# Migration and Resilience: Discovering Strengths and Building Capacity in International Students

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# ABSTRACT

Resilience, a trait developed through life experience, influences how an individual responds to negative events in the future. The growing wave of international students has created economic and social opportunities for host countries. Despite this, we do not know what factors develop their resilience and shape their decision to stay post-graduation. The extent of coordination of stakeholders is unclear; how can they be better supported to retain their contributions long-term? Conducting stakeholder interviews and a media analysis, we modeled the protective and risk factors that shaped the development of resilience within international students, and the overall experience of their international education. Examination of the relationship among the various stakeholders and the international students demonstrated how interactions and collaborations among stakeholders can improve a student's experience. We highlight the areas in which students require further support, and propose opportunities for collaboration, and policy change to increase international student retention and immigration.

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## 1. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

Individuals have different responses to negative life events, and an individual's resilience can influence this reaction. Resilience is defined as the personal attributes and competencies developed through personal experiences allowing individuals to navigate the events of life (Connor & Davidson, 2003; Luthar et al, 2000). Many researchers understand that resilience consists of psychological and dispositional factors that can include things such as competence, societal support systems and personality traits (Campbell-Sills et al, 2006; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Lee et al, 2013; Masten, 2001). Through a dynamic developmental process these factors evolve into two main categories: protective factors and risk factors. Protective factors include life satisfaction, optimism, and social support, whereas, risk factors focus on perceived stress, depression, and anxiety (Lee et al, 2013). The frequency in which these factors are present within an individual's life will reflect the degree to which they develop their resilience, and their satisfaction with the overall experience.

Cole (2004) found that international students who were stressed often suffered disruptions in their cognitive functioning. This hindered their learning and perception of academic experience and can cause depression.  With the intention of improving the experience of international students, other stakeholders should offer support where possible, while mitigating exposure to risk factors. The stakeholders identified within the experience of an international student are the students themselves, the institution in which they pursue their international studies, the local community, and the government.

We begin with an academic review of literature on resilience and psychological hardiness. Then we provide contextual overview by describing Canadian academic experiences and Canadian demographics. This information guided the methods of the research, which are

discussed next, followed by the results and discussion of the data collected. Finally, the limitations of the research and a brief conclusion are provided.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### a. Resilience

Resiliency refer to the personal attributes and competence that enable an individual to successfully operate and adapt to the adversity and distress of negative life events (Connor & Davidson, 2003; Luthar et al, 2000). Studies show that individuals who possess attributes associated with resilience are more likely to successfully adapt to traumatic injury, loss of job, or death of spouse, whereas individuals who have fewer of these attributes will not be as successful in adapting to similar situations (White et al., 2010). Similarly, Wang (2004) states that psychological adjustment issues are negatively associated with the development of resilience.

Several research studies define resilience as a trait that consists of psychological and dispositional factors, such as competence, societal support systems and personality traits (Campbell-Sills et al, 2006; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Lee et al, 2013; Masten, 2001). However, many researchers have varying opinions as to how this trait of resilience is developed within an individual. Some researchers argue that resilience is a fixed trait, while others refer to it as a dynamic trait (Edward, 2005). Some recent studies suggest that resiliency is a dynamic developmental process consisting of demographic and psychological variables. Risk factors, such as anxiety, depression, negative effect, and perceived stress are psychological variables and enhance the likelihood of maladaptation. However, protective factors such as life satisfaction, optimism, positive effect, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and social support enhance the process of adaptation (Lee et al, 2013). Protective factors include an individual's personality

characteristics and their environmental circumstances (Bolton, 2016). External connections and environment are important protective factors through the lifespan of individuals (Bolton, 2016). Enhancing an individual's protective factors will have a greater impact on their development of resilience, rather than reducing the risk factors they are exposed to (Lee et al, 2013). Fergus and Zimmerman noted that in the development of protective factors, a low exposure to risk is more beneficial than no risk exposure at all (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Bolton (2016) also stated that it was the interaction between protective and risk factors that led to the development of resilience. Peterson et al (2008) noted that resiliency helps to develop additional protective factors through a positive feedback loop.

A study involving adolescent African immigrant students showed that the academic support provided by teachers and the social support of the family were critical to building resilience in the students (Hersi, 2011). Similarly, studies on Latino immigrant youth demonstrated that along with individual traits, a strong family relationship, positive community atmosphere, and strong cultural inclusiveness were the key factors to build resiliency in youth (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010). Finally, Ross and Rouse (2015) found that millennials are more resilient than prior generations to adverse conditions due to their positive attitude towards life in general.

b. *Psychological Hardiness*

Hardiness is a character attribute of an individual which greatly predicts their current and future well-being. Physiological hardiness is comprised of an individual's commitment, control, and challenge (Cole, Feild, & Harris, 2004). The three attributes that define hardiness are similar to the protective factors of resilience. Commitment is defined as an individual's willingness to actively participate and be involved in their surroundings. Control is an

understanding that the individual has the ability to make a difference in their own life, and challenge is the acceptance of change as a regular and positive part of life (Cole, Feild, & Harris, 2004). Through the development of protective factors, an individual's hardiness can be improved, and accordingly, increase the likelihood of success.

Stress from any aspect of an individual's life can have an immediate or even lasting effect on their cognitive abilities and productivity. Research conducted on international students showed that those suffering from stress often experience disruptions in cognitive functioning that negatively affect their learning as well as their general outlook toward academic life, potentially leading to depression (Cole, 2004). Students facing academic stress are at risk for burning out, but stress effects can be mitigated through exercise, proper nutrition, social support and a well- developed hardy personality (Cole, 2004).

c. *Academic Experience*

Attending college or university can be an especially stressful time in the lives of students because of the multiple areas in their lives that require attention and performance. Students must find a balance between their academic, personal, and social lives (Cole, Feild, & Harris, 2004). Zirkel and Cantor (1990) noted that students who are focused on their academic performance experience greater levels of stress, and in turn have a more negative academic experience (Cole, Feild, & Harris, 2004). Compared to their domestic counterparts, international students face added pressure from their families to perform academically, while also having to adjust to the new culture, and social environment they have moved to (Li, Chen & Duanmu, 2010). For these reasons, international students are at a greater risk of experiencing depression, increased stress, and reduced motivation in both their academic studies and personal lives.

Over the past two decades the number of international students attending Canadian universities has increased (StatsCan, 2017). These students are enrolled in various levels of programming; however, their presence is greatly felt in graduate level degrees. International students who have obtained either a master's or doctoral degree from a Canadian university outpace domestic students at a rate of 2:1 (StatsCan, 2017). Some universities have increased their enrollment numbers to reflect an increase in international student applications (Pfeffer, 2017).

