

Female Brazilian Students' Experiences at Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigated the experiences of Female Brazilian international students studying in Canadian post-secondary institutions. While funds and research have been invested in the promotion and marketing of post-secondary institutions to Brazilian international students, little or no research has been conducted regarding the cultural accommodations and needs once they attend these institutions. This phenomenological study examines the experiences of eleven female Brazilian international students between the ages of 26 and 43 who had previously completed post-secondary education in their own country. Eleven unstructured interviews, yielded six themes from a grounded theory analysis process: (a) the Competitiveness of the Immigration Process; (b) the Adjustment to Living in Canada; (c) the Challenges of Studying in Canada; (d) Financial Issues; (e) Employment in Canada; and (f) Personal Wellbeing. The overall benefits and challenges of studying in Canadian post-secondary institutions are presented and recommendations are made describing specific ways in which institutions can adapt policies and programs in order to enhance international students' transition to Canada.

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Chapter 1: Overview of the Study

Introduction

World Education Services (2012) has stated that the number of students who study as internationals has increased by 50% from 2002 to 2010. In 2011, the number soared to 4.3 million worldwide, with 8 million international students projected to study internationally in 2025 (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2013). Countries benefit from talented international students because they build the nation's human capital, knowledge, economy and enhance the development of strategic alliances with other nations (Altbach, 2016; Edwards, 2007). The majority of international students choose English-speaking countries such as Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand (Waters, 2008). World Education News and Review (2013) stated that the biggest percentage increase in international undergraduate enrolment between 2002 and 2009 was in Canada¹.

The Government of Canada's International Education Strategy recognizes that international students help to create jobs, stimulate economic growth and add to the long-term prosperity of the country (Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, 2014). A report issued by the Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy stated that, "The overarching goal of an international education strategy is to brand Canada internationally as a choice destination for talented people from around the world for studying, conducting research and potentially immigration" (FATDC, 2012, p. 48).

For post-secondary institutions, international students are a profitable source of revenue, but some would argue that little attention has been paid to these students' desires or their requirements (Altbach, 2016). Reynolds and Constantine (2007) stated that international students

¹67% in Canada, 62% in the United Kingdom, 43% in Australia, and 13% in the United States

deal with stressors typical of a domestic student such as financial demands, academic pressures, loneliness, and career indecision; however, international students must also contend with challenges associated with adapting to a foreign country and culture in their study on African, Latin America and Asian international students studying in United States (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007). International students may experience culture shock, loneliness, and homesickness when studying abroad (Dongfeng, 2012; Mahmood, 2014; Rajapaksa and Dundes, 2002). Students' perceive that they have fewer social supports than those available to domestic students compound these challenges (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002).

The increase in the number of international students studying in Canada, the benefits that they offer the country and the challenges that they face, suggest that more attention needs to be given to the social, cultural, academic and financial struggles of this unique population. Existing research investigates the experiences of students from Asian cultures like Chinese studying in the United States (Huang, 2004; Huang and Brown, 2009) but no research has specifically targeted Brazilians, and in particular female Brazilians. Brazil is the largest country in South America by both land mass and by population. Brazil has also been gaining international attention since hosting the summer Olympics in 2016 and the World Cup in 2014. In order to attract female Brazilian international students, Canada might want to invest in research on how to meet the specific needs of this demographic.

My personal and cultural background will inform this study. My partner and I are both Brazilian and we both studied in Canadian post-secondary institutions. Although I left Brazil at a very young age, my partner's first year in Canada was spent studying in a post-secondary institution. Witnessing her experiences, both positive and negative, has given me a better

understanding and interpretation of the results of this study. This has also provided me with a strong passion for this topic. I believe that this study can help bring awareness to the challenges that Brazilian international students face while studying in Canada as well as ways in which post-secondary institutions can enhance their experiences. This chapter will explore the terminology of the study, research question, purpose of the study and the significance of the research.

Terminology

This study will adopt Andrade's (2006) definition of an international student which is, "individuals enrolled in institutions of higher education who are on temporary student visas and are non-native speakers" (p. 134). For Brazilian international students, this includes anyone who was born in Brazil, speaks English as a second language, and who is studying in Canada with a study visa. Canadian post-secondary institutions encompass college or university programming in Canada.

Research Question

The main research question guiding this study was: How do female Brazilian international students view their academic and non-academic experiences when studying at a Canadian post-secondary institution?

The specific questions guiding this study were:

1. What are the cultural challenges?
2. What are some of the academic challenges the female Brazilian participants face studying at Canadian post-secondary institutions?
3. What are the financial challenges?
4. What are the social challenges?

5. What are the positive experiences?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the experiences faced by female Brazilian international students studying in Canadian post-secondary institutions. This study used unstructured interviews to give participants the opportunity to have their voices heard in order to hopefully improve future international student experiences.

Research Significance

This study filled the gap in the literature on how female Brazilian international students view studying at Canadian post-secondary institutions. The global financial crisis in 2007 caused the governments of many developed countries to cut funding to higher education. Canadian support had already been on the decline in funding in the last 30 years with a drop from 84% to 58% of funds (Ivanova, 2013). This lack of funding gave rise to increased tuition fees, especially for international students as they pay a higher rate than domestic students²(Statistics Canada, 2015). With higher tuition rates across the country, the market must improve educational experiences because competition motivates schools to create a closer connection with students and become more reactive to their needs (Brown and Baker, 2013). Interviews of the experiences that international students have in Canada can give insight to their cultural, as well as their educational needs. Brazilian international students have unique needs as not only are they expected to study and perhaps work to pay the bills but are also commonly responsible for the house chores. In a typical family constellation, females are expected to do housework while males do not need to worry about this extra task.

