3. Parents' Intention to select Piano Teaching Schools for Children

The survey research was designed using a self-administrative questionnaire. (Malhotra, 2007). Several steps of research methodology were used and are listed as Population & Sample, Citizens in Beijing City, PRC. **Sample:** Chinese parents with the intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC. **Sample Size:** Due to the number of populations is unknown, the researcher uses Taro Yamane table to calculate by the approximately sample size for this study (Poldongnok 2009). The sample size is calculated based on 95% confidence level and 5% sampling error. The sample size is 384 respondents.

Due to limited time as full-time musician, the researcher was able to collect 100 samples.

Sampling Method: the research adopted convenience sampling method by distributing self-administrative to Chinese parents in Beijing City, PRC. Convenience sampling was used to test this study because the respondents selected to be in the right place and at the right time and least time consuming compared to other sampling methods. (Malhotra, 2007).

Data Collection

This study developed and adapted items from previous studies to measure the constructs as following;

- The survey questionnaire was passed out by the researcher through offline means.
- The survey / questionnaire consisted of three parts.

1) Socio-Demographic Profile

- The first part of the survey consisted of only close-ended questions to collect the personal information of the respondents necessary for the research. The questions are made of dichotomous questions.

2) Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's)

- 30 items to measure the Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's) (e.g. product, price, distribution channel, and promotion).

Likert Scale, a five-point scoring method was used to measure these items.

“5” = Strongly Agree with the statement

“4” = Agree with the statement

“3” = Feel neutral with the statement

“2” = Disagree with the statement

“1” = Strongly Disagree with the statement

According to Sirirat (2005), each item is numerical score, ranging from 1 to 5 as follows:

- Calculating the cutting/interval score
 - = (highest score – lowest score) / highest score
 - = (5-1) / 5
 - = 0.80

- Thus, descriptions of the revised score are follows:

Range of Score		Level of agreement
4.21 – 5.00	=	strongly agree with the statement
3.41 – 4.20	=	agree with the statement
2.61 – 3.40	=	feel neutral with the statement
1.81 – 2.60	=	disagree with the statement
1.00 – 1.80	=	strongly disagree with the statement

3) Parents' intention to select piano teaching schools in Beijing City, PRC.

- 5 items to measure the parent's intention to select piano teaching schools.

Likert Scale, a five-point scoring method was used to measure these items.

“5” = Strongly Agree with the statement

“4” = Agree with the statement

“3” = Feel neutral with the statement

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This study composed of 2 types of data collected through two different methods;

1. Primary Data – collected through the mean of handed out survey questionnaires to Chinese parents with the intention to select piano teaching school for children in Beijing City, PRC.

2. Secondary Data – collected through the means of online and offline research such as text books, articles as well as related research papers.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using the following statistic methods:

- a) Descriptive statistics – frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.
- b) Inferential statistics for hypothesis testing;
 - Chi-square was used to test the relationship between socio-demographic profile and Chinese parents' intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.
 - Correlation analysis was use to the relationship between Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's) and Chinese parents' intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.

The average mean score of the sub-items of each element of the 4P's was used in the hypothesis testing. For example, testing the relationships between average mean score of product strategy and Chinese parents' intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.

The confidence level of 95% or <0.05 was adopted to test the hypotheses of the study.

Research Findings

1. The results of Socio-Demographic Profile

Gender: The number of majority of respondents in this study are female (60%) followed by male (40%). **Age:** the majority of respondents are between ages 41-50 (44%), followed by 31-40 (31%), 51-60 (14%), 21-30 (8%) and 61+ (3%). **Status** – the majority of the respondents are married (71%), followed by single (11%), divorced (11%), separated (6%) and widowed (1%). **Education** – the majority of respondents have masters (44%), followed by bachelors (35%), vocational (14%), high school (4%) and doctoral (3%). **Occupation** – the majority of respondents were private employees (28%), followed by government officers (24%), state entre employee (15%), freelancer (12), business owners (11%), post graduate student (6%), and others (4%).