Due to the growing numbers of international students pursuing their academic studies at Canadian universities, many universities are introducing services to support their needs, for example, one university adopted an online wire payment system to allow international students a more convenient method to pay their fees in a currency of their choice (Windsor, 2017). Additionally, universities have implemented the Keep.meSAFE counselling service targeted to international and exchange students. Keep.meSAFE is being adopted because it addresses many of the difficulties international students face when seeking help. This counselling service is offered over the phone, through text, a mobile app or through their website. International students may be hesitant to seek counselling support because mental illness may not be as openly accepted or supported in a student's home country (Atkinson & Gim 1989). By offering their services through anonymous outlets, Keep.meSAFE is able to mitigate some of the stigma around mental health and seeking help. Also, they offer their services 24/7, which many counselling services are unable to do, and they provide service in a student's first language (Douchette, 2017). Through addressing the needs of international students with the Keep.meSAFE program universities are able to assist these students with their increased

academic pressure and stress of living in a new environment, in the hopes of improving their overall experience and influencing their decision to stay post-graduation.

International Student Connect (ISC) is a pilot project designed to identify and develop an appropriate service response to the settlement needs of international students pursuing post-secondary education in Ontario. The ISC is working to connect international students with the wider settlement services and community, transfer information using online services including pre- and post-arrival webinars, provide tailored and practical information geared towards international student's needs, and increase access to online resources through the ISC website. The resources currently available on the ISC website are; let's connect sessions (group workshops on topics such as, immigration pathways, legal rights in Canada, banking and credit, healthcare, etc.), one-on-one settlement support, Ontario international student guide, international student connect handbook, and webinars.

Beyond the additional supports offered by universities, the student-faculty interactions can play a large role in the experience of international students. Glass et al (2015) found that it international students' interactions with their professors provided the most meaningful and high-impact experiences. These interactions helped students to feel included and participate more within their classes, develop and build their own ideas, and recognize their full potential and desired direction in life. International students mentioned that professors provided more practical support than the students' domestic peers, and the same amount as students' same culture international peers. The faculty of a university may be the most frequent point of contact for students and can have a large impact on an international student's overall experience.

The Canadian population is aging faster than the workforce is being replaced, which can potentially lead to problems if the demographics continue to shift in this direction. This could lead to lower economic growth, a tighter labour market, and more skill set shortages. Immigration is one of the key tools Canada uses, and will continue to use, to keep its population growth up, particularly in the working age group, to combat population decline in the domestic population. (Bouajram, 2015, Macdonald, 2016)

Cities around Canada have noticed the value that international students can bring to their community and job market. The presence of international students creates a thriving environment of research, trade, and business opportunities. Many cities have noticed an increase in the number of international student applications for local universities, and others are looking for ways to help retain these students after graduation. The Atlantic Immigration Pilot Project is one example of how Canada is hoping to better utilize the talent available and develop the country through international students.  A three-year project, it aims to grow the population and develop the labour market within the region by working with employers (Canada, 2017). The project is looking to hire 2,000 foreign workers and international student graduates over three years (Campbell, 2017).

In 2015, 271,000 people immigrated to Canada, approximately 0.8% of its total population. To bring modest growth in the population, Canada needs to bump up its immigration to 1% by 2030 (Keung, 2016). Even though most immigrants come through the economic class, finding a job in their respective area of education is a challenge. Discrimination, lack of recognition of foreign education, and literacy are the three-primary reason mentioned within the Conference Board of Canada reports for this difficulty in finding

jobs (Owen, 2017). They also depict Canadian employer's value local work experience, local education and language skills as the top three criteria for hiring employees, thus creating a systemic preference for a locally-trained workforce. One way to improve immigration satisfaction is to attract, engage, develop, and retain the international student population in Canada.

Over the past twenty years the percentage of international students applying to Canada has increased and is expected to continue to do so (StatsCan, 2017). A report released by University World News states that international students preferred destination for post-secondary education is shifting towards Canada, compared to the US, and UK. In specific regions, such as Africa and Asia-pacific, Canada has surpassed the UK as the preferred destination (O'Malley, 2018). It is thought to be because of the recent geopolitical events in these other countries that Canada has seen an increase in popularity amongst international students. The decision of the UK to leave the European Union and the immigration control changes in the US increases the desirability of the Canadian political situation. However, despite these changes, the US and the UK remain the top destinations for international students, and it is thought to be because the prestige of the universities outweighs the worry surrounding these changes (O'Malley, 2018). Many factors influence a student's decision, and the current situation has increased the number of international students applying to Canada.

Ontario receives approximately half of the international students coming to Canada, and half of the valid post-graduation work permits issued to international students (Waddell, 2014). An international student is characterized by someone who is between 18-35 years of age, can read and write in English or French, and has passed the language-qualifying exam

(TOEFL/CLB). They may continue to reside in Canada after graduation, however, many lack connections to the wider community networks outside of their Canadian university.

The top reasons why an international student chooses a particular city for study is governed by the institution itself, along with safety, multiculturalism, affordability, climate, availability of part-time work, and presence of family or friends. South-western Ontario is a top destination for international students due to the above-mentioned reasons.

There are many different stakeholders that must be considered when looking at the impact and support of international students. The literature reviewed provided an initial understanding of the services offered, and the perspective of the international students and the other stakeholders Canada wide. Due to this demonstrably large and increasing presence of international students in universities across Canada, we conducted research to analyze how the development of resilience within international students impacts their overall experience, and post-graduation residency decision.

## 3. <u>METHOD</u>

### a. *Sample*

Our case study was conducted at a mid-size university serving 15,000 students in Southwestern Ontario. In 2017, 25 per cent of total enrollment was at the graduate level. Of the graduate students enrolled, 61 per cent were international students - one of the highest percentages of international graduate students in Canada.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four members of the faculty and staff, two members of the community and 28 international students. A media analysis reviewed 104 articles from the local newspaper (the most-read per capita newspaper in Canada) to gain an

understanding of the community's views. Insights about the government's position on international students and immigration were gathered through government articles and statistics.

Results from this case study indicated that international students have the most interaction with, and support from both their academic institution and their social network. It explored how and when the various stakeholders were involved with the students, as well as the frequency with which students interacted with these protective and risk factors. This information was then put together into two separate models that were used to compare involvement and identify gaps or areas of flexibility within the international student experience.

### b. *Qualitative Methodology*

The decision of an international student to stay, post-graduation, is a highly personal choice, and may be greatly influenced by their experience. Also, the perception held by the university, local community, and governments about international students can vary based on their interactions with them. For these reasons, a qualitative analysis of narrative data was used (Renner & Taylor-Powell, 2013). Using a case study approach, interviews and a media analysis were conducted, along with a review of government documents to analyze the perspectives of various stakeholders. This section will outline our method and develop a model of international student recruitment and experience.

### c. *Interviews*

Interviews were conducted with: 1) faculty and staff, 2) international, graduate students, and 3) community members involved with this group of students. All interviews were held on campus. There were two researchers involved in each interview; one taking notes and the other

leading the discussion. The roles of the researchers did not change to retain consistency among interviews.