²domestic undergraduate average tuition is \$6,191 compared to international students average of \$21,932, over 3 times higher in 2015/2016

Castaneda (2008) and Glass (2012) described how international students can add diverse cultural experiences to a multicultural campus, thereby increasing campus diversity. This diversity can bring new experiences and perspectives to domestic students, coupled with the encouragement of an awareness and appreciation of other countries (Lee and Rice, 2007; Lee, 2013). Unfortunately, to date, these benefits have been lost to Canadians. A survey from the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) revealed that over half of 3,000 international students who were surveyed in Canada reported that they had no Canadian friends (CBIE, 2015). By targeting and meeting the needs of female Brazilians the Academic institution can offer the unique diversity of South American culture to Canadians and possibly break this social barrier.

Female Brazilians, by nature, are affectionate, social and tactile people who seek emotional and personal connections with others (Meyer, 2010). In Brazilian culture it is appropriate to talk about personal life, age, marital status, working status, politics and religion, although some of these subjects are avoided in conversation in other cultures (Meyer, 2010). This closeness that female Brazilians seek with the people around them may create stronger connections with domestic students, allowing Canadians to receive the benefits of that diversity.

This study provides valuable information on the personal experiences and struggles of female Brazilian international students studying in Canadian post-secondary institutions that can be used to better equip post-secondary institutions in the support of these new students. Post-secondary institutions can use this information to make the changes and adaptations needed to give better experiences to female international students from Brazil. This may increase enrolment, giving Canada more of the many benefits that results from cultural diversity.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This review of literature begins with a discussion of Canada's marketing strategies to attract international students; the main purposes of which have been to add diversity and to fund post-secondary institutions. The chapter also discusses the known barriers that international students face upon attending post-secondary institutions and iterates Robertson's (2000), finding that the academic institutions must do more than identify the problems faced by international students, and cite existing research that has indicated how post-secondary institutions can support international students.

Canada's need for International Students

Canada has very low birth rates in comparison with most developed nations (Statistics Canada, 2014). As a result, Canada uses immigration to build and support its skilled workforce. According to Statistics Canada (2014), the 2011 Census indicated that just under 7 million Canadians were foreign-born (1 out of every 5 Canadians), the highest proportion of them came from among the G8 countries³. Additionally, over 76% of immigrants reported a language other than English as their mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2014). The 2011 Census reported that since 2006, 58.6% of people who came to Canada were in the main working age group (25 and 54 years of age). This cohort of people required further Canadian post-secondary studies to use their degrees from their home country particularly in the fields of law, health, and engineering. Also, 14.5% of immigrants were between the ages of 15 and 24 (Statistics Canada, 2014). This is a demographic that is approaching or at a post-secondary age level.

³G8 is a group of the 8 most powerful economic countries in the world

Grayson (2006) found that young high school immigrants were more likely to enrol in and attend Canadian post-secondary institutions than their domestic counterparts based on a sample of four Canadian universities. Not included in these statistics are international students attending Canadian post-secondary institutions on study visas. As mentioned earlier, in 2003, there were 2.1 million international students worldwide (Bohm et al., 2004). This number soared to 4.3 million international students worldwide in 2011 (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013) and by 2020, the authors predicted that number will further increase to 5.8 million. Canada is among five countries in the world with the highest international post-secondary registration (Bartlett, 2002). In his study, Walters (2008) found that most international students choose English-speaking countries such as Canada, the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. Of those English-speaking countries, Canada has had the most significant percentage increase⁴ from 2002 to 2009. Today, Canada is at its highest capacity hosting international students with an increase from 159,425 in 2003 to 293,503 in 2013 (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2013, 2014).

In order for Canada to remain competitive in the international education market, the Harper government created Canada's International Education Strategy⁵. The last report issued by the Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy stated, "The overarching goal of an international education strategy is to brand Canada internationally as a choice destination for talented people from around the world for studying, conducting research and potentially immigration" (FATDC, 2012, p. 48). The target of the report was to increase international students from 239,131 in 2011 to more than 450,000 by 2022 (FATDC, 2014). Justin Trudeau, the current Prime Minister of Canada, has pledged to reduce the barriers to immigration imposed

⁴67% in Canada, 62% in the United Kingdom, 43% in Australia, and 13% in the United States

⁵Part of Canada's Global Markets Action Plan

on international students in order to increase potential immigration of international students (The Liberal Platform, 2017).

Government funding to higher education has been cut in many developed countries due to the global financial crisis in 2007, Canada has not been an exception. Despite the drastic increase in international student enrolment at post-secondary institutions in Canada, government funding has declined over the last 30 years, dropping from 84% to 58% (Ivanova, 2013). The lack of funding gave rise to increased tuition fees, especially for international students, who pay a higher tuition rate than domestic students (Magnusson, 2000; Godard, 2010). According to a report by the Department of International Affairs, post-secondary international students spent \$7.7 billion on tuition, accommodation, and discretionary spending in 2010 (Roslyn, Kunin & Associates, 2012). Further, international students created over 81,000 jobs and generated more than \$445 million in government revenue (Roslyn, Kunin & Associates, 2012).

If Canada can retain its international students and the revenue earned from their tuition, the Canadian government can also build upon its human capital, knowledge economy and create alliances with other countries (Altbach, 2016; Edwards, 2007). For post-secondary institutions specifically, recruiting international students becomes a profitable source of revenue; but attention needs to be given to these students' desires and needs (Altbach, 2016; Lacina, 2002; Lee and Rice, 2007; Lee 2013; Lin, 2012; Okorochoa, 1996). Brown and Baker (2013) believed that an awareness of international students' needs and supports are becoming more of a concern to post-secondary institutions as the market becomes more competitive.

Problems Faced by New International Students to Canada

A survey of 155 international students in the United Kingdom identified eight major challenges: financial problems (30% of participants), mixing with non-international students

(25% of participants), academic progress (23%), English language proficiency (17%), accommodation (16%), teaching and tutoring styles (15%), homesickness (12%) and feelings of isolation (7%) (Yanhong Li & Kaye, 1998). The situation in Canada is similar.

