

A Study On The Scope Of International Expansion Of Home-Schooling Pertaining To South Africa, Malaysia And India

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Abstract:- I was part of a 5 week training program of “**Global Village for Future Leaders of Business and Industry**” conducted at the prestigious **Lehigh University**, Bethlehem Pennsylvania, U.S.A between 21st June and 5th Aug 2013. Representing India, I was one of the 105 delegates from 54 nations. This program centered on topics like Leadership and Entrepreneurship, Strategic Thinking and Innovation etc. facilitated by distinguished faculties from the University and certain Industry Experts. As a part of the program, we visited New York City, Philadelphia and Washington D.C and had an engaging interactive session with executives of World Bank, Pentagon, and U.S Department of Citizen Diplomacy, Thompson Reuters, NYSE, Nestle Waters, Sands Casino, Century 21 and Wall Street Walks. During those five weeks, we worked on a project for which we were divided in eleven groupshaving eight interns in each group. It was a real project with certain issues and the groups had to do their individual research (primary as well as secondary) and come up with recommendations and give a final presentation to the clients. The clients were the corporates pertaining to Retail, Textiles, Beverages, Education Institution, Service Industry, Tourism etc. I was associated with an Education Institution’s project considering my background as an academician with VIVA Group. Having worked day and night for two weeks with lots of hurdles and obstacles, finally we were ready with our final template. The major obstacle in this project was unavailability of data on web. We made lot of calls, emails and fax to people to get information and to seek authority to retrieve information from Government websites. I was fortunate to make the final presentation to the client. This project encouraged me to do further research on the scope and expansion of Home-Schooling. The research focuses on identifying three to five countries for the purpose of expansion of the International Diploma Program (IDP) to the foreign market. Those countries in which governmental policies recognize homeschooling as a valid form of education and already have a successful homeschooling culture are taken into consideration. The cultural context and the country’s connection to the United States are also taken into account. Appropriate marketing strategies for expansion are applied for each individual country.

I. INTRODUCTION

The research focuses on identifying three to five countries for the purpose of expansion of the International Diploma Program (IDP) to the foreign market and subsequently designing marketing strategies to create awareness about Home-Schooling. Those countries in which governmental policies recognize homeschooling as a valid form of education and already have a successful homeschooling culture are taken into consideration. The cultural context and the country’s connection to the United States are also taken into account since the concept of Home-Schooling was initiated and is now well established in the United States. The Home-Schooling has effectively revolutionized international education by offering a complete curriculum, live online classes and full support for each of its IDP locations. Its mission is to *equip students for a lifetime of service and excellence with challenging academics, purpose filled education, and the credentials to move forward after graduation*. Over the years it has helped more than 20,000 K-12 students with various academic abilities and special interest; worked directly with homeschool families and/or small private schools seeking an American education for their students. In Homeschool Academy the educational experience is customized. Students who graduate with a Home-Schooling diploma are able to access higher education in English speaking countries with much less difficulty. In addition, the students have the experience in an English speaking “classroom” and are therefore able to perform better once they enter the brick and mortar classrooms. One of the goals of homeschooling academies is to expand their services internationally.

