‘Push-pull’ factors influencing exchange student’s destination choice for study abroad

A case study of the students at JIBS

Bachelor thesis within Business Administration

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Abstract

‘Internationalisation of higher education’ is considered a significant issue in many countries. One effective way to achieve internationalisation is by having an exchange study program. This is something which has been promoted by universities all around the globe. It has been found that the experience of studying abroad is beneficial to the students. There has been a trend of increasing number of students going to study abroad. In Sweden, Jönköping International Business School (JIBS) is one of the most internationalised business schools that promote exchange studies extensively. To promote study abroad it is important to know what motivates and influences the students to go on exchange. There has been previous research on internationalisation and push-pull factors of student mobility which acted as a guideline for this thesis. Thus it was appealing to study the reasons behind the phenomenon of students going abroad for exchange studies.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the push-pull factors influencing student’s destination choice for exchange study abroad. JIBS is the institution where the case study was conducted. The empirical data have been gathered by using a qualitative approach combining face-to-face interviews and focus groups with international exchange students and Swedish students. To analyse the findings, theories relating to marketing communications in service and product attribution were used.

The results derived from the empirical findings show the push-pull factors which motivate students to go on exchange. The initial push factor is the promotion and encouragement to students for studying abroad by the university. Exchange studies helps to enhance students’ personal development with intercultural communication, practicing language skills and travelling. These skills and experiences add value to their CV.

On the other hand the pull factors which the students take into consideration for deciding on their host countries and institutions are geographic location, weather, culture, and the economic and social position of the country. Living cost and the education system which includes language used, courses offered, perceived image, communication and cooperation and recommendations are factors influencing the choices of a student’s decision on the destination for studying abroad. The authors in this thesis summarised their findings in a model of push-pull factors which is specialised only for exchange students. The process of considering these factors leads to the outcome of choosing the destination for studying abroad. The authors believe the results of this study can be applied on other universities for further research and may be appropriate for its own case to focus on areas where it needs to improve.
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1 Introduction

The first chapter will introduce the reader to the topic by presenting the background of this thesis. Further the problem will be discussed and narrowed down to the purpose followed by perspective and delimitation. The headings are numbered automatically.

1.1 Background

Today, ‘internationalisation of higher education’ is recognized as an important issue to many countries. According to International Association of Universities, in 2005, 73 percent of respondents added high priority to internationalisation efforts and the number of student wanting to enrol in international education institutions outside home country also increases (Strategic Fund for Establishing International Headquarters in Universities’ website, 2009). The students who are graduating hoping to be leaders and successful in their career will be expected to speak multiple languages, work in foreign countries, and bridge cultural differences to achieve social, economic and political objectives. Governments and concerned authorities around the world are acting to this trend by escalating the internationalisation of their higher education systems — both attracting a greater number of international students and ensuring their students are able to pursue studies beyond national boundaries. One significant way to promote and encourage this issue into students is by motivating students to study abroad and participate in exchange programs. This can enhance the image, reputation, enrich environment for institutions and has positive impact on the students.

Then the interesting question arises “what are the factors that influence the student’s decision to study abroad and make their choice?” since there are many benefits of study abroad including language skills, cultural enrichment, and access to better jobs and others. Studying abroad through the exchange program in the higher education among universities is one significant way of promoting student mobility around the world. As mentioned in the website of the European Union: studies show that a period spent abroad not only enriches students' lives in the academic field but also in the acquisition of intercultural skills and self-reliance (European Commission’s website, 2009). Student mobility is seen as a key in increasing the productivity of the highly educated. First, student mobility across countries exposes students directly to the different cultures and helps them to develop their multi-cultural skills. These skills are indispensable in a European union that strives for full economic integration while preserving the diversity of its culture. Second, increasing student mobility is hoped to kindle a competition between countries to attract the most able students (Mechtenberg & Strausz, 2007).

The intention of the European Union is to harmonize the diverse European university system and thereby achieves a higher degree of comparability resulted into the implementation of the Bologna Process (Mechtenberg & Strausz, 2007). The European Union provides funds and supports students through programs like Erasmus and Tempus. Erasmus is the EU’s flagship education and training programme, enabling two hundred
thousand students to study and work abroad each year, as well as supporting co-operation actions between higher education institutions across Europe. Around 90 percent of European universities take part in Erasmus and 1.9 million students have participated since it started in 1987 (European Commission’s website, 2009). Another programme named Tempus (The Trans-European mobility scheme for university studies) supports the modernization of higher education and creates an area of co-operation in countries surrounding the EU. Established in 1990 after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the scheme now covers 27 countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, North Africa and the Middle East (European Commission’s website, 2009). Socrates is the European Union education program with more than 30 countries participating. Its main ambition is to develop the European Knowledge Society that will better respond to challenges of the new century (Government of the Principality of Austrians’ website, 2009). All these programs are conducted to promote and motivate students for studying abroad on exchange program which is beneficial for the students, the universities and the countries involved.

During few years ago, student overseas mobility has been rapidly increasing, especially in Europe. European Commission even provides ERASMUS program which enables thousands of students to study and work abroad each year (Website of European Commission, 2009). Taking advantage and adapting from this trend, Sweden also becomes one of the European countries that has the most increasing foreign students coming. According to Statistic Sweden, SCB’s report of *International mobility in higher education from a Swedish perspective 2007/08*, there are 31,000 foreign students studying at the university in Sweden during the academic year 2007/08, increasing by 13 percent compared to the previous academic year. The in-and-out students consist of students participating in an exchange and students who arrange their studies in the country on their own, so-called Free Movers, whereas fewer Swedish students go studying abroad. SCB has reported that in academic year 2007/08, 24,000 Swedish students study abroad through exchange programs or on alone, 2 percent less than the academic year before and continuously decreasing over the past five academic years. Compared with the previous academic year, exchange students have fallen by 5 percent and ‘Free Movers’ students decreased by 1 percent (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, Högskoleverket’s website, 2009).

### 1.2 About Jönköping International Business School

In Sweden, most of educational institutions are run by central government only few run by private sector governing bodies which receive national grants including three biggest universities/colleges in this sector: Chalmers University of Technology, the Stockholm School of Economics and the University College of Jönköping (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, Högskoleverket’s website, 2009). Compare to two other institutions, Jönköping University is rather young and consists of four schools: Jönköping International Business School, School of Education and Communication, Jönköping School of Engineering and School of Health Sciences. While Sweden is more famous for its contribution in medicine and technology subjects, it is also interesting to have a look at school that focuses on social science such as business field. Jönköping International Business School as the name itself focuses mainly on internationalisation. It is one of the newest Swedish universities that provide bachelor, master and doctoral programmes in
English. The school has been active in LINNAEUS-PALME, NORDPLUS, SOCRATES, ERASMUS, TEMPUS, and ALFA projects that provide fund and support students to study abroad. JIBS has many partner universities which are more than 200 spanning six continents and over 70 countries compared to other business school in Sweden (JIBS’s website, 2009). Hereinafter Jönköping International Business School will be referred to as JIBS.

1.3 Problem

According to Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), the factors that influence international student destination choice can be divided into push and pull factors. He conducted his study on students from home and host country who pursued their full degree programme abroad. Push factors involve students decision to undertake international study while pull factors talk about how a host country can attract international students. In his study, he initially conducted focus group discussion for in depth understanding and then surveyed around 2485 students at different levels of study from four countries: India, China, Taiwan, and Indonesia. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) concluded with their “Push-pull” factors model which was mainly based on full degree programme students from developing countries in pursuing study abroad.

According to the school statistic, there are around 525 incoming exchange students at JIBS and about 400 JIBS students studying abroad in 2008/2009. Within student exchange area, JIBS has “the most active and largest business/economics programme in Sweden in terms of exchange” and calls itself as one of the most international business school in Sweden (JIBS’s website, 2009). Finding the factors that influence students coming in and going out will help JIBS recognize and evaluate the needs of students and thus improve the internationalisation process. Among four schools of Jönköping University, JIBS is the school that focuses the most on internationalisation promoting student mobility and studying abroad on exchange. It has the highest number of partner universities which enables it to attract students to come and go on exchange. Therefore JIBS was considered as an ideal institution to study the push-pull factors that influence students’ destination choice for studying abroad.

Factors that motivate students to study abroad and factors for selecting different destination may vary for students from different region because of different culture, geographical, social and economic development, and other reasons. The authors tried to relate the factors with relevant theories and models. Service marketing communication theories were used to analyse the different ways that push the students to study abroad. There various sources of message which the institution combines to attract the students towards them. The pull factors are factors which attract students to a particular destination and involve factors influencing the choice of a country and an institution. These are discussed in terms of product attributes, functional, psycho-social consequences and value explained by the Means-end chain theory model. This model helps to understand the process of decision making of students in terms of how the attributes of a country and institution and functional and psycho-social consequences related to them create value and act as guidance to evaluate and select among their alternatives. Thus carrying out the
research the authors of this thesis attempted to find out the push-pull factors for exchange student and compare the similarities and differences with the previous study of factors on full programme students of Mazzarol and contribute the distinctive factors which can be specialised only on exchange students.

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to explore the push-pull factors influencing exchange student’s destination choice for study abroad on exchange.

1.5 Research questions

What are the motivational factors that encourage students to study abroad and go for exchange studies?

What factors influence the students to choose the country they want to go to exchange on?

What are the factors that have impact on the students concerning the selection of the institution when they go to for exchange?

1.6 Perspective

It is of great significance for the authors to clarify and explain to the reader which perspective is being used in the research and what the authors want to achieve through this research. The importance is because shift in perspective might change the way to look at the problem and purpose. In this thesis the study was conducted from the perspective of the students at JIBS, both Swedish students and international exchange students on their choices on destination of study abroad.

1.7 Delimitation

The authors decided to limit the research by conducting a case study on one institution which is Jönköping International Business School as it is generally considered and known to be one of the most internationalised schools in Sweden. The number of exchange students present at JIBS is large in number which made it an interesting institution to conduct the study on. Since the study was based only on JIBS, the findings of might not be generalised on a larger scale. The nature of the research was restricted to qualitative study as the aim was to do in-depth research and explore the factors influencing exchange student’s choice of destination for studying abroad. Thus quantitative research was not a compulsory requirement and it was referred to further studies on the factors that this thesis summarized. The sampling of the focus group and interviews included students from Western countries because they represent the major part of the population at JIBS whereas students from other regions like Asia form a minor fraction. So the authors believed that their chosen sample represented the population more effectively.
2 Frame of Reference

The main purpose of this chapter is to present the relevant theories for the purpose of this study and to clarify the concepts used from research articles. It will start with service marketing, integrated marketing communications, sources of communication messages, and Means-end chain model and connect it to the purpose and the research questions of this thesis.

2.1 Previous research

For the purpose of writing this thesis, the authors read journals and articles in the related field of study and conducted literature review. There were several articles which influenced the authors and provided knowledge supporting and guiding theories and purpose of this thesis. In this section two articles are discussed in details which were the initial inspiration and were closely relevant to the topic. At the same time a summarisation of further literature reviews in the related field of study were listed in a table.

2.1.1 ‘Push-pull’ factors influencing international students destination choice

This is an article by Tim Mazzarol and Geoffrey N Soutar from The International Journal of Educational Management. The authors of this article examined and conducted a qualitative and quantitative research on students from four different Asian countries and concluded with push-pull factors which influenced the full-programme international students to choose their destination for study abroad. This article in particular encouraged the authors of this thesis and gave them the idea to conduct a similar study on exchange students from different countries and try to find out what are the push-pull factors for the choice of destination of exchange students going on study abroad; which is basically the purpose of this thesis.

In another study conducted by McMahon in 1992 on the flow of international students, testing an outbound or ‘push’ model and an inbound or ‘pull’ model was examined. According to the push model, the student flow was dependent on the level of economic wealth, the degree of involvement of the developing country in the world economy and the availability of educational opportunities in the home country; whereas pull-factors attracting a host country was influenced by the relative sizes of the student’s home country economy compared to the host country, economic links between the home and host country, host national political interests in the home country through foreign assistance or cultural links and host national support of international students via scholarships or other assistance (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). This push-pull model was based on relatively more from an economic perspective.

Mazzarol, in his article ‘push-pull’ factors influencing international students’ destination choice, initially conducted focus group discussion for in depth understanding and then
surveyed around 2485 students at different levels of study from four Asian countries: India, China, Taiwan, and Indonesia. He then concluded with his own push-pull factors that influence students to choose their destination for study abroad (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Mazzarol summarizes six factors that influence the selection of students' host country which are the pull factors.

The first factor is the overall level of knowledge and awareness of the host country in the home country. The second factor includes the level of personal recommendations that the study destination receives from friends and family. The third factor is the cost issues, including the cost of fees, living expenses, travel costs and social costs, such as crime, safety etc. The fourth factor is the environment, where study climate, physical climate and lifestyle are included. The fifth factor concerns the geographic proximity of the host country to the home country. The last factor concerns the social links, such as if the student had family or friends that live in the destination country or if family or friends have studied there before.

Countries and institutions which want to attract students need to think about the importance of these factors when trying to influence the students (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). These factors helped the authors of this thesis in having a basic idea of what can influence the exchange students as well.