The first set of interviews, with faculty and staff, were conducted from April-June of 2017. Interviewees were selected based on previous knowledge of involvement with and programs for international students, and a subsequent snowball effect to cover a variety of areas within the University. Interviews were conducted with four individuals involved in a variety of the different stages of an international student's experience. For example, faculty and staff relating to international student recruitment, support programs, and program directors were interviewed. Participants were asked open-ended, general questions about their interactions with international students, how the students are supported and interact with the university, and generally about the academic experience of international students. Interviews with the faculty and staff were conducted first to provide a foundation of information for generating questions for the second set of interviews.

The second set of interviews was conducted from June to September 2017 with international, graduate students. Data gleaned from the interviews began to converge around 25 interviews, in accordance with prior research (Baker, Edwards, & Doidge, 2012), and in total, 28 were conducted.  In order to recruit participants, each researcher identified a few international students, and to maintain voluntary participation, the opposite researcher would ask the students to participate. Additionally, an email was circulated by program coordinators asking for participants, and students who had already participated were asked for referrals. Coordinators of programs targeted to international students also distributed survey information. Students responded to the researchers, and upon completion of their interview, recommended participation to their friends. Students were interviewed from the graduate level Master of Business

Administration program, the internationally-focused Master of Management, and Master and Doctoral Engineering programs. Participating international students were in different stages of their degree, had been in Canada anywhere from one month to five years, and originated from eight different countries. A detailed breakdown of interviewee demographics can be found in Table 1.

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The international students were asked a series of 17 semi-structured questions relating to the process of deciding to study in Canada, their transition to the university, and experience during their academic program. For example, students were asked "What factors did you consider in the decision-making process", "Please tell me about the barriers you've encountered prior to your arrival as an international student at the University [disguised]", and "What is your plan after finishing your studies"? The interviews ranged from 15 to 45 minutes.

Upon completion, the researchers reviewed the notes to find common themes from the interviews. Relating these themes back to the literature reviewed, the primary researcher then coded the interviews based on protective factors and risk factors (Lee et al, 2013), as well as how these factors were perceived to have influenced the students experience. Protective factors were coded based on social support, university support, future prospects and political stability. Risk factors were coded for process difficulty, academic difficulty, social difficulty, and political unrest. Each of the above mentioned, coded topics were further divided based on pre-departure

decision, international academic experience, and post-graduation expectations. This coding scheme allowed for an understanding of the key factors international students face.

The third set of data was collected from community members who interacted with international students on a regular basis through their jobs. The researchers met with two individuals, one in May and one in September. The first individual was a local Canadian Immigration lawyer, while the second was the Executive Director of a locally-based, but nationally-recognized immigrant settlement organization. When speaking with these two individuals they were informed about the topic of the research, and were asked about their interactions with international students, and opinions about the research topic.

d.  *Media Analysis*

The local community is a large stakeholder in the analysis of international students and the impact of their studies and post-graduation decision. Consequently, we conducted a media analysis to understand community perceptions and attitudes and to gauge the support offered to international students.

Using the key phrase "international students", a search of the local newspaper produced 104 results. The results ranged from 2008 to 2017, with a stronger focus in the last four years. The articles were obtained from the newspaper's online database in December, 2017. Six of the links did not work, and therefore, a total of 98 articles were reviewed. This media outlet reaches 149,000 people on a weekly basis through print, approximately 55 percent of the local population (disguised citation, newspaper, 2017). The online readership is able to reach a much wider audience, and therefore, has a higher readership around 341,000 (comScore, 2014). The

newspaper has strong readership numbers for its size compared to similar newspapers across Canada, and is the most visited media source in the local community (Van Wageningen, 2013).

Each article was coded based on the topic, viewpoint, context, and schooling level. For the topic, articles were coded as to whether international students were the main topic of discussion, or simply mentioned within the article. The viewpoint distinguished if international students were referenced in a positive, neutral, or negative way, while the context was coded based on the context the students were referenced in: school or the community. Finally, articles were coded based on the level of schooling pursued by the international students, grade school, high school, or university/college.

Of the 98 articles, 34 focused only on international students. Seventy-seven profiled international students at the college or university level, and 22 profiled students at the secondary school level.  Fifty-two mentioned them in a positive light, while only seven were negative. A full breakdown of the results can be found in Table 2.

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Secondary data were also collected from various government sources.  This was used to gather insights into the government's view of international students. Statistics and articles or quotes published from the government were reviewed.

## 4. **RESULTS**

An analysis of the data gathered presented a variety of themes relating to the experiences of international students and the impact had on the various stakeholders. The student experience was broken down into three sections; the decision to enroll in a Canadian institution, international academic experience, and post-graduation expectations. The first two sections are influenced by different factors and stakeholders, all of which have in impact on the final section of their post-graduation expectations and plans. A full breakdown of the frequency of these sections and the coded themes can be found in Table 3.

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### a. *Decision to Enroll in a Canadian Educational Institution*

Local schools are actively pursuing international students to enrich their classrooms; therefore, interviews were used to determine what factors the international students considered when choosing this university. During student interviews, all participants were asked who was consulted, and what factors helped in the decision-making process, and ultimately, why they chose this university. All students spoke of both social and academic supports that impacted their choice. For example:

> An agent in India helped me to figure out which schools offered a program I was interested in, and despite [the university] being ranked last it was the personal feel that made my decision. The program administrator set up a Skype interview, which made me feel like it was more of a selective process and that they wanted me. It was a more personal touch rather than just accepting me based on my resume, a piece of paper. (S27)

Responses varied in the academic representative that was consulted, some spoke of a recruitment agency in their home country, while others spoke to university faculty and staff while they were traveling to recruit students to their programs. One student also noted that their decision was influenced, "through contacts of my previous supervisor" (S3).

A student's academic support was additionally motivated by the programs offered at the university. Since this research is focused around graduate students, their field of study has already been determined, and therefore, programs offered by a university greatly influence their choices and decision. "The [university] is one of the schools having civil opportunities, [university] matches my intended career profile" (S10).

Social supports were also mentioned in 100 percent of the interviews. In the pre-departure decision stage, the social support came in two different forms. The first form of support was offered through family and friends in their home country. One student commented that, "My husband was very supportive, he wanted me to go to Canada cause he has a friend in Winnipeg that recommended it" (S25). Other students mentioned that not only did their families support them in their decision, they also supported them financially (S15, S17, S21, S22, S27). This support from home also extended to friends who were past students of the [university]. Ten of the prospective students knew people who had completed the degree that they were considering, and therefore, gained first hand testimonials and recommendations from their friends.

The second form of social support that students spoke of during their interview was the support of family and friends currently in the university's city, or more broadly, in Canada. Twenty of the 28 students had this second kind of support, for example, "I talked with Italian

students who had been to Canada before on this program, who gave me suggestions and I also bought a house and bed off of last year's students" (S28), said one interviewee.