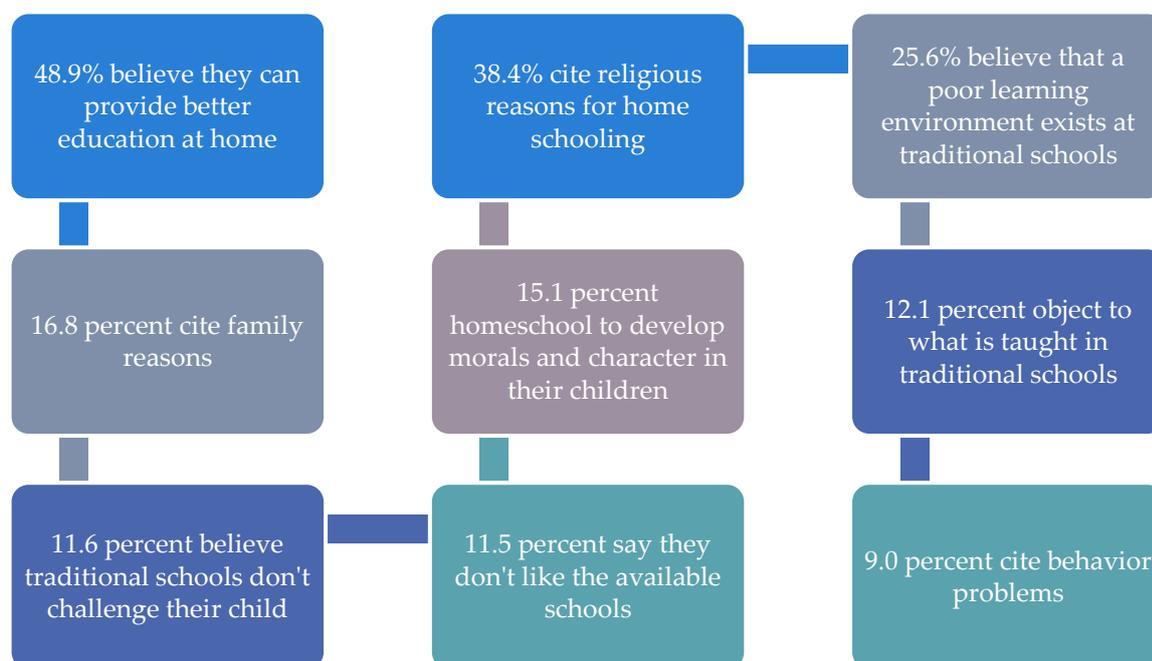
II. RESEARCH SCOPE

- Primary goal of this research is to identify the top three to five countries where acceptance of Home-Schooling is high in terms of political / governmental acceptance, legal acceptance, socio-economic acceptance, PPP of people is favorable, GDP is positive etc.
- Secondary goal of this research is to come up with various market strategies applicable to individual selected countries for expansion.

- The tertiary goal is to identify groups or entities that could be possible partners of the home-Schooling academies in their international expansion.

In order to locate potential target countries for the purpose of expanding the International Diploma Program to the foreign market social, economic and educational factors were included and divided into three steps.

In order to conduct research on scope of expansion of Home-Schooling in various countries, it is utmost important to first analyze why parents Home-School their children?



In order to locate potential target countries for the purpose of expanding the International Diploma Program to the foreign market, social, economic and educational factors were taken into consideration. In the first phase country research was conducted so as to identify potential target countries. Based on available research results, appropriate marketing research and strategies were applied. Finally, potential partner institutions were identified.

<http://www.sellintoschools.com/articles/education-marketing-school-channel-homeschool-market>

III. SELECTION OF POTENTIAL COUNTRY

Based on available information, out of the 196 world countries, the division was made into those countries which allow homeschooling as a legal means of providing education, and those which do not offer homeschooling as a part of the country's educational system.

Countries which allow homeschooling include United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Nigeria, Puerto Rico, Canada, Australia, New Zeland, Portugal, India, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Columbia, South Africa, South Korea, Venezuela, Bahamas, Columbia, Gambia, Dominican Republic and Malaysia.

During the research for these countries the following criteria's were considered:

- Whether the people in the target country typically seek out an American Diploma.
- Whether other education options are readily available (i.e. International Baccalaureate programs, free/governmentally subsidized programs already in place, etc.)

- If the country requires exit exams as a way for the student to prove what they have learned throughout high school, which might result in an increased interest in the home-schooling Diploma.
- If the country speaks English as a main language, which might diminish their regard for an American program.
- Whether there are cultural or governmental obstacles (i.e. a Christian education is looked down upon, homeschooling is not accepted or illegal)
- If the country has a mandatory term of military service for high school graduates, which might result in schools seeking for additional ways for their students to get into college or university
- Whether there are incentives to targeting a specific country (i.e. already speak English, trademark/patent process is relatively simple, government is encouraging American companies to establish business there, etc.)
- If the country's churches tend to operate a school on the premises, which might make the Home-Schooling program more appealing to them.

As a result five countries were selected which already have a well-established homeschooling structure or seem to be the most promising for the introduction of the International Diploma Program – South Africa, Belgium, Malaysia, India and Hong Kong. Out of the selection of these five, I am focusing my research on South Africa, India and Malaysia for now.