Pull factors which make a particular institution more attractive than its competitors are: institutions reputation for quality, market profile, range of courses, alliances and coalition, offshore teaching program, staff expertise, degree of innovation, use of information technology, size of the alumni base, promotion and marketing efforts (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

In the finding of the article Mazzarol summarizes that the students identified eight factors that motivate a student to study abroad, these push factors are as the following paragraph.

The perception that an overseas course is better than a local, two factors were related to a student’s ability to gain entry to the local programs, two factors were the desire to gain better understanding of the West and an intention to migrate and graduate. The students are also influenced by the reputation or profile of the host country, the decision is also influenced by parents, also the social links will affect the choice. Costs and the local environment are as well extremely significant and taken into consideration (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

In relation to the above article, from the context of this thesis it can be said that even exchange students have factors which influences their decision of where to go for studies abroad. The universities try to promote their institutions so that they can attract exchange students from all around the world. If the universities get to understand which factors that
students consider, it might be easier for the universities to promote themselves in that direction to become the choice of the students.

2.1.2 Visualising the ‘internationalisation’ of universities

When the authors of the thesis were trying to review previous research in this field of higher studies and exchange studies the term they came across most often is Internationalisation. Thus this article was quiet significant providing knowledge about internationalisation and so the authors summarized the article in this section. This article is also from International Journal of Educational Management and the authors of this article on internationalisation came up with an 11-dimension model was developed by literature search and interviews with academic and non-academic university staff. The model was suggested as a useful way of conceptualising and visualising the internationalisation of universities (Elkin Devjee & Farnsworth, 2005).

Universities in many parts of the world have realized the importance of “internationalisation of curriculum”, but may still be at earlier stages of internationalisation. (Elkin et al., 2005)

Knight (cited in Teekens, 2002) suggests a helpful description of internationalisation of curricula as follows:

‘a process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of an institution of higher education, with the aim of strengthening international education – understood as education which involves and/or relates to the people and culture and systems of different nations’. This definition extends the scope of internationalisation beyond students and curriculum to include staff and the research and service functions of the institution (Elkin et al., 2005).

The world has been seen as integrating through electronic media and communication, mass travel and the growing dominance of the English language. This interdependence has encouraged the development of a market for internationally orientated and qualified graduates who are able to understand different cultures and work in a multi-cultural globalised society. This raises both prospects and pressures for universities which aim to participate in this international marketplace for students. On the one hand, they need to have a sufficiently “international” profile to attract significant foreign students. On the other, they require an adequate infrastructure and policy framework to manage the growth (Elkin et al., 2005). According to Seligman (1999) increasingly, cross-cultural understanding and language use are predictors of success in business (cited in Elkin et al., 2005). Another outcome claimed by (McKellin, 1998) for the internationalisation process in education is better prepared students who will enter and compete in an increasingly global labour market and market place (cited in Elkin et al., 2005). More and more students will need this preparation as further globalisation and trade liberalization takes place.

For domestic students “internationalisation at home” may be seen as enriching the educational process to help them towards this end. Internationalisation at home means the development of curricula and extra curricula processes that focus on internationalisation
without the need to travel (Elkin et al., 2005). On the other hand, Burn (2002) states that study abroad and student exchanges can be powerful internationalisers of higher education cited in Elkin et al., 2005). Finally the authors of this article came up with the 11 dimension model that is shown below which can be of great significant and can be implied on universities which try to seek internationalisation. According to the article, 11 factors seemed to be the cores of an institution’s internationalisation are: internationally focused programs of study, international institutional links, student exchange programs, internationally recognized research activity, international research collaboration, staff interaction in international context, support for international students, and attendance to international conferences, postgraduate international students, undergraduate international students and staff exchanges programs (Elkin et al., 2005).

These 11 factors can be interpreted very easily as the terms mentioned in the model are self explanatory and the authors of this thesis found this model quite interesting which can act as a guide to a university focusing on internationalisation.

### 2.1.3 Summary of related articles

Below is a summary table of the articles selected for the study and the reason why they have been selected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Main findings</th>
<th>Facts related to this thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bunnell, T. (2005)</td>
<td>The purpose of this article was to investigate the issue of whether the international schools have a marketing plan and after conducting a survey on 32 international schools in 22 countries it was concluded that half of the schools had a marketing plan.</td>
<td>To understand how the institution focus on internationalisation and whether they actually have marketing plan for doing so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grönroos, C. (1999)</td>
<td>The author Grönroos points out obstacles for internationalisation, which are true for manufactured goods as well, keep service firms from going abroad. The purpose of this article is to discuss some key challenges for service firms planning to go abroad and to present five different types of internationalisation strategies for services.</td>
<td>This article on service marketing explains what are the obstacles when organisations providing services wants to internationalise. It helped the authors to have an understanding of internationalisation from a service marketing perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazzarol, T. (1998)</td>
<td>The author describes</td>
<td>This article provided the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Article Title</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical success factors for international education marketing</td>
<td>The International Journal of Educational Management. Bradford, 12(4), 163</td>
<td>developing competitive advantage for international education suppliers via marketing strategies as a complex issue. The author identifies four critical success factors that appear important to institutions marketing internationally: Promotion and recruitment, Image and resources, People and culture, Coalition and forward integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovelock, C., &amp; Gummesson, E. (2004)</td>
<td>Whither Services Marketing: In Search of a New Paradigm and Fresh Perspectives</td>
<td>This article discusses about service marketing and challenges the validity of the four characteristics: intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cubillo, J.M., Sa´nchez, J., &amp; Cervi˜no, J. (2006)</td>
<td>International students’ decision-making process</td>
<td>This article is a quantitative study on the factors that may influence international students’ choice of study overseas which based on the international students in UK universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chung, K. C., Fam, K. S., &amp; Holdsworth, D. K. (2009)</td>
<td>Impact of cultural values on young consumers’ choice of international tertiary education.</td>
<td>This article is a quantitative study which aims to find out how cultural values influence students decision on study destinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maringe, F., &amp; Carter, S. (2007)</td>
<td>International students’ motivations for studying in UK HE - Insights into the choice and decision making of African students</td>
<td>This article is an exploratory study on the push-pull factors which influence African students deciding to study abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Title/Abstract/Keywords</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chon, K. Y. (1992)</td>
<td>This article is an empirical student on visitors and mainly argued about how the images of the destinations influence the visitors’ choices. The authors of this thesis would like to discuss on the function of the image of an educational institution which affects exchange students’ selection on the universities for studying abroad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pezeshki, V., Mousavi, A., &amp; Grant, S. (2009)</td>
<td>The purpose of this article is to investigated the importance and performance of the main attributes which have the influence on customers’ satisfaction of the services provide in the mobile telecommunication and industry. The functions and impotency of attributes of pull factors were one of the main study focuses of this thesis. This article provided the authors an insight on the impotency of attributes in service industry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correia, A., &amp; Pimpao, A., (2008)</td>
<td>This article is a study on tourist’s decisions making process which mainly investigated the behaviours of Portuguese tourist, and a push-pull motivation model was conceptualized through the study. This article strengthen the authors belief that push-pull model is a persuasive model to analyze consumer behaviours in the decision making process.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### 2.3 Theoretical Framework

In the theoretical framework section the authors of this thesis describe the theories and the models which they used to relate their empirical findings within the analysis. In the effort to find out the factors influencing the exchange students in their destination choice for study abroad, the authors broke down the factors into three research questions. The authors used two different concepts and theories to explain these three research questions. The first question which involves the factors that motivate the students to decide to study abroad in the first place is analysed in relation to service marketing perspective; being more specific in terms of integrated marketing communications. The second and third questions which involve the factors that influence the decision of which countries and institutions they want to go to are explained in terms of Means-end chain theory which provides a better understanding of how consumers evaluate and select among their alternatives.
2.1.4 Service marketing perspective

Service marketing is an important phenomenon which had been in study for some time now. Grönroos (2007) in his book of Service Management and Marketing discusses service in perspective of relationship marketing. He mentions service as being inherently relational; managing a business from a service perspective benefits from a relational approach to customer management.

According to Lovelock and Gummesson (2004), to determine what a service is, a service should have the following characteristics:

Intangibility - service is immaterial,

Heterogeneity –non-standardization,

Inseparability - the production and consumption takes place simultaneously

Perishability - doing an inventory of service output is hard.

Thus to be considered as a service these characteristics should be present in the service.

Erramilli (1990) suggested that services can be of two types: Hard and Soft services. Hard service providers can separate the production and consumption of their service and can be exported directly e.g. architecture. For soft services production and consumption are to a major extent simultaneous process, and such services require major local presence by the service firm or a representative that acts on its behalf.

Now the marketing communication of service is discussed. Marketing communication in service is a significant part of marketing process. Grönroos (2007) defines Integrated marketing communication as a strategy that integrates traditional media marketing, direct marketing, public relation and other distinct marketing communications media as well as communication aspects of the delivery and consumption of goods and services and of customer service and other customer encounters. According to this definition communication messages can originate from several sources.

Duncan and Moriarty (1997) distinguish between four kinds of sources of communication messages:

Planned messages

Planned messages are the outcome of a planned marketing communication campaign where separate communications media such as TV, brochure, Direct mail, Internet etc., are used to send the message. Generally these are planned by the marketer to convince customers and potential customers in a certain direction (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997).
Product messages

Product messages are the messages of firm and its offerings that follow from the physical products in an offering: how a physical product is designed, how it functions, how it can be disposed of, etc (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997).

Service messages

Service messages are messages that result from service processes. Interaction between customers and service employees includes a substantial element of communication in the service process. The customers get valuable information in these encounters and also develop a sense of trust in the firm based on such interaction (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997).

Unplanned messages

Unplanned messages about the firm and its offering are sent by fellow customers who interact with a given customer during the service process or who convey good or bad word-of-mouth communication or by article in newspaper, magazine etc (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997).

Word-of-mouth communication means messages about the organisation, its credibility, and its ways of operating, its goods and services and so on communicated from one person to another (Grönroos, 2007).

The authors of this thesis found the service marketing perspective, integrated marketing communication and the sources of communication messages relevant to this study as these theories would be efficient tools to analyse how a university can promote and market itself for promoting exchange studies and in this scenario it was also used to interpret the marketing efforts of JIBS.

2.1.5 Means-end Chain Theory

Means-end Chains theory shows how product attributes lead to relevant consequences and how the consumers gain values from those (Gutman, 1982). The theory provides a better understanding of how consumers evaluate and select among their alternatives (Olson & Reynolds, 2001). Means-end Chain theory is the process which consists of three levels: attributes consequences and values (Gutman, 1982) while Peter and Olson (2008) have developed it into Means-End Chain Model of Consumers’ Product Knowledge as the figure below.

![Means-End Chain Model of Consumers’ Product Knowledge](image-url)

Figure 1: Means-End Chain Model of Consumers’ Product Knowledge (Peter & Olson, 2008, p.79)
Attributes are the characteristics of a product or a service and usually are physical features that can be observed. Attributes can be colour, price, design (concrete) or taste (abstract) while consequences are the results of using the product or service to the consumer. For a country or a school, the attributes consist of academic programs, courses offering, the teachers and the staffs, the quality of education (Klenosky, Templin & Troutman, 2001).

Consequences include functional or psycho-social results. According Peter and Olson (2008) functional consequences are the functions of the product such as the duration, the performance of that product. On the other hand, psycho-social consequences relate to the personal feelings of the buyer and the attitudes of others to the consumers. Psycho-social consequences can be the result from any of functional consequences. In some case, the attributes can lead only to functional consequences or psycho-social consequences. A positive consequence is called benefit and the opposite refers to potential risks. For a student the benefits are achieving a good education, improving practice skills, communication ability and opportunity to play at professional level while the costs are time, money, risks of injured, loneliness of being away from home (Klenosky et al., 2001, p97).

Finally, the last stage is about personal values. It is the highest level which will determine or influence the decision making behaviour and is said to be very abstract including self-esteem, thrifty, personal feeling (Peter & Olson, 2008). The values for a student when choosing an institution might be the feeling of security, accomplishment, achievement (Klenosky et al., 2001). A pair of Nike shoes can be given as an example of overall the means-end chains process. Then the attributes will be air insert, colour and its size. Functional consequences are better support, better performance, comfortable and durable. Buying Nike shoes will give the feeling of identify with famous athletes who advertised for Nike shoes, as well as feel more confident or admired by friends (psycho-social consequences). Hence it makes the consumer feel self-esteem (values).

This theory was used by many researchers to study how consumers feel about the products or services based on the attributes which leads to consequences and creates value to make their decision. For instance, Klenosky et al. (2001) also applied it to investigate the school choice destination decision of student athletes. Means-end chain theory therefore is useful to analyze the second and third research questions in the analysis of this thesis since these questions are about how students use their information and knowledge to evaluate their choices. There are many attributions from a single product or service and each attribute might lead to its own functional consequences and psycho-social consequences. Then individuals evaluate alternatives through attributes that provide desired consequences and minimize undesired consequences (Gutman, 1982). According to Klenosky, Gengler & Muley, (1993) however, the importance of those consequences is to create personal values (the “end”) that help to reinforce decision making (cited in Klenosky et al., 2001). The findings which were analysed using the Means-end chain theory explained which factors/attributes the school should emphasize and which should avoid.
3 Method

In this chapter there will be a description of the method used in conducting this study and fulfil the purpose. Research approaches, the process of collecting data and pros and cons of the method of collecting the data are discussed. It also mentions about secondary data.

