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# How Do Program Recruiters at One Ontario University Interpret the Internationalization Strategic Plan?

Jing Qu

*The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor

Dr. Augusto Riveros

*The University of Western Ontario*

Graduate Program in Education

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## **Abstract**

This study examines how program recruiters interpret a university's internationalization strategic plan in Ontario, and how they translate this policy initiative into Chinese international students' recruiting at the graduate level. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the processes related to the internationalization of higher education in Canada, this study explores recruitment as one key aspect of the university's internationalization efforts. A qualitative research approach was used in designing this study. The data was gathered from three Ontario universities' internationalization policy initiatives and semi-structured interviews with recruiters from a research-intensive university in Ontario. The findings demonstrate significant implications for internal and external recruitment networks and for the recruitment strategies in Canadian higher education.

## **Keywords**

Globalization, internationalization of higher education, recruiters, Chinese international students' recruiting, recruitment networks, recruitment strategies, recruitment challenges, international policy

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Canadian universities claim internationalization as a crucial aspiration in their strategic plans (Larsen, 2015). As a result, international students' recruiting is on the rise with the enactment of universities' internationalization policy initiatives. To recruit increasing numbers of international students, many higher education institutions (HEIs) in Canada are expanding the operation of their recruitment offices to reach out to international applicants.

Globalization has shortened distances and enhanced global links across borders (Rizvi & Lingard, 2000). In the field of education, "globalization" includes multiple international activities between different countries, especially in HE. Rizvi and Lingard (2000) refer to globalization as "both the intensity and the extent of international interactions" (p. 4) between countries. They argue that the major influence of globalization in education is evident at that level of policy.

In response to the forces of globalization, the internationalization of higher education is positioned as a key strategy in Canadian HEIs. Internationalization has been defined in many ways: Knight (2004) defines internationalization as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p.11). This definition resonates with the work of other Canadian scholars, such as Guo and Guo (2017) and Larsen (2015). Alternatively, Savage (2009) identifies internationalization of higher education as the way to prepare students with the international and intellectual knowledge, skills, abilities, as well as attitudes, necessary for living and working today and into the future.

One crucial consequence of the rapid growth of internationalization of higher education in Canadian post-secondary education is the increment in international student enrollment (Beck, 2012). One important motivation to recruit more international students is the revenue generated through the fees paid by these students. With declining investment from the Federal Government in HEIs, universities are taking the responsibility of finding new sources of funding in order to operate (Jones, 2009). Because the fees paid by international students are often viewed as a means of revenue generation, it could be argued that international recruitment is one method to address HEIs financial shortfall.

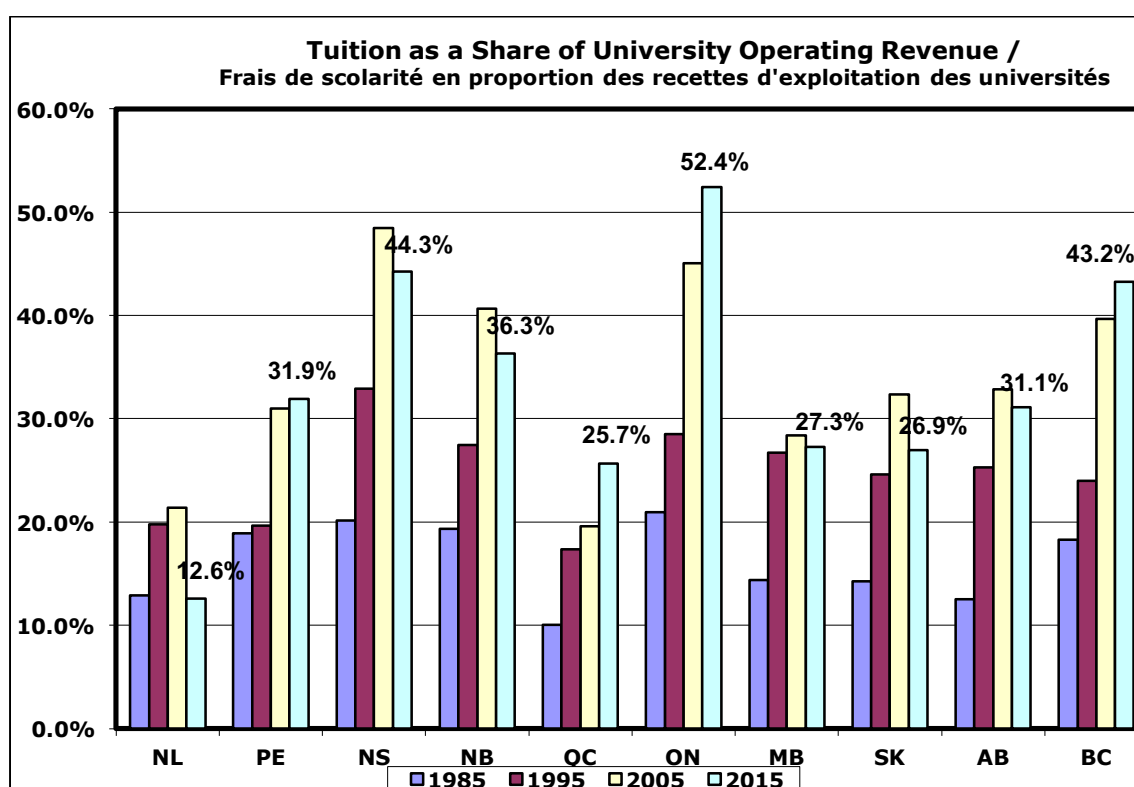


Figure 1. Tuition as a Share of University Operating Revenue

Source: [www.caut.ca](http://www.caut.ca)

<b>Tuition as a Percentage of University Operating Revenue /</b>					
<b>Frais de scolarité en proportion des recettes d'exploitation des universités</b>					
		<b>1985</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>NL</b>		12.9%	19.8%	21.4%	12.6%
<b>PE</b>		18.9%	19.6%	31.0%	31.9%
<b>NS</b>		20.1%	32.9%	48.4%	44.3%
<b>NB</b>		19.3%	27.5%	40.7%	36.3%
<b>QC</b>		10.1%	17.4%	19.6%	25.7%
<b>ON</b>		21.0%	28.5%	45.0%	52.4%
<b>MB</b>		14.4%	26.7%	28.4%	27.3%
<b>SK</b>		14.3%	24.6%	32.3%	26.9%
<b>AB</b>		12.5%	25.3%	32.8%	31.1%
<b>BC</b>		18.3%	24.0%	39.6%	43.2%
<i>Statistics Canada and CAUBO</i>					
<i>Statistique Canada et ACPAU</i>					
<b>Updated October 14, 2016 / Actualisé le 14 octobre 2016</b>					

*Figure 2. Tuition as Percentage of University Operating Revenue*

Source: [www.caut.ca](http://www.caut.ca)

Many countries have come to realize the great economic benefit that international students bring. Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy Final Report (2012, August) notes the immediate benefits of international education for Canada, which span economic growth, job creation, and increased exports and investment (Foreign Affairs Canada, 2012). These benefits include not only educational expenses, like high tuition fees and textbooks that international students pay for, but also the expenses beyond academics, such as housing, transportation, tourism and other living expenses.

High spending of international students in Canada contributes to Canadian economic growth: international students' tuition, accommodation, discretionary and additional tourism expenditures constitute important sources of federal and provincial

revenue (Foreign Affairs Canada, 2012). Statistics Canada (2005) notes that the average tuition fees that international students pay in Canadian post-secondary education institutions are almost three times that compared with the domestic students. Yu and Li (2016) mention that some parents in the home countries have to pay for the students' credit card bills and some other expenses due to policies that prevent international students from seeking jobs outside of the campus during their studies.

North (2010) notes that in order to promote economic growth in higher education, universities in the U.S. have implemented numerous strategies to recruit international students. Kishikovsky (2010) points out that, in addition to the U.S, many other countries including Australia, Canada, Russia and China have opened their education market to attract more foreign students. Chakma (2018, February 8th) called for the Ontario government to aggressively commit to increase the number of international students by 50 per cent, while maintaining the space for qualified domestic students.

There is a trend of international students pursuing overseas study at graduate and undergraduate level, especially students from China (Humphries, Rauh & McDine, 2013). The number of Chinese students constituting the majority among East Asian students studying abroad (Larsen, 2016). Lu and Zong (2016) argue that Chinese students' mobility to Canada has risen faster in the twenty-first century. China has been the top source country of international students to Canada since 2001 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014). This large involvement suggests that Chinese students are important to the success of internationalization strategies of Canadian HEIs.

The internationalization of higher education is evident in how universities internationalization strategic plans are designed and put in practice. One focus area of these plans is international students' recruitment (Mundy & Zha, 2012). Bodycott (2009)

argues that China has already become the largest source country of output international students globally, and remains a dominant place for recruiting international students (Brooks & Waters, 2013). Asian students, particularly Chinese students, have been targeted by many internationalization plans (Palmer, 2011). Anderson, (2015) notes that China remains the largest international students' output at graduate level in Canadian post-secondary education. In fact, there were 42,154 Chinese international students studying in Canada in 2008 (CIC, 2009). With the growth of Chinese international students' enrollment in Canadian universities, understanding how universities enact international recruitment strategies is of great importance.

During the international recruiting process, faculty program recruiters act as the representatives of the university and become speakers for specific programs. In most cases, recruiters are the first and direct contact with international applicants. Even though recruiters are an important part of the universities' internationalization process in Canadian post-secondary education, researchers have largely overlooked their role in the internationalization agenda.

### **My Positionality**

To investigate this research gap, being reflexive and focused is important to a researcher (Rawolle & Lingard, 2015). In order to accomplish a reflective stance, it is important for researchers to position themselves in relation to their object of study. Positionality is defined by Rawolle and Lingard (2015) as "position within various fields, encompassing the field of the object of research and the academic field(s) in which the research is positioned" (p. 18). Rizvi and Lingard (2010) also relates positionality to the actual location of the policy researcher in respect of the focus of analysis. The second

meaning of positionality links to theoretical and political stance adopted by a policy researcher (Rizvi & Lingard, p. 46).

In this research, I position myself as a young Chinese female educator who aspires to be an education policy researcher. I am an international student who came to study in a Canadian higher education institution for two years. My experience as an international student coming to Canada motivated my interest in exploring international students' recruiting processes in Canadian higher education.

When I pursued education in Canada, and while being a Peer Guide volunteer for international students at the International and Exchange Student Centre, I noticed how universities provide multiple resources and support to international students. I also realized that it is still hard for a newcomer who lives far away from home and family to adapt to challenges and to feel welcome in a completely new culture and environment. My experiences as an international applicant and student motivated me to explore how universities use different resources and networks in the international recruiting process.

Additionally, I used to work at a large English training school / overseas education consulting company in China. My responsibility was teaching reading, speaking and listening for undergraduate students to help them prepare for the IELTS (International Language Test System). I gained extensive experience working with private education agents and several third-party agencies in China. As an international student, I know about the difficult and complex application process to enroll in Canadian higher education institutions. I was also familiar with the strategies that agents used to engage with my students/their clients in assisting them to complete the overseas application. After seeing the increasing involvement of agents in the universities recruiting process, I became interested in exploring how recruiters in Canadian higher education institutions develop



their recruitment strategies for international students' recruiting. What drove me to conduct this research was my curiosity about the guiding policy initiatives from the institutions, how the recruiters incorporated these policies into their recruiting practices, and how recruiters' jobs aligned with the universities policy initiatives.

I have a cross-cultural educational background. I did my undergraduate degree in China and I was an exchange student at National Changhua University of Education in Taiwan while I was doing my first Master's degree in Interpreting and Translation. I have travelled to many countries, such as Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and South Korea, which helps me gain more experience in a diverse environment. I know the importance of having a cross-cultural experience and I believe I benefited greatly from my international experience during my studies. I am interested in learning more about other aspects that recruiters are looking for when seeking a successful candidate for recruitment as I aspire to become a program recruiter in the future.

### **Research Questions**

This research focuses on how program recruiters interpret the internationalization strategic plan in one Ontario university and how these recruiters translate this policy initiative into their recruitment of Chinese international graduate students. In this study, recruiters are regarded as one of the many groups and individuals (e.g. Presidents, Provosts and Vice-Provosts, Deans, Associate Deans, etc.) who interpret the university's internationalization strategic plan. Based on this key assumption, it could be argued that the recruiters' job is prominent and influential because they are interpreting and enacting the university's internationalization policy initiatives. Thus, to gain a deeper understanding of the process of internationalization of higher education in one university

in Canada, this study will explore how program recruiters understand the internationalization strategy in a selected post-secondary institution in Ontario. The following questions will guide this research:

1. How do program recruiters at one Ontario University interpret the internationalization strategic plan?
2. How do program recruiters translate this university's internationalization strategic plan into their recruiting practices?
3. What vision(s) of internationalization are manifest in the recruiting perceptions and practices of the recruiters in one Ontario University?

To provide additional context in addressing the main questions, the following sub-question further guide this research:

- 1). How do the job responsibilities of program recruiters align with the University's internationalization strategy?
- 2) What other actors and organizations are involved in the program recruiters' recruiting practice?

The guiding research questions note that recruiters are an important part of the universities' internationalization process in Canadian post-secondary education and that their role in the internationalization agenda has been largely overlooked. There is an increasing trend of overseas international students' recruitment (Mundy & Zha, 2012). Limited research has been done to analyze how the recruitment strategies respond to the universities' internationalization strategic plans and, specifically, how program recruiters interpret these plans to recruit Chinese international graduate students. In other words, how program recruiters understand the university's internationalization strategies in the practice of recruiting Chinese international students has been largely overlooked.

While there is some emerging research related to the recruitment of Chinese international students, there is a lack of studies in the Canadian context. For example,

Ross, Grace and Shao (2013) address this issue in Australia, while Falcone (2017) focuses on Chinese international students' recruitment trends and challenges in US higher education. Huang, Raimo and Humfrey (2016) address the expansion of Chinese international students' recruitment and they investigate the relationship between recruiting agents, such as private educational agencies, and universities in UK higher education. In Canada, a lot of attention has been paid to Chinese international students' experiences and how they interpret internationalization when they pursue higher education in Canada (Guo & Guo, 2017); however, there is minimal academic research that investigates the practice of recruiting Chinese students. Some Canadian researchers (Trakman, 2009; Beck, 2012; Teichler, 2013; Larsen, 2015; Larsen & Al-Haque, 2016) have examined how internationalization policy initiatives are enacted in HEIs, but their critique focuses on how internationalization strategic plans are geared towards responding to the lack of government funding, concluding that the recruitment of international students is a form of revenue generation.