1. Present situation of Home-Schooling Market

Home-Schooling provides a customized education. In Home-Schooling environment religious and moral values are being promoted. It provides an American Diploma. Families and children with special needs for example: military families, athletes, artists etc., who are not able to attend school or are not able to manage their working and schooling together or children whose parents are in a uncertain transferable jobs are benefitted a lot. Parents select Home-Schooling to give their children better educational environment. Children would have better flexibility towards their civic and community engagements.

1.1 Present situation of Home-schooling in South Africa

Population	Economy	GDP	Language	Connection to the US	Geographical location	Religion
49,991,300	11, 440\$ /per capita	408.2 billion	<u>English</u> Afrikaans Ndebele Northern Sotho Sotho Swazi Tswana Tsonga Venda Xhosa Zulu	US embassy In Durban, Johannesburg and Cape town	Africa	Secular democracy with freedom of religion

Educational System

The Bill of Rights, contained in the Constitution, 1996 stipulates that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must progressively make available and accessible. The Annual National Assessment conducts nationwide testing of the students and rates the educational system of the country

In February 2011, more than six million primary school learners from grades one to six sat for the first ANA tests in Languages (home and first additional language) and Mathematics. The objective of the ANA is to establish a national benchmark by which the department will measure levels of Literacy and Numeracy in primary schools

Governmental Policies about Education

Home Schooling is legal by national law, but every province has some authority to control it. National Coalition of Home-Schoolers provides legal information to Home- Schools and independent schools has welcomed a decision that these schools are not bound by the national curriculum.

The home-Schooling environment in South Africa is highly competitive having its presence only in a few countries with lot of scope to expand in other regions. The Pestalozzi Trusts works between 4000 and 5000 Home-Schools in South Africa Pestalozzi Trust Legal Defence Fund for Home Education, Upper highway Home-School Group KZN (they are a group of Home-Schoolers who meet up weekly in the upper highway area as well as various outings and events through the year), Western Cape Home Schooling Association

There are anywhere between 100,000 and 150,000 home educating families in South Africa. This is almost a threefold increase from ten years ago, and it has caused the National Education Department to start a study on the real effects of Home-Schooling on children. Home-Schooled children can enter college or university throughout the usual entrance exams. National Coalition of Home-Schoolers provides legal information to home schools and independent schools has welcomed a decision that these schools are not bound by the national curriculum.

Agencies operating presently in South Africa

- Cape Home Educators
- Eastern Cape Home-Schooling Association
- Pestalozzi Trust
- Western Cape Home-Schooling Association (WCHSA)

1.2 Present situation of Home-schooling in Malaysia Education System

Population	Economy	GDP	Language	Connection to the US	Geographical location	Religion
28,860,000	\$12,243 /per capita 4.1% growth	\$340 billion	<u>English</u> Malay Chinese Arabic	US embassy in Kuala Lumpur	Asia	Islam Budhhism <u>Christianity</u>

Education in Malaysia is regulated by two government ministries. The ministry of Education (Kementerian Pelajaran) deals with matters regarding to pre-school, primary school, secondary school and post-secondary school. On the other hand, the Ministry of Higher Education (Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi) handles matters on tertiary education. Even though coordinating the education is the responsibility of the federal government, each region governs the educational regulations and policies of its territory. The majority of Malaysian students go to free public schools. However, there are also many private schools and home schools that focus on certain students with special capabilities and needs.

The Education Act of 1996 is referred as the major legislation regulating the education throughout Malaysia. According to this Act, the National Education System comprises of pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, post-secondary education, higher education. Pre-school education concentrates on pupils from ages 4 to 6 and supports kids to take their first step towards primary education which lasts 6 years. Children learn basic arithmetic, reading, writing, foreign language, physical education, science, Islamic/Christian and moral education. The next step, secondary education, includes lower and upper secondary levels and consists of grades from six to eleven (as they call it from 1 to 5). During their 5 years of studies, children take a number of core subjects on Science, Mathematics, Malay (Islamic studies), History and Geography. After secondary education, students go to post-secondary education, which basically involves studying either Form 6 or the matriculation(pre-university). However, all students have to apply to both Form 6 and the matriculation, and not all of them are accepted. After finishing Form 6 and successfully passing Malaysian Higher school certificate examination (which can be equal to an internationally recognized, British General Certificate of Education “A” Levels) the students can apply for international undergraduate programs while the graduates of the matriculation cannot, and they have the chance to apply only to Malaysian Universities.