Less than half of the students considered the potential of future prospects, or the political stability of the country they were applying to. The frequency of political stability also includes the consideration of exchange rates, and the cost of tuition. Within this category, the cost of tuition was the biggest consideration, and one student mentioned that this greatly influenced their final decision (S15). Consideration of tuition costs recognized the burden that international studies place on their family, as this student also mentioned his parents were funding his graduate schooling.

Risk factors were not mentioned as frequently as the protective factors for the pre-departure phase of an international student's overall experience. Four students mentioned that they had academic difficulties that added stress or hassle to their experience. One student found his experience to lack organization and struggled with miscommunication at the University (S16). Two students found the university took extended periods of time to reply, one student commented, "[University] took lots of time to reply, I got other offers about a month before I heard from [University], and I was sending lots of emails to them" (S27). Despite the experiences of these four students, the majority of risk factors came from process difficulty, which usually occurred after they had accepted their admission to university. For these students it was getting documents from their undergraduate program at home, and visa processing requirements that gave them difficulties.

> Getting my visa wasn't straightforward; it took two and a half weeks. The night before I left the visa arrived. It was a very stressful start to my trip; they definitely did not make it easy for me. (S23)

*b.  Enrollment – Local Community Perceptions*

The opinion of the community was gathered through an analysis of local news articles. Eighteen of the articles specifically mentioned rising numbers of international students at schools in the locale. School boards viewed rising numbers of international students as a benefit to their learning environment. One article said, "Students from abroad help foster a cosmopolitan learning environment that benefits all students, university representatives say" (Sagan, 2016). Other articles discussed initiatives taken to recruit more international students, for example, adding services to their schools to ease a student's transition. Within the local school boards there was currently a focus on international students to compensate for the declining number of domestic students enrolled. For example, one media article mentioned, "tapping into the international market is a growth area in an era of dwindling enrolment" (Waddell, 2017a). Not only did this help with enrollment, but it was reported that international students have alleviated some of the debt facing local school boards (Waddell, 2017b).

Enrolment increases also created jobs for local teachers. "The [County District School Board] has created a full-time position to oversee its growing International Student Program" (Waddell, 2017f). Also, teaching positions were created due to the increasing number of students (Waddell, 2017c).

*c.  International Academic Experience*

The protective factor with the greatest impact on the academic experience was social support. One hundred percent of the students mentioned social support during their interview. The majority of students discussed support for finding accommodation and for building a social network.  For example, "I have a friend who did the same program years ago, he helped to introduce me to friends here, and provided me a social network" (S28). A student had a friend

from their hometown enrolled in the same program, the year ahead of them, and was able to use

this individual as a resource in many different areas of their life in Canada.

> "My friend helped with any questions I had, whether it was about things I was learning in school, or about things to do around [the city]. It was nice to have someone here who went through a similar experience I was going through. She also helped me to get settled in [the city] by arranging a room for me in her apartment building." (S25)

The university also played a large role in supporting students during the completion of

their graduate program. A number of students discuss the support offered by the International

Students' Centre, particularly at the beginning of their studies by providing program-specific

orientations. One student mentioned, "... the International Students' Centre helped me to open a

bank account, set up my student card, and register for courses" (S7). Other academic supports

such as the Centre for English Language Development (CELD) (S14), professors (S22), and

research supervisors (S11) were mentioned within the interviews.  The local newspaper

published an article about the opening of a new building for CELD to assist international

students with their transition to school in Canada.

> "This is a new home for our English training programs," said [president of the university]. "Those are programs that attract students from all around the world as a first step toward becoming a student at the university. We have students from more than 50 countries that come and study English here" … Forty per cent of students at CELD are pursuing graduate studies, while the remaining 60 per cent are pursuing undergraduate programs. (Steele, 2016)

There were other supports offered to the international students through the academic

institutions that they attended. These supports ranged from programs offered within the school,

to programs designed to help involve students with the community and Canadian culture. The

community college paired with the local immigration support centre to support new international

students in an orientation program called, Orientation to Ontario. A brief article was published

within the local paper about this pilot orientation program and the benefits it would have for international students (Waddell, 2016). In a truly reciprocal program, the Catholic school board introduced an English immersion summer camp for international students to adapt to Canadian culture, while also practicing their English language skills.

> The students will be talking about Asian culture a couple times a week with the 110 elementary school students in the Minds on Learning Academy held in the same building. As part of their package, the international students get three meals a day at Central Park. The food is being prepared by Grade 9 students enrolled in a high school culinary credit course given as part of the board's Summer Reach Ahead program. (Waddell, 2017g)

The Catholic School board also increased the intensity of their English as a Second Language program, and the change was well received by students. "For newcomers and international students, acquiring English-language skills is vital to starting a new life in Canada. This change is very important because it will help us graduate earlier" (Waddell. 2017e). The Catholic board implemented this change as a part of their open boundaries vision, getting students into the mainstream as quick as possible, while also giving them options as to which local school to attend.

Through a discussion with the director of the ISC and a review of nine published newspaper articles an understanding of the Host for the Holidays program was gained. This program was offered at Thanksgiving and Christmas by the ISC at the university.  Host for the Holidays pairs international students with local families or community partners for a holiday meal and celebration (UW2). The articles ranged from asking local families to host international students, to praising a local business who hosts between 50-100 students every Christmas for a holiday meal. Each article included quotes from either past hosts or students, and they were always overwhelming excited and positive about the experience. For example,

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Christmas Day can be lonely when your family is an ocean away. This is what led BD of the GB Cafe to host a free community meal on Christmas Day which drew a crowd of [international] university students who couldn't be with their families this Christmas, together with [city residents] who lived nearby. "We wanted a way that we could make a positive impact in our community," he said. "The local neighbourhood is very important to us." (City Desk, 2012c)

This article shows that local business desired to positive influence the community, and they considered the international students a large part of that community. Local families also recognized the benefits of programs such as these,

Huntington says hosting students year after year has been an extremely enriching experience for her family, especially for her children. "It shows them that the world is a big place and allows them to learn about different countries and cultures," she said. (City Desk, 2014)

Community outreach and understanding of the value of international students extended beyond university led initiatives. The local post office was said to be closing, and the community was disappointed not only to be losing a historic building, but also because the international students would be losing a valuable resource. The community supported the university's initiatives in recruiting international students, and could see how services, such as a post office, can make a difference in the experience of these students.

Beyond Canada Post's dismissal of the post office as both community meeting space and an important link to the history of this area, the corporation is lacking a true business vision in not recognizing the increasing need for the post office as the nearby [university] continues to grow and attract international students. As the university positions itself to globally recruit students, invariably many of those students will seek to live in nearby Sandwich and will require the ability to send and receive mail and packages from their family and homelands. Removing the post office at just the time that the university is attempting to become more global is both ironic and an economic impairment to the school and the city. (City Desk, 2013a)

The community has also noticed the impact that international students are having on the housing market. For example, "The lower vacancy rate is believed to be a result of higher

international immigration, a higher number of international students and higher employment for young adults" (Thompson, 2017). Seeing the contribution of this group of students, community members also reached out to help international students get accustomed to life in Canada.