This research will investigate the program recruiters' interpretation of the university's internationalization strategic plan, to analyze how they translate this strategy into their recruiting practices. By examining how selected actors in universities interpret internationalization initiatives, we will be able to recognize how Ontario universities promote internationalization strategies via recruitment and how recruiters contribute to the internationalization process. This knowledge provides important insights to improve recruitment strategies in Canadian universities and to better align internationalization policy and practice.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of literature on student mobility and the recruitment of international students paying special attention to the recruitment of Chinese students, including the role of agencies in international recruitment in China. As important actors in Canadian post-secondary institutions, recruiters' work is largely underestimated. There is limited research related to how university recruiters are recruiting international students and what strategies are adopted in the recruitment of Chinese students in Canadian higher education. This chapter aims to provide some context to understand this issue.

The literature review begins with an overview of student mobility and its relation with processes of internationalization of higher education. As an essential part of achieving internationalization in higher education institutions, international student recruitment is a central component of internationalization strategies. The motivations to recruit international students vary in different contexts, and it include different challenges in the overseas recruitment practices of higher education institutions.

Internationalization includes various forms of student mobility, international students' recruitment, the hiring of international faculty and many other initiatives and approaches (Jones, 2009). Internationalization of higher education has become a significant Canadian feature (Beck, 2012). As reported by previous studies, Canada has gained popularity over other countries for Chinese international students to pursue post-secondary education (Li, DiPetta, & Woloshyn, 2012; Li & Tierney, 2013). How to improve the current recruitment strategy in attracting more prospective international students come to Canadian universities remains a contentious topic. As important actors

in higher education institutions, there is little research examining how program recruiters interpret internationalization policy initiatives, including internationalization strategic plans in Canadian higher education. This literature then focuses on recruitment of international students in different contexts, particularly on the recruitment of Chinese international students. The last section reviews research on the involvement of education agents/agencies in international recruitment for higher education institutions, a phenomenon that is highlighted in key academic studies on this area (Hagedorn & Zhang, 2011; Zhang & Hagedorn, 2014).

### **Student Mobility**

Today, an unprecedented number of international students are studying at Western universities (Xu, 2008) as overseas higher education has gained popularity around the world (Liu, Hung, & Chung, 2013). The major student-receiving countries are the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK (Ong, 1999; Butch 2004; Collins, 2006; Waters, 2008). The U.S., the UK and Australia are top three destination countries of students from China (UNESCO, 2018). According to the statistics provided by UNESCO (2018), the total number of mobile students abroad is 847,259; and there are 291,063 Chinese students coming to the U.S.; 112,329 to Australia; and 91,518 to the UK. Canada lists the fifth of the destination country, consists of 60,936 students from China.

The majority of international students in the West come from Asia, mainly from East Asia. Among which, China has demonstrated a disproportionately important role in global student mobility and remains the top sending country in Canadian universities (Lu & Zong, 2016).

Challenges and pressures faced by Canadian universities, such as the need to reconcile tighter budgets while maintaining the quality of teaching and improved facilities and resources, have made some Canadian universities consider the recruitment of international students as a form of revenue generation (Trackman, 2009). The influencing factors for international student recruitment in higher education include, provincial government policies, institutional leadership, university traditions and organizational structure, financial status, the capacity of an institution, and the provincial higher education system in Canada (Wang, 2008; Teichler, 2009).

To address their fiscal crisis (Jones, 2009), many universities in Ontario have included internationalization in their strategic plans in response to the lack of government funding. For instance, Queen's University's strategic framework year-two implementation report (Queen's University, 2017), describes the University's response to the lack of funding by promoting revenue generation from the recruitment of international students. In this case, Queen's University's internationalization strategic plan could be seen as a response to the lack of government funding in higher education.

Li and Tierney (2013) argue that Ontario universities have international programs that specifically focus on the recruitment of international students, especially Chinese students at the graduate level. According to Li and Tierney (2013) and Waters (2006) the reasons why Chinese students decide to pursue a Master degree in Canada, are based on three primary factors, namely the safety conditions in the destination country, the global university rankings of the destination university combined with the overall education quality of the destination country, and the students' expected annual expenditure (Li & Tierney, 2013).

The UK and Australia are the countries with the highest proportion of international students (Robertson, 2010). These countries have been more aggressive in recruiting Chinese students and the admissions in these countries is more accessible, however, some studies have reported that Canada had a good international reputation in terms of the quality of their educational system (Li, DiPetta, & Woloshyn, 2012; Li & Tierney, 2013). Being a developed English-speaking country, with a less expensive, safer environment, Canada has become a popular destination for overseas study among international students from China, India, Saudi Arabia and Thailand (Li, DiPetta, & Woloshyn, 2012; Li & Tierney, 2013).

The federal government in Canada is also interested in recruiting more Chinese students, as exemplified by the participation of the Canadian Embassy in Beijing and its consulates in Shanghai, Chongqing, and Guangzhou in the most significant international education exhibition in China in October 2011 (Fairlink Exhibition Services Ltd., 2011; Li, DiPetta & Woloshyn, 2012).

### **Recruitment of International Students in Higher Education**

Since overseas higher education has gained popularity around the world (Liu, Hung, & Chung, 2013), the motivations to recruit international students in higher education institutions (HEIs) vary in different contexts. According to Galway (2000), to generate revenue, to bring different perspectives to the national student body, and to foster international trade links have become the top three reasons for HEIs to recruit international students (Ross, Heaney, & Cooper, 2007; Ross, Grace & Shao, 2013; Legusov, 2017). “In financial terms, most governments are under pressure to reduce the

growth of public spending on education and to find other sources of funding for the expected expansion of their educational systems” (Brooks & Waters, 2013, p. 22).

As the post-secondary sector face financial constraints, both universities and colleges are moving aggressively to recruit international students onto their campuses and programs (Brooks & Wasters, 2013; Beck, 2012; Long 2010). However, with the growing number of international students attending college in the U.S. (Newcomb, 2017), the increasing number of international students studying abroad brings countless opportunities and challenges for both students and post-secondary institutions (Choudaha, Chang, & Schulmann, 2013). Many U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) face a hurdle when recruiting internationally: due to a lack of relevant data with which to formulate recruitment strategies, HEIs in the U.S often rely on ‘hunches’ and prior experience as a replacement for evidence in designing their recruitment initiatives (Choudaha, Chang, & Schulmann, 2013).

Facing a competitive environment, many universities are seeking new approaches to attract prospective students through educational fairs, alumni clubs, newsletters, emails, and magazines advertisement and other printed literature (Stedman, 2000). The Internet is the most widely used tool by university admission offices to disseminate academic programs and application information to prospective international applicants (Gray, Fam & Llanes, 2003; Mentz & Whiteside, 2003). International office recruiters have used social media, commercial websites and university websites as their recruiting strategies to attract international students to their respective countries (Robison, 2007; Choudaha, Chang, & Schulmann, 2013; Yakaboski & Rizzolo, 2017).

Choudaha, Chang, & Schulmann, (2013, p.13) recommend three strategies for recruiting prospective master’s students,



1. Provide more opportunities to communicate directly with admissions officers through virtual channels.
2. Highlight program differences, reputation, and post-graduation career opportunities in your marketing material.
3. Connect prospective students with current students and alumni through online forums and social media to emphasize program strength and career opportunities.

Additionally, many English-speaking destination countries such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom have engaged third-party education agents to recruit international students, and this has become a common practice (Gray, Fam & Llanes, 2003; Mentz & Whiteside, 2003; Choudaha, Chang, & Schulmann, 2013; Hagedorn & Zhang, 2013). However, historically, recruitment practice with third-party agents has been viewed as a symbol of weak recruitment practice and a sign of a poorly prepared recruitment team (McKown, 2009).

### **Recruitment of Chinese Students**

China, as a significant new player in the world economy, has already become the most abundant source country of international students globally, remaining a dominant place for recruiting international students (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Bodycott, 2009). As the most prominent student-exporting country, 339,700 Chinese students went abroad in 2011, by 2016, 544,500 Chinese students went abroad (ICEF Monitor, 2018). In total, 5,194,900 Chinese students have studied abroad over the last 40 years, and 1,454,100 students are currently enrolled in overseas higher education institutions (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2018).

In relation to the recruitment of Chinese graduate students, Choudaha, Chang, and Schulmann (2013) note the importance of the use of social media and technologies. They suggest three strategies: first, the use Chinese social media platforms to address the issue of limited accessibility; second, to engage prospective students with current or alumni students in online discussion forums, and third, to highlight the quality of programs and future job prospects. Yakaboski and Rizzolo (2017) provide a list of the current strategies used for recruiting Chinese students to the United States. The actions include: providing a simplified and accurate text in Chinese language on a separate international site for Chinese students; making the website more user-friendly; making it easier to complete the international applications at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; using Chinese-language marketing materials and business cards for faculty and staff who travel to China on institutional business, and using Chinese communication platforms/Apps to communicate with prospective students, such as WeChat. Ultimately, these strategies worked to increase the program-level faculty face-to-face connections to recruit prospective Chinese students.

Increasing competition with the United States and the lack of effective communication channels is challenging the international recruitment in the Canadian context (Wang, 2009). Most recruitment offices in universities insist on an “everything in English” practice. Wang noted that for students and parents not proficient in English, having recruitment officers that can communicate in the local language does not undermine the features of an English-speaking university, but instead, contributes to building a trusting relationship (Wang, 2009).

Knowing what international students want, and having knowledge of the competitive environment, can benefit international recruitment practices (Ross, Grace, &

Shao, 2013). However, and more importantly, institutional recruitment strategies should be backed by sound research; it also requires the cooperation of various departments/faculties, quick responses from the admissions office, timely housing information from the residence office, and a commitment from students' services to enhance international students' on-campus experiences (Wang, 2009; Choudaha, Chang, & Schulmann, 2013).

### **Agencies and Recruitment**

The increasing number of Chinese students studying abroad has given rise to a booming business in international education, namely, third-party education procurement agents/agencies (Hagedorn & Zhang, 2011). According to the list provided by the Ministry of Education of China, as of January 2011, there were approximately 400 registered educational procurement agencies in mainland China (The Ministry of Education of China, 2018).

For many Chinese applicants, it is very common to receive assistance from agents or consultants during the application process to Western universities. Zhang and Hagedorn (2014) note that education agents/consultants and agencies are paid by students to assist them in completing the overseas universities applications. These intermediaries help in counseling students on the selection of a university, completing the entrance applications, as well as the visa application. Also, some agents are, at the same time, hired by host foreign institutions to recruit Chinese students (Altbach, 2015). In the United States, collaboration with education agents is a vital marketing tool to promote international students' recruitment and partnership, particularly in China (Zhang & Hagedorn, 2014).

Agents are often hired to assist students in finding suitable international institutions fitting their academic goals at undergraduate and graduate level by charging services fees in China. These agencies may also receive a commission from overseas universities with whom the agent has an agreement (Hagedorn & Zhang, 2011; Zhang, 2011; Zhang & Hagedorn, 2014; Coffey, 2013; Altbach, 2015; Legusov, 2017). Agents play a crucial role for students who have no overseas experiences and have low English proficiency level (Hagedorn & Zhang, 2011). Agencies and can help prospective students with language test training (IELTS, TOEFL, GMAT) and cultural practices (Raimo et al., 2014). Those education agents can provide a full range of services to students including application/admission guidance and program selection consultation. The literature on this topic notes that prospective graduate students like to work with education agents (Yu, 2016) because of the variety of services that they provide. Including: health insurance, travel insurance, visa processing, airport pick-up, language training, accommodation, application guidance, mobile phones, currency exchange, school visits, career counselling, referral to institutions, and local job placement (Observatory Report, 2014, p. 18).

Sarkar and Perényi (2017) explored the role of education agents in the internationalization of higher education in Australia. They found that recruitment agents, as information sources to international students, exercise strong influences not only toward students but also toward university recruiters. In their study, they point out that education agents play a key role in the university's internationalization process. By identifying four themes: Market Knowledge, Network Facilitators, Financial Interest, and Reliance and Trust factors, they concluded that education agents can always guide the international office staff in marketing and business development based on their

connections in the market; however, the universities' overreliance in the work of agents may limit the scope of recruitment to the agent's networks.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Theoretical Framework**

For the purpose of this study, I draw on Rawolle and Lingard (2013)'s interpretation of Bourdieu (1972)'s primary 'thinking tools, namely, practice, habitus, capitals and fields (Wacquant, 1989) to address my research questions. Rawolle and Lingard (2008) conclude that Bourdieu (1999)'s concepts provide thinking tools for researching and understanding of education policy, thus, my research adopts the notions of practice, habitus, capitals, and fields as suitable analytical tools to examine how program recruiters interpret the internationalization strategic plan in an Ontario university and translate their understandings to overseas recruiting practices, particularly, how they use these interpretations to recruit Chinese international students at the graduate level.

Internationalization has become increasingly important in the higher education sector. It frames activities such as curricular reform, student/faculty exchange, technical assistance, and the recruitment of international students. To contextualize this chapter, I will begin with a brief introduction to the notions of globalization and internationalization of higher education. The second section presents a brief introduction to Bourdieu (1972)'s 'thinking tools', namely, practice, habitus, capitals, and fields. In addition, I will explain how Bourdieu's 'thinking tools address the research questions.

### **Globalization and Internationalization of Higher Education**

Internationalization and globalization are different concepts but intertwined and confused with each other (Carnoy, 1998; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Spring, 2015). Knight (2008) defines internationalization as "the process of integrating an international,

intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education" (p. 6). My review of the literature, revealed that many scholars accept this definition (Guo & Guo, 2017; Stier, 2004; Chan, 2004; Zha, 2003; Larsen, 2015; Shubert, Jones & Trilokekar, 2009).

Globalization can be manifested in different ways, namely, economic, political, and cultural (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014). Altbach and Knight (2007) identified globalization as "the economic, political and societal forces pushing 21<sup>st</sup> century higher education toward greater international involvement" (p. 290). Alternatively, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) suggest that globalization not only refers to transnational economic activities but also to the ways that major advances in information technologies reshaped cultural and political configurations within and across national spaces.

Regarding developments in technology, communication and information, globalization is manifested in the cross-national flow of knowledge, ideas, and competencies (Rizvi, 2000). Further, globalization is having a significant impact on education (Carnoy, 1998). One aspect of globalization, relevant to this study, is the increasing mobility of students (Butcher, 2004). Indeed, internationalization involves more multilevel cultural and academic activities (Adey, 2009; Holdsworth, 2009; Finn, 2017), which stimulates students' mobility. Student mobility is generally understood as "the semi-permanent move associated with leaving home and migration over distance rather than mobility and everyday-life" (Finn, 2017, p. 743), despite the fact that students are 'constantly on the move' in many different ways (Holdsworth, 2009, p. 1849).

Globalization is the context of the economic and academic trends, while internationalization includes the policies and practices undertaken by educational systems and institutions. Internationalization of higher education is an outcome and an expansion

of institutional responses to the process of globalization (Knight, 2013).

Internationalization of higher education is considered as an inevitable trend for countries in a globalized world (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Spring, 2015).