This paper’s research process followed the order of research onion suggested by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2003) as the figure below. The process was developed from the second layer down until the last layer is reached and each layer depends. Research philosophy and time horizon were the layers which were not covered because the authors believed that they were areas that were not necessary for the purpose of this research.

Figure 2: The research onion – Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill (2003, p83)

3.1 Research approach

In this thesis the authors started to discuss their method from the second layer of the diagram which is the research approach. According to Sekaran (2003), business research is defined as ‘an organized systematic, data-based, critical, objective, scientific inquiry or investigation into a specific problem, undertaken with the purpose of finding answers or solution to it’. In the first stage of a research study, carefully selecting research approaches is significant for authors. It is highly related to the direction of the whole research. It also helps with selecting research strategies that will work for the study and crucially those will not (Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Lowe, A., 2002). Therefore to understand the purpose well and choose a research approach correctly to use is essential to a research study. In this thesis the research approach chosen was of great significance, as the main aim was to find out the factors which influence student’s decision of destination choice for
study abroad. Thus the impact of the chosen approach will have effects on the results that are summarized at the end of the thesis.

3.1.1 Qualitative research approach

Using the appropriated methodology between qualitative and quantitative approach will determine valuable results while choosing the unsuitable and incorrect one may lead to biased and unsatisfying results (Saunders et al., 2003). A quantitative research is often based on numbers and standardized methods to predict and measure a phenomenon by gathering some sample from a larger population (Zikmund, 2000 & Patton, 2002). Its purpose is to prove or disprove a theory or generalize findings to a population. Meanwhile, qualitative research is about ‘capture people’s meanings, definitions, and descriptions of events’ (Minichello V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E., & Alexander L., 1995, p.9). This type of study is to draw out some understandings on what people feel about an issue or the topic of an area that has little information so that the researcher want to undertake an initial exploratory study. Lee (1999, p.41) suggested that the decision of choosing qualitative approach rather than quantitative approach should be considered by the purpose of researcher’s study and several criteria. The goal in this thesis was to find out new or unspecified factors from exchange students. The authors chose to conduct a qualitative research because they believed that to find the factors which influences student they need to collect the information with face to face interactions in order to have an in depth view of the phenomenon. Thus qualitative research was used in this present study.

3.1.2 Inductive approach

There are two types of research approaches, which are deductive and inductive approaches. Deductive approach is a research approach involving the testing of a theoretical proposition by applying of a research strategy specially designed for the purpose of its testing. Inductive approach on the other hand is an approach which involves the development of a theory as a result of observation of empirical data (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). As stated in the purpose section, this paper aims to explore the factors that influence exchange student’s destination choice by using empirical data collected from JIBS’s students. This means the authors collected and summarised raw data into brief, establish links between research objectives and summary findings derived from raw text data and explained in terms of concepts and theories that were already researched. Hence this should be undertaken inductively rather than deductively. However it is difficult to distinguish or use purely one of these two methods. There is often combination of deductive and inductive approach but either use one more than another. Inductive reasoning can be never 100 percent correct due to the uncertainty of generalizing observations (Sohlberg, 2001). Many researches include elements of both; for instance, an inductive study cannot start without having any assumptions or some elements of deduction (Grix, 2004). Therefore, this study was inductive and was also influenced by previous existing researches in the field of educational management of other such push-pull factors model.
3.2 Research Strategies

3.2.1 Research purpose design

The research strategy will provide an overall plan of how to collect the data needed to fulfil the purpose of the thesis and to answer the research questions made. It should contain clear objectives, derived from research questions, specify the sources from which the data is going to be collected and consider the constraints that will be inevitable (Saunders et al., 2003). There are three types of research studies consist of explanatory, descriptive or exploratory. The empirical data in this study is collected by exploratory studies. Robson (2002) defined exploratory studies as a valuable means of finding out ‘what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light’ (cited in Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000). It is particularly useful if the understanding of the problem needs to be clarified. There are three principal ways of conducting exploratory research: a search of literature; talking to experts in the subjects; conducting focus group interviews (Saunders et al., 2003). In this thesis to achieve the purpose, the third way of conducting exploratory studies was chosen i.e. focus group interviews were used as the research strategy along with face-to-face interviews. Focus groups were used as the authors of this thesis considered that focus group discussion would lead the participants to interactive conversations which will give a deeper insight of the subject being studied. Exploratory study in this thesis would help the authors to find out and interpret the reasons to why students want to go on exchange and on influenced by what factors do they decide the country or the institution they want to go to for study abroad.

3.2.2 Case study

Depending on which studies, different types of research strategy forms including experiment, survey, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research will apply. These strategies describe the main characters of different studies, but it does not mean they should be considered mutually exclusive (Saunders et al., 2007). Case study is particularly useful where one needs to understand a particular problem or situation in great depth. Through a case study a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question as it can provide rich information (Patton, 1987). Marshall and Rossman (1995) and Yin (1994) state that when the main purpose of the research project is exploratory, then a case study approach is an appropriate strategy. It is a problem solving technique and emphasizes on understanding the reason behind a certain phenomenon or event (Sekaran, 2003). Authors should find the underlying problem, and then think up research questions for the problem, finally through explanatory and exploratory research (Saunders et al., 2007), try to solve the problem under the purpose. Cases study can be individual, a single institution, a small group, a particular event or process. In this study the authors of this thesis used JIBS. JIBS is an international business school that provided many available data and has large number of Swedish and international exchange students. The authors needed to understand in depth about the phenomenon of students going on exchange study abroad and JIBS was fulfilling the criteria. JIBS has international exchange students coming from two hundred partner universities all around the world which makes the school so international and an interesting subject to study about exchange studies abroad.
3.3 Data collection

Gathering related information is one of the most important parts in the beginning of a research study. There are different types of data and correspondingly there are various methods to collect them. Authors should choose based on their research property. Deciding to gather qualitative or quantitative data is the first mission for the authors.

3.3.1 Qualitative Data

Qualitative data are data that are not directly quantified unless they are coded and classified in some way (Sekaran, 2003). Since this is a case study on a university and case studies are qualitative in nature (Sekaran, 2003), collecting qualitative data is more valuable for later analysis and interpretation. By using qualitative data, the authors can collect more rich information from the participants and then reports can present in a narrative rather than a statistical form which is easier to understand for non-experts (Veal, 2005). Moreover, Veal (2005) also mentions that researchers can experience issues from a participant’s perspective. In this thesis especially for studying the theory of service marketing and product attributes, explored how students actually act in response about the school and its services and other factors related to exchange studies. The second mission of the authors after choosing whether to gather qualitative or quantitative data is gathering primary and secondary data in a proper manner for the study. The data collection concerning this research study is discussed below.

Secondary data

Secondary data is data used for a research project that were originally collected for some other purpose. It includes documentary secondary data, multiple source secondary data, and survey-based secondary data (Saunders et al., 2007). The secondary data mainly applied in this research are literature, contextual factors, and statistical data. Authors of this thesis used library and internet to search for books, e-books, articles and journals within the fields of service marketing, product attributes and international educational management that can be applied in the theory section. Articles from different international journals were a rich source of data providing guidance and knowledge related to this study. Statistical data on the other hand were used for providing information in the analysis section and it is mostly collected from official Swedish statistic website. The statistical data gave the authors of this thesis to have a clear picture of the trend in present and past.

Primary data

Primary data are data that can be obtained only by talking to people to observe their perceptions and attitudes and is collected specifically for the research project being undertaken (Saunders et al., 2000). Six interviews and two focus groups were used in this thesis. The authors combined two different methods. This was because the authors wanted to use triangulation method in collecting data. It was believed that data collected using two different methods would have more credibility than using one (Patton, 2002). The participants chosen for interview were Swedish students who have already applied for study abroad while focus groups were international exchange students. The reason of conducting
interviews with Swedish student was that all Swedish students had one common background that is Sweden and they were going on exchange to different countries. Thus their explanation on the choice of countries and institution would vary and the authors assumed that conducting focus group might affect individual’s answers and have a biased effect on some of the answers of influencing factors. Another reason is that when the Swedish students were approached for participating, they preferred speaking on one-to-one basis than in groups, as they felt more comfortable with that. The Swedish students are not willing to disclose personal information or share their opinions in public among other Swedish students. On the other hand, international students are from different countries and different backgrounds, but they all came to JIBS on exchange and so the factors influencing the selection of the country and the institution were common and interaction among them came up with new factors and ideas on the subject. Thus method of focus groups and interviews both were chosen to collect primary data as it was felt to be able to generate ideas and encourage in depth discussion leading to arousal of information. The details of the participants and how it was derived are described in the later section. The table below summarises the general information of the primary data of this thesis.

| Focus group 1 | Greece, France Spain | 2009-03-10 | 50 min |
| Focus group 2 | Canada, Mexico USA | 2009-03-12 | 55 min |
| Interview 1 | Swedish | 2009-04-26 | 37 min |
| Interview 2 | Swedish | 2009-04-26 | 40 min |
| Interview 3 | Swedish | 2009-04-26 | 42 min |
| Interview 4 | Swedish | 2009-04-27 | 38 min |
| Interview 5 | Swedish | 2009-04-27 | 43 min |
| Interview 6 | Swedish | 2009-04-27 | 39 min |

### 3.3.2 Sample

Sampling is a very vital component of the method, where the sample for the study is selected from the population. There can be two categories of sampling: random probability sampling and purposeful sampling; under these categories there are more detailed parts of sampling. In Random probability sampling the sample size is function of the population size and desired confidence level. In purposeful sampling selection is based on information-rich cases chosen strategically and purposefully (Patton, 2002). In this thesis
the sampling method chosen is homogenous sampling which is a sub-category of purposeful sampling that helped to study a particular subgroup thoroughly. Homogenous sampling is the strategy of picking a small homogenous sample, the purpose of which is to describe a particular subgroup in depth. Patton (2002) mentions that focus group interviews which involve open-ended interviews are based typically on homogenous group. It helps to achieve in-depth information.

According to Norman (1989) triangulation is a process where by combining multiple observers, theories, methods, and data sources researchers can hope to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-methods, single-observers, and single-theory studies (cited in Patton, 2002). In this thesis two qualitative approaches for collecting data were adapted: focus groups and interviews. This means comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information derived at different times and by different means within the qualitative methods. Patton (2002) mentions that triangulation of data sources and analytical perspective can be included to increase the accuracy and credibility of findings. The sample size for focus groups according to him could vary between five – eight people. In this thesis focus groups were conducted with international student from different countries around the world and an in-depth open ended discussion was expected to bring in more variation and deep understanding and discussion on the topic as their background varied. Thus one focus group had student purposely selected from North American countries as in Canada, Mexico and United States of America while the other focus groups were all European students from France, Greece and Spain. For the Swedish students interviews were conducted. Swedish students chosen were all students who have already applied and accepted for going on exchange and will be going on exchange the next semester. The authors chose to interview the students who are ready to go on exchange and have everything finalized and not the students who already returned from their exchange as they felt that once the students have already had the experience then their influencing factors in decision making of destination choice of study abroad are affected by that.

3.3.3 Focus group

Focus group is one type of interviews which is called group interview. Compare to other types of interview like personal interview where only single person is interviewed, focus group can interview several people at the same time. The method of focus group was chosen to collect primary data as it was felt to be able to generate ideas and encourage in depth discussion leading to arousal of information that might not have been achieved through individual interviews or surveys. Focus groups can be defined as group interview composed of a small number of participants, facilitated by a moderator in which a discussion is focused on aspects of a given theme or topic (Saunders et al., 2003). Focus group method is a research technique that collects information through group interaction (Morgan 1997, cited in Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2000, p. 153). Morgan points out that focus group provides direct and immediate evidence about similarities and differences in participants’ opinions and experiences, as opposed to reaching some conclusions from post hoc analysis of separate statements from each interviewee. Krueger and Casey (2000) stated that focus group is considered as naturalistic as it allows participants to say anything they want in group sessions. Other advantage of focus groups is to allow the researcher to
interact directly with the respondents which provides opportunities for the clarification of responses, for follow-up question and for probing of responses. The open response format of a focus group provides an opportunity to obtain large and rich amount of data in the respondents own word which the researcher can obtain deeper levels of meaning, make important connections and identify subtle nuances in expression and meaning. It also allows respondents to react and build on the responses of other group members. This synergistic effect of the group setting may result in the production of data or ideas and differences of opinion also help the researcher to identify how and why individuals embrace or reject particular ideas (Stewart, Rook & Shamdasani, 2007).

