

Online Appendix: Survey Questionnaire

Li Chen*, Juan S. Pereyra†, Min Zhu‡

Note: The original Chinese version was administered to respondents, and the English translation is provided for reference.

Dear participant,

We are a research team from Beijing Normal University conducting a study on the college admission system. To better understand the application process in Inner Mongolia, we kindly ask you to spend about 10 minutes completing this questionnaire. Thank you for your participation!

All data collected will be used solely for research purposes. We strictly adhere to data regulations and ensure complete anonymity; your personal information will not be disclosed. Your responses will not affect your admission results in any way. If you have any questions regarding this survey or the research, please contact us at zhu@bnu.edu.cn.

Part 1: Basic Information

Q1. Your total Gaokao score: _____ points.

Q2. Which study track do you belong to:

- (a) Humanities/Social Science
- (b) Science
- (c) Other track

Q3. Your gender:

- (a) Female
- (b) Male

Q4. Are you from an ethnic minority?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

Q5. Your age: _____ years old.

Q6. Name of your high school: _____.

*Shanghai International College of Intellectual Property, Tongji University, China; Department of Economics, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. chen_li@tongji.edu.cn

†Department of Economics, Universidad de Montevideo, Uruguay. jspereyra@um.edu.uy

‡Corresponding author. Department of Economics, Beijing Normal University, China. zhu@bnu.edu.cn

Part 2: Application Preferences and Admission Results

Q7. Do you have a most preferred college and major?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

Q8. If you answered “Yes” to Q7, please list your preferred colleges and majors in descending order of preference. For each college, specify up to six majors and whether you would accept adjustment.

College name	Major 1	Major 2	Major 3	Major 4	Major 5	Major 6	Accept major change?
1st choice							
2nd choice							
3rd choice							
4th choice							
5th choice							
6th choice							
7th choice							
8th choice							
9th choice							
10th choice							

Are there more than 10 colleges that you would like to choose?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

Q9. Was the list of choices you provided in Q8 drawn up before the day of online application, or did you add new colleges/majors on the day of application?

- (a) The list was drawn up before the online application day.
- (b) I added new colleges/majors on the application day.

The reason was: _____.

Q10. Which college and major were you eventually admitted to?

College: _____ Major: _____

Q11. Are you satisfied with your final admission result?

- (a) Satisfied
- (b) Not satisfied

Part 3: Application Strategies

Please answer the following questions about your application strategy.

Q12. Did you have a strategy for submitting your application?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

Q13. If yes, what was your strategy? (Multiple answers allowed.)

- (a) Start with the most preferred college; whenever my rank falls outside the college's admission quota, move to the next choice, and proceed down the list in descending order until I can be admitted.
- (b) Select a college before 11:00, then before the application deadline, choose the best college my score can reach.
- (c) First apply to various colleges to learn information about my rank, then before the application deadline, choose the best college my score can reach.
- (d) No particular strategy; I chose any college to which I could be admitted.
- (e) Other strategy (please describe): _____.

Q14. From whom did you mainly receive advice on *how* to apply (i.e., application strategy advice, not recommendations on which colleges/majors to choose)?

- (a) School and teachers
- (b) Professional agencies
- (c) Students and parents who applied in previous years
- (d) Online sources (e.g., admission websites, Weibo, WeChat, Douyin, etc.)
- (e) I did not receive any advice
- (f) Other (please describe): _____.

Part 4: Application Behaviors

The following questions concern your actual application behaviors.

Please note: The following questions ask about revisions of your college choice, not revisions of majors. Any change of college in the system counts as one modification (e.g., switching from College A to College B and then back to College A counts as two modifications).

Q15. How many times did you revise your preferred college?

- (a) 0–5 times
- (b) 5–20 times
- (c) 20–50 times
- (d) 50–100 times
- (e) More than 100 times

Q16. What was the frequency of your revisions?

- (a) Similar frequency throughout the whole window
- (b) Most revisions occurred at the beginning of the application window
- (c) Most revisions occurred just before the deadline
- (d) Most revisions occurred at the beginning and just before the deadline, fewer in between

Q17. When did you usually revise your preferred college? (Multiple answers allowed.)