There is an increasing expectation that universities will take steps to incorporate internationalization in their work (Jones, Shubert, & Trilokekar, 2009). One of the motivations for internationalization is the commercial advantage (Altbach & Knight, 2007); in New Zealand, in particular, international education has been a source of considerable revenue to the higher education sector. One important factor is the payment of international fees by students, their families or their governments for a range of different educational services (Collins, 2006).

### **Bourdieu's Thinking Tools and Policy Analysis**

According to Rawolle and Lingard (2008), Bourdieu's 'thinking tools,' namely, practice, habitus, capitals, and fields can be applied to education policy studies. They argue that Bourdieu's tools are of significance for understanding education research globally and nationally (Rawolle & Lingard, 2013, 2015). These conceptual tools are useful to explain "the context of policy text production occurring within the policy field with its logic of practice" (Rawolle & Lingard, 2013, p. 21). In this research, the core question is how program recruiters interpret the meaning of the university's internationalization policy initiatives and how they translate these meanings into their recruiting practice. As I will demonstrate in the following sections, practice, habitus, capitals, and fields are important conceptual tools for analyzing program recruiters'



actions, in terms of how they enact their interpretations to the recruitment of students and how they adjust recruiting strategies in different contexts.

### **Practice**

Practice is social life's core element. Within practice, Rawolle and Lingard (2013) explain, Bourdieu (1997) saw the patterned development and flow of social energy, associated with patterns of meanings, and a reinforcement of the selections of those meanings in social processes. Practice is the carrying out of an activity and the normalization of a process, for instance, when a series of activities are structured as a pattern over time and space, they could be nominalized as a practice. A practice is circumscribed by shorter cycles of times that give it its structure, limits, and meaning. For Bourdieu, practices are public and relational (Rawolle & Lingard, 2008; English & Bolton, 2016).

Canadian universities are embedding internationalization policies into their missions, to the extent that most universities have implemented internationalization to their strategic plans, such as the University of Ottawa (n.d.), Queen's University (2016), and Western University (2014). There are two key concepts in these documents: *internationalization* and *international strategy*, which motivates this research on how recruiters make sense of the internationalization strategic plan and then translate their understandings to overseas recruitment practice. The concept of practice is fundamental to understand how the recruiters give meaning to the internationalization initiative through patterned interactions and activities that may or may not align well with the policy texts.

## **Habitus**

Habitus as a concept expresses the way in which individuals develop their attitudes and dispositions to "become themselves," and the ways in which those individuals engage in their practices (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). Bourdieu (1977) has tried to understand and explain the relationship between people's practices and the contexts that stimulate those practices (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). Habitus is required as a prior condition for producing and consuming practice. It can be understood as "the values and dispositions gained from our cultural history that generally stay with us across contexts" (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002, p. 36), these values and dispositions bound us to respond to cultural rules and contexts in particular ways, but the responses are largely determined by where and who we have been in a culture.

Bourdieu (1990a) argues that habitus is manifested in our knowledge, attitudes, values and behaviors. This is because rules, regulations, values, and capitals can characterize the agents' activity in the field. In order for a particular habitus to function smoothly and effectively, individuals must think all the possibilities from the specific sociocultural conditions and their historical context (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). For instance, when recruiters go to China to recruit students, they have to adapt themselves to the Chinese context to better understand the cultural habitus in China, so they can engage in effective recruiting strategies. Being aware of the different rules, regulations and cultural differences in their overseas recruitment help recruiters develop effectively and smoothly overseas recruiting practices.

Rawolle and Lingard (2013) argue that "habitus is required as a prior condition for producing practice" (p. 123). When applying this notion to the field of education policy, they argue that a shared habitus is "constituted as a reflection of and a contribution

to the global field of education policy and its logic of practice” (Lingard, Sellar, & Baroutsis, 2015 p.26). In relation to the rapid changes in education policy, particularly in the field of internationalization, the habitus becomes the basis for the actors’ making sense of their practice. As noted, Rawolle and Lingard (2013) identify practice as an important element to explain connections of the logic, flow and practical activities in social life. In terms of the research problem in this study, the concept of habitus helps illuminate our understanding of the strategies that program recruiters use in their recruiting practice, and particularly, how their habitus informs their recruiting practice in China. As recruiters move through and across different countries to recruit students, their recruiting strategies are formed and developed by habitus: which is manifested in their knowledge and their awareness of the culture. However, their habitus is not permanent; it may change or adjust in response to the context, because a particular habitus function in one context may not fit for another.

### **Capitals**

From Bourdieu’s perspective, each social field provides a way of accumulating and distributing field-specific forms of capital, such as social capital and cultural capital (Rawolle & Lingard, 2008). Bourdieu defined ‘capitals’ (e.g., social, cultural, economic, political, symbolic, national) as the specific resources accumulated by social actors. Capitals are instrumental in the constitution of hierarchies within fields. In this study, capitals refer to program recruiters’ capitals in terms of how they access to the market and make connections. The notion of capital is used to make sense of the social and cultural connections that program recruiters make with other agents and agencies in China during their recruiting practice.

Bourdieu argues that each distinct field provides a different form of capital within it. Field-specific capitals could be described as social capital, cultural capital, economic capital, and symbolic capital (Rawolle & Lingard, 2013). These are specific resources that actors have to gain advantages particular circumstances in specific fields. As actors move between fields, capitals could be strategically transformed to fit different goals, for example, when financial capital is converted through tuition and fees into cultural capital in the form of academic knowledge and qualifications, which contributes to mobility within the social field. As a component of cultural capital, educational or academic capital (Bourdieu, 1984) is a useful construct to identify the specific resources that actors obtain through their participation in educational fields. The idea of educational capital and the broader idea of cultural capital are used in this study to understand how recruiters' educational and professional backgrounds inform their recruiting practices.

Brooks and Waters (2013) argue that in the context of globalization, international education is geographically uneven and far from global, either in scope or reach. Social capital provides access to recruitment networks; however, recruiters' practice may vary in different countries, where different networks may be available to them. The notion of capital shows that recruitment practice is not simply related to institutional policy frameworks, but also relates to the constitution of social space and the practices allowed within this space. An important component of the recruiters' social space is networking. Networking is about sharing resources and connections with other people; it is an extension of social space. In this study, the notion of networking is useful to make sense of how recruiters use social and cultural connections to access the students outside of Canada. The analysis aims to show how recruiters use their social and cultural networks to collaborate with different actors in overseas recruitment practice.

## **Fields**

Fields, according to Rawolle and Lingard (2013) “would help to understand the patterns of relations between fields, movements of fields relative to one another, points overlap or disconnect between fields” (p. 25). Fields is used in this research to further explain if there is an overlap in terms of recruiters recruiting practices, and whether there exists the disconnect between different fields, for example, recruitment field and academic field.

***The Cultural Field:*** Bourdieu (1990a) refers to discourses, institutions, values, rules, and regulations that produce and transform attitudes and practices as "cultural fields"(p.1). Webb, Schirato, and Danaher (2002) demonstrate that embedded in the success of any practice there is “a self-reflective understanding of the person’s position and resources within the cultural field(s) or institution(s) in which they are operating” (p. 57). Cultural fields are not merely made up by institutions and regulations but by the interactions between institutions, rules, and practices. In overseas recruitment, the social interactions demonstrate the connections between different actors, both domestic and global; for example, how recruiters collaborate with different actors in Canada and how they engage with actors in China in their recruiting practice.

***Social Fields:*** For Bourdieu (1984), social life “consists of a multiplicity of social fields in which agents produce practices, compete with one another and develop social capacities (Rawolle & Lingard, 2008, p. 732). A social field is an ordering of different aspects of social life that provides a structure and history to agents who invest in specific practices (Rawolle & Lingard, 2008). Hardy and Lingard (2008) argue that the individual and collective habitus constitute and are constituted by social fields. The individual and

collective habitus, in turn, are constructed through the agents' locations within the particular fields, which keep the social field dynamic (Hardy & Lingard, 2008).

In this research, the social field is constituted through the interactions between different actors in different fields, namely, the education field, the policy field, and the recruitment field, that, in the case of internationalization, are guided by their respective policy initiatives. Social fields are also spaces of competition (Rawolle & Lingard, 2013): As noted above, Canadian universities have gained popularity among international students (Li & Tierney, 2013), which creates a domestic competition to attract international students. Indeed, when it comes to student recruitment, the competition is not only between countries (e.g. Canadian and U.S universities), but between universities in Canada. This study aims to illuminate how this competition influences the recruiters' perspectives in terms of their recruiting strategy.

### **The Field of Global Education Policy**

Rizivi and Lingard (2010) argue that in the context of globalization, education policies interact with policies in other fields. They note that education can be seen as a form of economic policy to ensure the competitiveness of the national economy. For example, education policymakers network with policymakers beyond the nation, like international organizations including, the World Bank, UNESCO, the EU. Rizivi and Lingard (2010) believe that the stages involved in the policy process from text to practice, namely the policy implementation process, is a complicated process and it is never straightforward. Zha (2003) argued that in order to make internationalization successful and sustainable, internationalization practices must be entrenched in the culture, policy

planning and organizational process of the institution. Thus, there are many elements involved in designing university's internationalization strategic plans. Recruiters are essential actors in the process of internationalization of higher education and following Rizvi and Lingard (2010) and Zha (2003)'s arguments, about the complexity of the practices involved in policy implementation, it is pertinent to investigate how recruiters interpret the internationalization policy text, and how they align the policy with their recruiting practice.

Rawolle and Lingard (2008) argue that there is a need to develop additional analytical tools to conceptualize a policy field that is meaningful to educational policy studies. They claim that one of the major foci of policy research involves an investigation of the multiple relationships between the policy field and other social fields. Furthermore, to develop a meaningful policy analysis, it will be necessary to investigate the way that policy field links to other fields, such as the fields of education (Rawolle & Lingard, 2008).

Policy practices are manifested in the policy field and Bourdieu's thinking tools are useful for researching and understanding the adoption of education policy at the global and local levels (Rawolle & Lingard, 2008). In the context of globalization, using Bourdieu's notion of social fields would allow us to recognize that there is an emergent global education policy field on the rise. These different fields include related habitus and forms of capital that are valued within these fields. For example, how recruiters develop a habitus by using their social capitals and knowledge within the education policy field.

The education policy field is multi-layered, stretching from local to global (Lingard, Rawolle, & Taylor, 2005). The relationships between fields or cross-field effects become the critical task for education policy analysis (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

For example, how actors in the policy field to connect with actors in other fields, such as the recruiting field and the education field in order to engage in overseas recruitment practices. This analysis would also reveal, what vision(s) of internationalization are manifest in the recruiting perceptions and practices of the recruiters in different fields.

This study pays attention to the strategies that program recruiters use in overseas recruiting practice and aims to identify other actors and organizations involved in the program recruiters' recruiting practice. The analysis examines how these actors and agencies are engaged and interacted by using various forms of capitals in different fields, such as the policy field, the education field, the recruiting field and the social field.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodology**

A qualitative research method has been employed in this research. The rationale for this choice will be explained in this section. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) define qualitative research as an approach that can be used to examine the details of people's experiences. Qualitative research focuses on participant's perceptions and experiences, and the way they make sense of their lives (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996; Locke et al., 1987; Merriam, 1998). It allows researchers to explore subjective experiences and the social context to gain greater understanding of factors that influence these experiences, actions, and practices (Gelling, 2015). Qualitative research helps researchers understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena or people's daily lives within a natural setting or under real-world conditions (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2011).

#### **Research Design: Case Study**

Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2000, 2005, 2011) describe qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observers in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3).

For the purpose of this research, a qualitative case study approach is adopted for

designing the study and exploring its details. Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery, and Sheikh (2011) define case study as “a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context” (p. 1). Alternatively, Robson (2002, p. 178) defines case study as “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation for a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence.”

Yin (2003) explains that the desire to understand complex social phenomena generates the need to conduct case studies. Using case study provides an in-depth analysis of how recruiters understand internationalization and how they translate the interpretations into the overseas recruiting practices. Yin (2009) suggests that particular strengths of case study reside in its capacity to answer *why* and *how* research questions. Yin (2011) notes that studying how people cope and thrive in a real-world setting would capture the richness in people’s daily life. Ashley (2012) argues that the constitution of a “case” has broad ranging, individual, institution or a policy can be considered as a “case”. In this research, I am particularly interested in how recruiters interpreted and translated the internationalization strategy in a Canadian post-secondary institution. The program recruiters’ interpretation of an Ontario University’s internationalization strategic plan was selected as the case in this study. The case study aimed to explore how program recruiters from different faculties translate this University’s internationalization strategic plan into international students’ recruiting practices and strategies. The findings from a case study could provide important insights to other researchers, policy makers and practitioners interested in international recruitment in Canadian post-secondary institutions.

## **Data Collection**

Semi-structured interviews with recruiters were conducted. The focus of the interview was the recruiters' understandings of the university's internationalization strategy. The interview, as a data collection strategy, is helpful to understand how people make meaning of their experiences (Seidman, 2006). Specifically, the interviews clarified how program recruiters understood internationalization, how their interpretations were translated into the practices, and why they made specific decisions.

Specific questions and topics must be covered when conducting semi-structured interviews: a set of questions (see Appendix B) was prepared to make sure the researcher covers the focus of the study. The interview questions relate to the participant's experience. For instance, questions about how the university's internationalization strategy informs the program recruiters' overseas recruiting practice. All proposed interview questions were reviewed by the University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board and approval was obtained to conduct the study (see Appendix A). Overall, the semi-structured interview can help researcher learn about a specific phenomenon through the participants' experiences and provide rich in-depth information about how individuals make sense this phenomenon.

Data was also collected from the University's internationalization strategic plan. This document was useful to investigate the vision(s) of internationalization manifested in the recruiting perceptions and practices of the recruiters in one Ontario University. Additionally, the information posted on the university's official website was included in the analysis of the strategies that university used to attract targeted prospective students.

## **Participants**

Mears (2012) notes the need to be intentional in choosing the participants. I used purposive sampling, that is, participants were selected according to a specific criterion, namely, that she/he worked as a program recruiter at the University where the study took place. In this research, five recruiters from three faculties: Education, Engineering and Business, as well as the university recruitment office in main campus were interviewed. The recruiters interviewed in this research have at least 5 years international recruiting experience and a wealth of knowledge and insights into recruitment, which certainly provide relevant information pertaining to recruitment and internationalization in this institution.

## **Data Analysis**

The interviews were audio recorded, and transcribed. All interview transcripts are coded using NVivo 11 for Mac. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) argue it is of great importance to remove any identifiers from the transcript in order to protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality. The information removed included participants' name and specific locations.

After the data was transcribed and anonymized, coding was used for analysis.

Gibson and Brown (2009) provided the definition of a transcript:

When researchers speak of transcript, they are referring to a mode of representing a piece of data that has been gathered. Data refers to material that has been collected (or generated) in the course of research, while transcription is the process of rendering that data into a new representational form. Through

transcription, researcher represent or better still re-present the data that they have gathered (Gibson and Brown, 2009, p. 109).