**Focus group on international exchange student**

The international exchange students came from different background and thus focus groups were conducted on them with the belief that in-depth discussion will lead to more detailed information. Two focus groups were conducted; one with exchange students from different European countries and the other focus group had students from countries in North America. The focus group with students from European countries consisted of male and female students from Greece, France and Spain. All the students from European countries were under the ERASMUS programme and received funds from it. The students from the second focus group had male and female students from Canada, Mexico and United States of America. The groups were divided into European and North American groups because it was assumed that the factors influencing them would be similar due to their common cultural backgrounds. Their education system is also different. The focus groups were conducted by one moderator while there were two other persons observing and taking notes. This helped the authors obtain the data that would be more reliable. The duration of the discussions was from forty-five minutes to one hour.

**How the empirical material of the focus group was derived**

The authors used tape recorder and transcripts were written later from the recorded data received from the focus group. Transcription notes were taken soon after the conduct was over and a summary was written. Then the authors rewrote them into fluent text and started to analyze the summaries. The trends that appeared repeatedly in data and surprises that are unexpected comments were worth noting for analysing.

**Limitation of focus group**

One limitation with using a focus group is that the open-ended nature makes the moderator have less control of the discussion and the responses obtained in focus groups often makes summarisation and interpretation of results difficult (Stewart et al., 2007). By having a well-prepared moderator, the effect of this problem was reduced by the moderator taking measures so that the discussion does not go out of track. The focus group discussion was broken down into three research questions which made the summarisation and interpretation of the results easier. The benefits of having a number of participants discussing the topic were considered to be more important for this research and it enabled to gather wide range of ideas and reflections.
The interaction of respondents with one another and with the moderator may have two undesirable effects, firstly the responses from members of the group are not independent of one another, which restricts the generalisability of the results and secondly the results obtained in the focus group may be biased by a very biased or opinionated member (Stewart et al., 2007).

To avoid this restraint, the moderator had specific instructions to consciously attempt to invite potential quiet participants to take part in the discussion by posing questions directly to those participants. The aim was not to generalise the results in this study and thus careful interpretation enabled to overcome the problem.

### 3.3.4 Interview

The purpose of interview is to collect information and get well informed of current situation (Maxwell, 1996). Interview gives flexibility that makes the interviewer able to change the question or go deeper depending on situation. Interviewer has chance to explain question that participant does not understand. Face to face interview is used because the visual reactions that cannot be observed by questionnaire or telephone interview may add weight to the answer. However, interviewer should not try to influence the answers and avoid argumentation. There are three types of personal interviews: structured interview, semi-structured interview and unstructured interview. Semi-structured interview is the type of interview that the interviewers commence with structured questions but are prepared to vary the order of the questions and add new questions during the interview process (Saunders et al., 2007). The authors decided to use semi-structured version for having high flexibility and avoid unexpected situations. Open questions are also used to let respondents answer in their own terms (Saunders et al., 2007). However basic questions are still applied for each interview to stick to the purpose of this thesis. Interviews are conducted one-to-one or two-to-one that has two interviewers and one interviewee. The purpose of two interviewers is that one can actively interview while another can listen and take notes as well as support the other. Two interviewers should not be both active because the interviewee might feel uncomfortable or disturbed and stressed. Moreover, while one write down the answers, that person can have time to digest them and ask for clarification at the end of interview.

### Interviews on Swedish students

There were six individual face to face interviews with Swedish students. The students chosen were all studying at JIBS and consisted of male and female students. All interviews were conducted in the same way with same questions. The duration of each interview was from 30 minutes to an hour. All the interviews took place at school as suggested by interviewees. Interviews were conducted two-to-one that has two interviewers and one interviewee. The purpose of two interviewers is that one can actively interview while another can listen and take notes as well as support the other. It increases the trustworthiness of the data as well. The organisation of the question made it easier to summarize and analyze the data as well as compare with focus group’s records. The participants consist of three students studying International Management (IM) program,
three studying Informational Technology Business (IT Business) program. Five of them chose to study only one semester and another one chose one year. The interviewers prepared a list of questions dividing it into three main research questions as focus group with open-ended conversation. The additional questions were added during the interviews when there was something not clear or need to go in deep.

**How interviews were derived**

Similar to focus group, tape recorder and written paper were used to collect data. Taped records were carefully heard and interpreted by all the authors and were summarized according to three research questions that were written in empirical data sectors. Then the authors wrote down the transcription of the interviews. Those notes were rewritten into fluent text and analyzed.

**Limitation of interview**

There is also several limitation of interview. First of all, one-on-one interviews is said to incur higher field cost (Frey & Oishi, 1995). As the thesis was written from the perspective of the students of JIBS and participants selected as sample for interviews were students chosen from JIBS who were studying this semester at JIBS and thus there were no travel expenses for the interviewees or the interviewers. Hence no field cost was incurred. The place where the interview takes place also affects the interviews as Frey and Oishi (1995) state that there is increased resistance on the part of the respondents to invite strangers into their homes or places where they might feel uncomfortable. This limitation was also faced by the interviewees in this thesis. All the interviewees were students who preferred to have the one-on-one interviews at school campus and the interviewers gladly agreed and conducted the interviews in campus where they would feel comfortable. Thirdly, facial expressions of interviewees are hard to interpret; the answers may not be their real opinions (Saunders et al., 2007). Since the authors already carefully prepared the questions without sensitive issues, thus the facial impressions from interviewees did not affect their answers. Finally, transcription of the interviews may cause bias because the authors may interpret in the way they want it. Therefore the validity and trustworthy of the collecting data are important to a research study (Saunders et al., 2007). All the interviews were audio recorded by the authors in order to make sure that there were no interpretations or memories bias when conducting data transcription. The authors tried to make sure that data is interpreted meaningfully. Trustworthiness of the findings from interviews was discussed individually in the later section.

**3.4 Trustworthiness**

In quantitative research, reliability and validity are often argued to prove the credibility of the data that has been collected by testing through certain mechanisms. Since the reliability and validity of qualitative data is not measurable (Stenbacka, 2001 cited in Golafshani, 2003). Therefore in qualitative study, trustworthiness which is defined as ‘it lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability’ (Seale, 1999 cited in Golafshani

In order to create trustworthiness in this case study, as it mentioned before, from the view of methodology, triangulation is applied in this case study by combining focus group and interview together to strengthen the integrity of the data findings. These two methods test the result for each other and provide the authors a complete image of the empirical data.

Questions for both focus group and interview are derived from the previous research in the ‘push-pull factors’ article, and modified based on the characteristic of this case study. The authors constructed the questions carefully to avoid interpreted bias, sensitive issues or personal information included to make sure all the participants are opened up, comfortable and willing to answer the questions in the correct way.

All the focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews are audio-recorded by the authors, and it has been agreed by all the participants. Data transfer is done and prove read by the three authors together to avoid subjective perspective or interpretation bias. Participants in this case study are selected from multination, because findings form single nation or a few nations are not able to present a common view. The purpose of this case study is to discover and explore general ideas of push and pull factors for student choose to study abroad. Hence a multicultural sampling is good and necessary for this case study.

### 3.5 Generisability

Generalisability is also sometimes referred to as external validity. There is a concern that whether the design of the research and the research result are generisable or not (Saunders et al., 2007). It is said that especially in a research where case study research is conducted on one institution or a small number of organisation, then the aim is not be to produce a theory that is generisable to all population but to try and explain what is going on in the particular research setting. Then as a later part the test can be exposed to other research setting in a follow up study to test the robustness and effectiveness of the conclusion achieved (Saunders et al., 2007). In this thesis it is likely to be questioned about the generalisability of findings from the qualitative research because of the use of samples from a single institution. However, qualitative research intends to explore information in a various way through the flexible and responsive interaction between interviewer and respondents (Sykes, 1991:8, cited in Saunders et al., 2007). In this case study, the authors would like to discover the factors encouraging students going exchange, the nature is exploratory, and information in details is necessary for the authors to find the factors. Therefore, the attempt is to find out the factors which influence the students at JIBS and for further study these factors can be exposed to further research in different settings and also different method of research.
3.6 Data analysis

Saunders et al. (2007) in their book mentions that approach to data analysis can be of two types: deductively-based analytical procedures and inductively-based analytical procedures. In this thesis as the approach of research is inductive, thus the approach to data analysis is also inductively-based analytical procedures. In inductive analysis the analyst may become aware of categories or patterns for which the people participating did not have labels or terms. The analyst then develops terms to describe these inductively generated categories (Patton, 1987). For the authors in this thesis the process was similar to that. The students in focus group discussed and expressed their opinion and also in one-on-one interviews the interviewees answered the questions; the participants did not label the factors. The authors of this thesis then analysed the data and summarised the factors and labelled them with terms.

One of the methods under the inductively-based analytical procedures is data display and analysis. The data display and analysis approach is based on the work of Miles and Huberman (1994). According to Miles and Huberman (1994) data analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activities called: data reduction, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions. After collecting the primary data through focus groups and interviews, the next important step is to analyse the data. To begin with, data reduction is a process of summarizing and simplifying the data collected and focusing on some part of the data. In this thesis the authors started with data reduction by converting the tape recorded interviews and focus group discussion data into written transcriptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The interview and focus group data was done transcribing simultaneously during the data collection process because by doing so it helped to note down all the minute details as well. Data reduction also involved to read the transcription thoroughly to search and categories the data into themes and headings which could be related to the mentioned theoretical framework. Then the task was summarizing the transcript data into empirical findings categorized as to answering the research questions of this thesis. The data was analysed as such to summarize the factors that influences the student decision of study abroad destination choice at the stages.

Secondly data display is an organised, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this thesis the procedure of data display through organising and summarizing the factors helped the authors to identify and interpret the data for analysis in a more systematic way. It eased the process of connecting the findings with the theory. Using data display the authors of this thesis tried to find similar patterns, patterns in contrast and relationships and affects of it while analysing. The process was advantageous to answer the research questions in a systematic way. The last stage involves drawing and verifying conclusions. In this thesis at the end of analysing the findings in relation to theories, the authors concluded by expressing their own model of push-pull factors influencing students choice of study abroad destination choice from the perspective of students at JIBS. These factors are just an outcome of this thesis and study conducted on the students at JIBS and requires further verification and study to come up with generalised push-pull factors of students.
4 Empirical findings

In this section the data that has been gathered from the students at JIBS through focus groups and interviews will be presented. This will form the basis for the analysis.

4.1 Focus groups with international exchange student

The focus group was designed into three main research questions: the first question was related to questions trying to find out the factors that motivated student’s decisions to study abroad in the first place and the push factors within the home country. While the second question asked questions concerning to what were the pull factors of the host country which attracted the students towards them and the last question focused on the factors that influenced the students to select the institution over other.

4.1.1 Research question 1: Motivational factors leading to study abroad

What are the motivational factors that encourage students to study abroad and go for exchange studies?

Along with other factors there were three main factors mentioned by the students which had the most influence on their decisions to study abroad. One of the major factors was to take advantage of the opportunity available to them for going on exchange abroad for a semester or a year. Universities all around the world focus on internationalisation and want their students to go on exchange and attract foreign students as well. According to the exchange students participating in the focus groups, all their universities held information meetings and seminars which made them interested in study abroad in the initial stage. The institutions motivated and encouraged students to participate in the exchange study program. On an average most universities have several partner universities all around the world, from which students can choose. As mentioned by one of the students ‘internationalisation is the buzz word’. For the students from the European Union, going on exchange is ‘a must’ as described by one of the students from Greece. European Union has various projects focusing on student mobility. Erasmus is one of the programmes which provide funds to students among the member countries to study abroad within different countries in Europe and other countries as well. The students from North America expressed the intention of exchange studies as being part of both: the institution and their own interest.

The second factor was to experience different cultures with new people, different social and educational environment; a whole new experience as a whole. One of the students described it as ‘a thrilling and adventurous experience’. When on exchange studies the students meet and interact with students from all around the world. ‘Intercultural communication’ is the best thing experienced said by one of the male students from Mexico. Now he knows more about different culture, their customs and it helped him to understand the people and their behaviour. A French girl mentioned that ‘not only this enhanced my socialising skills but also when I was working for group reports in my course of International Management, I learnt so much from each of the members from different country just by interacting and working together in writing the report. We all
learnt something from each other which I believe it will help me in my career in future when working with individuals from different nationality.' The participants mentioned on the experience at JIBS that more could be done in terms of integrating Swedish and international students.

Another factor which influenced most students was that they considered their studying abroad experience as a significant criterion that could mention in their CV which according to them would differentiate them from students who had not been on exchange. One of the students described their exchange study as ‘icing on the cake - in the CV which would give the employer the impression that the individual can adapt and adjust to new people culture and environment and is willing to discover and has previous experience of intercultural communication’. ‘It works as an added competitive advantage in the CV’ as described by one of the Mexican students. The participants said, ‘In today’s world of globalisation these skills is assumed to help us in our career’.

Going on exchange studies abroad would mean learning and studying in another language and most commonly for international students the language is English and the students participating in the focus group expressed that it was a great way to improve and practise English language skills.

Travelling around is another factor which the students considered when going on exchange. Students expressed that they had plans of travelling in and around the country where they would go for exchange. So a country which is located in such a way that travelling and visiting other countries will be easy to access was considered as well. As in when a student is going on exchange, he or she can travel around in the countries and travel in other neighbouring countries as well quite easily.