- (a) When my rank fell below the admission quota of the college
- (b) After hourly release of admission information

- (c) After the application deadline of the preceding score band, and before the deadline for my own score band
- (d) When others suggested revising

Q18. What were the reasons for revising your preferred college? (Multiple answers allowed.)

- (a) To obtain current information on the score ranking at a target college
- (b) My rank fell below the college's admission quota, so I had to choose another
- (c) I found a better choice becoming available
- (d) Other (please describe): _____.

Q19. How many times did you revise your application in the **last 1 hour** before the deadline? _____ times.

Q20. How many times did you revise your application in the **last 10 minutes** before the deadline? _____ times.

Q21. How many minutes before the deadline did you make your **last** revision? _____ minutes.

Q22. Which of the following best describes your application behavior just before the deadline?

- (a) I settled early on the best college I could reach and made no further revisions.
- (b) I kept refreshing the admission status of my target colleges and switched at the last moment to the most preferred college that my score could reach.
- (c) Worried that my rank might fall outside the admission quota at the last moment, I chose a safer college where admission was more secure.
- (d) None of the above (please describe): _____.

Q23. What information did you consider important when submitting your application? (Multiple answers allowed.)

- (a) Information on colleges' admission quotas
- (b) My real-time rank at the college/major, and the number of students with the same score
- (c) The hourly release of colleges' admission information
- (d) Other (please describe): _____.

Q24. Which admission batches did you plan to participate in?

- (a) Tier-1 Undergraduate Batch
- (b) Tier-1 Undergraduate Batch B
- (c) Tier-2 Undergraduate Batch

Part 5: Admission System

Q25. What is your view on the current system of staggered deadlines by score segments? (Single answer.)

- (a) It greatly reduces the possibility of being displaced from the selected college at the last moment.
- (b) It still leaves the possibility of being displaced from the selected college at the last moment.

(c) It makes it very likely to be displaced from the selected college at the last moment.

Q26. Do you think the current application window is long enough?

(a) Yes, because: _____

(b) No, because: _____

Q27. If the application deadline were extended by 10 minutes, do you think the admission outcomes would change?

(a) Yes, because: _____

(b) No, because: _____

Q28. In your view, are there any problems with the current application system?

Part 6: Other Information

Q29. Father's education level:

- (a) University or above
- (b) Junior college
- (c) Technical secondary school, vocational high school
- (d) Senior high school
- (e) Junior high school
- (f) More than 4 years of primary school
- (g) 1-3 years of primary school
- (h) Illiterate or semi-literate

Q30. Father's employer type:

- (a) Enterprise
- (b) Government agency
- (c) Public institution
- (d) Other

Q31. Father's occupation:

- (a) Private entrepreneur
- (b) Self-employed
- (c) Professional/technical personnel
- (d) Head of government or enterprise unit
- (e) Department head in government or enterprise
- (f) Clerical staff
- (g) Skilled worker

- (h) Unskilled worker
- (i) Commercial and service worker
- (j) Farmer
- (k) Other worker not classifiable
- (l) Homemaker or other non-laborer

Q32. Mother's education level:

- (a) University or above
- (b) Junior college
- (c) Technical secondary school, vocational high school
- (d) Senior high school
- (e) Junior high school
- (f) More than 4 years of primary school
- (g) 1-3 years of primary school
- (h) Illiterate or semi-literate

Q33. Mother's employer type:

- (a) Enterprise
- (b) Party/government agency
- (c) Public institution
- (d) Other

Q34. Mother's occupation:

- (a) Private entrepreneur
- (b) Self-employed
- (c) Professional/technical personnel
- (d) Head of government or enterprise unit
- (e) Department head in government or enterprise
- (f) Clerical staff
- (g) Skilled worker
- (h) Unskilled worker
- (i) Commercial and service worker
- (j) Farmer
- (k) Other worker not classifiable
- (l) Homemaker or other non-laborer