International students in Canada face similar problems adjusting to a different culture and education system, communicating in a second language (Chen & Sun, 2006), maintaining social relationships (Chen, 1999), and dealing with financial stress (Choudaha & Hu, 2016) and academic concerns (Cheng & Fox, 2008). For the purpose of this literature review, the barriers faced by newcomers to Canada are categorized into social and academic concerns.

Social Challenges

Although post-secondary intuitions expect to benefit from the diverse cultural experiences that international students bring (Castaneda, 2008; Glass, 2012), the new perspectives and opinions, the enrichment of classroom discussions and awareness to different cultures (Lee, 2013; Lee and Rice, 2007). To create a great exchange of ideas among different communities in order to foster a culture of global understanding, this does not always happen. Rasmi, Safdar and Lewis (2009) found that international students from majority Asian origin (40%) in southern Ontario who formed friendships with domestic students experienced better sociocultural adaptation eighteen months after arriving in Canada. According to Trice (2007), establishing social relationships is a major concern for newcomers to Canada as it ranks second after academic success for international students' needs. Misra, Crist and Burant (2003) found that travel to a new country resulted in broken ties with social support networks back home and created difficulties when developing new ones with their sample in the United States.

Westwood and Barker (1990) conducted a study with international students that investigated the possible relationship between academic achievement, drop-out rates and social

adjustment. They paired first year international students with national students in a mentorship program. The study revealed that overall achievement rates were higher and drop-out rates were lower for those international students who participated in the mentorship program (Westwood & Barker, 1990).

Unfortunately, the expected benefits to domestic students such as cultural exchanges are lost due to the isolation and loneliness that international students face. Loss of social support, discrimination and culture shock create an acculturative stress that pushes international students away from domestic students (Brown, 2008; Lee, 2013; Nwadiora & McAdoo, 1996; Reynolds & Constantine, 2007). This stress is exacerbated by the students' perception of having fewer social supports than domestic students (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002). First-year students' in the Netherlands, stress levels were higher for international students when compared to those of domestic students (Rientjes, Beusaert, Grohnert, Niemantsverdriet & Kommers, 2012). Sam (2001) found in Norway that international students from Asia, Africa, Europe and North America had difficulties creating meaningful relationships. In a survey of 1415 students from four Canadian universities⁶, Grayson (2007) found that 53% of newcomers to Canada had difficulty making friends, and only 11% of Canadian students reported having a friend who was an international student. In 2014, the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) (2015) revealed that 54% of the 3,000 international students in Canada reported to have no Canadian friends (CBIE, 2015). This lack of integration is due to internal barriers, institutional barriers and Canadian attitudes (CBIE, 2015).

⁶University of British Columbia, York University, McGill University and Dalhousie University

Mental and Emotional Barriers

The common internal barriers that international students face are their perceptions of inadequate English skills along with the perception of a strong accent from their mother tongue. Liu (2011) found that this self-doubt, when international students struggle with new language acquisition, often leads to lower self-esteem in his study conducted in Canada. Trice (2005) and Liu (2011) found a connection between international students' struggle to master English and their low self-confidence when interacting with domestic students which, in turn, made it more difficult to improve their English and adapt to the host culture. International students who regularly engage with domestic students feel less isolated than those who do not have consistent interactions (Klomengah, 2006). Alreshoud and Koeske (1997) surveyed 74 male Saudi Arabian international students attending an American university and found that most students described themselves as only "a little" to "somewhat desirous" of engaging in activities with domestic students. The authors concluded that this lack of interest might be because of "vast cultural differences" (p.243) and a lack of confidence in colloquial English. Erichsen and Bolliger (2010) found that language barriers made international students feel alienated from the campus community and forced them to rely solely on culturally familiar networks.

International students who travel to Canada with their partners and/ or families face an additional social stress because family responsibilities and changes in social and/or work status are compounded on the general adjustment to a new environment (Copeland & Norell, 2002; Martens & Grant, 2008; Zhang, Smith, Swisher, Fu, & Fogarty, 2011). Cho, Lee, and Jezewski (2005) found that Korean international students had many more opportunities to immerse themselves in a new culture in comparison to their Korean partners. Teshome and Osei-Kofi (2011) discovered that the partners of international students in the United States believe that the

post-secondary institutions should be responsible for providing them with the same supports that their attending partner, has access to. Without family-oriented support systems, family dynamics become increasingly stressed.

Institutional Barriers

Institutional barriers present in international classes throughout the world are also found in many Canadian post-secondary institutions (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2015). Trice (2007) interviewed 27 faculty members from four different North American universities and found that:

Some ethnic groups tend to stick to each other way too much, even for their own good...it's really great to have somebody that understands you ... But if you never speak English, you never improve, you don't get as much out of the culture here, so you miss a lot.(p.112)

International students can miss the opportunity to practice their conversational English, which can help their academic papers. Kim (2001) suggested that international students who participate in events at their post-secondary institution can create stronger social networks. Social events sponsored by post-secondary institutions are more commonly attended by international students than domestic students (Kuh, &Carini, 2005; Mamiseishvili, 2012; Zhao,). This setting fosters an environment where international students speak their own language and create social networks with their cultures of origin rather than integrating with domestic students.