4.1.2 Research Question 2: Factors influencing the choice of the country

*What factors influence the students to choose the country they want to go to exchange on?*

In this stage the students were asked to what are the factors that influenced their decision to select the country they wanted to go on their exchange. For the exchange students as they were already on their exchange to Sweden, their responses were to what factors they considered which led them to choose Sweden as the country where they could go on exchange studies. The students mentioned several factors that were quite interesting to know of how they decided the country they wanted to go in as it was more of a funnelling process. The first factor for both the focus group students was the geographical location. The geographical location of the country was the first and foremost factor that they considered. For the students from the European Union, they wanted not to go too far from their home country and stay closer; thus went for exchange within Europe. On the other hand, the students from North America wanted to come to Europe. Students from Canada mentioned that they had the choice of going on exchange to United States, but chose Europe as they wanted to see, travel and live a European life and wanted to be far away from their home country as well. Same factors were shared by the students from Mexico and United States of America. So both the focus group students concluded that they wanted to be in Europe.
After choosing the continent they wanted to be in then they had to decide which country in Europe they want to go to. The students from France, Spain and Greece all mentioned that being from countries geographically located in the lower portion of Europe; they were always fascinated and attracted towards the countries towards the North Pole: the Scandinavian countries being on the other side of Europe. The different weather and climate due to the geographical locations of the countries made the Scandinavian countries interesting to them. One of the French students mentioned ‘I wanted to be closer to the North Pole for a while’ and the students from Greece agreed. The Spanish students also considered the weather and wanted to be in a cold country where it has a lot of snow and to experience winter in the north. For the Mexican students coming to Europe was also to be in a cold climate where it snows. Thus students from both the focus groups considered the climate and weather of the country vital.

Quiet interestingly none of the students who participated in the focus groups had previous exchange of travelling or coming to Sweden. One of female students from Canada mentioned that ‘not much is heard about Sweden, nor there is much exposure of their culture; students tend to go to Paris, London and other cities which are more commonly heard of’. Thus she considered Sweden as she wanted to know more about the country, the people and their culture. The students from the European countries told that for them Sweden is a peaceful, developed welfare country with progression and advancement in education, inventions, technology. One of the students said ‘Sweden is considered as a very good country to live in’. This clearly shows that the people, culture and social and economical position of the country were taken into consideration by the students.

Living cost and expenses came lower down the list of factors after weather and social and cultural factors. The students from the focus group of the European countries mentioned that they were not worried about the source of fund for their exchange studies abroad as they were all students from the countries of the European Union and thus they were provided fund under the Erasmus program which widely promotes exchange study abroad. The amount received from the Erasmus was quiet a handsome amount to cover the living and other basic expenses. For students from Canada, Mexico and United States of America had no such funding but said that they had financial support from family to cover their stays and it was not tough as they themselves were planning the exchange and saved money already for this purpose. There was one exception with the Canadian girl coming from Quebec as she received a scholarship from the provincial government of Quebec for studying abroad in English language as French is the language used to deliver education in her university.

One of the factors mentioned by the students of focus group from the European country was that Swedish education system was considered as good and maintained high level of quality which shows that the level of the education system of the country and the recognition of it in their home country was taken into reflection.
4.1.3 Research Question 3: Factors influencing the choice of the institution

What are the factors that have impact on the students concerning the selection of the institution when they go to for exchange?

Therefore in continuation with the last two research questions, what makes the experience of study abroad so different than studying at the home university is that the educational institution is different, their method of delivering education, the language in which education is delivered, the process and the system of the institution is diverse with different rules and regulations, studying with students from different countries with various background and so on. So what are the pull factors of the institution that influence the student’s choice for choosing the institution?

As mentioned by the exchange students from European Union, the language in which the education is delivered was the first and foremost important factor in choosing the institution. The students coming from countries like France, Greece and Spain study in their own national language as French, Spanish and do not have any experience of studying in English and for them studying abroad is the chance where they can study in English language apart from their own language. They mentioned that by studying in English and practise of English language helps them improve their English skills and makes it easier for them to communicate at international level all around the world. The students from Mexico and Canadian student from Quebec for whom Spanish and French are the language used for studies as well agreed on this and said that they also wanted to study in an institution where the education is delivered in English.

The second factor which all the students mentioned was about the image of the institution that the students developed from the information received. The focus group students both from the European countries as well as North America mentioned that the basic source of information for all of them was the internet. Although there were meetings and seminars held in their home university promoting study abroad but these seminars did not provide in details information about all the universities and institutions. It was through their university intranet that they could access the list of the university and then surf the university website for more detailed information about the institution. So the information and appearance of the university in their website had impact on the decision of the choice of institution that the students made. One of the exchange students said ‘JIBS was able to promote itself as an international business school and was successful to attract me as I always wanted to be in an international school studying with students from all around the globe’.

Courses offered by the university also had influence over the students. The students in both focus groups mentioned that they wanted to opt for institution which would offer them a wide range of courses in English and in this scenario JIBS had an advantage over
other institutions in Europe as it is an international business school and offered wide range of courses in English that the students could choose from.

Recommendation from previous exchange students, as well as reports and internet blogs written by them had an impact on the students and was a pull factor. A French exchange student mentioned that the STARS evaluation which is a report filled out by all the exchange students within the European Union was a great source of information and helped him in making decision which institution would fulfil his requirements.

The students felt that the communication and level of cooperation between the host country and the exchange student also had an impact on their decision. If the host university approaches actively providing necessary information and support to the exchange student in forms of emails, forms, documents etc in a well organized manner then the students receive positive vibes about the institution and it acts as a pull factor for the university. As one of the exchange students from Greece commented that the process of coming to JIBS on exchange was really simplified and well organized and that the staff in charge of the exchange study did a good job in that.

The exchange students in both focus groups then discussed and suggested comments on areas for improvement which might help JIBS to influence more exchange students. To end with, both the focus groups were asked to describe their exchange study abroad in one word or a phrase and few of their comments are quoted below: ‘internationalisation’, ‘intercultural communication’, ‘travelling’, ‘studying in English’, ‘networking globally as now I have at least one friend in most country you would name’.

All the above mentioned words somehow summarize the factors that had been discussed at the various stages of decision making of the students on the destination of their study abroad.

4.2 Interviews with Swedish students

There were six individual face-to-face interviews conducted with Swedish students. The interviews were followed the same way after focus groups with exchange students were conducted. The main aim of the thesis is to come up with the factors that influence the students destination choice for study abroad and though the international exchange students and Swedish students had different answers to explain their opinion but when it was analysed on a broader aspect it was found that most of the factors could be categorized on a common grounds. The authors must mention that the interviews with the Swedish students really helped them as they provided more insights and opinions on JIBS and its performance as an institution which was very important for this thesis as JIBS is the case study and getting detailed responses to the questions enabled the authors to analyse the topic extensively.
4.2.1 Research Question 1: Motivational factors leading to study abroad

What are the motivational factors that encourage students to study abroad and go for exchange studies?

One of the main factors was mentioned that influenced Swedish students to go on exchange study are that it was extensively promoted by JIBS. All the interviewees more or less had the same opinion. In the initial stage they received information through the official website of JIBS. Four interviewees mentioned that the opportunity that JIBS provide for going on exchange was one of the main reasons for them to study at JIBS as a full programme student. In an international school like JIBS, surrounded by international students and a lot of international events, students are able to exchange the culture, information and experiences from each other. More than half of the students participating in the interviews discussed and talked in the different ways of how JIBS promotes its exchange studies including seminars and information sessions. JIBS’ international office has promoted exchange program every year encouraging all students here go abroad and take courses that do not offer at JIBS. Seminar about exchange studies and meetings with students have been abroad before are held for second year students. It is a part of every program at JIBS, even the students are mostly motivated by themselves. All these are the initial factors that push students at JIBS to go exchange. Swedish students talked about the seminars and information meetings on exchange studies and the emails that they received which described the whole process of going on exchange and guided them with the preparation to go on exchange. According to three of the interviewees, the exchange coordinator and the international office did quite a good job in making the process of going on exchange simpler through JIBSnet (JIBS’s intranet) and all the other informative methods. On the other hand the rest half expressed their views that the international office had some lacking and could be more efficient in helping out with students going on exchange in other ways which the authors discussed in the conclusion. One of the interviewees said ‘JIBS is successful in publicising its exchange program to a great extent but at times fails to maintain that expectation in the later stage where the students need more support for the rest of the process after deciding to go aboard’.

The second factor that came up from the interviews is that the interest of Swedish students to experience a new culture and being able to communicate intercultural. All the participants said that they want to experience living in a new country that has totally different culture from Sweden. Three of the students mentioned that the International Day held at JIBS every semester gave them a chance to know about different countries, their culture which made them fascinated towards those countries. The boredom of living in same area, the exciting feeling to adventure and opportunity to contact new people and change lifestyle were also mentioned as elements motivate them to study abroad. Travelling around these countries was a factor which was within this desire to experience a whole new country and culture. It was not one of the major factors for all the interviewees and only two of the interviewees mentioned plans of travelling.

To help their studies and careers is the next factor that most of interviewees mentioned. For example, when asking three students from IT Business program, their other reason
beside language and culture to go exchange is to have more courses about business rather than just IT. The courses for business subject in their program are not enough while they want to learn more about it. The rest said that study in another country can let them have a different view and aspect to the subject that they are studying at JIBS. In addition, being study abroad can add something value to their CV. They said it will attract the employers when looking at their CV. When asking how they going to present their experiences of study abroad into their CV, they referred to culture, their language and social communication skill that are often lack from many students that only stayed in one place. According to one of the interviewees, only by marketing as an International school will not help in achieving success unless the school also achieve good reputation in terms of education research and guarantee the quality of the education. Three of JIBS students mentioned that they think JIBS is not internationalized enough. The quality of the courses and the teachers in English is not as expected. Also one participant said that some exchange students who shared their views with the Swedish students mentioned how JIBS as an international business school is different from theirs in terms of courses, teacher and the method of delivering education. The Swedish students wanted to study in a different system and learn from it.

There are three students in the interviews who chose Asian countries because they want to learn and improve new languages. Two of them already studied those languages before. They said that being in those countries give them chance to practice their skills. Similar to them, those students that chose English speaking countries want to improve their English. Compared to Europe and other countries in which English is the second language, the students said they would rather choose a far country but has English as main language as in countries like Canada and United States of America. So practicing language skills also acts as a factor motivating students to go on exchange.

4.2.2 Research question 2: Factors influencing the choice of the country

What factors influence the students to choose the country they want to go to exchange on?

There are three students that chose Asian countries and others chose English speaking countries: one student chose Japan, one chose Chinese speaking country, one chose South Korea, one chose United States of America, one chose Australia and one chose English speaking countries and got accepted in Canada.

The first factor that influenced the students is the geographical location of the countries. The Swedish students chose countries that were pretty far away from Europe. Since they live in Europe there is not necessary and interesting to study here except if they want to study German, French or other languages from European countries. Travelling far away from Europe is more thrilling for them.

The weather is also an important factor that influenced their choices. Most of the interviewees chose countries which is warmer than Sweden or chose the semester that has warm weather like in Australia and other Asian countries. The student going to United
States of America said that he could not get the place in spring semester so he chose winter semester for skiing. Furthermore, almost the interviewees chose to study only six months because either they want to go back and complete studies at JIBS or they could not get the place for one year.

More than half of the interviewees had past experience travelling to the countries they want to study abroad or similar countries. Especially the students have been to Japan and U.S.A, because of that they would like to visit them again and have opportunity to stay there longer. When being asked about living expenses in the countries they chose, none of them said it as an important factor to them. They mentioned that they can get help from CSN or Erasmus and said that they definitely applied for scholarship from these programs. However, the amounts of funds or scholarships depend on which country they are going to go. One student said if he goes to U.S.A, the money he got from CSN or Erasmus even less than he has in Sweden or Nordic countries. The students said if there is not enough money from scholarship or loans from CSN, they can have a part time job. So the living costs and travelling expenses do not affect them much.

More than half of the interviewees said that they are fascinated by the country’s landscape and lifestyle and heard many positive things about the country. The reasons are as the motivations that make them want to study abroad: the opportunity to improve their language skills and experience new culture. Language is a significant part of one’s’ culture. The student chose to study in Japan because he is really interested in Japanese as well as the country itself and also Japan is famous for IT which is his major. Besides that, he also got strong recommendation from his friend. Similarly, the student chose Chinese speaking country said that he only chose either Taiwan or Singapore or China because he wants to improve his Chinese. The student chose South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and the one chose U.S.A is attracted by culture, scenery, music and fashion there. The other chose Canada because he wants to improve English. Besides the cultural aspects the students also took consideration of the recognition of the education system. As mentioned by the interviewees going to Japan and China mentioned that they wanted to make sure that their education system is well recognized in Europe.

4.2.3 Research Question 3: Factors influencing the choice of the institution

What are the factors that have impact on the students concerning the selection of the institution when they go to for exchange?