Yin (2011) notes that the purpose of coding items is to move specific themes expressed by the interviewees from methodologically to conceptual level. As Ravitch and Carl (2016) recommend, I kept the original audio files to refer to throughout the data analysis process.

The documents collected were analyzed in contrast with the themes generated from interview transcripts. This allowed me to compare how recruiters' job responsibilities are aligned with the university's internationalization policy initiatives.

### **Analysis Method**

Transcripts were coded using a two-cycle coding method. Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) argue that coding is a deep reflection about the analysis and interpretation of the data's meaning. The first cycle, or a-priori, used predefined themes, which emerged from the literature review, to organize the interview according to general themes. The second cycle, or inductive cycle, included an exploration of new themes that emerged from the careful reading of the interview data.

Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) programs have been developed as a tool to analyze the complexity and density of the collected data (Gibbs, 2012). Using software to support the data analysis can provide rich findings about the identified themes. In this research, NVivo 11 for Mac, was used to assist data analysis. A variety of documents and texts can be imported to NVivo to provide analysis in detail. In addition, NVivo is a quick way to systematize and compare different data sources (Gibbs, 2012).

Gibbs (2012) suggests that coding will be well served by software. Coding is one of the crucial activities in NVivo. Coding means applying labels, the codes, to passages or text, as a way to indicate all the contents about the identified theme to the research topic (Gibbs, 2012, p. 254). Coding let researchers quickly assign meaning to the collected data in order to examine and compare (Gibbs, 2012).

Richards (2015) suggests coding is not only for labeling all parts of the document, but to bring them together to review and develop the research topic. The purpose of coding is to reflect on the category that the coded segments represent and the meaning that is generated in the process (Richard, 2015).

### **Strategies for Establishing Trustworthiness**

It is important to build trustworthiness when interpreting and presenting qualitative research data in the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that trustworthiness involves *Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability*. *Credibility*, refers to researcher's "confidence" to confirm the research findings is convincing.

To make sure the findings in the research have credibility, multiple data sources should be involved in facilitating the depth in the findings. Four types triangulations are identified by Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999), namely: 1) Method triangulation, 2) Triangulation of sources, 3) Analyst triangulation, 4) Theory/perspective triangulation. Another technique for establishing credibility is member checking (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006, July). Researchers have to make sure the research is conducted with participants' approval. Lincoln and Guba (1985) view member-checking as the most crucial techniques to build credibility. Because this process requires researchers have correctly interrelated

participants' ideas, perspectives, or their interpretations towards a certain policy initiative. Transferability indicates the findings could apply in other contexts. Therefore, thick description, as a way to achieve external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) needs to be described. Dependability refers to the consistency of qualitative data and research findings. To foster the accuracy of a research, inquiry audit, as the technique for establishing dependability need to be used. Inquiry audit for this research that is the supervisor's audit of the project at all stages. Researcher's positionality and background could affect the results in conducting the research, it is of great significance to make sure that the research is not influenced by researcher's bias, motivations or interests. It is necessary to note that the findings do not simply represent researcher's assumptions and perceptions. Thus, reflexivity is used as a technique to establish confirmability.

### **Research Challenges and Limitations**

There are always challenges in the design of a research project. Seidman (2006) argues that interviewing takes a great deal of time and sometimes, money. He explains: "because the researcher has to conceptualize the project, establish access and make contact with participants, interview them, transcribe the data and then work with the material and share what he or she has learned" (p. 173). Due to the nature of this study, the small sample of participants and the limited time to conduct the interviews, I was not being able to offer generalizations. Furthermore, since I conducted the interviews in my second language, namely, English, misunderstandings may have taken place. Adopting the trustworthiness strategies listed above lessened some of these issues.

One limitation relates to the medium used for data representation, that is, the transcript of the interview. Because all transcripts are representations of data (Kress et al., 2008), researchers are consciously and unconsciously making choices about what is important or meaningful for them (Gibson & Brown, 2009). The grammar and punctuation, the gestures, the eye contact, or even the tone of voice could influence the data interpretation, however, these aspects of the interview could not be clearly presented during transcripts and may be relevant in the analysis of the data. Another limitation of this study relates to timelines and the lack of financial support. If this research was conducted at several research-intensive higher education institutions in Ontario and other provinces, the data collected could be transferable.

Another limitation in this type of research relates to the researcher's positionality. Bourke (2014) argues that researchers' biases shape the research process, serving as the checkpoints along the way. Researchers must reflect on the development of ideas, the data collection, the findings, and the implications. Kenzar (2002) argued people make meaning from various aspects of their identity (p.96), thus, the identities of researcher and participants could impact the results of research process (Bourke, 2014).

The researcher is set as the data collection instrument in qualitative research (Bourke, 2014). As a novice researcher, I recognize that the researcher's positionality plays an important role when conducting this study. The researcher's gender, race, class, socioeconomic status, educational background, and the geographic location of the research site would also affect the research's process (Bourke, 2014), which cannot be ignored.



## Chapter 5

### Findings

This chapter describes the key themes identified through the analysis of the data. I interviewed five recruiters from a research-intensive university in Ontario. The recruiters work at the Faculty of Education, Faculty of Business, Faculty of Engineering and the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. The analysis revealed four themes from the data: (1) program recruiters held multiple perspectives to interpret internationalization; (2) program recruiters faced challenges in their recruiting practices; (3) recruitment networks are identified in the program recruiters' recruiting practices; and (4) different recruitment strategies are adopted/adjusted in different contexts.

Table 1

*Participants' Profile (all participants' names are pseudonyms)*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender &amp; Racial Background</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Faculty</b>
James	Male, White	Recruiting Manager, International Office	Education
Amanda	Female, White	Graduate Officer	Engineering
Cody	Male, White	Director, International Office	Education
Trevor	Male, White	Executive Director, Recruitment and Admissions	Business
Emma	Female, White	Recruiting Manager, International Graduate Recruitment	Main Campus, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

## Themes

### 1. Interpretations of internationalization

Recruiters from the Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Business, Faculty of Education, and the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies interpreted the purposes of internationalization differently. The following table presents the most frequent terms they used in relation to their understandings of internationalization.

Table 2

#### *Interpretations of Internationalization*

<b>Recruiter &amp; Faculty</b>	<b>Participants interpretation of the main purposes of internationalization</b>
Emma, <i>Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies</i>	International students' enrolment
Trevor, <i>Business</i>	International experience
Emma, <i>Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies</i> James, <i>Education</i>	Competition between universities
Amanda, <i>Engineering</i> Emma, <i>Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies</i>	Support for research
Cody, <i>Education</i> James, <i>Education</i> Trevor, <i>Business</i> Amanda, <i>Engineering</i>	Revenue generation
Amanda, <i>Engineering</i> Cody, <i>Education</i> James, <i>Education</i>	Program diversification
Amanda, <i>Engineering</i> Cody, <i>Education</i> Emma, <i>Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies</i> Trevor, <i>Business</i>	Enrich diversity

In the interviews, the recruiter from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies referred to internationalization as the growing enrolment of international students in Canadian higher education institutions. She recalled that for Ontario universities, the percentage of international students at graduate level is around 20%. She also pointed out that universities in other provinces have larger percentages of international graduate students, like the University of Alberta, the University of British Columbia or the University of Calgary, whose percentage of international graduate students is much higher, around 30%.

In response to the question: “what do you know about the internationalization strategic plans in Ontario’s universities”, Emma said she did not know the plans from other Ontario universities, she knew the plan from the university where she works at:

I know that the overall plan was, I can’t remember, maybe up till 2014/15, to increase undergraduate enrollment to 10%, and now I know we have reached that goal to increase international students at undergraduate level to 10% and now I believe the plan is to have a slow increase of international undergraduate students to 15%. (Emma)

Also, she noted that:

...going back to the internationalization strategic plan, for graduate students is to retain that number of international students, not necessarily to increase but kind of to retain that and bring in more quality as well higher caliber students. (Emma)

The recruiter from the Faculty of Business offered a different perspective on the purposes of internationalization. In his view, internationalization is about the diversity of experiences as well. He elaborated that when they decide there is a suitable international candidate for the program, one important aspect to look at is if the candidate has international experience already.

James, from the Faculty of Education brought up a different interpretation. He noted that internationalization is as a platform for universities in Ontario that,

diversifies the revenue; it protects against the decrease of domestic Canadian enrollment, it protects against the fact that the birthrate of Canada is declining, bringing in students internationally helps with that. And, it not just happened at universities' level but also happened at high school or grade school level. (James)

He elaborated,

... Canadian universities by large or lately, we are behind the U.S. universities, in terms of trying to appeal to the recruitment. I think Canadian universities think that their global image is better than what it is. It's a game of numbers. The U.S. has over 5,000 degree programs institutions, Canada has about 280. So, at the end of the day, the U.S. needs more international students, because if you do it per capital basis by university, the U.S. has way more competition within the U.S. At the same time, Canada is trying to diversify its revenue for universities, so we need international students to fill our spots. (James)

He noted that in terms of competing for international students, it would be wrong to think that the competition is only between Canadian universities:

we are also competing with the State University of New York, we are competing with the University of Pittsburg, we are also competing with Pennsylvania. International students are Canadian students, they don't just have to go to a Canadian school. If you have an inclination of what a country to go to, but ultimately, your choices are larger. It's quite worldwide, in a fact. (James)

Two participants argued that that aim of internationalization is to support research.

Amanda, the recruiter from the Faculty of Engineering, said that internationalization is having a broad group of students to support their researches and to support the university.

Emma, the recruiter from Graduate and Postdoctoral program elaborated:

what I'm thinking of internationalization, it's bringing [...] diversity, bringing in international students, collaborating with international partners, working with international companies, doing research with international companies or international organizations like universities. (Emma)

Four participants linked internationalization to revenue generation: James noted that internationalization helps to diversify the revenue of Canadian economy overall. Trevor, the recruiter from the Faculty of Business indicated that the majority of their programs are

largely self-funded, because the government funding they get is shrinking and there are not too many domestic students available to fill the spots.

He pointed out that as a result of the limited number of domestic students applying to their programs, there is a huge push to get international students in to fill that void. Relatedly, he noted that international students' tuition is becoming an important revenue stream, which also made the international recruitment segment to become increasingly significant.

Cody's job responsibility focuses on the domestic and international recruitment for the Faculty of Education. Because of his role and job responsibility, he indicated that the term "internationalization" can be widely used for a variety of different contexts. For instance, he said:

my responsibility is the strategic direction, budget, I do some of the recruitment myself, and I'm also engaged with helping the university become more flexible so that it is a better return on your recruitment efforts. [...] my role is particularly around the business of the development revenue diversification, program development, and international programming. (Cody)

Cody said that internationalization strategic plans in Ontario universities are very "aspirational". In responding to the question about "what do you know about internationalization strategic plans at Ontario's universities", he explained:

I know that they tend to not to [explicitly say it], the biggest reason for internationalization, which is the revenue diversification. [...] In Ontario, there is a fear of stating that in the strategic plan, so there are very kind of large language, very kind of aspirational, but they are very short on two things. They are short on the details, and they are also short on what is the real reason for internationalization, which is the revenue diversification in the face of declining governmental funding. So, they are not really complete. (Cody)

Three recruiters mentioned the program diversification in their faculty. Amanda mentioned that there are course-based programs and research-based programs at the Faculty of Engineering.

For admission, most popular is the Master of Engineering program, simply is because it easy to get into. There is no funding requirement, there is no supervision requirement, you just have to meet the minimum of the program and you are considered to submit all. And it's the capacity of the program to meet students. It is also a very good program to train engineers and to get post-graduate work permit to stay in Canada. It's an easy way to immigrate in Canada.  
(Amanda)

She also mentioned that the Faculty of Engineering offers course to combine business with engineering to enhance the unique learning experience that outside of students' researches. Most importantly, the course gives students additional educational experiences they wouldn't necessary get in other institution.

Cody mentioned that there are certain programs at the Faculty of Education that are appealing to the domestic population, and there are some programs that are appealing to international population. For example, they have 100% international population in the TESOL program [Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages]. James elaborated that some programs at the Faculty of Education appeal internationally for multiple reasons. For example, they have strong faculty members to attract good quality students who are interesting in applying to research-intensive programs and they also provide some one-year on-site professional programs like TESOL. However, he also pointed out:

TESOL, we know it appeals internationally, for multiple reasons. Everything from immigration purposes to the fact that people believed that having better English skills will help them bridge the gap between business and education. Specifically, by large, China and Canada. So, we use all these driving factors to recruit. (James)

Most recruiters mentioned diversity. "Diversity" is the most frequent term mentioned during the interviews. For instance, Amanda said that because of the different life experiences that people bring in, having an international student body helps faculty, students and researchers reach different perspectives and see things differently.

Cody, Emma, and Trevor, had international experiences, either for their educational background or professional experiences, so their interpretations of internationalization seem to focus more on the diversity aspect. Other than that, Cody, Emma, and Trevor had overseas recruitment experiences. They travelled to other countries to recruit international students, which helped them cultivate some cultural awareness, especially understanding some of the nuances of coming to a new culture and having that challenge as well. In addition, they all had the experiences of living overseas and worked with different cultural groups; they recognize the importance of diversity.

This is how Cody interpreted internationalization:

internationalization can also incorporate being more culturally competent, cultural diversity on campus, activities that we would see at the university, so it is a quite a wide, not well-understood concept. [...] Internationalization also means to have the right support programming and the right perspective to work and to help these students when they get to here. (Cody)

Emma interpreted internationalization as diversity, and one aspect of it is bringing in international students to campus. She also mentioned the importance of diversifying the countries where the University recruits its international students as well as the programs they enroll in:

I know that the plan is also to diversify the countries that students are coming from. It's not only diversifying the countries that students are coming from but also diversify the programs they enter into. (Emma)

Trevor put the emphasis on diversity aspect as well; he commented that internationalization is really about diversity:

the true internationalization is people that are coming here are under a student Visa, so they are immigrating to Canada under coming here may be their first visit to Canada is the day that they land to do the program. That is how we look at the internationalization of it, but it really is important for the diversity aspect. (Trevor)

Trevor also mentioned they value student quality, they want to make sure that the quality standards of the programs that are maintained and also that they are balancing the quality standard with the diversity that are important in the classroom as well.

For Amanda, the diversity of the student body and the different experiences they brought in is how she views the diversity. In the meantime, she thought sending out their students for the different experiences is the other understanding of internationalization.

## **2. Recruitment challenges**

The second finding was drawn from the interview question “what are the most challenging parts in your overseas recruiting practice?” All recruiters reported facing challenges in their recruiting practices. At the Faculty of Business, Trevor mentioned two challenges in his recruitment practice:

The first thing that we have to recognize is: this is a huge decision for people, they are moving to Canada, they are spending some time in some certain areas, the money they spent is a huge amount, a huge investment for them. To kind of understand that first is that where it's coming from. We have one-year program, and people get a one-year postgraduate work permit. (Trevor)

The second challenge relates to the admission requirements, such as the English proficiency admission requirement. The Faculty of Business does not offer academic support or preparation before the program starts. They, however, offer other types of support for international students, such as study permit consultation as well as connecting Alumni networks with the students.