Canadian Barriers

It has been argued that Canadians, by their stereotypically quiet and personal nature, have also unknowingly created a barrier to prevent the integration of international students. Trice (2007) found that a “lack of interest in befriending them[international students], their [domestic

students] ethnocentrism and discrimination against international students, and their impatience with foreign accents” were the reasons for the lack of bonding between international students and domestic students. Pieterse and Carter (2010) discovered that non-white international students reported more discrimination than white students in the United States with a predominantly female (61%) sample. Hwang and Goto (2009) found that Latinos reported more discrimination than Asian students in many areas such as treatment by the post-secondary institution employees, teachers and domestic students in the United States. Anxiety, depression and lowered self-esteem have been linked to discrimination on campus (Araujo & Borrell, 2006; Carter, 2007; Hwang & Goto, 2009; Moradi & Risco, 2006; Mossakowski, 2003; Pieterse & Carter, 2010; Williams & Mohammed, 2009; Yoo & Lee, 2005). However, no link has been attributed to students’ marks and the discrimination students face (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). This can make the discrimination more difficult for the post-secondary instructors to detect. Unfortunately, very little research has been conducted on the discrimination that international students’ face in Canadian post-secondary institutions. Although many have called for an investigation into the topic (Chandra, 1974; Chataway & Berry, 1989; Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Henry & Tator, 2009; Lay & Nguyen, 1998; Samuel & Burney, 2003).

Academic Challenges

International students face academic challenges emanating from difficulties with English comprehension, professors’ foreign teaching styles and their relationships with teachers. With participants in a school in England, Brown (2008) found that international students experienced challenges adjusting to their new educational system due to their English proficiency. Okorochoa (1996) highlighted that these language difficulties often lead to confusion and struggles with course content. International students commonly need to score high marks in a Test of English as

a Foreign Language⁷ in order to be accepted into a post-secondary institution program. Whether the TOEFL accurately indicates English proficiency is still being debated. Ling, Powers, and Adler (2014) found some support for the accuracy of TOEFL scores while numerous control studies have shown no correlation between TOEFL scores and English proficiency (Chen & Sun, 2006; Fass-Holmes & Vaughn, 2014; Wongtriat, 2010). This lack of correlation can suggest that international students are taking courses meant just to pass the test (Hamp-Lyons, 1998; Raimes, 1990) and/or are cheating on the test (Jung, 2013).

Duanmu, Li, and Chen (2009) found that international students, mostly Chinese, have difficulty adjusting from teacher-centered pedagogical approaches to student-centered teaching styles. In their study, Ramsey, Barker and Jones (1999) found similar problems faced by international students. After interviewing 25 first year students enrolled in a Faculty of Commerce and Management course, data indicated that the majority of international students had difficulties with lecture-based teaching styles. Participants cited, “the lecturer spoke very fast and used complicated words” (pg.137) which resulted in negative feelings of frustration.

In order to accommodate this influx of diversity in not only languages but also learning styles, faculty members need to have a more international focus in their educational pedagogy and philosophy. Bond and Thayer-Scott (1999) discovered that there was a significant gap between the understanding of internationalization and the contribution of faculty with international experience. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (2014) indicated that in 2001, 40% of Canadian university faculty were professors born outside of Canada (CAUT, 2014). Richardson, McBey and McKenna (2009) completed a qualitative study of 44 international faculties currently employed by six Canadian universities to see if they have

⁷ The Test of English as a Foreign Language or TOEFL for short is a widely respected standardized test to score the English ability of an individual

utilized international experience in research and teaching. The results indicated that some faculty did not use their international experience in the classroom for three main reasons. The first was an imagined focus on Canadian ideology; “students only care about a Canada context” (p. 21). The second was a negative perception of international experiences; “international experience is perceived as weakness, lack of experience and understanding in Canada” (p.21). The third reason involved acceptance; professors were “worried that they would not be accepted by their students” (p. 21). Those faculty members who are newcomers themselves have reported that the language barrier is the most difficult in teaching their students, which has resulted in complaints and subsequently, low teaching evaluations scores (Richardson et al., 2009). As one faculty member stated, “I think that the most important barrier is the language, “... It is very difficult to be in front of the class and speak in a clear way when you have a lot of complex thoughts. In Canada you should be able to endure this kind of psychological challenge - that is not being able to speak correctly in the first language” (Richardson et al., 2009, p.23). As part of the same educational institutions, students are exposed to similar psychological challenges.

International students also reported more difficulty with their academic skills when they were misunderstood by their professors (Robertson et al., 2000). Through 65 questionnaires and 30 interviews, Choi’s (1997) participants indicated that professors consistently mispronounced their names, prompting the students in the study to believe they needed to change their names to common English names to avoid further ridicule. Students also indicated that their shyness to participating in open class discussions was due to the fact that they may mispronounce a word and lose “face” (Choi, 1997, p.272). Bista (2012) found that Nepali international students’ reluctance to participate in group discussions was because of their perceived shortcomings

concerning language. Lee (2016) and Mesaroli et al. (2015) found that communication skills increased for international students when they were put in situations that had them speak often. Therefore, it is up to the professor to foster a safe environment for international students to feel comfortable speaking. Volet and Ang (1998) noted that faculty needs to have a greater willingness to learn about the backgrounds of students from other countries in their classes to promote intercultural learning. Biggs (1997) believed that the academic community needed to do more than just identify the problems faced by international students and recommended that post-secondary institutions analyze students' prior knowledge, skills and strategies and work from the pedagogical overlap between cultures.

The Ways Universities Can Assist International Students

Post-secondary institutions hoping to be competitive in the international student marketplace, need strategies to accommodate international students' needs in order to ensure a shared experience and the growth of an inclusive environment (ACE, 2015). Choudaha (2016) discovered that post-secondary institutions that allot inadequate funding and expertise to meet the needs of international students, create a negative impact on satisfaction and, therefore, future recruitment. Alfattal (2016) suggested that:

When a campus engaged its international students with social activities, the campus was at the same time providing emotional support and a sense of security through providing students with opportunities to build social networks. These were likely to reduce potential feelings of loneliness, isolation, and intolerance, while at the same time they increased international students' motivation to engage more with campus life, which again resulted in more opportunities to receive social support through building more, or expanding, social networks (Alfattal, 2016, p.117).