Each student had their own factors on which they decided which university to go for. The ranking order of their choices depends on their own interests. As mentioned above, the interviewees were all targeting to learn and study in the language which they wanted to practice their skills further. Except two of the interviewees, the rest was willing to go to an English speaking country and the education is also delivered in English.

When being asked about how they find information about university that they want to go, the answers are mostly at first from JIBS’ international office and intranet of JIBS and then
from the institutions official websites. One of the interviewees mentioned that the initial image and feeling that he got about the university from visiting the website was very significant in decision making in his case.

The courses offered in the universities are an important factor. The students have to make sure that the university offers the courses of their interest and that is accepted back at JIBS as well. According to one of the Swedish students, wide range of courses offered which included her area of studies was one of the main criteria she searched for when evaluating the universities. However, the information about courses was not enough as described by three of the interviewees. They said the school’s homepage only provides general information and international office has only compendium or gives the list of previous students that went exchange.

One student going to Japan searched a lot of information from internet and got recommendation from his friend and he even contacted with Host University beforehand. The other students said they got more contact and information after being accepted from host universities than before being accepted. Two students said that because of lacking information about the course, they only looked at the facility and admission office and how the homepage organizes. This shows that communication from the host university can make the student motivated to go for that university.

Every student who goes on exchange fills out STARS evaluation. ‘This is a good source of information for students who want to know more about specific universities’ was said by one of the interviewees. Three other interviewees mentioned that recommendation from previous exchange students from certain universities made them interested towards those institutions.
5 Analysis

In this section the data empirical findings will be analysed in relation to the theoretical framework chosen. The analysis is also designed in a similar approach as in the findings into three stages. The factors which came up from the students of JIBS participating in the focus groups and interviews will be then summarized in a model.

5.1 Research Question 1: Motivational factors leading to study abroad

What are the motivational factors that encourage students to study abroad and go for exchange studies?

In this study, push factors are the factors which influence and encourage students to go for exchange studies in the first place. It is a great importance for a university to know the reasons behind a student’s decision to study abroad so that the university can conduct and direct their marketing strategies in the best way possible to encourage outgoing and incoming students. Thus for the purpose of this thesis, JIBS was considered as the subject of the case study and the aim was to try and identify the factors influencing the students to study abroad from the perspective of the students at JIBS; both Swedish and international. Understanding the motivating factors from the student’s perspective becomes vital to achieve success on the on-going process of internationalisation and encouragement of exchange study abroad.

Education from a perspective of Service Marketing

To begin with, the authors wanted to express the idea that education is a marketable service and in this thesis according to the study conducted education can be marketed to students through different sources of integrated service marketing communications. Education is a service as it has the characteristics of a service which includes intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perish-ability. Education is immaterial and in specific it cannot be standardized for all, as different areas of education has different requirements. Education is also inseparable as delivering and consuming education takes place simultaneously. Thus education is a service provided by the university which are delivering this to the students who are the consumers of the service. Erramilli (1990) suggested that services can be of two types: Hard and Soft services. Hard service providers can separate the production and consumption of their service and can be exported directly e.g. architecture. For soft services production and consumption are to a major extent simultaneous process, and such services require major local presence by the service firm or a representative that acts on its behalf. Quiet interestingly Grönroos (1999) in an article of service marketing described education as a hard service while Mazzarol (2003) in an article of educational management described education as a soft service. Different scholars have categorised education from their own perspectives. According to the definition soft services production and consumption are to a major extent simultaneous process. The authors of this thesis believed that though education is a much more sophisticated process of transferring knowledge but in terms of service marketing education is a soft service as production and consumption are a simultaneous process.
Now, while education is the service the institution is providing, exchange program is a product, an opportunity that the university offer the students with which contributes to the enhancement of the studying experience of the student and helps to achieve internationalisation for the institution as well. To promote this exchange study programme it has been observed in this thesis that JIBS conducts marketing and implies marketing strategies which according to the participating students of the focus groups and the interviews has been ‘quite successful’. Integrated marketing communication is a strategy that integrates traditional media marketing, direct marketing, public relation and other distinct marketing communications media as well as communication aspects of the delivery and consumption of goods and services and of customer service and other customer encounters (Grönroos, 2007).

In the study conducted for this thesis, the first factor that all the students mentioned was that the university conducts extensive marketing communication of study abroad, promoting and encouraging students by providing the students with all sorts of information and support to go abroad. Swedish students who are full programme students mainly described the different ways that JIBS uses to promote exchange as they have experienced more of it. The focus group students also added to it. According to Duncan and Moriarty (1997) there are four kinds of marketing communication sources: planned messages, product messages, service messages and unplanned messages. The authors used these four types to relate and interpret the method that universities conduct and in this case JIBS conduct to reach its potential customers who are the students.

**JIBS promoting exchange studies using the four kind of marketing communication sources:**

*Planned message:*

JIBS implies marketing strategies of study abroad at different levels. Planned messages are the outcome of a planned marketing communication campaign where separate communications media such as TV, brochure, Direct mail, Internet etc., are used to send the message. Generally these are planned by the marketer to convince customers and potential customers in a certain direction (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997). In case of JIBS, as it was interpreted by the authors planned messages play a significant role in marketing communication. The opinions and information received from the interviews and focus groups supported this fact. According to two of the interviewees when JIBS recruits Swedish students at national level, it focuses on exchange programme as one its main strategy to attract Swedish students. A way of effective advertisement to reach mass number of students is the institutions official website. JIBS official website provides information and conveys facts which can be termed as planned messages and has impact on the students as well. It mentions in JIBS official website the fact that approximately 80 percent of all students at JIBS study abroad at one of the partner universities for at least one semester. JIBS also has more partner universities, more than 200 spanning six continents and over 70 countries, than any other business school in Sweden (JIBS’s website, 2009). Four of the Swedish interviewees among six mentioned that the reason they chose JIBS over other universities was because they wanted to go on exchange studies abroad and JIBS according to the information in the website seemed to fulfil that criteria very well. This showed that JIBS strategy of sending planned messages to students through
website were effective. When it came to exchange student, they mentioned the fact that the website gave a clear image of being an international business school which made them interested. Thus planned messages using website implied for communicating messages reached both national and international students at the same time. Another way of providing information accessible to students is through university brochures. JIBS sent out their brochures to partner universities where the international students gets to know about JIBS and similarly the exchange coordinator at JIBS has brochures from several partner universities which are accessible to the students at JIBS. Brochures are also a type of planned message which is a traditional marketing tool to provide basic information to the potential students. Another way of communicating planned messages is where the consumers are reached via personal mails, emails etc. In case of JIBS direct mails from the exchange coordinator to the students plays a significant role in pushing the students to study abroad. Through emails send in regular intervals the student are informed about when to apply, information about the deadlines and the selection process etc. The students are also able to ask any questions regarding study abroad and receive reply through JIBSnet which is the intranet of JIBS.

Product Message:

Another approach to advertise exchange study and establish a relationship with the students is by presenting information face to face. Product messages are the messages of firm and its offerings that follow from the physical products in an offering: how a physical product is designed, how it functions, how it can be disposed of etc (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997). As mentioned by the Swedish students at JIBS, during the first week of introduction in the university all students are given an introduction to the exchange program by an individual representing the international office which works with the exchange programme. All the interviewees also confirmed that JIBS conducts informative meeting and seminars on exchange programmes for all the second year students before they apply for exchange; communicating information on what is the procedure of applying on exchange and how the whole process will work starting from applying on exchange till the end. The students get to ask questions and discuss which a two way communication is. All this method of providing information through meetings and seminars can be termed as product message. In this scenario the product that the university is providing to students is the exchange studies. To inform and update the students about its product, the university conducts seminars and meetings which provide information of how the product (i.e. exchange study) functions, what are the products and so on. The Swedish students described this process of delivering information as being a helpful tool which gives them a chance to have a clear concept of how the whole process works. The exchange students also shared the idea that they have information sessions at their home universities as well.

Thus communicating marketing messages through planned messages like website, brochure and direct response through mail are able to reach both Swedish and international students; while product messages through seminars and meetings for communicating marketing message works for Swedish and International students in their own home country institution.
Service Message:

JIBS tries to promote exchange studies internationally by building relationship with partner universities. JIBS relies and emphasises on interactive marketing which is termed as service message. Service messages are messages that result from service processes. Interaction between customers and service employees include a substantial element of communication in the service process. The customers get valuable information in these encounters and also develop a sense of trust in the firm based on such interaction (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997). At JIBS, as mentioned by most of the participants the exchange coordinator who is in charge of the exchange program interacts with the Swedish and International students directly. All students can meet the exchange coordinator any day during the office hours and appointments can also be arranged. This helps both the Swedish and international students as mentioned by the participants. The interaction is between the service provider and the consumer here leads to conveying service message. Three out of six interviewees in their individual interviews said that it is very important being able to interact with the coordinator but at times when it was very important for the students to communicate with the coordinator they were unable to do so. One of them said ‘it might be too much of a burden for one person to manage all and their might be some managerial issues which should be solved to make the process easier’.

JIBS often uses its own students going out on exchange for conveying service messages. When on exchange the students of JIBS represent their university at that host university. As the student who is going on exchange to a certain university abroad has to give a presentation on JIBS and talks about the institution as well as place and the country. In the focus groups five international students mentioned that they had seen presentation of JIBS by its students which led them find further information of JIBS on the website. The students mentioned that hearing about the university from the students was more reliable and encouraging when compared to brochures and websites. Thus, this in a way promotes JIBS to students in that university abroad and the technique has been doing quite well.

Unplanned Message:

In some cases unplanned messages by students on exchange in the form of word-of-mouth communication can play an important role in communicating messages to prospective and potential students on exchange. Word-of-mouth communication means messages about the organisation, its credibility, and its ways of operating, its goods and services and so on communicated from one person to another (Grönroos, 2007). The use of word-of-mouth acts as a very strong influence on students as this is one of the ways where it is not a promoting method of the university but generally true and unbiased opinions from the students. It seem to have impact on students as it was found that recommendation by previous students was one of the factors which influenced students’ choice of the institution.

Besides that, JIBS being affiliated with projects like Erasmus, Socrates, Tempus and few others which provide funds to students willing to go abroad also acts as an important
factor to attract more students to go on study abroad and assist international students to come on exchange at JIBS under these projects as well.

To summarize as discussed above JIBS uses all the four sources of communicating marketing messages to promote their exchange studies to both: international exchange student and national student as well. Thus all these marketing activities act as a motivational push factor for the students to study abroad.

Intercultural communication was the next factor mentioned by almost all the participants in the focus groups and the interviews. According to Seligman (1999) increasingly, cross-cultural understanding and language use are predictors of success in business (cited in Elkin et al., 2005). This is a significant factor which is realised by both the students and the institution as well. Being in a different culture and meeting students from different cultural background is believed to be a learning experience as described by one of the participants in the focus groups. The Swedish students shared similar feelings about ‘International Day’ at JIBS. JIBS in order to promote and encourage intercultural communication holds an event called ‘International Day’ where all the exchange students from different countries represents their universities, their culture and their country; all under one roof. It is an efficient way of conveying service messages between the international and the Swedish students for intercultural communication and exchange of information. One of the exchange students in the focus group described ‘coming to exchange in JIBS did not only just make me aware of the Swedish culture, I was also able to communicate and be acquainted with several other culture from countries all around the world through the exchange students whom I met here.’ Two of the interviewees mentioned that this sort of event gave them an idea of the country, culture and the university they want to go on exchange to. Thus service message in this context gives a chance to all the students to interact and this scope of intercultural communication available to exchange students should be promoted by the institution through the message they deliver to attract the students. Internationalisation at home means the development of curricula and extra curricula processes that focus on internationalisation without the need to travel (Elkin et al., 2005). On the other hand, Burn (2002) states that study abroad and student exchanges can be powerful internationalisers of higher education cited in Elkin et al., 2005). At JIBS from the feedback from the exchange student it was said that there should be more scope of integration of Swedish and international students in terms of their studies and courses. This could enhance the learning experience and communication more for both of them.

The students emphasized on exchange studies by saying that one of the push factor for going on exchange is that it will add credentials in their Curriculum Vitae. An outcome claimed by (McKellin, 1998) for the internationalisation process in education is better prepared students who will enter and compete in an increasingly global labour market and market place (cited in Elkin et al., 2005). More and more students will need this preparation as further globalisation and trade liberalization takes place. Thus this exchange study experience will prove their experience and skills in their CV. According to the students both Swedish and International, expressed that they hope and think that their future employer will consider the exchange studies as an added quality in their CV which might distinguish them from others in comparison. As one of the students said exchange studies
acts as ‘icing on the cake’ in their CV which would give the employer the impression that the individual can adapt and adjust to new people culture and environment and is willing to discover and has previous experience of intercultural communication’. This factor can be promoted by institution as a benefit and advantage of exchange study abroad in their product message.