There are a lot of people who do not trust public education and prefer to select Private and International Schools or Home-Schooling using English communication system. The drop-out rate for secondary schools was given as 9.3% in urban areas and 16.7% in rural areas.

Governmental Policies about Home-Schooling

Home-Schooling is legal in Malaysia. Home-Schooling has been in existence in Malaysia for a long time now. Almost 20 years ago, individual families were Home-Schooling their children secretly. However, the Home-Schooling movement really started to spread about ten years ago initially with the support of the Christian Churches. Today, Home-Schooling is growing among a variety of families of different races, caste and creed in Malaysia which includes the Buddhists, Muslim, The Hindus as well as the free-thinkers. However, parents who wish to Home-School are required to apply for school exemption from the ministry.

Based on the information gathered from Malaysian interns at Global Village, there are two types of Home-Schooling systems in Malaysia: Usual Home-School learning alone at home or Home-School gathering of about ten people at a center similar to a small size of usual school and using each customized curriculum provided by Home-School Company.

Potential Partners of Home-Schooling in Malaysia

The list of organizations below may not be a direct partner but they could provide some insightful approach and useful advice about home-schooling in Malaysia.

- Family Place
- Home Frontier
- Home School Malaysia
- Malaysian catholic Home-Schooling Network
- Teach Asia

1.3 Present situation of Home-Schooling in India.

Population	Economy	GDP	Language	Connection to the US	Geographical location	Religion
1.27 billion	Main industries textiles, chemicals, food processing, steel, transportation equipment, cement, mining, petroleum, machinery, software, pharmaceuticals	4.8%	Hindi, <u>English</u> , or State language	Major import and export partners	South Asia Indian subcontinent	Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism.

Home-Schooling is more prominent in major urban cities like Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Chennai, and Kolkata. The estimated number of Home-Schoolers has been put to 500-1000 children as per Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), a non-profit advocacy organization working for the education of children.

There are fixed rules to Home-Schooling in India if a candidate appears for an examination. Parents use a curriculum advised by NIOS or IGCSE and then appear for the examinations. Children can also take examination as a private candidate at a regular school.

Second way follows a liberal approach. Parents may design their own curriculum by referring to syllabi of different boards. It is up to the parents and their children to decide whether they want to register with a board and appear for the examination.

The Indian Education System is structured as follows:

- Pre School
- Private Playschools
- Kindergarten
- Primary School

- Middle School
- Secondary School
- Higher Secondary or Pre-University
- Undergraduate
- Post-Graduate

Promotion Strategy of Home-Schooling in India

1. Indian association of Home-Schoolers, known under the name Swashikshan, is a non-profit initiative of homeschooling children and parents. The members of this association include homeschoolers residing in India.
2. Home-Schooling forum <http://indiahomeschoolers.ning.com/>
3. Twitter of Home-Schooling in India <http://twitter.com/indiahomeschool/>
4. Facebook of Home-Schoolers, India <http://www.facebook.com/indiahomeschool/>
5. Home Schooling in India yahoo group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/alt-ed-india/>
6. Google group of India Home-Schoolers <http://groups.google.com/group/alt-learn-blr/about>

IV. POTENTIAL PARTNERS

All CBSE, ICSE, SSC, IGCSE schools can be potential partners. IGCSE is conducted by two boards: Cambridge International Examination (CIE) and Edexcel. The exams can be taken through an IGCSE school (as a private candidate) or at the British Council in Kolkata, which is the only CIE exam center in India.

National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) is a board of open school in India. It provides relevant continuing education at school stage, up to pre-degree level through open learning system. Home-Schoolers can directly use NIOS to take examination for class X and XII. They are only required to register with the body a year before they want to take the exam. Certificates issued by NIOS carry the same recognition as other Boards and are valid for taking competitive exams.