The cycle of interaction is depicted in Figure 1:

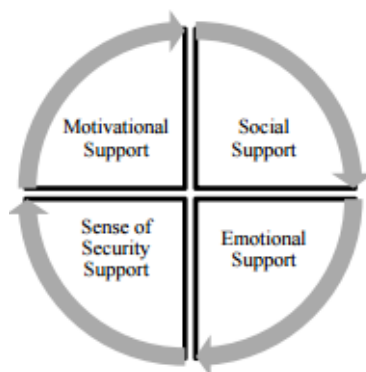


Figure 1: Meeting the needs of international students (Alfattal, 2016, p. 117)

Motivational support and social support. Motivational supports come from the post-secondary institution through academic support programs or social supports. Some academic support programs may include extracurricular language programs (Benzie, 2010; Phillips, 2008), embedded faculty-based programs (Benzie, 2010; Hirsh, 2007; Peelo & Luxon, 2007) and for-credit language courses (Benzie, 2010; Hirsh, 2007). There is some evidence that most of these language supports are not utilized. For example, Singh (2015) found that only 22% of international students participated in additional language programs to improve their academic written and spoken language.

Similarly, other programs were either not available or not utilized. Although Grayson (2007) determined that “the more students are involved in various campus activities, and the more they receive external support from others, the more likely the realization of desired educational outcomes” (p.216) there was little evidence of participation. Cheng and Fox (2008) indicated that student reluctance to participate was attributed to shyness, a lack of confidence, or at times, a sense of cultural inappropriateness. Only 23% of international students indicated that faculty members were available to provide academic assistance (Grayson, 2007) and only 20%

of international students could rely on parental assistance in comparison to 40% of their Canadian peers (Grayson, 2007).

Emotional support. Chen (1999) stated that a “culturally sensitive ...[school adult]... demonstrates a cultural awareness, openness, and respect for different values, as well as tolerance for ambiguity, a willingness to learn, and a genuine concern for people with different values and from a different cultural background”(p.58).Robertson (2000) collected questionnaires of 20 students and 26 faculty members to assess the cultural knowledge and perceptions of international students and the professors teaching them. International students felt that professors favoured domestic students over international students (Robertson, 2000). Some of the perceptions highlighted by the university professors were, “international students are often less worldly and less knowledgeable of past and present world events, and the past and present social and political issues” (Robertson, 2000, p.97). Some solutions offered by the professors in the Robertson (2000) study were to use group work that mixes the international students with domestic students, encourage participation, provide written material for lectures, check in with international students, be inclusive, educate staff on ways to support and offer private tutorials.

Brazilian International Students

There is some research on the academic experiences of international students from the BRIC (emerging economic super powers) countries of China and India, but little research on the challenges that Brazilian students face. Canadian Bureau for International Education (2014) stated 1188 Brazilian students were studying in a Canadian college or university in 2014. In an official visit to the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada announced that Canada will welcome 12,000 Brazilian students at the undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate level by 2015 (Science Without Borders, 2014).

However, with this enormous influx of Brazilian students, little additional funding has gone into accommodating the cultural challenges of this community.

In a survey completed by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (2014), post-secondary Brazilian students indicated that they chose to study in Canada because Canada offers a society that is tolerant and not discriminatory, Canada is internationally recognized as a safe country and Canada is believed to have a positive attitude towards international students. Research done over 20 years ago, indicated that this was not always the case. While interviewing Brazilian university students, Goza (1994) indicated that, “when asked the ethnicity of the majority of their friends, over 80% of both samples indicated it was Brazilian and only 7% stated that the majority of their friends were host country natives” (p.149). 50% indicated that at some time they had faced discrimination in varying degrees. Through the interviews, “a list of over 30 different types of reported discrimination was compiled” with more incidents revolving around female participants (Goza, 1994, p. 149). The current study is intended to examine the situation for female international students from Brazil in the current landscape.

Chapter Summary

The paucity of research specific the experiences of female Brazilian international students in Canada suggests that there is a need for current research on the experiences of these students in order to develop best practice to enhance transition to Canadian post-secondary institutions. International students face unique barriers to successes and post-secondary institutions need to provide supports to prevent them from dropping out (National Association of Foreign Student Advisers, 2014). If faculty members are aware of the academic, cultural and social problems that international and ESL students face in Canadian universities, they can be better prepared to provide assistance. Newcomers to Canada face many challenges that domestic students take for

granted, further compounding genuine integration. The support techniques offered in this literature review can provide faculty members with some examples of ways that they can help newcomers. To date, most research has been focused on challenges faced by Chinese international students (Huang, 2004; Huang and Brown, 2009). This study focus on the challenges that female Brazilian international students face while studying in Canadian post-secondary institutions.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study is to examine the experiences of female Brazilian international students studying in post-secondary institutions in Canada. With the increase in international students worldwide and the incentives for post-secondary institutions to attract this profitable market, educational institutions are well advised to develop strategies to support and enhance the experience of international students, not just those of the emerging economic super powers. In this chapter, I provide a procedural framework for the study, which includes a phenomenological research design, a sampling strategy, the research setting, data collection processes, participant profiles, data analysis, ethical considerations and limitations.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design. Creswell (2014) defined qualitative research as “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). Qualitative research “tends to give us open ended question so that the participants can share their views (Creswell, 2014, p.9). The worldview is social constructivist in that the study focuses on the participant’s views and experiences (Creswell, 2014). There also exists a transformative worldview because the research design “focuses on the needs of groups and individuals in our society that may be marginalized or disenfranchised” (Creswell, 2014, p.10).

This study uses a phenomenological research design of inquiry which is a process where several individuals describe a lived experience about a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). This design of inquiry allows the researcher to target the meaning of the phenomenon through the

participant's perspective (Patton, 2002). A phenomenological design was appropriate for the research interest because the participants' experiences were sought. As such, the method of data collection in this study was through the use of semi-structured interviews to best understand participants' perspectives (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Common in phenomenological research design, purposeful sampling was used to select the participants who would provide "information rich" for this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Reed, 2007).