Amanda's answer, at the Faculty of Engineering, was quite different from the other recruiters. She mentioned that most of her recruitment challenges are around domestic, not international students. She explained further in responding to the question about her recruitment challenges:



[with] an engineering degree in Canada [...] you can work with your degree, complete your degree as an undergraduate student and get a high paid job. So, they don't necessarily need a Master or Ph.D. through their career. While internationally, it's very common to have an advanced degree to gain that type of position in engineering in many countries around the world. (Amanda)

For international recruitment, she explained:

The views of academia are changing, and the outcome for Ph.D. position is also changing, and that is across all faculties. It's been recognized that getting a Ph.D. doesn't mean that you are going to get a job in academia. How we support, that is also changing. Mainly, to explain to students that are coming from outside of Canada, a Ph.D. is not equal to a professorship. (Amanda)

Besides, the number of students at the graduate level at the Faculty of Engineering is increasingly high, which make it hard to track students' down to measure programs' outcomes after graduation.

Emma's primary role at the School of Postdoctoral Studies is to recruit international graduate sponsored students. Her challenge is about the "fit". She said:

the most challenging part with graduate recruitment is matching the student with the supervisor. I think that is the hardest part. [...] we hope to have an increase in the students we track the sponsored student applicants, we hope that will go up, as well as the number of sponsored applicants, but it's tough because we get plenty of sponsored student applicants, but it's tough for us to get them accepted. Because for many of them, they need a supervisor, and it has to be a fit. [...] So, it's really about just finding the right match and finding a supervisor who will be willing to work with them. (Amanda)

She mentioned the term "fit" multiple times during the interview. She explained:

[...] even if the student is coming a sponsored student [and] they are an excellent student; sometimes the faculty member just doesn't see a fit. That is really where it becomes a challenge, to get these students matched up with the supervisors. Sometimes it's out of my hands, I can't really force any supervisor to take any student. It's really different from recruitment undergraduate students where they are self-funded and they are completely self-funded for their studies. Our role or the university's role is just to ensure that we received all the documents that we can admit them. (Amanda)

Cody's most challenging part in his recruitment practice at the Faculty of Education is the disconnect between how university understands itself, the realities of the recruiting field,

and the international context. He explained his experience in his overseas recruiting practice:

When I go overseas to recruit, I see Canadian, British, American, Australian, Eastern European, that all kinds of different universities, and I see how at times, how much better prepared they are for international students and, how much better prepared they are for international recruitment. Bring back that information back to the university at times is not convincing. (Cody)

Cody is also responsible for international recruitment with the University's English Language Centre, which means that he is recruiting for campus-wide programs through the Language Centre. That is, while Cody's job responsibility is focused on the domestic and international recruitment for the Faculty of Education, he is also responsible for the international recruitment for university's Language Centre. In his view, the role of English Language Centre is underappreciated. He believes that the role of English Language Centres in Ontario universities is to be an advocate for students, to prepare them linguistically, and academically for advanced studies. However, he felt that there are disconnects and misunderstandings towards these programs:

I don't think people appreciate the value that English Language Centres have: to prepare students, to make them feel welcome on campus. [...] I'm not so sure people quite understand that. (Cody)

James said that having too many academic programs at Faculty of Education could be challenging in his recruiting practice, because he could not recruit the number of students equally for each of their programs. He also mentioned, regarding recruitment strategies, his Canadian colleagues tend to share less compared to recruiters in the United States. He mentioned that, for some research-intensive programs, it is difficult to recruit students who know exactly what research they want to do, because of issues of student-supervisor matching. In some cases, the students' interests do not align with the supervisors' research.

### 3. Recruitment networks

Trevor explained that the recruitment team members at the Faculty of Business are assigned to different geographical regions, such as Europe, India, China, Southeast Asia and Latin America. Recruiters travel to those areas to meet candidates and participate in fairs at the assigned regions in order to get the opportunity to seek candidates.

Trevor also mentioned that they have an immigration consultant at the Faculty to help students answer questions about immigration. They also rely on Alumni networks and social media to get connected. It is worth noting that they do not use recruiting agencies. He explained:

We don't use any recruiting agency. We represent ourselves at events and such. We will connect with admissions consultants, who are paid by candidates to deal with their file. First of all, to let know about our program, refer them to our program. People are using them anyway, why not develop those relationships, but we do not do any recruitment agency or anything else. (Trevor)

And he adds:

I don't think we ever will use the recruiting agency we would pay to finder fee for each person they get into our program. (Trevor)

The Faculty of Engineering relies a lot on its faculty members for recruitment. Amanda noted that the admission decision is completely based on the decisions of the faculty member and their current student support funds. They also rely on the expertise from School of Postdoctoral Studies. Furthermore, in relation to recruitment of Chinese international students, she explained they work with the Chinese Scholarship Council:

We usually focus on students that are funded through the China scholarship council, because there are so many schools in China. When a student is coming from a reputable school with the China Scholarship Council, [we know] they are high-quality students. (Amanda)

She also connects with the International Students Centre and the English Language Centre on campus. Her attitude towards private education recruitment agencies is critical. She said because the admissions decisions are department-based, she does not generally connect with agencies.

Very, very seldom, do I connect with private education agencies. The most connection that I usually have with them is actually Canadian or Ontario Conferences about Education. [...] For the most part, they are knowledgeable. They know their clients and they are trying to help their clients. I have an aggressive experience with getting information and getting answers. They don't always necessarily understand our privacy policy here in Canada. This is my personal experience from what I work at the department. [...] I think they just need more education when they come to what we are allowed to provide, what we are not allowed to provide and why. But again, they are knowledgeable; they understand the admissions process, and I do feel that they are trying to do the best for the applicants. Just they are not always going around the way that I would like them to. (Amanda)

Emma is responsible for the recruitment of international graduate sponsored students at the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. She works with students who are sponsored by government agencies, such as CSC, the China Scholarship Council and Mexico's AMEXCID. She speaks with different administrators from universities and often conducts events with the Canadian Embassies.

I'm focused on international graduate students who are sponsored by their government or company. We have agreements with different organizations across the globe and many of them are in Latin America and the rest are in China, Vietnam, and we are working on one in Indonesia. (Emma)

Regarding the work with recruitment agencies, she notes that she does not work with agents [private education agents] and does not hire agencies or pay anybody commission fees. The only organization that she works with is CALDO, a consortium of ten universities in Canada. She also helps to coordinate international sponsored students with the financial officer on campus and she makes the connection with the international office. Finally, she works with some of the professors from the Faculty of Engineering to

recruit international students based on the connections that professors have in their home countries.

According to Cody, there are traveler recruiters and domestic recruiters who are responsible for the different programs' recruitment at the Faculty of Education. Cody further explained the case in China: he mentioned that China is an agent market, that is, the use of private agents in China is very popular. Students use private education agents/agencies in China to assist them with their international education. Cody's recruitment team work with agents to recruit students and they provided training for those agents/agencies to better assist students in China to deal with the applications. For Middle-Eastern countries' market, recruiters assigned to Middle-Eastern countries use intermediaries to make connections. In addition to the internal networks, Cody mentioned the collaboration with the graduate office at Faculty of Education and the Language Centre to better assist international students' inquiries about the programs and the university.

James explained that they work with their own recruitment office and use private education agents, for example, in China:

We work with agencies at the English Language Centre. We don't directly work with agencies in the Faculty of Education. We work with private education agencies. In China, for example, there is JIL, there is XDF, there is EIC, there is Can-Achieve, there is Shinyway [the listed names are the brands of private education companies in China] and three of the five listed are publicly traded agencies on the Asian stock exchange. IDP is an agency that is governed by about eight or nine Australian universities and they also owned the IELTS. [...] Absolutely we work with them and absolutely we connected with them. (James)

He pointed out the importance of making connections with the recruitment body on-campus:

our connections are more by programs. [...] for example, in Engineering, we [English Language Centre] support them with conditional offers. Everything is about relationship building when it comes to the recruitment. (James)

This explains why Amanda, from the Faculty of Engineering views the role of English Language centre as “exceptionally important” and she describes the experiences with the English Language Centre as “exceptional”:

I work with them regularly. We have students that go through their programs regularly. And the students that we see coming out of that program, there is a remarkable difference about they approach to communication, their understanding, their comprehension when they speak to me or instructor or another administrator, or even their fellow students. The other thing that I see [is] how they interact with students that are not from their home country. Because generally, when we see students, like all of our Egyptian students group together. And all of our Chinese students group together. And it's normal that you stick with where you used to. But the students coming from [the English Centre], because they pushed to spread out to work with other people and communicate primarily English with people. You see they are coming from a multicultural program, like engineering. They still work with other students that come from different background, they approach it easier than someone that doesn't go through that type of programming. I have spoken with the students at the beginning of their program, mid-way and at the end, and their communication skills are just like a blow of my mind how much they learned in 4 months, 6 months or 8 months. (Amanda)

The analysis found that, in addition to the external recruitment networks outside of Canada, there are internal recruitment networks on campus. Amanda, Emma, James and Cody work with the International Office on campus to better assist and support international students. Furthermore, the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Engineering work with the English Language Centre to support international students who have met the academic admission requirements but lack of the language proficiency.

#### **4. Recruitment strategies**

When asked recruiters about the question “what strategies/recruitment plan are being used in your overseas recruiting practice in terms of attracting more international

students?”, recruiters noted that they adjust different recruitment strategies to different contexts.

At the Faculty of Business, Trevor had the experience of living and working overseas, he said these experiences added credibility in his recruiting practice. Because the recruiter's international experience suggests that she/he understands some of the nuances of coming to a new culture. Thus, his recruiting strategies include travel to several of regions and attend recruitment fairs in those regions to meet prospective candidates. His recruitment team also conducts one-on-one meetings to build trust and get to know candidates. He mentioned that his team benefited from the fact that Canada that has a strong brand.

Also, he suggested that they want to make sure that the quality standards of the programs are maintained and that they are also balancing the quality standard with the diversity in the classroom. Because his team pays high attention to the quality of the program and the candidates, they developed an interview system to score suitable candidates. This constitutes another important recruitment strategy:

we involve our alumni heavily to get that network going. We say it to our candidates, look at LinkedIn to connect with our alumni. They get the sense of how powerful that network is through that. (Trevor)

At the Faculty of Engineering, Amanda does not have overseas travel recruitment experience. Amanda's recruitment strategies include attending recruitment events, holding recruitment events on campus, as well as developing recruitment materials for both undergraduate and graduate audiences, internationally and domestically. In addition, she seeks the help of the current student body, invites current graduate students to attend the events and talk about their researches. She also recruits through undergraduate students’

research appointments and summer research appointments. Another recruitment strategy used to recruit suitable candidates includes to:

look at the reputations of the institutions that they [student researchers] are coming from, the international ranking as an indicator. The ranks at their home country, as well as the research area, both globally and locally. (Amanda)

In addition, Amanda addressed the “fit” between candidates and programs:

the supervisor will look at the pool of students that relate to their research, and they will conduct the skype interviews, email back and forth, maybe phone calls depending on where they are. They will decide what is the best fit for their research group. It's not only the supervisor but also a team of researchers that they are working with. (Amanda)

Therefore, the recruitment strategy at Faculty of Engineering largely relies on their faculty members.

Emma’s international experience at the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies is different from other recruiters. She was an international student, recruited at a recruitment fair. Because of this experience, she has a sense of what was like being recruited. She has conducted hundreds of in-person meetings as well as presentations to prospective students. One important recruitment strategy of her is to maintain the relationships with the sponsored agencies that they have agreements with. She works with these institutions to promote study opportunity in Canada. She adjusts recruitment strategies in terms of different context. In relation to the recruitment of Chinese students, she indicates:

for the graduate level, [I attend] the fairs that they [sponsored agencies] conduct. [For example] the IGF Fairs, or the Ph.D. Workshop in China that is supported by CSC, the China Scholarship Council. So, I know that attending these fairs is very important because I know I will meet with CSC students or potential CSC students. That's what I've been doing in China. [...] fairs in China seem to be, particularly the graduate fairs, seem to work really well, where I'm very careful with attending fairs in Latin America, I think that visiting universities, meeting



with students is the best road to really recruit the best students attending to the top universities. (Emma)

At the Faculty of Education, Cody pays special attention to how to support and welcome international students when they come to Canada. One of the recruiting strategies is to let students know how they will be supported when they come to Canada. He explained:

when you say this university is driving to internationalize further, you could talk about the activities that the programming, how the campus is adjusting multicultural communities on its own campus. That is important, because the person that needs to know that they are welcomed here, that they are going to be well taken care of and supported. (Cody)

He noted: “every country has a peculiar way of approaching.” He believes that understanding some of the general norms of a specific culture is important. The Faculty of Education uses traveling recruiters who are focused on international targets. For example, they have Chinese recruitment officers focused on the Chinese market. Having a Chinese-speaking recruitment officer liaison could reduce the language barrier when communicating with Chinese students and their parents to better promote the programs. Also, they have domestic recruiters who travel around Canada to recruit domestic students for specific programs. In addition to attending university fairs, they also make full use of technology:

We do social media outreach, we do information sessions, we do digital, like videos that kind of thing. It’s a variety of different tactics to gain access to those recruitment channels. We also have a dedicated WeChat channel; we need to be able to play in that space, but according to Chinese rules. Facebook or WhatsApp does not work. (Cody)

Cody’s perspective towards recruitment in China is: do as the Chinese do when you are in China. He commented:

In China, WeChat. In the Middle East, it's Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. In South America, Facebook. The different markets respond differently. Korea has its own social media platform; they are very Korea-specific. There is no one that works across all contexts, it just depends on how the students work and how we

have to engage with the act. We don't determine the rule of the engagement. We should adjust to it. (Cody)

They coordinate all strategies to make sure that there is no duplicating effort.

Collaboration is very important to his team.

Part of the networking is about educating yourself. [...] I probably get about 7 or 8 emails every morning from different sources that help me understand some of these things. At times, we chose agencies; we become a member of an agency based on the news we get. (Cody)

The Faculty of Education is a unique case. It is the only faculty I interviewed that works with private education agents/agencies in China. This Faculty uses agencies as intermediaries to recruit in Chinese market. Cody argued: "you have to adjust how you engage with the agents, depending on the country." Similarly, James attitudes toward agents are quite straightforward:

With agents, I like agents. I think agents are fine. People have a misconception of agencies. [...] Every job has good and bad people. But my point is, people think that having an agent to help with the applications to schools is bad. That is a very popular conception in some Canadian universities. [...] The Canadian universities are not easy to apply to; the system is not straightforward. Having someone to help you through that is fine. Where I see it though, it's, my job is to manage the agent relationship. [...] I don't have a problem with the agent who help students with the application at all. I think it's strange to have issue with that, as long as everything are done appropriately. [...] my relationship with the agents is to know which one that I can work with, that brings me those types of relationships. (James)

James mentioned China is a pretty big country and there is more about the relationship management and less about building the brand image. He pointed out, maintaining the brand image in China is important, due to the value that the brand has brought in. For maintaining the brand image, they have to go to big cities, like Beijing, Shanghai.