With the population of 1.24 billion people, India is a country known for having great investment opportunities in terms of education. Although India is still struggling to send all the children to school, especially in backward areas, Indian parents have always been very focused on education at all levels. Home-Schooling in India has a clear focus on various promotion strategies through Web (yahoo, Google, Twitter) and associations with Home-Schooling forums.

2.4 Analysis on the problems with Home-Schooling in South Africa, India and Malaysia and their causes

- One of the biggest concerns in the families of mentioned countries is that their children would not have the proper socialization process.
- It is also a concern the potential for development of religious or social extremism/individualism.
- Home-Schooling could also be affected by international competition (Home-Schooling vs. Public and Private Schools).
- One of the parents need to spend a great amount of time with their children, therefore they have to quit their jobs.
- Home-Schooling does not have much awareness in most countries.
- Inadequate focus on lower social class.
- It is inclined to having negative attitudes towards non-traditional styles of education.

1.4 The inadequacy of correct understanding of Home-Schooling.

The research indicates that the acceptance of Home-Schooling among the people of South Africa, India and Malaysia is largely dependent on those countries diplomatic, trade and educational relationship with the United States of America. It also indicates that Home-schooling is accepted where it is prominent and reflects it is legal. And also the countries that have adequate financial means for the Home-Schooling services (GDP, HDI, PPP). During our research we observed that in most of the countries people do not have positive attitude towards Home-Schooling.

1.5 The absence of proper marketing mix for expansion.

Market Segmentation: Targeting a segment of the market can be a powerful strategy. It is the concentration of marketing efforts to dominate a market niche. Market segmentation is the process of

identifying and targeting groups of individuals that similar to one another. Home-Schooling markets can be segmented in many different ways: By products or service needs, by sensitivity to price, by geographic area, by demographic segment or by psychographics and lifestyles. Therefore, the educational environment was first divided into the following segments:

- Countries that have good diplomatic, trade and educational relationships with the United States.
- Countries in which Home-Schooling is legal.
- Countries in which people have positive attitude towards Home-Schooling.

Target Market/Potential Countries: After segmenting the market based on the different groups and classes, target countries were chosen. Since the countries that have been chosen differ in terms of the educational system, and the schools offer some mandatory subjects, undifferentiated marketing cannot be used. Specific strategies should be developed for the target market.

Positioning of Home-Schooling: Positioning is developing a product and brand image in the minds of consumers. In addition, it might include improvement of the customers' perception about the experience they will have if they choose to purchase a product or service. The business can positively influence the perceptions of the chosen customer base through strategic promotional activities and by carefully defining the businesses marketing mix.

Economic and Financial Plan: Due to the lack of available data on homeschooling and school prices outside the United States, I am unable to develop an economic and financial plan at this point in time.

I adapted a pricing to that of our future competitors. While doing that I took into consideration the current economic conditions of the country that we were positioning our products into. Moreover, in order to save costs on promotion (especially in advertising), it is really important to establish collaboration with the regional partners, such as schools or organizations that have the sufficient experience and information about the homeschooling in certain areas.

2. Promoting Factors of Home-Schooling in South Africa, India and Malaysia

- Dissatisfaction with conventional system of education
- Flexibility
- Disability
- Mindset
- Less Stress
- Teacher-Student ratio
- Online Forums
- Better attention to specialization
- Enjoyment in education
- Safety

V. CONCLUSION AND PROPOSAL

- In the beginning stages of expansion of Home-Schooling academies should focus on social media and Home-Schooling educational forums. Registration on these websites would enable them to gain a wider audience among potential future Home-Schooling families.
- Make the proposition cost effective depending on the GDP of the country for long term survival, i.e. targeting upper-middle class and upper class in countries with a high GDP.
- There are legal bodies governing and protecting the legal right of home-school and of parents in different countries. I would recommend that Home-Schooling academies should establish a legal association or joining existing legal associations in the target countries.
- Additional recommendation would be to consider changing the organization structure, i.e. instead of focusing on home-schooling which offers an American diploma, these academies might want to adapt to each individual country's educational system and offer diplomas based on the target country's curriculum.

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