Sampling Strategy

Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants who could provide "information rich" data for this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Reed, 2007). According to Creswell and Clark (2011) this involves the selection of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon of interest. Through purposeful sampling, participants are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with the phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) note the importance of issues such as availability and willingness to participate, as well as the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner.

Criterion sampling was used to make sure the participants would be a good source of information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012; Maxwell, 2012; Reed, 2007). The criteria used for this study were the participants' identification as Brazilian, are female and their current or past enrolment in a Canadian post-secondary institution within the last 6 months. A snowball sampling research technique, also called "linktracing sampling" (Hancock & Gile, 2010, p. 11) was used while collecting data for this study. This research technique involved the recommendation of prospective participants from current participants. This technique was essential in finding participants that met the study's set criteria. At the end of each interview,

participants were asked if they knew any other female Brazilian international students who maybe interested in the study. This method has proven to be effective in locating female participants from certain countries who may be otherwise difficult to locate (Amit & Riss, 2007).

For this study, eleven (11) participants engaged in different interviews with participants between the ages of 26 and 43. Different ages gave unique experiences and perspectives of female Brazilian international students. All participants had completed previous post-secondary programs in their home country of Brazil so comparisons could be made to the Canadian international post-secondary experience.

Research Site

The site of research was in Winnipeg, Manitoba which has a population of over 650,000 people. The site was chosen due to convenience, because there are three post-secondary institutions located in Winnipeg, all of which enrol female Brazilian international students.

Data Collection

Data in this study was collected through 11 interviews conducted in English. Qualitative interviews “[attempt] to understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of people’s experience, to uncover their lived world (Kvale, 1996, pp.1-2). The type of interview conducted was semi-structured in nature, lasting between 30 minutes and 60 minutes, depending on the participant’s responses. Semi-structure interviews ensured that every participant answered the same questions in the same order, increasing the chance of comparative responses (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, this type of interview provided greater flexibility for the researcher to ask further probing questions, depending the participants’ responses. The open-ended questions focused on the participants’ experiences living in Canada and studying in a Canadian post-secondary institution. The basic questions in the interview included:

- What are some of the challenges you face learning in a Canadian post-secondary institution?
- What strategies do you use to deal with these challenges?
- What are some of the differences studying at a Canadian post-secondary institution in comparison to back home?
- What changes have you noticed in yourself after spending some time studying in Canada?
- Do you enjoy studying in a Canadian post-secondary institution and why or why not?
- How can Canadian post-secondary institutions better accommodate your needs as a Brazilian international student?

The interviews were held in a place that was mutually agreeable to participant and researcher. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed immediately after the interview with all names and places replaced with pseudonyms.

Participant Profiles

Luiza. Luiza is a 34 year old female who came to Canada with her husband on July 31, 2015. She worked as a dentist in Brazil before enrolling in a dental assistant post-secondary program in Canada. Her husband is currently working as a full-time cook in a Mexican restaurant.

Rosa. Rosa is 32 years old and arrived in Canada in August, 2015 and also enrolled in a dental assistant program. Rosa had worked for 9 years in Brazil as a dentist before her arrival. In Brazil, Rosa's husband worked as a film editor. Upon moving to Canada, he became a server at a coffee shop and later was promoted to the manager.

Rita. Rita is a 30 year old female from San Paulo, Brazil and arrived in Canada on August 28, 2015. Rita had worked as an Early Childhood Teacher for bilingual schools in San Paulo. She has been working with international and bilingual education for the past 6 years. Rita is currently working on her Master's in Education with a focus on English as a Second Language. She has also been working for a summer camp at the university in addition to working as a substitute/volunteer for a childcare centre.

Nina. Nina is 33 years old and arrived in Canada on April 7, 2016. She first studied industrial chemistry in her native country but never had the opportunity to find employment in the field and subsequently changed her major to law. Nina studied for the public contest (government test), the equivalent of Canada's bar exam, while working as an English teacher in Brazil. In Canada, Nina was studying culinary arts in the hope of opening her own bakery one day.

Nara. Nara is 33 years old from Rio de Janeiro and arrived in Canada on April 8, 2016. She is married and majored in law, attaining her lawyer credentials in 2012. She worked as a legal representative for family and friends as she studied for the government test to be a public lawyer. She received the public lawyer position the day before she left for Canada but she turned it down. Nara is currently studying English at a Canadian post-secondary institution and plans to take a culinary arts program when her English improves.

Carla. Carla is 26 years old and came to Canada with her 27 year old husband. They come from a city called Natal and arrived in Canada April 27, 2016. Back in Brazil, she worked as a civil engineer, as did her husband, who has worked in the construction of World Cup arenas, airports and seaports. In Canada, he is currently working for \$13.50 an hour stocking shelves in a

supermarket part-time, hoping that they will promote him to a full time position. Carla is studying for her PhD in Civil Engineering, which will take 4-6 years of school to complete.

Amanda. Amanda is 31 years old and arrived in Canada April, 2015. In Brazil she worked as a Portuguese language teacher for 10 years in a public school in addition to being a private English tutor for 6 years. Amanda is technically still employed in Brazil because she is a public employee and as such, she is permitted to go on unpaid leave at any time and have her spot available to her if she chooses to return. Her husband works on an Atlantic Ocean platform off the coast of Brazil, drilling for oil. He travels to the platform for 2 weeks which is then followed by 3 weeks of vacation time. Now that Amanda has finished her English program at a local college, her husband has told the oil company that employs him that he will not be returning at the end of the month, as he wishes to remain with her for longer periods of time. Amanda presented her Master's dissertation in education in Brazil on the same day she came to Canada.