Because in the major cities, there are major education centers, fairs, agencies, school fairs, and exhibitions. However, he is also interested in developing the recruitment at the cities where there are few recruiters.

## **Conclusions and Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter outlined the findings of the study. It identified the multiple ways recruiters understand internationalization. Most participants felt internationalization was a positive way to enrich diversity. They also indicated that internationalization benefits universities in terms of diversifying their revenue stream. One recruiter at the Faculty of Education brought up a new dimension of internationalization, namely the competition between universities, specifically; he noted that the competition is not only with the universities across Canada, but a competition with the universities in the United States for Canadian domestic students.

Through the interviews, positive visions of internationalization are manifested in the recruiting perception and practices of the recruiters; however, participants also revealed the challenges that they faced in their recruiting practices, including the disconnect with other recruitment offices and colleagues; and the challenges of educating people to eliminate misunderstandings in the field. The misunderstandings include the assumptions that: 1) all recruiters need to travel to another country to conduct recruitment activities, 2) recruiters only conduct face to face digital recruiting activities, 3) recruiting equals admissions, 4) agent recruiting considers as a weak recruitment strategy for recruitment teams.

The analysis also identified the actors involved in recruitment networks internally and externally. Recruiters work with Faculty members, the English Language Centre, the International Students Centre on campus. Furthermore, some of the recruiters also work with actors and organizations outside Canada; for example, they work with the China Scholarship Council, CALDO, Canadian Embassies and several private education agencies in China.

The findings evidence that the job responsibilities of program recruiters have are aligned with the university's internationalization strategy. It is worth noting that one recruiter clarified that what he knew about the university's internationalization strategic plan is different from how he felt about it, which influenced on how he viewed internationalization in his recruitment practice. The next chapter will discuss these findings in light of the theoretical framework and the literature.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research findings in light of the theoretical framework and the literature. As noted in the previous chapter, recruiters from different faculties in this research-intensive university interpreted internationalization differently. Their various understandings of internationalization are reflected in their recruiting practice.

This chapter will be divided in two sections: First, a discussion of the program recruiters' interpretations of internationalization, which has been organized in seven key themes, namely: 1) International students' enrollment, 2) International experience, 3) Competition between universities, 4) Support for research, 5) Revenue generation, 6) Enrich diversity, 7) Program diversification. The second section discusses how the recruitment strategies, networks, and challenges reflect and influence the recruiters' interpretations of the internationalization strategy from a research-intensive university in Ontario.

#### **Seven Themes of Internationalization**

Seven themes have been identified based on the interviews with program recruiters. The following themes are considered as the significant configuration of the university's internationalization strategies. These themes are reflected in relation to the recruiters' recruiting practices.

## 1. International students' enrollment

Emma, the recruiter from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, referred to internationalization as the growing enrolment of international students in Canadian higher education institutions. Her interpretation shows how Canadian universities have identified internationalization as a key component of their strategic plans (Viczo & Tascón, 2016; Guo & Guo, 2017), one significant consequence of this focus is the increment in international students' enrollment (Beck, 2012).

This theme can be found in some research-intensive universities in Ontario, such as Queen's University, Western University, and The University of Ottawa: For example, Western University's international recruiting objective 3 (International Action Plan 2014 – 2019, 2014, p. 5) lists the significant enrollment growth in graduate student intake:

2000-01 there were 2554 graduate students studying at Western and 291 (11 %) of them were international students. By 2011-12, we had 4770 graduate students studying at Western and 1036, (22%) of them were international students. The overall growth and the international student growth are both excellent accomplishments that befit a research-intensive university like Western (p. 5).

The quote suggests that the number of international graduate students studying at Western University doubled within two years. This increase in international students' enrolment can be considered as an outcome of the university's recruiting practice. Similarly, Destination 2020, The University of Ottawa's strategic plan (The University of Ottawa, n.d., p. 8), specifically outlines the university's effort to increase international students' enrolment. Between now and 2020, they will:

...double the number of international graduate students (from 700 to 1,400) and increase the number of international undergraduate students by 50% (from 1,500 to 2,250), for a total of 3,650 international students, or 9% of the entire student body (p. 8).

In these internationalization initiatives, the category “international students’ enrolment” is evident.

## **2. International experience**

Zha (2003) notes an emphasis on international experience is considered as one aspect to make a university more internationalized. The recruiter from the Faculty of Business interpreted internationalization as international experience, which resonates with Zha (2003)’s argument. This recruiter elaborated that if the candidate has international experience, on the one hand, it could bring the diversity into the class, and on the other, she/he could easily understand the nuance of adapting to a new culture. This participant also reflected on his recruiting practice: in his view, international experience is an important feature to look at during the admission. When he decides that there is a suitable international candidate for the program, one important aspect to consider at is if the candidate has international experience already. Furthermore, because this recruiter had lived and worked overseas, he placed emphasis on internationalization as international experience from his personal history.

## **3. Competition between universities**

Chan (2004) argues that in recent decades, marketization of higher education has led to severe competition for funds, students, and faculty, and it also brought challenges to university management. James, the recruiter from the Faculty of Education, viewed internationalization as a competition between universities. He noted that it would be wrong to think that the competition is only between Canadian universities because U.S. universities are also trying to attract Canadian students. He also elaborated that in his

view, regarding recruitment strategies to attract international students, Canadian universities are behind U.S. universities. He noted that his Canadian colleagues tend to share less compared to recruiters in the United States, which could be challenging in his recruiting practice.

Interestingly, another recruiter from the Faculty of Education also mentioned the most challenging part in his recruitment practice is the disconnect between how university understands itself, the realities of the recruiting field, and the international context. When he went overseas to recruit students, he saw that universities in the UK, the U.S., Australia, and Western Europe better prepared for international students and international recruitment than Canadian universities. However, it is difficult for him to convince his colleagues on campus to coordinate efforts, due to the lack of communication between recruitment offices.

From the two recruiters' perspectives, there are several reasons behind why they view internationalization as the competition with universities. First of all, universities in the UK, the U.S., Australia and Western Eastern Europe have the highest proportion of international students (Robertson, 2010). In the recruitment field, the brand of the university, the recruitment strategies, and the recruitment networks are all different forms of capitals that could be used to advance the strategic plans of universities. Rawolle and Lingard (2008) argue that the habitus provides the connection between agents and social practices, it allows agents to produce a particular practice that aligns with the field. The habitus produces dispositions to behave in a way that would allow agents to achieve their goals. Thus, the field rewards the actors that make use of their capital to advance their interests, and those who have access to more capital would have the field advantage. In this case, Canadian universities may find themselves in a position of deficit, as



universities in the UK, the U.S. and Western Europe make use of their brand image, recruitment experience and networks to attract more students for their programs. However, facing a competitive environment would push Canadian universities to seek new approaches to recruitment strategies in order to attract international students while maintaining the domestic students' enrolment.

#### **4. Support for research**

There is an increasing expectation that universities will take steps to incorporate internationalization in their work (Jones, Shubert, & Trilokekar, 2009) without overlooking their primary functions of teaching and research (Zha, 2003). This view is reflected in the reflections of two of the participants in this study, they stated that that aim of internationalization is to support research.

The recruiter from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies noted one aspect of internationalization is to work with international organizations, both academic and non-academic, in doing research. Her interpretation also reflected on her recruitment practices: in relation to the recruitment of Chinese international students, she explained that she works with the China Scholarship Council to ensure the quality of the students. She also works with an organization called CALDO, a consortium of ten universities in Canada, to recruit international students. It must be noted that, she mentioned networking with faculty members on campus. Some faculty members, when they conduct research abroad, perform a series of recruitment activities on behalf of the University. This practice extends the university's recruitment network.

One way to observe the recruitment networks in action is when faculty members weigh in to determine the students' research ability and "fit" with the program and the

supervisor. The interviewed recruiter mentioned the "fit" multiple times during the interview. In her role, she is responsible for the recruitment of government-sponsored international students, and if the faculty member/supervisor do not see a fit with the student, she could not give the admission. Amanda, the recruiter from the Faculty of Engineering, interpreted internationalization as an essential collaboration between institutions, so students can conduct their research with other universities and companies. Her interpretation supports her recruiting practice because one of her recruitment strategies includes inviting current graduate students to attend faculty events and talk about their research. She also recruits through undergraduate students' research internships and summer research programs. She also mentioned that in this faculty, there were numerous research collaborations with other universities outside of Canada, such as China and Germany.

"Support for research" is aligned with strategic plans reviewed for this study. For example, the University of Ottawa set the goal of "research excellence" (The University of Ottawa, n.d., p. 5), Queen's University in their strategic framework 2014-2019, mentioned "research prominence" to expand more programs and to build strength and depth in key research areas (Queen's University, 2017, p. 11). Western University's international action plan (2014) includes "international research" (p.3) as one component in its plan. As noted in the analysis of the interview data, "support for research" has become a key theme in the recruiters recruiting practice.

## **5. Revenue generation**

Mundy, Green, Lingard, and Verger (2016) argue that "education and schooling have long been deeply implicated in process of internationalization and global economic

integration (p.1). One of the motivations for internationalization is the economic advantage (Altbach & Knight, 2007). There is no doubt that international students' tuition fees make up a significant source of revenue for universities worldwide (Knight, 2004; Marginson, 2006, Stier & Börjesson, 2010), which has an important effect on the country's economy.

Four recruiters interpreted internationalization as an important strategy that helps diversify the revenue of the Canadian economy. They noted that international students' tuition is becoming an important revenue stream for the university, which makes the international recruitment segment increasingly significant. One recruiter is very critical about how universities elaborate internationalization in their strategic plans, he views these international policy initiatives in Ontario as very "aspirational." He pointed out that the biggest reason for universities to embrace internationalization is the diversification of the revenue stream in the face of declining governmental funding. The recruiters also mentioned that they value students' quality over just numbers to ensure the reputation of the university, which is a positive aspect of internationalization of higher education in Canada. In their view, paying attention to the student profile's quality is helpful to maintain Canadian educational reputation.

## **6. Enrich diversity**

All recruiters mentioned the importance of enriching diversity on campus. Bringing in the diversity is a crucial element to achieve "greater international involvement" (Altbach & Knight, 2007) in higher education. Recruiters also noted that diversity is not limited to students, but also faculty members and staff on campus.

Alternatively, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) suggest that globalization not only refers to transnational economic activities but also to the ways that significant advances in information technologies reshape cultural and political configurations within and across national spaces. “Diversity” is the most frequent term mentioned during the interviews. For instance, one recruiter explained that because of the different life experiences that people bring in, having an international student body helps faculty, students and researchers reach different perspectives and see things differently. Thus, diversity is included in some universities internationalization strategic plans. One example of the universities’ emphasis on internationalization as diversity could be seen in the University of Ottawa’s *Destination 2020* strategic plan (The University of Ottawa, n.d.). The plan calls for enhancing campus diversity by welcoming international students and by increasing the recruitment in specific regions of the world.

Internationalization and globalization provide the context to achieve the possibility of diversity across campus. We can also notice that universities in Ontario have elaborated the diversity on campus as a critical element to their policy initiatives.

### **7. Program diversification**

Internationalization involves multilevel cultural and academic activities (Adey, 2009; Holdworth, 2009; Finn, 2017). From the interviews, program recruiters highlighted program diversification in their faculties. There are course-based programs and research-based programs in each faculty. At the instructional level, some faculties included popular global trends in their curriculums, such as business and leadership, to provide a unique learning experience outside of the students’ research.

Program diversification comes with the need for English as a Second Language support and the incorporation of cross-cultural diversity in pedagogy and curricula (Richardson, McBey, & McKenna, 2009). As noted in the analysis of the internationalization documents, universities in Ontario offer different programs, as well as ESL courses, to support international students. Li and Tierney (2013) noted that Ontario universities have international programs that specifically focus on the recruitment of international students, especially Chinese students at the graduate level. At the Faculty of Education, the recruiter mentioned that the most popular program in the faculty is a one-year on-site program called TESOL. The student body is 100% international in this program.

Regarding ESL course support in the university, it is interesting to note that the three recruiters stressed the critical role of the university's English Language Centre. Shi and Lin (2016) describe that English has outpaced other languages, and it has impact on the language of business, politics the Internet, and the academia. They argue that education has been restructured into a form of human capital for competitiveness. Similarly, Bourdieu (2008) argued that in contemporary societies, English is viewed as a commodity that can be converted into multiple capitals.

The increasing demand for language learning motivates universities to provide ESL courses and programs, which can be evidenced in the universities policy documents. For example, Queen's University's strategic framework (Queen's University, 2014, p.4) mentions the need to develop new programs, such as professional master programs, but also to engage in curriculum innovation. This strategic framework lists language support for international students in relation to international undergraduate students' recruitment:

[...] the introduction this past year of a year-long on-campus English language pathway (QBridge) for academically qualified students lacking the necessary English language proficiency, which complements the 4-month summer QBridge program which accommodated 44 students in 2015-16 (up from 17 the prior year) (p. 19).

Western University also includes in its strategic document mentions to support and services to international students. It includes a call to identify language needs so that the English Language Centre can work to develop more programming in support of ESL students (Western University, 2014, p. 8). Clearly, program diversification provides more options to international students, which explains why it is used as a strategy in recruiters' recruitment practice. However, one recruiter also pointed out that offering too many academic programs could be challenging in his recruiting practice because he could not recruit the number of students equally for each of their programs.

### **Recruitment Networks (internal and external networks)**

Through the interviews, internal (on campus) and external (abroad) recruitment networks were identified. In relation to the external networks, it is worth highlighting the role of intermediary recruitment agencies in China. The networking opportunity provided by agencies can be beneficial for recruiters because it makes the recruitment process faster and more effective (Sarkar & Perenyi, 2017). Sarkar and Perényi (2017) note that Australia was the first adopter of the agent recruitment model. At the university where this study took place, recruiters from the Faculty of Education use private educational agents and agencies in China, which proves that Canada has also become an adopter of the agent-recruitment model.

From the findings, recruiters not only work with actors in the recruitment field, such as academic organizations and agencies, but also with faculty members in the academic field. Each actor in their respective field possesses various forms of capital, which allows them to build internal and external networks for their recruitment activities. Rawolle and Lingard (2008) argue that fields tend to attract agents whose habitus is aligned to that particular field.