> A grocery store tour aimed at international students at the [University] is also open to the public. Dietitian Chris Wellington of the [local] Family Health Team will lead the way, introducing healthy food choices available to newcomers unfamiliar with supermarket shopping. (City Desk, 2012a)

Just as the community attempted to mitigate the risk factors international students were exposed to locally, the university made a similar effort. Therefore, we used interview questions to determine the risk factors facing students, and three different factors were mentioned. Four students had difficulties relating to their academic experience that all dealt with course selection. One of these students also lacked a supervisor who specialized in their area of research, therefore, they experienced difficulty in gaining the technical guidance they required (S28). A few students had difficulty submitting their fees. For example: "Fee submission was not updated in the system and it took a week to resolve my issue" (S10).

The other risk factors encountered by international students surrounded their experience in the city. They had process difficulties in securing accommodation, and social difficulties in finding transportation around the city. A student mentioned, "... with no car I had difficulties going out at night, getting groceries, and seeing friends" (S24). In 2012, when the local budget grocery story relocated many international students were left without an easy way to get food. No longer located on a bus route, getting groceries, without access to a car, became very difficult. However, in response the university and community were able to partner and provide a service for these students,

> Starting later this month, Orr said a free bus shuttle provided by the Real Canadian Superstore will carry students from campus to the Superstore … every Tuesday from

4p.m. to 10 p.m. Orr called the student union's new partnership with the Real Canadian Superstore … perfect timing. (City Desk, 2012b)

Through efforts to work together, mutual benefits were experienced by the community, international students, and the university. Twenty-six out of 28 interview participants expressed satisfaction with their overall international academic experience. A 93 percent satisfaction rate, supported by social and academic protective factors, with minimal exposure to risk factors could have an important influence on the decision of a student post-graduation. However, regardless of how long students had been in Canada, 25 out of the 28 students - the vast majority of students - hoped to stay in Canada post-graduation.  The Director of the local immigration support agency then questioned, should they be paying international tuition fees? If students had the intention, from the beginning of their studies, to stay and continue to contribute to the local Canadian community, is it right to charge international rates? Rather, should they be offered the opportunity to pay domestic fees based on their long-term intentions? (C2)

Our media analysis reviewed articles over ten years and recurring topics were student tuition rates and increasing student activity fees.  Articles presented the opinions of the university's administration and students regarding the large tuition increases for international students. For example, "Fees for international students will increase by 6.5 to eight per cent per year. There's no provincial cap on international tuition fee increases. Most international students face hikes ranging from a $1,000 to $2,500 (law) in each of the next two years" (Waddell, 2017d). During the same time period, domestic students saw annual increases of only $200 to $900.

One article reflected the perspective of a frustrated international doctoral student, who noted the rising tuition rates make it difficult to concentrate on their studies when they are having

to work multiple part time jobs to be able to afford school. This student says, "We are a source of talent. We are a source of hard working dedication, but we are not a source of income. But the university, the way the university looks at us, is from the business-oriented perspective" (Thompson, 2005). Publishing this article, from the perspective of the student, is one example that the community empathizes with the issues facing international students. Later the university reviewed funding for international graduate students,

> "I think there's an increasing recognition that a lot of international students are coming to study and staying in Ontario," said, [the president and vice-chancellor of the university]. "The province has opened the door to having more discussion on how we support and fund international students." (Waddell, 2014)

The president of the Graduate Student Society commented, "the country would benefit from such an investment in international graduate students. He said the majority of such students stay in Canada. "This should've been done a long time before, if the government invests in us, they're investing in the country" (Waddell, 2014). A policy change to this effect would make international graduate studies available to wider group of students,  and would satisfy the government's interest in research and innovation that comes from graduate students (Waddell, 2014).

### d. Post-Graduation Expectations

The local Canadian immigration lawyer we interviewed offered his services pro bono to international students at three universities across Ontario, including the [university]. He spoke about the services most commonly requested from students and of the process for applying to permanent residency (PR).

> "At the beginning the Canadian government wants to see that the international students will be returning home after their study period. However, they also want to keep the best

of the best students to stay here after they finish, so they allow them the chance to transfer to a permanent resident." (C1)

The government realized that there were many talented international students coming through our school system, and upon completion of their degree, it was beneficial to our country to have them stay (Macdonald, 2016). The lawyer discussed what the Canadian government considered the "best of the best" students.

> It is not the program that the students come from that will increase their chances of gaining permanent residency, but rather the work experience that they have… It is the local eligible work experience that can make a difference, but it is difficult to ensure that the experience is eligible. Programs that offer co-op can have an advantage because it gives the students additional work experience to help them get more points [for the system used for permanent residency] (C1)

During the interview period with the students, all were still completing their degree requirements, and could only speculate about their post-graduation decision. Students were asked about their plan after graduation, and if they planned to stay in Canada, what influenced that decision? Although students expressed a desire to stay in Canada post-graduation, they noted that their final decision depended on many factors, and different opportunities. However, they still discussed the protective and risk factors they had considered, and a shift was noticed in the frequency in which they were discussed.

Social support was discussed 12 times, much lower than in the previous two sections. However, it was referenced in a more general context where students simply mentioned that their interactions with Canadians were friendly, so they feel they would enjoy staying. For example, when asked what factors helped to make their decision to stay in Canada/in the local area, one student said, "I like the way people interact here, it is very honest and I appreciate that" (S13). 82 percent of the students on the other hand considered the potential of future prospects when making their post-graduation decision. A student commented, "Technological advances is good

in Canada, it helps in my career. I plan to apply for work permit, work for ten years here and later on possibly move back to India" (S9). Political stability was mentioned by 10 students, more at this stage than any other of the international student experience. Students appreciated the "political stability and safety of life" (S20) that they found in Canada.

Interviews were conducted with current graduate students, and therefore, when asked questions about their post-graduation plans they were only able to speculate as to the barriers or supports they may encounter. This is believed to be the reason behind the lower frequency of risk factors mentioned at this stage of the international student experience. Three students commented on process difficulty in terms of the amount of time it took to receive Permanent Resident (PR) status (S24, S25, S28), and one social risk where the individual did not have connections within the community to find an appropriate job (S28).

## 5. <u>CONCEPTUAL MODEL DEVELOPMENT</u>

Using information gathered from the literature reviewed, interviews and the media analysis, two models were developed. These models depicted the relationship between a student's experience pursuing international post-secondary studies, and the development of internal resilience. We outlined the risk factors and protective factors that contribute to student resilience, and considered the nature and extent of stakeholder involvement. Information regarding how protective factors and risk factors affect the experience and resilience of students (Lee et al, 2013) was used to determine how their experiences contribute to their retention, degree completion, and decision to stay in Canada.

Student interviews and the frequency in which the students mentioned the different protective and risk factors within their interviews helped in the development of the first model (Figure 1). This model is used to depict the process a student goes through when selecting an

international university to attend. The proposed mediating experience of gathering information about prospective universities was developed through a review of student answers. The proposed moderating variables are influenced by the frequency in which students mentioned the particular factors within their interview.