Gabriela. Gabriela is 30 years old and moved to Canada in 2006. She graduated and worked as a dentist in Brazil before immigrating. She first moved to Alberta, where she spent four years to complete a Master's of Science. She then came to Manitoba to obtain her degree to practice as an orthodontist, taking an additional three years. She has now opened her own practice in a small city in Manitoba.

Julia. Julia is 43 years old and is from the southern Brazilian city of Curitiba. She arrived in Canada in June, 2014. Julia's husband is currently working in Canada as a truck driver, although he worked as a Construction Technician in Brazil. Julia obtained a degree in Brazil in Social Communications, where she managed her own company. In Canada, Julia is enrolled in a one year Public Relations Marketing and Strategic Relations program. She has previously started

in Canada working on an English proficiency program for 2 months before undertaking her present educational program.

Sophia. Sophia, 40 years of age, is from Rio de Janeiro and came to Canada in August, 2014. Sophia spent 8 years in university in Brazil, trying multiple programs and internships before finishing with a major in Tourism. In Brazil, she worked for a travel agency and several non-profit organizations. In Canada, Sophia has just graduated from a degree in Business Administration, with an emphasis on financial services. During school, Sophia worked at Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. Her husband is working two jobs; Bison Transport in logistics and at a Manitoba Liquor factory.

Mariana. Mariana is from San Paulo and arrived in Canada in September, 2015. In Brazil, she completed her Master's in business administration and expanded her education by taking other post-graduate courses. In Brazil, she was employed in a management institution and advanced to a senior managerial position. In Canada, she is in university currently studying Project Management. While in Brazil, Mariana's husband was the head manager of a multi-million dollar corporation. In Canada, he is currently working two part time jobs as cart receiver for Wal Mart and as a delivery man for the company, Skip the Dishes; a service that delivers meals from local restaurants. Mariana has started working 20 hours per week for Skip the Dishes.

Data Analysis

The results from the interview were audio recorded on a device provided by Lakehead University. The recording was then typed and coded using a constant comparative method. Glaser and Strauss (1967) expanded ground theory through this method, which looks at categorizing properties and finds links between ideas. Bogdan and Biklen (2006) defined the

constant comparative method as a research design that links different sets of data with code in order to compare specific characteristics and then categorize themes based on those codes.

Glaser (1978) indicated the following steps in constant comparative method:

1. Begin collecting data
2. Look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that become categories of focus
3. Collect data that provide many incidents of the categories of focus, with an eye to see the diversity of the dimensions under the categories
4. Write about the categories you are exploring, attempting to describe and account for all the incidents you have in your data while continually searching for new incidents
5. Work with the data and emerging model to discover basic social processes and relationships
6. Engage in sampling, coding and writing as the analysis focuses on the core categories

In this study the categories were revised many times as the interview data was coded from the transcripts. The codebook table shows the breakdown of the codes assigned to each response given of the 11 transcripts compiled. Below is an encryption taken from one of the interviews in the study:

First of all Canada doesn't have so different culture like Japan than us. I heard at first in Brazil that Canada really have a good security, health. Canada had an example of health system for Brazil and education was good. It was like United States but more family. Haha. Family system. Really help people. It was like you really focus on the people so if the person has to be with the family it's okay you don't have to die working.

This response was categorized into three different categories: safe, health and people under the theme “Why Canada” and was assigned each of the categories code. After every response was coded and organized based on those codes, comparisons between participants were interpreted and discussed.

Codebook

Level				
1	2	3	4	Theme
1.00				Participants Characteristics
	1.10			Name
	1.20			Age
	1.30			Where in Brazil from
	1.40			Time in Canada
2.00				Type of Visa
	2.10			Intent
	2.20			Process
	2.30			Challenges
3.00				Choosing Canada
	3.10			Why Canada
		3.11		Research
		3.12		Been here before
		3.13		Safe
		3.14		People
		3.15		Public Transportation
		3.16		Weather
		3.17		Health
	3.20			First Impression
4.00				Social Challenges
	4.10			Who they came with
	4.20			Cultural Differences
		4.21		People
			4.212	Greeting
			4.213	Conversation
5.00				Studying in Canada
	5.10			General
		5.11		Program
		5.12		Post-Secondary School
		5.13		Start of School
			5.131	First Impressions
			5.132	Hours
		5.14		Class Sizes
	5.20			Challenges
		5.21		Brazil Experience Different
		5.22		Workload
			5.221	Time
		5.23		Respect
6.00				Working in Canada
	6.10			Job in Brazil
	6.20			Job in Canada
		6.21		Time it took

		6.22		Resume/Cover Letter
7.00				Financial Challenges
	7.10			Tuition
		7.11		International versus Canadian
	7.20			School Supplies
	7.30			Rent
		7.31		Household Items
	7.40			Food
8.00				Weather
9.00				Support
	9.10			Work
	9.20			School
	9.30			Requests for School
	9.40			Requests for Government

Ethical Considerations

Informed written consent was obtained from all 11 participants in the study. The consent form (See Appendix A) went over the confidentiality of the interview and data storage policy of Lakehead University⁸. It was made clear that participation in the study was completely voluntary and that there were no risks to participation. The participants were also provided with an information letter (See Appendix B) that summarized the purpose of the study, the choice to decline to answer any question and the possibility to be emailed the study's results. Every participant was made verbally aware of the purpose of the study, their role in it and the explanation that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. The names of the participants were replaced by pseudonyms during the transcribing process. Any publication that results from the data will remain confidential with the pseudonyms. This study had no foreseeable risks for the participants involved. Potential benefits to the participants included the opportunity to share their stories and experiences to others for the purpose of helping post-secondary institutions better accommodate Brazilian international students.