Another actor in the external networks is the Canadian Embassy. This suggests that the federal government in Canada is also interested in recruiting more Chinese students, as exemplified by the participation of the Canadian Embassy in Beijing and its consulates in Shanghai, Chongqing, and Guangzhou in the most significant international education exhibition in China in October 2011 (Fairlink Exhibition Services Ltd., 2011; Li, DiPetta & Woloshyn, 2012).

Rawolle and Lingard (2008) argue each social field provides a way of accumulating and distributing field-specific forms of capital, such as social capital and cultural capital. The findings show that program recruiters use their social and cultural capitals to make connections with other actors in their recruiting practice. In addition, this study found that recruiters use their educational and professional capitals to inform their recruiting practices. Four recruiters had the experience of living and working overseas. They said these experiences added credibility to their recruiting practice. One recruiter was an international student, recruited at a recruitment fair. Because of this educational experience, she has a sense of what was like being recruited. Her recruiting practice is informed on the basis of her educational and professional experience. The recruiter from the Faculty of Business had the experience of living and working overseas. His experiences help to shape his recruiting practice. Some of his recruiting strategies include

travel to several of regions and attend recruitment fairs in those regions to meet prospective candidates.

English and Bolton (2016) relate fields as networks or configurations that impose values and rules in the social spaces. It is interesting to note that the English Language Centre works as an intermediary that links the recruiters from different faculties to support the recruiting practices. In this case, the English Language Centre not only supports international students' language learning need but as the internal network for recruiters.

### **Recruitment Strategies**

The results of this research indicate that several strategies are being used for recruiting international students to depend on different contexts. Altbach and Knight (2007) note that, “institutions make major investments in marketing and branding campaigns to earn name recognition and to increase enrolments” (p. 301). In Canada, some common strategies include: educational fairs, alumni networking and printed materials, such as universities brochures and booklets. Some of the recruiters also work with actors and organizations outside Canada; for example, the China Scholarship Council, CALDO, Canadian Embassies and several private education agencies in China.

In terms of overseas recruitment practice, recruiters mentioned that they benefit from Canada as a strong “brand”. In their view, Canada, as a destination, has a better reputation than Australia and the UK, and it provides a safer environment for international students than the U.S. (Li, DiPetta, & Woloshyn, 2012; Li & Tierney, 2013). Also, Canada benefits from having a high-quality educational system where immigration



policy also motivates students to come to Canada to Canada. The Canadian brand is considered as capital to assist recruiters recruiting practice and formed a habitus to deliver the capital in the overseas recruitment. Because leveraging a brand in the recruitment process constitute symbolic capital that can be converted to economic capital in the recruitment process.

International office recruiters have used social media, commercial websites and university websites as their recruiting strategies to attract international students (Robison, 2007; Choudaha, Chang, & Schulmann, 2013; Yakaboski & Rizzolo, 2017). Through the interviews, I found that recruiters from this research-intensive university pay attention to digital marketing. There are digital recruitment officers who are responsible for maintaining digital channels and social media updates. Digital communication is essential in the context of globalization. In China, in the era of digital communication, the information channels as well as the living habits have changed dramatically due to the influence of the virtual society created by We media (Ran, Huang, Wang, Zhang, & Song, 2016). To attract the targeted market, traditional digital marketing model needs to keep the pace with the advanced technology. Therefore, digital recruiters in Canada could consider making full use of We media in China, like Sina Weibo and WeChat to better fit in the Chinese market.

Wang (2009) noted that for students and parents not proficient in English, having recruitment officers who can communicate in the local language does not undermine the features of an English-speaking university, but contributes to building a trusting relationship. Wang's (2009) argument is confirmed through the interviews. It is worth noting that Queen's University uses English and Chinese in their official website (<https://www.queensu.ca/international/chinese-introduction>). The website also lists

Queen's University's WeChat account to better assist prospective Chinese students' inquiries. Queen's University's website (<https://www.queensu.ca/international/contacts>) lists the contact information of its China Liaison Office in Shanghai. This recruitment information is consistent with Queen's University's strategic framework 2014-2019 year two implementation, which states that the success of the strategy can be attributed to “a number of initiatives – some new in 2015-2016 and some continuing from a year or more ago including: the recent addition of a second recruiter based in Beijing to complement our first recruiter in Shanghai, coupled with an expanded international recruitment team” (Queen's University, 2017, p.19). Building a liaison office in Chinese major cities, Beijing and Shanghai, with experienced recruitment officers is a new approach in Canadian Higher Education Institutions. Culture and language constitute the recruiters' cultural capital to better assist their recruitment activities. These actions show Canadian universities' effort to recruit students from the targeted country. Additionally, recruiters who are familiar with the Chinese educational system and the Canadian educational system, and who have some bilingual background (English and Mandarin/Cantonese) could also be an asset to the recruitment team in Canadian post-secondary institutions.

McKown (2009) notes that the recruitment with third-party agents has been viewed as a symbol of a weak recruitment practice and a sign of a poorly prepared recruitment team. Because the third-party education agents usually get paid by applicants to deal with international applicants' profiles, it could not reflect applicants' quality, which could undermine the quality of the university's programs. If an agent gives misleading information to a student and his/her parents and provides falsified profiles to the institution (Sarkar & Perényi, 2017) in the admission process, this could break the chain of trust in the international students' recruiting process. In addition, some higher

education institutions pay commissions to third-party agents by recruiting international students. The financial interest could lead the negative effects in the market competition. The findings in this study demonstrate that recruiters in Canada hold critical perspectives towards the third-party agents. The use of agents can also be seen as a capital due to the limited financial and human resources (Sarkar & Perényi, 2017). While recruitment agents and agencies in China can guide the Canadian recruitment teams in marketing and developing the knowledge about the Chinese market, the collaboration could be more effective.

Wang (2009) argues that the lack of effective communication channels is challenging the international recruitment in the Canadian context when competing with universities in other countries. The findings also demonstrate that while recruitment teams increasingly rely on digital recruiting, it is also important to maintain and update the digital contents in the different social media platforms.

### **Recruitment Challenges**

Recruiters face challenges during their recruitment practice, one of the recruiters from the Faculty of Education noted the disconnect with other recruitment offices and colleagues. Guo and Guo (2017) argue that in building an internationally inclusive campus, where cross-cultural learning is encouraged, university administrators, faculty, staff, and students should work collectively. They demonstrate the importance of increasing opportunities for interaction across different groups and establishing a collaborative system in higher education institutions. Hence, the international strategy across campus should be developed in a collaborative way to enhance the diversity on

campus and to educate different groups to become more inclusive and welcoming to international students.

### **Summary and Conclusions of this Chapter**

In answering the core research question: how program recruiters interpret the university's internationalization policy initiatives and how they translate their interpretations into their recruiting practices. Practice, habitus, capitals, and fields are important conceptual tools for analyzing program recruiters' actions, in terms of how recruiters enact their interpretations to the recruitment practices and how they adjust recruiting strategies in different contexts.

Habitus expresses how individuals engage in their practices (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). Bourdieu (1990a) argues that habitus is manifested in our knowledge, attitudes, values, and behaviors. For example, the recruiter from the Faculty of Business interpreted internationalization as international experience, because he had the experiences of living and working overseas. Thus, his experience forms a habitus in his recruiting practice. This explains why he values whether the candidate has international experience in the admission process.

Bourdieu (1977) has explained the relationship between people's practices and the contexts that stimulate those practices (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). Through the interviews, five recruiters noted that they adjusted recruitment strategies to different markets. For example, some recruiters use Chinese social media platforms, such as WeChat when they recruit Chinese students because Facebook or WhatsApp do not work in China, therefore, recruiters make use of the tools available in the country to advance

their recruitment practices. For the Middle East, recruiters use digital channels such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. Recruiters changed the social media platform in South Korea's market. Using digital recruitment is a form of capital that helps recruiters gain the access to different markets. These practices have already formed a new habitus in the recruiting field. The recruiting practices differ depending on the context, and these practices stimulate various recruitment strategies.

Webb, Schirato, and Danaher (2002) argue that the ways in which social actors respond to cultural contexts are primarily determined by the ways agents understand the norms of that culture. The recruiter from the Faculty of Education noted: "do as the Chinese do when you are in China" to address the importance of cultural awareness. By being aware of the rules, regulations, values, and capitals in the field, individuals must consider different possibilities from the specific sociocultural conditions and their historical context, in order to function in a particular habitus smoothly and effectively in a context (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002).

In relation the rapid changes in education policy, particularly in the field of internationalization, Lingard, Sellar, and Baroutsis (2015) indicate that the habitus becomes the basis for the actors' making sense of their practice. As mentioned in Chapter three, the concept of habitus could illuminate our understanding of the strategies that program recruiters used in their recruiting practice, and particularly, how their habitus informs their recruiting practice in China and other markets. The recruitment strategies used in China are different from other countries. For example, recruiters collaborate with private educational agencies in China; they provide training for those agents to better assist Chinese students in the admission. There is clearly an advantage to having Chinese recruitment officers focused on the Chinese market. Having recruitment officers who can

speak Mandarin or Cantonese could reduce the language barrier when communicating with Chinese students and their parents.

As recruiters move through and across different countries to recruit students, their recruiting strategies are formed and developed by habitus: which is manifested in their knowledge and their awareness of the culture. The findings of the study show that recruiters' habitus is not fixed, because a particular habitus function in one context may not fit for another. As quoted from one recruiter, "there is not one strategy fits all."

Each of the themes discussed is consistent with the theoretical framework and the literature review. The identified seven themes shed light on the different understandings and interpretations of internationalization by faculty recruiters. These interpretations reflect findings previously reported in the literature: e.g. to generate revenue, to bring different perspectives to the national student body, and to foster international trade links (Ross, Heaney, & Cooper, 2007; Ross, Grace & Shao, 2013; Legusov, 2017). Further, recruiters' recruiting practices seem largely aligned with the universities' internationalization strategic plans. For example, Queen's University's strategic plan (2014-2019)'s Year Two Implementation Report (p. 15) compares different Faculties/Schools revenue growth from 2014-15 to 2015-16 and indicates that the crucial strategy is to "plan enrolment growth (including growth in international students) and delivery of new undergraduate- and graduate level academic programs" (p. 16). The report also notes that for the most Faculties and Schools, international student tuition is the primary driver for increasing the revenue. Similarly, Western University's International Action Plan 2014 – 2019's international recruiting objective 3 (The University of Western Ontario, 2014, p. 5) lists three key objectives to increase and diversify the international student body as: "gradually increase the number of incoming

international students to 15%; diversify application pool to help ensure adequate diversity of student body; encourage applicants to apply to a wide range of programs at Western” (p.5). From the reviewed policy documents, we can see the consistency between recruiters’ interpretations and the key ideas in these documents, namely, "international students' enrolment," "program diversification," "revenue generation." Finally, this chapter also shows that program recruiter practices are aligned with the universities’ internationalization policy initiatives, offering additional support to the argument that it is necessary to take into account the recruiters' perspectives in the analysis of the internationalization to higher education.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusions of the Study**

During the international recruiting process, faculty program recruiters act as the representatives of the university and become speakers for specific programs. In most cases, recruiters are the first and direct contact with international applicants. Even though recruiters are an essential part of the universities' internationalization process in Canadian post-secondary education, their role in the internationalization agenda has been largely overlooked.

This study has explored how program recruiters interpret a university's internationalization strategic plan and how they translate this policy initiative into the recruitment of Chinese international graduate students. It analyzes how program recruiters' recruitment strategies respond to the universities' internationalization strategic plans in a selected research-intensive post-secondary institution in Ontario. In particular, to gain a deeper understanding of the processes related to the internationalization of higher education in Canada, this study situates and examines recruitment as a key component of the university's internationalization strategic plan. By looking at the role of program recruiters in the process of enacting the university's internationalization strategy, it is would be possible to understand in a more nuanced way the process of internationalization of higher education in Canada.

### **Key Literature and Theories**

In this study globalization was conceptualized as “the economic, political, and societal forces pushing 21<sup>st</sup> century higher education toward greater international



involvement” (Knight & Altbach, 2007, p. 290). Knight and Altbach (2007) argue that the results of globalization in higher education include the integration of research, the use of English as the dominant language and the growth of communication through digital technologies. The analysis revealed that program recruiters’ perspectives are consistent with Knight and Altbach’s (2007) definition of globalization, particularly, the research and scholarly activities. Other themes identified in the analysis, such as: promoting diversity, program diversification, and the enhancement of international experience.

The analysis of some internationalization policy initiatives from selected Canadian universities revealed that the call to increase the enrolment of international students is a consequence of the rapid growth of internationalization of higher education. A similar conclusion was reached in Beck’s (2012) study. Additionally, the increasing effort of adjusting the recruitment strategies for recruiting international students evidences the effect of the global competition for resources and revenue. Also, the recruitment networks identified in the analysis reveal "the intensity and the extent of international interactions" between countries (Rizvi & Lingard, 2000, p. 4).

This research adopts Rawolle and Lingard (2013)'s interpretation of Bourdieu (1972)'s "thinking tools," namely, the notions of practice, habitus, capitals, and fields as conceptual tools to examine program recruiters recruiting practices. The contextual difference between recruiters’ practices are explained in terms of the habitus that informed the recruiters' knowledge, practices and their awareness of cultural differences. Rawolle and Lingard (2008) also noted that the habitus provides the connection between agents and social practices, which allows agents to produce a particular practice that aligns with the field. The notion of habitus explains how is it possible for recruiters to connect with actors across campus and establish their recruiting practices. The

connections are constituted as through the recruitment internal and external networks, including the faculties members, International office, university's English Language Centre, embassies, intermediate agencies, etc. In addition, it was found that the field rewards the actors that make use of their capital to advance their interests, and those who have access to more capital would have the field advantage. This reflects the recruiters' strategic need to collaborate with other actors in their recruiting practices and demonstrates that, in order to achieve successful recruitment outcomes, program recruiters have to fully use their cultural and social capitals in the field. Because globalization has shortened distances and enhanced different global links across borders (Rizvi & Lingard, 2000), it provides the condition to achieve the possibilities to engage with actors in other fields across the border.

### **Results/Findings**

The following key themes were identified through the analysis of the data: (1) There was no common or unified perspective held by program recruiters. Participants made use of multiple perspectives to interpret internationalization. (2) program recruiters faced internal and external challenges in their recruiting practices; (3) recruitment networks are identified as key components in the program recruiters' recruiting practices; and (4) different recruitment strategies are adopted and each strategy is adjusted to different contexts. The analysis also identified some of the actors involved in the recruitment networks internally (on campus) and externally (abroad). The networks included Faculty members, the English Language Centre, and the International Students Centre on campus. Furthermore, some recruiters also work with actors and organizations

outside Canada; for example, the China Scholarship Council, CALDO, Canadian Embassies and several private education agencies in China. Intermediate recruitment agencies and agents in China were found to increasingly participate in the international recruiting process. This research notes that the collaboration with educational agencies outside of Canada becomes an important resource for Chinese graduate students' recruitment.