We created a second model through a review of the academic experience and post-graduation expectation stages. Figure 2 depicts the relationship of the international students with the other stakeholders involved, and how the stages are connected, and influenced by the different protective and risk factors. The two models depict how students are receiving support, and identify where stakeholders may have the largest influence on the student experience.

## 6.  DISCUSSION

The purpose of this case study was to better understand the interaction between the four stakeholders and subsequent development of resilience within international students at the University. The research examined the risk and protective factors affecting a student, and where and how the stakeholders were involved so that they could potentially improve the students experience. The following discussion is deconstructed by stakeholder and stakeholder influence.

### a.  Students

Researchers have found that it is the combination of enhancing protective factors, with small exposure to risk factors that produce the greatest resilience within people (Lee et al, 2013, Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). If the development of resilience is similar to the positive experience of an international student, then it can be said that it was the students with this combination of risk and protective factors that were the most resilient. Two students discussed multiple risk factors that influenced their time in Canada, causing an overall negative academic

experience. However, the other 26 students spoke of a combination of risk and protective factors that led to a positive experience. We wonder if there is a specific combination of factors that will lead to an ideal outcome? Collaboration between the stakeholders can help to enhance protective factors that students are exposed to. However, not every situation can be controlled for, and it is these situations that will provide the small exposure to risk, which will further enhance the development of resilience. Partnerships between the university and community, such as the host for the holidays program and the grocery bus, are great ways for the international students to develop relationships in the community, but also with other students. Through the host for the holidays program students are placed with local hosts who may be police officers, professors, entrepreneurs, or anything in between, giving students the chance to learn about opportunities available locally, while also learning about Canadian traditions. They also have the opportunity to meet other international students, as most of the hosts invite two or more students to their holiday meal. The success of these events however, is dependent on the participation of the students, and their willingness to meet new people and get involved. While these programs are currently well attended, there is room for them to grow, and room to expand the services if the students create the demand for it. Students rely on the university, community, and government to provide them with these protective factors, but they must also realize that they have the power to influence their experience and advocate for international students as a whole.

Upon completion of their program, a comparison of resilience between domestic and international students would offer insights to the effects of different factors on student experience. This comparison could shed light on the distinct experiences of the two groups of students, and how services should be tailored to their needs.  Further research into this

comparison could also allow for a better understanding of how resilience is built through a student's experience of moving to a new country. If international students have a much greater level of resilience, and are better off for it, is there a way to build this resilience within domestic students during their studies?

b.  *University*

The [university] is currently offering valuable orientation programs and services to the incoming international students through the International Students Centre (ISC), and the Centre for English Language Development (CELD). One student commented, "I got lots of help from ISC so I attended all sessions and orientations and it all helped me get settled into [the city] and the university" (S25). However, during the student interviews few mentioned support from the university beyond orientation. One reason these services might not have been mentioned is that during the interviews students were not given as many opportunities to speak about their experience during their time in Canada. Interviews were focused mostly on before and after the study period, leading to less information about this time.  From the media analysis and interviews with faculty and staff, it is known that additional services are offered, and are well attended. For example, the director of the ISC mentioned some of the services they offer include workshops regarding resume writing every Friday, clinics where students can apply for their Social Insurance Numbers (SIN), and tax services. The most well attended workshop throughout the year was the workshop put on by the government, through the ISC, about how to transition to PR. The director estimated 60-70 percent of international students will transition to PR, and therefore, this workshop was highly popular with the students. The ISC paired their information about the needs of international students with the services offered around campus, the community and through the government to best services the students.

The director of the ISC also mentioned that they tried to combat the major issue of international students forming social circles with people only from the same country as them. Pursuing education abroad provided an opportunity not only to learn about a host country, but also the countries and traditions of other international students. The ISC hosted fun events for the students to attend, giving them an opportunity to celebrate things like Canada day and Christmas, while also providing an opportunity for students to connect with each other and make new friends (UW2). They also paired with student groups targeted to international students, to provide organized traveling, to places such as, Point Pelee, Montreal, and Ottawa. Often these trips sold out due to the high demand from students. However, an observation was made that the Chinese students do not usually participate. The ISC asked some of these students why they did not participate, and what sort of events they would be interested in attending. The results showed that the students were seeking opportunities to visit malls and go shopping. Armed with this information, the ICS then planned a trip to the local outlet mall (UW2). The ISC was constantly surveying the international students they serviced in an effort to improve the opportunities for these students and give them the chance to build the social connections, and protective factors critical to developing stronger resilience.

Apart from offering services geared towards international students, the [university] also offered programs that were targeted to these students. For example, the Master of Management (MOM) and Master of Engineering (MENG) programs were designed for international students. Would such targeted programs be the best option for international students? There are two different viewpoints for this topic, offering specific programs for international students allows their unique set of needs to be easily addressed, and it can allow for programs to be designed to areas of interest and growth in other countries. Offering programs directed to international

students can also helped to make recruitment easier in the future as, "International students, not so much Canadians but others, tend to follow each other and gravitate to a school where they feel most comfortable" (City Desk, 2013b). Being surrounded by others who have gone through the same transition and come from the same country as you can help to instill a sense of comfort within international students. For this reason, specialized degrees aimed at international students might offer a sense of comfort to the students that they target. Conversely, targeted programs also limit the interactions of international students with local students. This limited interaction may prevent them from making valuable connections with local students who might provide additional social support to the international students should they stay post-graduation. Also, the degree to which a program is targeted, and the fit of the students enrolled, create differences in an individual's overall experience.

Ten students were interviewed from the MOM program and all but one student came from either China or Bangladesh. These nine students were fairly representative of the program demographics (UW1). These students enjoyed their program, spoke of strong social and academic support and satisfaction, while the one remaining student had the opposite experience. This last student was originally from the U.K., and previously studied in the Netherlands. He spoke of academic difficulties with miscommunication and disorganization, as well as, a lack of social connections with classmates and Canadians (S16). Knowing that international students tend to form groups with individuals from the same country (UW2), we can understand why the only European student we interviewed from the MOM program had a negative experience. As his program was targeted to international, primarily Asian students, he did not fit in with the majority. Consequently, he felt left out and unsupported; resulting in an unsatisfactory experience. This student did not have the protective factors to enrich his experience and combat

the risk factors he faced. Hence, we wonder, if a university chooses to offer targeted programs, should it also offer services to create a strong social network amongst all students?

*c. Community*

The media analysis indicated that international students received some profile in the local community. There were an increasing number of articles published over the last four years, and the vast majority of these reflected a positive or neutral viewpoint, as can be seen in Figure 3. Not only did the community support the experiences of international students, but seven of the articles empathized with them.  For example, one article was sympathetic to an international PhD student's struggle to pay the ever-increasing international tuition fees (Thompson, 2005). Such articles show how the community tried to understand the struggle facing international students and support them in their endeavors.