But at the same time the quality of education received and reputation of the institution is of extreme importance as mentioned by the Swedish students. According to one of the interviewees ‘only by marketing as an International school will not help in achieving success unless the school also achieve good reputation in terms of education research and guarantee the quality of the education’. Three of JIBS students mentioned that they think JIBS is not internationalized enough. The quality of the courses and the teachers in English is not as expected. This might lead to negative word-of-mouth which is unplanned messages which might affect the image and reputation of the organisation which is very significant or else the employers might not evaluate the credentials a student have in a proper way. Trying to be a reputation school good in all areas will promote the school through its students and their success in careers.

**Practicing language skills** is another major factor for students to go on exchange. Exchange students from European country in the focus groups and even the Swedish students thought that going on exchange in an English speaking country is an excellent way to improve in their English language skills. To mention an exception a Swedish student who is going to Japan for exchange mentioned that he had learned the Japanese language before and is now going to Japan to practice the language and improve. JIBS as an international Business School provides most of its courses in English which helps good practice of English if English is the language of study. Practicing language skills is one of the important criteria that students take into account. Thus the availability and possibility to practice language should be promoted and mentioned in the product messages for communicating marketing messages where exchange study is the product.

**Travelling** is also an important factor which made the students excited for going on exchange. Students expressed the idea that they wanted to travel and visit different places and countries if they get a chance to when they are on exchange. When it comes to JIBS the school arranges several trips to Kiruna, Norway, ship cruise to Finland among other trips which was described by the exchange student as ‘great effort by the school’. Such programs arranged for the exchange students makes their exchange study experience exciting and fun as well. This additional service provided by the institution is worth mentioning in the product messages as well because from the study in this thesis it can be said that it is one of the factors that students consider and this might attract exchange students towards the institution who has travelling as their one of the top criteria.

### 5.2 Research Question 2: Factors influencing the choice of the country

What factors influence the students to choose the country they want to go to exchange on?
After having the motivation to study exchange, the students face the next research question: which country to go to? The process starts with searching information and evaluating alternatives (Solomon, 2002). There were various factors that affected the students during the searching and evaluation that led to satisfaction or dissatisfaction and then influence their decision. Hence, the process of how the attributions of a country give several consequences both functionally and psycho-socially and lead the students to the end stage – achieving their values follows the Means-end chain model of consumers’ product knowledge (Figure 1).

**Attributes:**

The decision they have to make is choosing which country to go. Students have different levels of knowledge about the country and that is why they interpret information and make purchase decision differently (Peter & Olson, 2008). One of the forces that pull the students to a specific country is the attributes of that country. According to Peter and Olson (2008), products are bundles of attributes, benefits and value satisfaction. The attributes of a country might include climate, environment, culture, people, economic, politic, etc. Among alternatives, the one with best benefits contribution will be selected. For example, the exchange students from Mexico, Greece and Spain chose Sweden because it has cold climate, lots of snow, good location, English speaking country and advanced technology. According to data findings, the attributes of the countries mentioned by the participants are geographical location, weather and climate, costs, education system, culture, society and economy.

**Functional and Psycho-social Consequences:**

*Geographical location* was said by all the participants as the first factor that students chose where to go. The functional effect from this factor is the distance that the students can be near or far away from their home countries. Then psycho-social consequences are consequences after functional effect. For instance, a student from France chose to go to Sweden because it is near to her country and her friends and family can easily visit her in Sweden. For non-European students, not only the distance but being in a special location like near the North Pole or within Europe that make it easier to travel to other European countries is also the advantage of a country compare to another. In this case, psycho-social effect is being close or able to enjoy with friends and family.

The students from the sample of this thesis chose the country that has different weather and climate compared to their home countries. Hot or cold climate are functional consequences of the weather. Like one of the Swedish students chose Australia because the weather season is opposite to Sweden such as winter in Sweden means summer in Australia. Australia’s weather was different compared to other countries in Europe which has similar weather to Sweden. Contrarily, the other students came to Sweden because they wanted to experience the cold weather or opportunity to ski. The psycho-social results may be because they want to have tanned-skin, fresh air, healthier life.
Cost is another attribute that may cause negative effect even though the two above factors are satisfied. Most of exchange programs are free but the living cost, travel and other expenses will influence the student’s choice. Yet, the importance of this functional consequence depends on each student. There are students who said that the living cost issue is of less importance because they had funds from Erasmus, scholarship, loan or had saved money beforehand by working part time. Moreover, it is not only about how important the factor affects the decision choices but also the place to go. Students chose Asian country like China and South Korea because the living cost and other expenses is less compared to other western countries. This may be interpreted as a functional effect. Thus the students going there can experience the culture, enjoy the various taste of food which are the psycho-social effect.

The next factor is the recognition of education system in a country. If the education system is broadly accepted and recognised then the qualifications it add to the students’ record is the functional effect. The respect and acceptance of the education system in their home countries and society are psycho-social results. It might seem to be not so significant for exchange students since they are on exchange only for a short period. However, it varies regarding the motivation of students going abroad on the first stage. If the reason a student go for exchange is travelling or practicing language then the quality of education is relatively less important. It also depends on the different perspective of individual students. However, the students are still influenced by the reputation of education system which is an important function, not as a specific institution in this stage but a country as a whole. For example, the international students chose Sweden because they heard Swedish educational system is good and maintains high level of quality relatively similar or at some circumstances better than their home countries. It means that whatever university in Sweden they can still achieve the average levels of good quality of education. Another reason of why they chose a specific country is because they want other people to recognize their value of being in that country. Having chosen a country which has good reputation not only gives a good impression to other people but also for the students themselves.

Cultures, social and economic position of a country are the last but not least important factors when evaluating the options. The functional effects from these factors can make a particular country more attractive than others. These effects in a way lead to the psycho-social consequence where the individual’s personal feeling and choice acts. Functional consequence when students go to Asia is that Asian culture has a long history, many traditional festivals, lots of old building, pagoda, castles and various kinds of foods. For Western countries it is the advanced technology, modern building and lifestyle and strong economic position which act as functional effects. A country has its own characteristics that attract individual student. An example is the student that chose Japan because of the famous IT industry which helps a lot for his IT business major. Besides that, because Japan is famous for IT, his experience and study in Japan will be recognized by people (psycho-social consequence) and hence it is benefit for his career.

Values:
The students first take into consideration all the attributes of the country which lead to functional consequences and then psycho-social consequences. It is about how choosing a
specific country makes the students feel and what is other think about them. All this create value for the students which help them in choosing their destination. The more a country can fulfil the requirement or called the expectation from the students such as its promising positive consequences when they go there, the more value it can add to the students when they evaluate their choices (Peter & Olson, 2008). All the attributes and consequences of a country may lead to only one or few values such as security, self-pleasure, happiness, relax, the feeling they gain something better than before going or when going to a different country.

All the attributions from a country and factors that influence the students in this stage cannot be adjusted by the school because they are natural and the interests from students are all different. The school can try to take advantage of these factors to promote to students if its target students groups are most interested in this kind of factors, especially culture and weather.

### 5.3 Research Question 3: Factors influencing the choice of the institution

*What are the factors that have impact on the students concerning the selection of the institution when they go to for exchange?*

In research question 3 the students have a more specific decision: choosing an institution. The differences between choosing a country and an institution are also based on their attributes. There are students who only made decision right away from the second stage without considering the school’s options while others evaluated carefully each university.

**Attributes:**

The students are more likely to choose university that have the attributes that cause a positive effect or consequence to the students and lessen the negative effect on them (Peter & Olson, 2008). The attributes mentioned by the students from focus groups and interviews are *language, image of institution, course offered, communication and cooperation between partner universities*.

**Functional and psycho-social consequences:**

The first attribution that students considered when choosing an institution is *language being used* in that university for teaching. The functional consequence is the ability to study and communicate in a language which improves their skills in a certain language. It was found in the findings that all participants of focus groups and half of the interviewees wanted to go to English speaking countries. The students either chose English speaking countries or selected an international school since the course and lectures will be provided in English. At the same time it is the language used for communication at the school. In that way it will help them to improve their English speaking skills. Similarly, students who like to study other languages such as Japanese or Chinese chose the school that provides
that language because it would give them the chance to study a new language. Skills achieved in a language results in a psycho-social consequence where the students gain more confidence in communication.

The **image of the institution** is another attribute. A school creates its image through its own website, the facility or building and maintaining its reputation that has an impact on students’ opinion. The functional consequences are the facilities, the classroom, and the IT infra-structure which contribute to a positive or negative image of the school more likely leading to psycho-social consequences. For example, in this thesis the students participating in focus group and interviews said that they assessed information about their host schools mainly on the universities’ homepages. The students had positive feelings on a well structured website which offers clear and detail information about the school. In the opposite, they had a negative interpretation on a poor structured homepage which lacked information. The way how the institutions promote themselves contribute to attract the students’ attention to them and make them different from other institutions.

Besides creating a good image the institutions need to provide wide range of **courses offered** to attract students as this leads to functional consequence. When students go on exchange they look for institutions which offers them a wide range of courses which makes this attribute more important than others. Most of the international exchange students said that they came to JIBS because the school provided more courses compared to other schools. However, the course offering is weighed by the students depending on their personal demand of education. The psycho-social consequences of choosing a school that have a large number of courses offered is the opportunity to study new courses and achieving knowledge that might not have been available in their home university.

**Recommendation** from previous exchange students is not the attribute from an institution but it is the factor that influences the feeling or provides knowledge about the school. When an institution is recommended by previous exchange students and friends then it in a way assures a good quality which contributes to psycho-social consequence. Students get information about the exchange schools from various sources: personal experience of other students like blogs and video clips posted on internet. According to the findings it may be said that information received from previous exchange students appeared to have positive or negative feelings on the potential students. These recommendations then affect their overall attitude of the school they are interested in.

Exchange students have to contact with host universities throughout the whole exchange process. They need lots of information and help from the host university which are the functional consequence. Hence, **communication and cooperation** between students and Host University influence the student’s perception and lead to psycho-social consequence. It develops as the result of the direct communication between the students and the institution. In the data finding, the international students felt that the exchange department provided them proper help and support which are functional consequences. However, it was seen from the interviews that for some students, the level of cooperation at some instances between two universities seems not so high since the students did not get enough information as they expected from them. That might cause negative psycho-social
consequences due to insecurity and unpleasant feeling. Therefore, good communication and cooperation influence the students positively and create value.

Values:
After considering all the attributes and consequences that the institution provided the students evaluated the value that they can achieve from them. While language used in the school and course offered are more likely to lead to functional effect, image of institution as well as communication and cooperation from university acts as the psycho-social consequences. Finally adding those up with recommendation will support the students’ decision making of selecting the institution. The values here are security of being in good university, the self-pleasant feeling of being in international environment, the satisfaction of getting help from university. Hence the university which contribute the most value to the students was selected.

Thus the institutions may take into consideration the factors mentioned above to attract more exchange students as these influence the students for selection of the institution for study abroad.

5.4 Analytical comparison and contrast of Swedish and international students

In this thesis the authors used triangulation method in methods of collecting the data. Focus groups and interviews both were used to collect primary data. The triangulation is theoretically believed to ensure the credibility of the data. Along with increasing credibility, here it helped the authors of the thesis to clearly summarise the factors and gain a deeper insight of JIBS and its activities from the perspective of international exchange and Swedish students.

At first the aim was to figure out the push factors motivating the students for exchange study. The focus groups and interviewee participants both had discussed relatively same factors which influence them to study abroad. It is because no matter how diverse their background is the common thing binding them together is the fact that they are all students. The process starts with the universities providing the information of exchange study abroad for all the students. Then the students take into consideration other factors which might help their education and career in the future; practicing language skills and intercultural communication improves and enhances their skills while the exchange program itself is a good experience to write in the CV. It was discussed and agreed by all participants in both focus groups and interviews. The factor where the interviewee responses varied was that with the international exchange student, travelling was one of the major factors while for the Swedish student though two mentioned the wishes to travel, it was not much of importance while taking decision.
For the second research question of choosing which country, the first difference is about geographical location. Most of Swedish interviewees said they chose a country which is far away from Sweden. Compared to international students, they were divided into two types: some chose near country and others chose far country. The difference may be caused by their personal interests and culture differences (Gilbert, 1991). The second one is about language. Both Swedish and international students mostly prefer to go to English speaking countries because they want to improve their English since they live in countries where English is not common or just a second language. However, half of Swedish interviewees chose to study in other countries because they really want to study new language compare to international student who took Swedish course just as minor influence to them.

Three Swedish students interested in Asian culture and the warm weather while international students wanted to experience cold weather in Sweden. The cause of these three Swedish students interested in a specific country and the reason they only chose a few countries compare to number of available options on the list of choosing which country/university to go is because they already have past experience to go to that country before or similar country that they want to go. On the other hand, international exchange students said that they have not been to Sweden before. Hence, experience is the affect of the level of knowledge of students towards a school makes choice differently (Solomon, 2002). For Swedish students, they only accepted the country they are really interested in otherwise they would not go to study exchange at all even they have various other countries that they can choose. The interesting fact is that though most Swedish students wanted to be in warm weather and the international exchange students wanted to experience snow, both these relate to the common factor of weather and climate.