Average Income Per Month – the majority of respondents consisted of 10,001-20,000CNY (39%), followed by <10,000CNY (34%), 20,001-30,000CNY (10%), 40,001-60,000CNY (9%), 30,001-40,000CNY (4%), and >60,000CNY (4%). **Religion** – the majority of respondents consisted of Buddhism (41%), followed by non-religious (31%), Christianity (23%) and Islam (5%).

2. Results of Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's)

Table 1 Descriptive Results of Product Strategy.

Items: Product	Mean	SD.	Level of Agreement
Use well-known pianos brand to teach my children.	4.54	0.744	Strongly Agree
Use high quality pianos in teaching.	4.42	0.867	Strongly Agree
Has professional pianist teachers teaching my children.	4.81	0.419	Strongly Agree
Has western pianist teaching my children.	4.38	0.789	Strongly Agree
Has famous pianist teachers teaching my children.	4.66	0.572	Strongly Agree
Offer several kinds of piano courses e.g. teaching hours, levels.	5.14	5.071	Strongly Agree
Offer my children a chance to learn individually.	4.48	0.797	Strongly Agree
Own by famous pianists.	4.56	0.686	Strongly Agree
I can customize the learning package for my children e.g. study period, type of music.	4.58	0.699	Strongly Agree
Offer a certification of completion which is acceptable by music association in PRC.	4.63	0.774	Strongly Agree
Total	4.62	1.1418	Strongly Agree

Table 1 reports that according to the information gathered by the researcher, respondents strongly agree with all the statements concerning the product when selecting a piano teaching school.

Table 2 Descriptive Results of Price Strategy

Items: Price	Mean	SD.	Level of Agreement
Offer a premium piano course with high price.	4.24	0.767	Strongly Agree
Offer a general piano course with reasonable price.	3.95	1.123	Agree
Offer a price discount for the piano courses.	4.20	0.964	Agree
Offer flexible price for the customize course by customer.	4.54	0.673	Strongly Agree
Total	4.23	0.881	Strongly Agree

Table 2 reports that the majority of respondents strongly agree with premium piano price and flexible price when selecting piano teaching school and agree with reasonable price as well as discount prices when selecting piano teaching schools.

Table 3 Descriptive Results of Distribution Strategy

Items: Distribution Channel	Mean	SD.	Level of Agreement
Locate in the city area.	4.26	0.824	Strongly Agree
Locate close to our home.	4.45	0.892	Strongly Agree
Has several branches.	4.32	0.875	Strongly Agree
Has car park areas.	4.21	0.967	Strongly Agree
Has luxury decoration at school.	3.69	1.308	Agree
Has western decoration at the school.	3.52	1.337	Agree
Total	4.07	1.033	Agree

Table 3 reports that the majority of respondents strongly agree with the location and area with car parks while agreeing with it looking luxurious with western style when selecting piano teaching schools.

Table 4 Descriptive Results of Promotion Strategy

Items: Promotion	Mean	SD.	Level of Agreement
I can find school information from online search engines e.g. Baidu.	4.26	0.777	Strongly Agree
I can find school information from printed media e.g. newspaper, magazine.	4.28	0.766	Strongly Agree
I can find school information from broadcast media e.g. TV, radio.	4.34	0.831	Strongly Agree
I see the advertisement using billboard (big cutout) in the city.	4.17	0.943	Agree
Has positive comments in social media e.g. Weibo, WeChat.	4.49	0.659	Strongly Agree
Attend the exhibition about music school.	4.59	0.621	Strongly Agree
Use famous pianist as a presenter of the school.	4.62	0.599	Strongly Agree
Give special package price for studying multi courses.	4.28	0.830	Strongly Agree
Give a gift premium with the courses e.g. music accessory.	3.84	1.204	Agree
Give a membership card that has special privileges with other service.	4.08	0.918	Agree
Total	4.29	0.8148	Strongly Agree

Table 4 reports majority of respondents either strongly agree or agree with the statements concerning promotion strategy.

Table 5 Descriptive Results of Intention to Select

Item: Parents intention to select piano teaching school for children in Beijing City, PRC in the next 6 months.	Mean	SD.	Level of Agreement
I definitely would have to select a piano teaching school for my children	4.10	1.133	Agree
Total	410	1.133	Agree

Table 5 reports that a majority of the respondents agree that they would definitely select a piano teaching school for their children in the next 6 months.