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Refer to Figure 3, located on pg. 51

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The community also showed support for the international students by participating as a host in the "Host for the Holidays" program and by fighting to keep a post office open due to its value for the international students.  Based on the media articles the community appeared to understand the experience of the international students, and generated ways in which they could help to mitigate risk factors and enhance the protective factors.

Despite the positive view within the articles, a further analysis of the situation left something to be desired. The online database of the local newspaper was used to compare the number of articles written about the university domestic students versus international students.

The keywords "University [disguised]" and "students" prompted 1,618 results. However, when using the keywords "University [disguised]" and "international students" only 57 results appeared. These results indicate that despite the positive representation of international students within the local media, there was untapped potential, and an unequal representation within the paper. This underrepresentation could potentially mean that the community did not fully understand the impact of international students on the local environment. With increasing numbers of international students attending post-secondary education in Canada, their impact on local communities is expected to increase.

Organizations like the local immigration support agency are working to advocate for and provide services to the international students and immigrants within the community. Having such organizations working in favour of international students can greatly help the support that they are able to receive from the community. Not only do they provide services themselves, but they can also help to create change within the community for this particular group of students.

The executive director of the local immigration support agency strongly advocated for international students and was interested in policy change. Through a discussion with the researchers, he made an intriguing observation. Universities recruited international students to programs they created to meet the wishes of international students who were assessing programs from abroad.  Universities then assessed applications from these students based on institutionally-determined criteria. Upon graduation, these international students had stronger immigration applications given their enhanced language and cultural skills, and the possession of Canadian post-secondary degree, and usually a better chance of being fast-tracked for PR. Consequently, the director posed the question, "Who is setting the criteria for immigration?"

*d. Government*

One news article described how the University supported talks with the Ontario government about offering funding to international students in late 2014 (Waddell, 2014). No further articles were published on the topic despite the continued tuition raises. A great way for the government to support and reduce the risk factors facing international students would be by providing additional funding. For many students their decision of where to study was affected by the tuition costs, and this factor may prevent some of the best students from pursuing their studies in Canada. The Canadian government recognizes the benefits that international students have on the Canadian population and economy and wishes to attract the best students to Canada (Macdonald, 2016). Creating an incentive for some of the best international students to come to Canada might help to build stronger resilience within the students, increasing their chances of staying post-graduation, and having a long-term positive effect on the country.

Figures 1 and 2 allowed for a comparison of the role played by the government throughout various stages in the international student experience. The government plays a minimal role in the pre-arrival decision (Figure 1) and in the international academic experience stages. Pre-arrival, students must meet the criteria for their study permit and visa, which is an administrative role impacting the ability of a student to pursue international studies. However, from the interviews, the majority of students did not have issues with this process, therefore, for the majority of students it did not affect the development of their resilience positively or negatively. During a student's studies the government may offer workshops to students regarding relevant information for their post-graduation decision about PR. It is during this post-graduation phase that the government plays the largest role within the experience of international students. This is the stage in which students put the most thought into the political

stability of Canada, and rely on the government to grant either a work permit or PR. Based on the student interviews, many international students come into their program with the intention of applying for either PR or the provincial nominee program (PNP). Therefore, we ask, should the government be more involved in the initial phase of a student's acceptance to a Canadian university? Should a stakeholder, such as the government, that plays such a regulatory role have a stronger influence on all aspects of an international student's experience?

*e. Limitations and Future Research*

The qualitative research conducted within this case study is specific to the city and the university, which limits its generalizability. However, the research provides perspective on the general experience of international students, which can be used to begin a further analysis across universities in North America. It is worthy to note that participating city is considered amongst the top multicultural cities in Canada (StatsCan, 2005) and over the past 10 years has experienced many employment fluctuations due to manufacturing decline. This experience with immigrants has the potential to positively or negatively influence the opinion of the community on welcoming and supporting international students. Within future research, it would be important to look at a variety of communities that differ in their level of multiculturalism, economic drivers, and size of the city.

The data are cross-sectional and self-reported. Future research should focus on longitudinal research that monitors the development of resilience over the course of an international student's degree. A quantitative measure of resilience would also aid in this process. A comparison to domestic students could offer further insights to the development of resilience within international students, and the differences seen in domestic students.

## 7.  **<u>CONCLUSION</u>**

This research found that the vast majority of international students wish to stay in Canada post-graduation, and their decision was influenced by the protective and support factors they developed and utilized while completing their studies at the [university]. The models proposed help to identify the stages in which stakeholders have the largest impact, and potentially where their presence is lacking. This research was used to understand how the development of resilience within international students may be connected to their overall experience and post-graduation decision. The definition of resilience as a trait influencing the presence of both protective and risk factors (Lee et al, 2013) was used to guide our interviews with international students. The university, local community, Canadian government and the international students themselves were identified as the main stakeholders influencing these factors and benefiting from the results of a more resilient and successful experience. The enhancement of protective factors was found to have a far greater impact on student experience compared to the mitigation of risk factors, in line with the research of Lee et al (2013). The stakeholders successfully influenced student experience through collaboration with other stakeholders, providing new pathways for future research.

## 8. RESEARCH ETHICS

All research on human subjects has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at the authors' institutino and has therefore been performed in a way that is consistent with the ethical standards articulated in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its subsequent amendments and Section 12 ("Informed Consent") of the ASA's Code of Ethics. All human subjects gave their informed consent prior to their participation in the research and where necessary, adequate steps have been taken to protect participants' confidentiality.

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Table 1

Demographics of International Student Interviewee's

| Student | Gender | Program | Country | City/State | Time in Canada | Studied outside home country |
|---------|--------|---------|---------|------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| S1 | F | MEng – Electrical and Computer | India | Chennai | 4 months | Malaysia |
| S2 | M | MEng – Electrical and Computer | India | Andhra | 4 months | No |
| S3 | F | PhD - Civil | India | Kerala | 1.5 years | No |
| S4 | M | PhD - Civil | Iran | | 5 years | No |
| S5 | M | PhD - Civil | India | Vellore | 1 yr 11 month | No |
| S6 | M | MEng – Industrial | India | Chennai | 4 months | No |
| S7 | M | MEng – Mechanical | India | Chennai | 1 year | No |
| S8 | M | MEng – Industrial | India | Hyderabad | 1 yr 4 months | No |
| S9 | M | MEng – Electrical and Computer | Abu Dhabi | | 1 year | No |
| S10 | F | MEng – Civil | India | | 1 year | No |
| S11 | M | PhD - Civil | India | | 3 years | No |
| S12 | M | MOM | Bangladesh | | 1 yr 1 month | No |
| S13 | F | MOM | China | Liaoning Province | 1 yr 2 months | No |
| S14 | F | MOM | China | Henan Province | 1 yr 1 month | No |
| S15 | M | MOM | China | Liaoning Province | 2 months | No |
| S16 | M | MOM | UK | | 9 months | Netherlands |
| S17 | M | MOM | Bangladesh | | 9 months | Scotland |
| S18 | M | MOM | Bangladesh | Dhaka | 1 month | No |
| S19 | M | MOM | Bangladesh | Dhaka | 4 months | No |
| S20 | F | Liberal Arts & Professional Studies | Bangladesh | | 8 months | No |
| S21 | F | MOM | Bangladesh | | 1 month | No |
| S22 | F | Master of | Bangladesh | | 1 month | No |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Medical Biotechnology | | | | |
| **S23** | M | MBA | England | London | 1 year | South Africa |
| **S24** | M | MBA | Italy | Torino | 1 year | Windsor |
| **S25** | F | MOM | Nigeria | Lagos | 1 yr 2 months | No |
| **S26** | M | MBA | India | Kerala | 1 year | Canada & Switzerland |
| **S27** | F | MBA | India | Gujrat | 1 year | No |
| **S28** | M | MAS | China | | 1 year | Italy |