The findings demonstrate that while the interpretations of internationalization are multiple, the program recruiters' work was largely aligned with the university's internationalization strategy. Participants also revealed the challenges that they faced in their recruiting practices, including the disconnect they perceived with other recruitment offices and colleagues, and the challenges of educating people to eliminate the misunderstandings regarding the role and work of recruiters.

These themes provide important insight into recruiters' understanding of internationalization. Most participants felt internationalization was a positive way to enrich diversity. They also indicated that internationalization benefits universities in terms of diversifying their revenue stream. It is evident that programs recruiters play an important role in the internationalization process in Canadian higher education institutions.

### **Answering the Research Questions**

In response to the first research question: "*How do program recruiters at one Ontario University interpret the internationalization strategic plan?*", seven themes were identified from the analysis of the interviews. Recruiters interpret internationalization as:

international students' enrollment, international experience, competition between universities, support for research, revenue generation, enrich diversity, program diversification. The themes reflect different interpretations of internationalization from program recruiters' perspectives and outline the key aspects of how Canadian universities promote internationalization strategies. The identified themes are also important components of the universities' internationalization initiatives, which suggests interrelations between the policy documents and the participants perspectives

To answer the second question, "*How do program recruiters translate this university's internationalization strategic plan into their recruiting practices?*", the results indicate that the participants use several recruitment strategies depending on the contexts. They build internal and external recruitment networks to carry out their role in the enactment of the university's internationalization strategic plan. The strategies include: going to educational fairs, building and maintaining alumni networking, sending printed materials, such as university brochures and booklets, image branding, communicating with prospective students through various social media platforms, and working with recruitment officers who can communicate in the local language. In addition, they work with actors and organizations outside Canada; for example, the China Scholarship Council, CALDO, Canadian Embassies and several private education agencies in China.

Facing a competitive global environment in the higher education field pushes Canadian universities to seek new approaches to recruitment strategies to attract international students. For example, Queen's University uses English and Chinese in their official website (<https://www.queensu.ca/international/chinese-introduction>). This website lists the university's official WeChat channel and the contact information of Queen's University's China Liaison Office in Shanghai to assist Chinese international

applicants. Other higher education institutions could adopt these recruitment strategies in Canada in supporting the prospective Chinese applicants.

Regarding the question: “*What vision(s) of internationalization are manifested in the recruiting perceptions and practices of the recruiters from one Ontario university?*”, this study found that the visions of internationalization are revealed in the recruiting practices of the recruiters. Participants revealed the challenges that they faced in their recruiting practices, including a disconnect with other recruitment offices in the recruitment field and colleagues in the academic field, the challenge to increase domestic students’ enrolment, the misunderstandings to the recruitment field and the difficulty to match the student with the suitable research supervisor. The challenges reported by recruiters show that the international strategy across campus could be developed collaboratively to enhance the diversity on campus and to educate different groups to become more inclusive and welcoming to international students. Furthermore, as some universities in Canada have adopted an agent recruitment model, namely, using agents as intermediaries in recruitment of prospective Chinese students. It is important to provide professional training to those agents who ultimately represent Canadian institutions, so they can offer accurate and relevant support to international applicants. The challenges faced by program recruiters revealed the gap between how university enact their internationalization strategic plan and how they market their programs to international students.

To answer the question, “*How do the job responsibilities of program recruiters align with the university’s internationalization strategy?*”, this study concludes that program recruiters’ recruiting practices are aligned with the universities’ internationalization policy initiatives. For example, the recruiter from the School of

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, who is responsible for the recruitment of international graduate sponsored students, works with applicants sponsored by government agencies, such as such as CSC, the China Scholarship Council, and Mexico's AMEXCID. Since the university has agreements with different organizations across the globe, in her recruiting practice, she works to ensure that applications follow the terms of the agreement.

The recruiter from the Faculty of Education is responsible for international recruitment with the University's English Language Centre, which means that he is ultimately contributing in the recruitment for campus-wide programs. Indeed, students who complete the Centre's programs often apply to undergraduate and graduate programs on campus. In his role and job responsibility, he stressed the term "program diversification" in the interview. In the analysis of the internationalization documents from Ontario universities (Queen's University, 2014, p. 4; Western University, 2014, p. 8), it was evident that universities are willing to offer different programs and to develop more programming in support of ESL students.

This research demonstrates that there are actors involved in recruitment networks internally and externally. Recruiters work with Faculty members, the English Language Centre, the International Students Centre on campus. Furthermore, some of the recruiters also work with actors and organizations outside Canada. These findings answered the last research question, "*What other actors and organizations are involved in the program recruiters' practices?*".

## **Implications and Limitations**

This research identified several themes and concepts by interviewing five recruiters from a research-intensive university in Ontario. The identified strategies could be used to frame new recruitment strategies in the future. Furthermore, the recruitment networks identified constitute an unexplored phenomenon in the field of recruitment, which could be looked at to further interrogate the internationalization processes in Canada.

Research on the internationalization of higher education should not neglect the significance of the knowledge and insights provided by recruiters. Their knowledge, perspectives and experiences, would offer valuable insights for international students' recruitment and establish new initiatives, such as partnerships and further programming with other Canadian post-secondary institutions.

By examining how selected actors in universities interpret internationalization initiatives, researchers and policymakers would be able to identify how universities in Ontario put their internationalization strategies in practice, and in particular, how recruiters contribute to the internationalization process. In this sense, this study provides important insights to improve recruitment strategies in universities. The study also notes that institutions of higher education should build stronger recruitment networks, both locally and abroad, with different groups and individuals to improve the quality of international recruitment.

Only five program recruiters were interviewed due to time limitations. This study includes the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Engineering, and the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. However, if this study were to include more faculties, it could provide more robust insights into the university's

recruitment strategies and could help identify other recruitment networks and actors involved in the process of enacting university's internationalization strategies.

It is important to note that given the small sample, the findings may only be transferable to similar organizations. It is clear that more interviews should be conducted to get deeper insights into international students' recruitment from different faculties and perhaps from other universities. Recruiters from different faculties and different higher education institutions could bring more themes in the process of universities' internationalization that this study did not capture. Through the interviews and the information on universities recruitment liaison's website, it is evident that recruiting field remains racially homogeneous, in that most recruiters are white male. For future research, researchers could focus on how gender and race influence recruiters' recruiting practices in Canadian higher education institutions.



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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### The Letter of Ethics Approval



**Date:** 12 January 2018

**To:** Dr. Augusto Riveros Barrera

**Project ID:** 110447

**Study Title:** HOW DO PROGRAM RECRUITERS INTERPRET THE INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGIC PLAN IN A UNIVERSITY IN ONTARIO?

**Application Type:** NMREB Initial Application

**Review Type:** Delegated

**Full Board Reporting Date:** February 2 2018

**Date Approval Issued:** 12/Jan/2018

**REB Approval Expiry Date:** 12/Jan/2019

Dear Dr. Augusto Riveros Barrera

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

**Documents Approved:**

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
JQ_Dec_4_Jing's Email Script for Recruitment-Clean Version	Recruitment Materials	04/Dec/2017	2
JQ_Dec_4_Jing's LOI-Clean Version	Written Consent/Assent	04/Dec/2017	2
JQ_Nov_1_Jing's Interview Questions-	Interview Guide	01/Nov/2017	1

No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazard(s) to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kelly Patterson, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair *Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).*

## Appendix B

### Interview Questions for Program Recruiters

**Project Title:** How do program recruiters interpret Internationalization strategic plan from a university in Ontario?

**Document Title:** Interview Questions

1. What responsibilities do you have as program recruiter?
2. How long have you been working in the recruiting field and how does your experience inform your current recruiting practice?
3. How does your educational/professional background inform your recruiting practice?
4. How do you interpret the term “internationalization”, and how do you use this interpretation in your recruitment practice?
5. What do you know about internationalization strategic plans at Ontario’s universities?
6. How do you determine the numbers of international students to recruit each year? What are the international students’ proportion in terms of different programs?
7. What strategies/recruitment plan are being used in your overseas recruiting practice in terms of attracting more international students?
8. How do you adjust the recruiting strategies in different contexts (e.g. China compared to other countries)?
9. What qualities/aspects do you look for in international graduate applicants? /How do you define a suitable international applicant for the program you are promoting?
10. If the applicants have the same educational background, how do you decide which student will get the offer?

11. If the applicants are not suitable for the original program to which they applied, then, do you encourage/refer the applicants to different programs in your faculty? If so, how?
12. What are the most challenging parts in your overseas recruiting practice?
13. How do you connect with other actors or agencies outside of Canada?
14. Which highlights of your programs are most attractive to international applicants?
16. How much do you value the International English Language test, like IELTS or TOEFL in the selection process? If the applicant does not meet the minimum language requirement, what will you do?
17. How do you view the role of English Language Centres in Ontario's universities?
18. How do you measure international students' programs' satisfaction?

## Appendix C

### Email Script for Recruitment



#### Invitation to participate in research

Hello,

We obtained your email address from your institution's website. You are being invited to participate in a study that we, Jing Qu, Master's student researcher, and Dr. Augusto Riveros, Principal Investigator, are conducting.

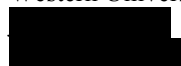
Briefly, the study involves a 60-minute private and in-person interview about your work as program recruiter, and your understanding of the internationalization strategy at your institution. Participating in this research will contribute to understanding the adoption of the internationalization strategy at your institution.

Your participation is voluntary, you may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your professional career.

If you would like more information on this study or would like to receive a letter of information about this study, please contact the researchers at the contact information given below.

Thank you,

Jing Qu  
Master student researcher  
Critical Policy, Equity and Leadership Studies  
Faculty of Education  
Western University



Augusto Riveros, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Critical Policy, Equity and Leadership Studies  
Faculty of Education  
Western University



## Appendix D

### Letter of Information and Consent



### Letter of Information and Consent

**Project Title:** How do program recruiters interpret the Internationalization strategic plan from a university in Ontario?

**Document Title:** Letter of Information and Consent

**Principal Investigator:**

Dr. Augusto Riveros,  
Assistant Professor  
Critical Policy, Equity and Leadership Studies  
Faculty of Education  
Western University



**Master's Student Researcher:**

Jing Qu  
Critical Policy, Equity and Leadership Studies  
Faculty of Education  
Western University



#### 1. Invitation to Participate

You are being invited to participate in a study that we, Jing Qu, Master's student researcher, and Dr. Augusto Riveros, Principal Investigator, are conducting. We are writing to you to invite you to participate in a research study about your understanding of the internationalization strategy at your institution. You have been invited to participate in this study because as program recruiter your understanding about internationalization strategy provides meaningful insights on how Canadian university implements these policy initiatives.

**2. Why is this study being done?**

This study aims to examine how program recruiters interpret the University's internationalization strategy and how they implement this policy initiative in their professional practice. We are particularly interested in how the internationalization strategy is being translated into program recruiters' overseas recruiting practice in the Canadian context, especially the recruitment of international students.

**3. How long will you be in this study?**

The study involves a 60-minute private and in-person interview about your work as program recruiter and your understanding of the internationalization strategy at your institution.

**4. What are the study procedures?**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to join the student researcher in a 60-minute private and in-person interview. You will be asked questions about your work as program recruiter and your understanding of the internationalization strategy at your institution. The interview will be conducted in private, on the University premises and will be audio recorded using a digital voice recorder. The audio recording is mandatory, potential participants who decline to be audio recorded will not be included in the study. This interview includes questions about how you understand internationalization strategy and your recruitment practice. The interviews will be transcribed and all names and personal identifiers will be removed to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity.

**5. What are the risks and harms of participating in this study?**

There are no known or anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study. The interview can be stopped at any time should you experience any discomfort or fatigue.

**6. What are the benefits of participating in this study?**

Participating in this research will generate useful insights on the adoption of the internationalization strategy at your institution, which will contribute to the improvement of current recruiting strategies and may enhance the programs' quality. Societal benefits include, providing universities with insights to reflect on their current policy initiatives and the improvement initiatives in the future. Moreover, this research will also contribute insight to build up effective and collaborative strategies to recruit international students.

**7. Can participants choose to leave the study?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your professional career.

### **8. How will participants' information be kept confidential?**

All data collected will remain confidential and accessible only to the investigators of this study, and will be kept for 7 years as per regulatory guidelines. If the results are published, your name will not be used. If you choose to withdraw from this study, your data will be removed and destroyed from our database. Identifiable information will be stored separately from study data in a locked cabinet. While we will do our best to protect your information, there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so. Information may not be kept confidential if data collected is required by law to be reported. Anonymized quotes with pseudonyms will be used in the final report and future publications, but it may be possible that the use of anonymized quotes may allow a person to be identified. Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may contact you or require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research.

### **9. Are participants compensated to be in this study?**

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

### **10. What are the rights of participants?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to be in this study. Even if you consent to participate you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose not to participate or to leave the study at any time it will have no effect on your employment status.

You do not waive any legal right by signing this consent form.

### **11. Whom do participants contact for questions?**

You may contact the principal investigator: Dr. Augusto Riveros. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics [REDACTED]

**This letter is yours to keep for future reference.**



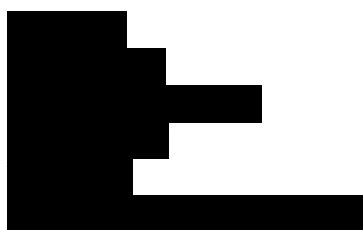
## Consent Form

**Project Title:** How do program recruiters interpret the Internationalization strategic plan from a university in Ontario?

**Document Title:** Program recruiter

**Principal Investigator:**

Dr. Augusto Riveros, Faculty of Education, Western University



**Master's Student Researcher:** Jing Qu, Faculty of Education, Western University

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to the use of unidentified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research

YES / NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (DD-MM-YYYY)

My signature means that I have explained the study to the participant named above. I have answered all questions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Person  
Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (DD-MM-YYYY)



## Curriculum Vitae

<b>Name:</b>	Jing Qu
<b>Post-secondary Education and Degrees:</b>	Zhixing College of Northwest Normal University Lanzhou, Gansu, China 2010-2014 B.A.
	Northwest Normal University Lanzhou, Gansu, China 2015-2016 MIT
	National Changhua University of Education Changhua, Taiwan 02/2016-07/2016 MIT
	The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada 2016-2018 M.A.
<b>Honours and Awards:</b>	Entrance Scholarship Faculty of Education, The University of Western Ontario, 2016-2018
	Graduate Student Internal Conference Grant Faculty of Education, The University of Western Ontario, 2018
	University of Regina Graduate Student Travel Grant Regina, Sasckchewen, Canada, 2018
	Excellent Graduate Lanzhou, Gansu, Northwest Normal University, 2014
	1st Prize of Excellent Academic Performance Lanzhou, Gansu, Northwest Normal University, 2010-2014
<b>Related Work Experience</b>	Graduate Research Assistant Faculty of Education, The University of Western Ontario 2016-2018
	Peer Guide International and Exchange Student Centre, The University of Western Ontario 2017-2018