The similarity of Swedish students and international students is how the cost issues influence them. All of them agreed that living costs and other expenses are considered but they had thought of how to finance their exchange study abroad beforehand. The international exchange students from Europe had the ERASMUS program funding their study abroad, while students from North America had arranged the money by part time jobs themselves. For the Swedish students they got help and fund from scholarship and loan program like CSN and Erasmus.

The final difference is about the quality of education. Only one Swedish student said he cared about the quality of the education over there. Other Swedish students seemed not take it as a significant factor or just assumed those countries have good reputation as a whole while international students chose JIBS after hearing the educational system is good and maintains high level of studies. The difference is because their motivations of going abroad are different. Most Swedish interviewees would like to experience new culture and study new language in a certain country rather than search a lot of information from a specific school. For this reason some Swedish students actually skipped the last stage of choosing a university.

Language used in the institutions is the first and most mentioned when students talked about choosing universities. Learning and practicing language skills are all their main
purpose for going exchange. However, in focus group, all of the students preferred to choose institutions using English as their studying language. On the other hand, Swedish students from interviews had more preferences. Half of them chose English used universities; others prefer to experience some other languages.

The image of institutions is also a common factor mentioned by all the participants from focus groups and interviews. Websites of host universities present the images of them in most of the students’ opinions. Well structured with detail information websites are more preferred by students.

Course offered by Exchange College is definitely a key factor for students to choose institutions. In focus group, students pay more attention on the quality of the courses that are offered by JIBS. In the opposite, Swedish interviewees are more concerned about the subjects that are available.

Recommendations from previous exchanged students were mentioned by students as well. However, compare to students from interviews, students in focus group were more influenced by the recommendations since none of them had been in Sweden before. Although students from interview were affected by the comments given by other people, they decided the institutions by their own opinions.

The other factor that is mentioned by students is communication and cooperation among partner schools, and also between school and students. International exchange students and Swedish students both felt that exchange department in the institution plays a vital role and their communication influences student’s decision. All the participants mentioned that though the exchange study is promoted well at JIBS, there are some deficiencies which the management should focus and improve.

Although there were some different answers from focus groups and interviews, relatively the factors that were mentioned by students are similar. The authors concluded the factors for students choosing exchange institutions based on the common facts.

### 5.5 Model of push-pull factors for exchange students

The analytical result of the finding is summarized in the model below showing the push-pull factors influencing the students on their destination choice for study abroad. The model answers the purpose and the research questions of this thesis. The most important factors that almost all the students participating in the focus groups and interviews discussed and mentioned somehow in their conversation were taken into consideration by the authors in making this model.
As much as the authors of this thesis had researched, they found out that the previous study on push-pull factors were all based on full programme students. The study of push-pull factors of the exchange students is a new approach which leads to different dimensions and aspects of study abroad when compared with previous models. This phenomenon of exchange study is one of the significant ways to internationalise and should be focused on with importance. In this thesis, the model of factors influencing the exchange students is compared with the previous research on push-pull factors of full programme students by Mazzarol.

Exchange students initially get the information about the university through the promotion conducted by the home university which acts as the major push factor. On the other hand, from the perspective of the full programme student the promotion of the university is from the host institution and thus it is a pull and not a push factor. Exchange students usually go abroad for duration of six months or a year and thus the most influential factors for them are different and not of equal priority when compared to full programme students who go abroad for two years or more. In comparison to the push-pull model of Mazzarol the push factors which are different for exchange students are intercultural communication, practicing language skills and travelling. They were not directly mentioned as the push factors for full programme students. The exchange students wanted to experience these factors which motivate them while for full programme they are not the most important factors taken into account. Exchange students consider this experience of study abroad as adding an extra value to their Curriculum Vitae while for the full programme student it is the degree itself and not any extra quality. Thus it is prioritized by exchange students than full programme in the major push factors.

Pull factors influencing the countries of choice are similar for both exchange and full programme students. Whether they are exchange or full programme students, both take into consideration of the geographical location, weather, culture, social and economic position and recognition of the education system when choosing the country. The cost issue is considered differently by the exchange students as they do not have to pay the tuition fees and other costs are mostly covered by funds and loans whereas the full programme students in the previous research had to take into consideration the total cost.

Pull factors which are common for both the exchange students and full programme students from previous study to choose the institutions are image and reputation of the institution, courses offered and their decision also got influenced by recommendation from others. However, for the exchange students the most important pull factor is the language used for teaching because they may have different preferences on the language. For full programme students in the previous research it was considered that the students fulfil certain qualification in English and they go to countries where English is the first language. The previous model does not treat language as one of the factors. Communication and cooperation is applicable for exchange students and was an influential factor from the study of this thesis. The exchange student seeks and desires cooperation and communication from the host institution and if they receive proper
feedback it acts as a pull factor. Such factors were not discussed in the previous study on full programme students.

It can be concluded that though both exchange and full programme students have similar factors influencing them but there are major differences as well which was presented through the model in this thesis.

Push-pull factors influencing student’s destination choice for study abroad
6 Conclusion

From the analysis in the previous section the authors concluded their own push-pull factors to fulfil the purpose which was to explore the push-pull factors influencing student’s destination choice for studying abroad on exchange. To achieve the purpose the authors derived three research questions and conducted focus groups and interviews on students.

The first research question was what are the motivational factors that encourage students to study abroad and go for exchange studies? From the findings it could be summarised that the most important factors which motivated students were the factors shown in the model presented by the authors in the previous section. The initial push was from the institution which promoted their exchange studies to students. Then the student’s personal interest in practising language skills, travelling and to have a scope for intercultural communication played roles in motivating as well. Further the student considered that the exchange study experience might add credentials to their Curriculum Vitae.

After being motivated by the push factors the students moved on to the next research question where they decided on which country or region to go for exchange. According to the findings, geographical location and weather had impact on student’s choice of countries relatively more. Another important factor which affected their selection was the cost of living and other expenses followed by the culture, economical and social position of the country. It was also observed in most cases that the recognition of the education system was also taken into account for decision making.

When deciding on the institution choices language used in studies was the main criteria for the students. The courses offered and the image of the school came next to language to attract the students. Communication and cooperation among the partner universities and between the institutions and students was an influential pull factor. At some instance recommendation by previous exchange students also seemed to play a role in decision making.

To conclude the authors of this thesis wanted to highlight the new factors that they came up with in the model for exchange student in comparison to the previous factors of Mazzarol for full-programme students. Basically the push factors for exchange student are not similar to those for full programme students as their motives are different. It is because the exchange students think of the study abroad for a short period of time of 6 months or a year, whereas the full programme students consider it for more than a year. Thus all the
push factors in the model which were formulated as a result in this thesis act as motivations for exchange students only. On the other hand, both exchange students and full programme students have all the pull factors in common with Mazzarols’ factors on deciding the country with a slight exception of the cost issue which functions in a different way between them. When it comes to the pull factors for selecting the institution, the language used for teaching and communication and cooperation are the factors which are unique to exchange students compared to Mazzarols’ factors. This is because the exchange students prioritize the language factors and communications as significant whereas these are not the main issues for the full programme students according to Mazzarol. The rest of the pull factors are common for both. Thus the authors believe that they contribute to the factors which are specialized for exchange students only.

7 End Discussion

In this section a discussion on the subject with the authors’ personal thoughts and opinions is written. There is also a part that reflects upon and suggests recommendations given for future research.

7.1 Discussion and Recommendation

Generally the students at the initial stage need the motivation to go on exchange studies abroad. The institution plays a vital role in providing relevant information and promoting it among a student which is the initial push. If the institution can promote the areas of intercultural skills and practicing language and travelling around in their message, it will be able to attract the students as these are influential factors. To choose the country, how an institution can use the country’s attractiveness on the students will help to pull the students come there. Hence, the school should promote the culture in its country such as provide a lot of traditional event, party, festival or games that might attract the students. The best thing to do is to get opinion from previous exchange students about what kind of things that the partner school did that attract the attention from most of students over there. Another approach can be to provide various language courses so it can weigh higher than other schools.

Increasing the number of courses offering and improve the quality of the courses as well as the teachers and staffs. The school should create a friendly and international environment; encourage students to interact with each other so that they can exchange the information from the school itself and other school as well. This way not only can push the students go on exchange but also pull new students come to their schools.

Provide more information on exchange programs which require better communication and cooperation between two universities is also one of the recommendations from the students. They should try to improve on designing website because the students found most information from there and they prefer the good design homepage that is easy to access and follow.
7.2 Managerial implications for JIBS

Now in specific, Jönköping International Business School was the focus of this study. The Swedish and the international exchange students gave feedback on several areas which they thought were strength and weaknesses of JIBS. The authors of this thesis also had recommendations on some points that could to be looked into and suggestions in light of their research on how to recover or improve in those limitations. As Swedish students are full programme students and had been studying here for long, they had more insights on how JIBS promotes its exchange studies compared to the international exchange students. From the findings it was clear that JIBS has strong marketing strategies to promote exchange programs for incoming and outgoing students. It must be taken into account that though there are some factors that need to be improved but these factors are not generisable and applicable to all courses or faculties in JIBS. It is true at some instances.

The factor mentioned by most students is that though the courses offered in English are not able to maintain a certain standard of the courses. Some exchange students described few of the courses as being not well designed in terms of the content and delivery of the subject. The method of having just one exam with usually no points given to attend lectures and seminars de-motivates the students to attend the lectures which are the main way of teaching and interaction. In some cases the lack of English language skills of the instructors made it difficult for the students to understand the subject. All these factors lead to deteriorate the quality over all for the courses and education received. In the long run this as a result affects the reputation and image of the school and has impact on the future exchange students. Word-of-mouth communication plays the role here where the exchange students returning to their home university recommend future students and fill out evaluation. One way to recover this issue is by promoting teachers and instructors who design and conduct the courses to go on exchange. This is what is called staff exchange program. It is presenting in JIBS but it should be promoted to the extent as student exchange programs are promoted. Teachers on exchange might learn different teaching methods and ways of interacting with the students which can make the process of teaching more enthusiastic for both. Practicing their language skills is also of equally importance. The course evaluation should be taken into account every semester and redesigned if necessary. Staff interaction in international context can also help in overcoming this weakness. An article on internationalisation in the literature review section shows an 11-dimension model for internationalisation which may guide institutions to internationalise.

A lack of integration between international students and Swedish students were highlighted as one of the deficiencies that JIBS could work on. The international students felt that the level of interaction among the Swedish and international students in their courses could be encouraged more. This could be done by having one-day workshops or projects to be conducted in groups of students where the teacher can make it mandatory to work in groups with students from mixed background of Swedish and international students.
Integration among the Swedish and international students will enhance the learning process of education and knowledge transfer.

Another issue highlighted by both exchange and Swedish students is that at time it gets difficult for them to reach the exchange coordinator when it is really necessary. As the number of students increases, it becomes increasingly difficult task for the coordinator as well. It is a managerial issue of the international office. A suggestion to overcome this situation maybe that there can be two exchange coordinators where one exchange coordinator can be in charge of incoming exchange students while the other of outgoing student and thus it is not a burden on one individual.

### 7.3 Further studies

Learning process is never ending and there is always scope of improvements through further research. This thesis attempted to explore and analyse the factors which the students take into consideration when they think of going on exchange. As the aim was to find out the factors which has impacts on students, a qualitative method was well suited for the purpose of this thesis. In the end the authors believe that the theories and information used provided a sufficient result. As it was based on samples from a single institution, the results cannot be generalised as the push-pull factors for all students. The authors suggest implying and exposing the factors in the models in a different setting and on different universities for further research. It can be studied with larger samples of students from diversified background. The model can also be researched quantitatively. A quantitative research conducting survey on a large number of students might validate the results found in this thesis to a further extent. Moreover, others can use another perspective such as management view to analyze the data. This way can help an institution apply its marketing strategies more effectively since not all influence and benefits from the consumers’ view can be used practically regarding to each school’s situation.
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Appendix

Interview questions

1. Which program are you studying in at JIBS?
2. How many semesters do you want to go or already went for exchange:
3. What are your motivational factors for going on exchange?
4. How did you get to know about exchange studies initially?
5. Is going on exchange studies promoted a lot at JIBS? If so what are the ways?
6. Is intercultural communication one of the factors?
7. Do you consider that your exchange studies add an additional value to your CV?
8. Is going on exchange encouraged by family, friends or previous exchange student?
9. Was travelling around one of the factors on deciding the country as well?
10. What are other factors excluding mentioned above do you think motivated you to study abroad?
11. How did you decide on which country to go on exchange?
12. Is geographical location of the country a factor as in Europe or America?
13. Is the weather and climate of the country considered?
14. Did the social, economical situation of the country affect your decision making?
15. Did you take into consideration of the living cost and other expenses?
16. Did the education system of the country influence your decision making?
17. Any factors additional to above which influenced your decision
18. What were the factors which influenced your decision when you chose a specific institution?
19. Was the language in which the education is delivered an important factor?
20. The image you perceived of the institution through website and seminar and information meeting influence your decision?
21. Were the courses offered in the institutions guide you decide which university you wanted?
22. Do you think the cooperation from the university of the host country and their coordinators influence the decision in some way?
23. Was the reputation of the university considered?
24. Any other additional factors for choosing the institution?