Table 2

Frequency of Coding from 98 Media Articles

| Code | Frequency (# of Articles) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Topic | About | Mentioned | - |
| | 34 | 62 | - |
| Viewpoint | Positive | Neutral | Negative |
| | 52 | 37 | 7 |
| Context | School | Community | - |
| | 70 | 26 | - |
| Schooling Level | University/College | High School | Grade School |
| | 77 | 18 | 15 |

Table 3

Student Interviews: Frequency of Coding

|  |  | Pre-Arrival Decision | | International Academic Experience | | Post-Graduation Expectations | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Protective Factors | Social Support | 28 | 100 | 23 | 82 | 12 | 43 |
|  | University Support | 28 | 100 | 11 | 39 | 2 | 7 |
|  | Future Prospects | 11 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 82 |
|  | Political Stability | 12 | 43 | 1 | 4 | 10 | 36 |
| Risk Factors | Process Difficulty | 9 | 32 | 4 | 14 | 3 | 11 |
|  | Academic Difficulty | 4 | 14 | 4 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
|  | Social Difficulty | 2 | 7 | 7 | 25 | 1 | 4 |
|  | Political Unrest | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

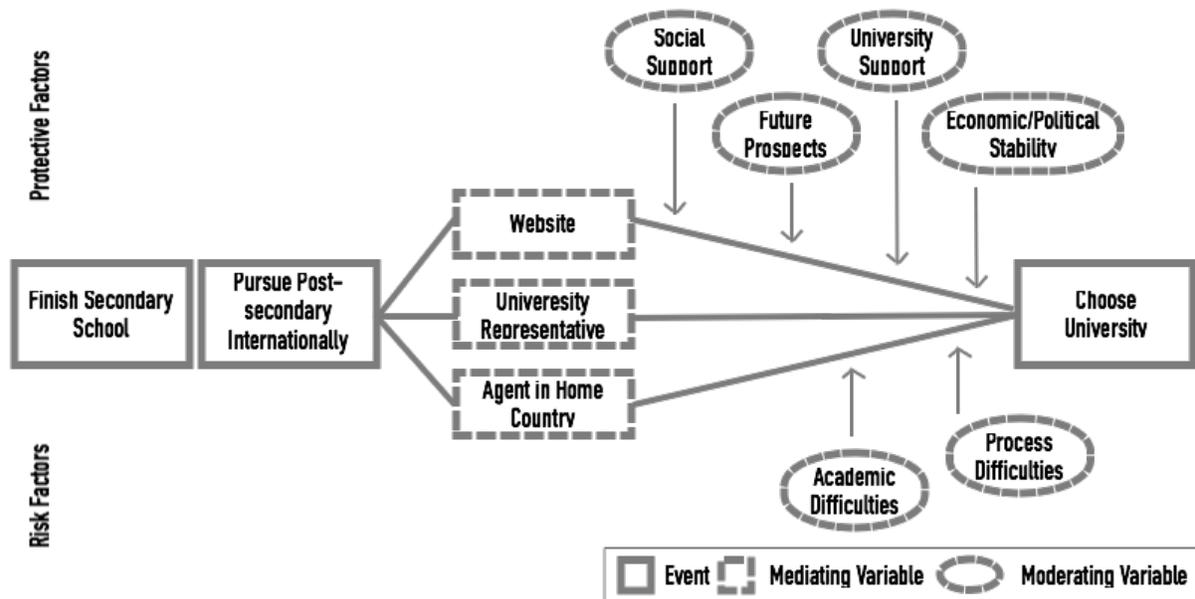Figure 1:  Stage 1 – Pre-Departure Decision to Enroll
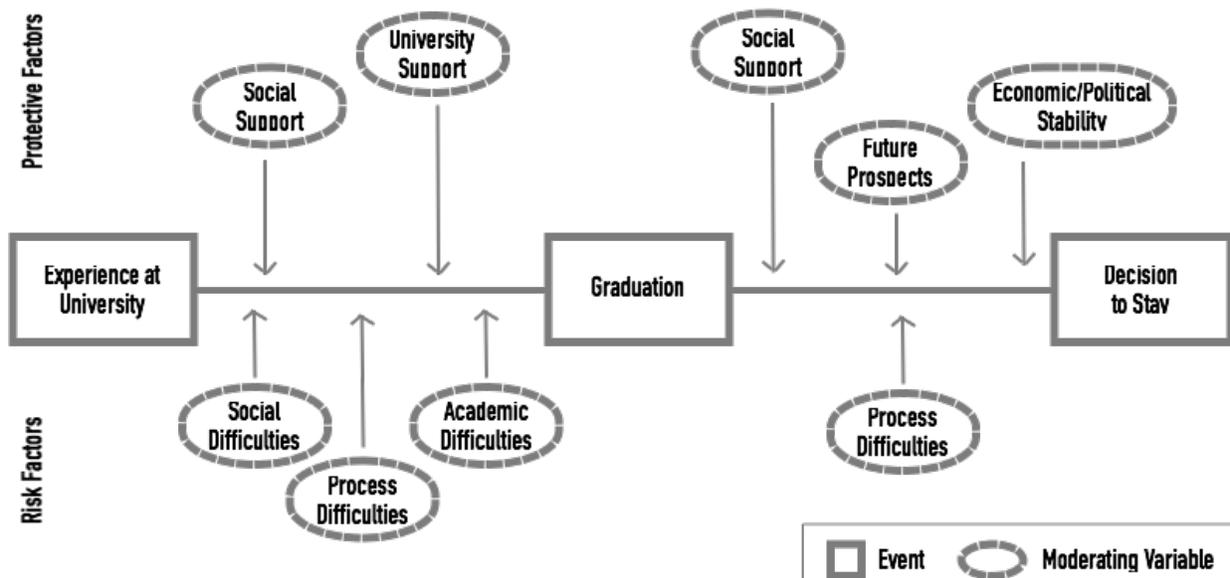


Figure 2: Decision to Stay in Canada

Figure 3- Frequency and Viewpoint of Articles Published in the Local Paper about International Students