Result of Hypothesis Tests

Socio-demographic profile data is described by gender, age, status, education, occupation, average income per month and religion.

H1: Chi-square was used to test the relationship between socio-demographic profile and Chinese parent's intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.

This study found partial support of H1 as follows;

Table 6 Relationship between Socio-Demographic Profile and Intention to Select

Items: In the next 6 months, I would definitely select a piano teaching school for my children.	Value	Df.	Sig.
Gender	2.890 ^a	4	0.576
Age	129.831 ^a	128	0.438
Status	16.126 ^a	16	0.444
Education	14.141 ^a	16	0.588
Occupation	46.431 ^a	24	0.004*
Average Income Per Month	31.547 ^a	20	0.048*
Religion	19.478 ^a	12	0.078

*level of significant $\alpha = 0.05$.

Table 6 shows that occupation and average income per month were found to have a significant relationship with the intention to select piano teaching schools of Chinese parents’.

H2: Correlation was used to test the effect of average mean of each Marketing Mix Strategy (4P’s) element on the intention to select piano teaching schools of Chinese parents’ in Beijing City, PRC.

The average mean of the Marketing Mix Strategy (4P’s) is described as product, price, distribution channel and promotion. Intention to select piano teaching schools for Chinese parents is described by selecting a school in the next 6 months as the below;

Marketing Mix Strategy (4P’s) and Intention to Select a Piano Teaching School.

Table 7 Effect of Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's) on Intention to Select

Items: Average Mean of Each Marketing Mix (4P’s) Element	In the next 6 months, I would definitely select a piano teaching school for my children.
Average Product	R = .442** Sig. 0.000
Average Price	R = 0.115 Sig. 0.255
Average Distribution Channel	R = .356** Sig. 0.000
Average Promotion	R = 0.112 Sig. 0.269

*level of significant $\alpha = 0.05$

Hypothesis	Level of Support
H1: Chinese parents with different socio-demographic profiles will have different intentions to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.	Partial Support*
H2: Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's) has an effect on Chinese parents' intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.	Partial Support*

Note: *Partial support at significant level of 0.05.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aims to identify the factors influencing Chinese parents' intentions to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC and to determine the effects of socio-demographic profiles and marketing mix strategy (4P's) on Chinese parents' intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.

As Chinese parents' are becoming more and more involved in their child's life and how to live out their future as well as realizing the importance of musical instruments especially the piano, led to the development of this research and its conceptual framework (see figure 1 p. 2) and the following hypothesis;

Hypothesis 1*: Chinese parents with different socio-demographic profiles will have different intentions to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.

With regards to hypothesis 1, the study found that there is a partial relationship with socio-demographic profiles and intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC. The findings show that respondent's occupation and average income per month have a significant relationship while gender, age, status, education, and religion have no significant relationship when selecting piano teaching schools.

The results found showed that Chinese parents with an upper to middle class occupation affects their intention to select piano teaching schools for their children as well as the average income per month also. Meaning that the parent's salary is a big factor that influenced the Chinese parent's intention to select piano teaching schools in Beijing City, PRC.

Hypothesis 2*: Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's) has an effect on Chinese parents' intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.

Note: *Partial support at significant level of 0.05.

With regards to hypothesis 2 the study found that there is a partial effect of Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's) and intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC. Product and distribution channel were found to have a significant effect on the intention to select piano teaching schools. (see table 8 p. 25)

The table below further shows the average mean score of each element of the Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's) that were used to identify the effect on the intention to select piano teaching schools for children in Beijing City, PRC.

Items: Marketing Mix Strategy (4P's)	Total Average Mean Score
Product	4.62
Price	4.23
Distribution Channel	4.07
Promotion	4.29

Limitations and Recommendation

There are several limitations in which the researcher encountered throughout the process of this research conduction. The limitation of the study leaves room for future studies in the following areas;

- This study collected data from 100 respondents in only 1 city which was Beijing City. In order to have a better understanding and more reliable results, future researchers should try to cover more cities.
- Future researchers may also replicate this study and move to focus on other musical instruments such as violin or cello as these instruments are also beginning to become very important to parents as they want their child to be fluent in an instrument.

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