⁸ Audio tapes are locked away and destroyed after 5 years

Limitations

The study was conducted in Winnipeg, Manitoba with Brazilian international students who attended three different post-secondary institutions. The sample was drawn from a small area from a medium size city in Canada so it is difficult to generalize results across the country. The findings, however, are transferable to other Brazilian students who are studying in similar post-secondary institutions.

Participants were female Brazilian international students studying in Canada on a study visa all over the age of 25 years so the sample may not be entirely representative of international students who are under 25 years old. Effort was made to interview Brazilian students under the age of 25 to incorporate different experiences but none of the Brazilians who were interested in participating in the study met this criterion. The interview was conducted in English which is a second language for all the participants and therefore the study is limited in that it was not conducted in the students' mother tongue.

A longitudinal research design would better show the Brazilian international students' experiences studying in Canada since impressions and experiences may change throughout the duration of the student's term studying in Canada. Due to time and cost, a cross sectional research design was implemented.

Those students who volunteered to participate in the study were generally more critical of post-secondary institutions because they felt strongly that changes were needed. As such, may not be representative of the entire Brazilian international student population.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Discussion

During the process of gathering, transcribing and coding data, six different themes emerged which include the following: (a) Intent to immigrate to Canada (b) Differences in day to day life between Canada and Brazil (c) Studying in Canada (d) Financial challenges (e) Obtaining employment in Canada and (f) Other forms of support inclusive of emotional support. These themes summarize the challenges faced by Brazilian participants. This chapter concludes by recommending ways in which Canada could support Brazilian international students as outlined by the participants involved.

Intent to Immigrate to Canada

The first theme that emerged from the data was participants' intent to permanently immigrate to Canada. All the participants and their spouses had the intent to leave Brazil to pursue a future in Canada. When asked if she planned to immigrate to Canada before her arrival, Luiza stated, "I was planning on immigrating (Luiza, 35)." She rationalized, "I have nothing in Brazil" (Luiza, 37). Sophia also had the same mindset, "The whole time I planned to immigrate. My mind was made up" (Sophia, 859). Amanda considered many different countries to study but chose the country where immigration was the easiest, "When I came to Canada my goal was to live here in Canada so one easy way is study one year in a college, work and after than apply for PR [Permanent Residence Status]" (Amanda, 616). Julia also considered a number of countries but chose Canada because it was perceived to have more liberal immigration policies compared to other countries. Mariana was straight-forward in her response as to why she chose to study in Canada, "We considered the countries that had the easiest immigration system" (Mariana, 1062). English speaking countries like England, the United States and Australia were also considered by the participants before choosing to study in Canada. The main reasons for every

participant was the perceived easier immigration policy that Canada currently has in place and the alleged level of tolerance Canada has to immigrants. The main reason for the participants wanting to leave their home country was pessimism towards their future in Brazil. Brazil has faced an economic recession and a subsequent increase in crime over the past decade and many younger Brazilians are looking at immigration to other countries, including Canada, as a possibility.

The findings of the study demonstrated how Brazilian international students cannot be clumped together with other international students because their needs are different than those of other international students. All participants indicated that they were planning to immigrate. For the participants in the study, it was a big commitment to make it work no matter the cost which created an extra stress that international students at the typical age of 19-22 do not have.

Process of immigrating. In Canada, those who wish to immigrate must apply federally but some provinces, like Manitoba, offer a nominee program which can accelerate the federal process. When asked if Sophia had already applied:

we did through the Manitoba nominee program and got approved last year and now we are just waiting as it can take 15 months. I changed my study visa to a post graduate work permit which is good for another 2 years (Sophia, 857)⁹.

Challenges posed by the immigration process. While the process of immigrating to Canada seemed the easiest of all countries, it did pose some surprising challenges to the majority of the participants. For example, when Luiza, formerly a dentist in Brazil, was asked what she

⁹The PGWPP (Post Graduation Work Permit Program) can be issued by the Canadian government, up to a maximum of three years. This work permit cannot be longer than the period of study and the study program must be a minimum of eight months (Government of Canada, 2016)]. During this time graduates can apply for permanent resident status through Express Entry.

now did in Canada, she replied, “Here I am, nothing. I am not even a dental assistant when I am done graduating” (Luiza, 3). When asked why she felt like she was nothing even though she had finished her program she clarified:

I researched on the MBA website, if I could work here once I graduated from this program and I found that yes I could. One month before graduation there was a women who came from MBA [told us] that we are not registering anyone that is only under a study permit condition. I discovered this one month ago and now I cannot work as a dental assistant (Luiza, 8).

Luiza and others were frustrated by the information they had discovered on educational websites which appeared to claim that successful graduates who achieved certification in a post-secondary programs were eligible for employment in that occupation in Canada. These websites, however, did not consider the additional professional regulations concerning international students and work permit requirements.

All of the Brazilian participants had acquired a degree of professional experiences from their native country, making them very desirable to potential Canadian employers; however, due to current immigration policies, Sophia and her husband also faced additional challenges:

My biggest problem was the transition of being a student and then a worker because I was hired part time because I was still in school and I was supposed to be hired full time after my graduation. In my first week I got a call saying you can't be full time It is their policy that if you don't get your visa and [yet] we are training you and spending a lot of money and you will have to go. I felt so frustrated that I graduated [at the] top of my class, got an academic achievement award and when I got a job I couldn't move forward because of a paper. It was so out of my control, out my hands and very frustrating (Sophia, 948).

Altbach (2016) and Edwards(2007) stated that the Canadian government can also build upon its human capital, knowledge economy, and create alliances with other countries if they can retain international students. In this situation, Sophia with over 10 years of post-secondary education

plus the academic achievement award from her business administration program, was given a job and then had it taken away. Sophia's husband faced the same difficulty as her:

He got hired and just before he started he got a call saying can you please provide us with a form that says you will renew your visa in July and he said I can't [as] there is no such thing. They said if you can get proof that your visa will be renewed then unfortunately we can't move forward with you. What are you supposed to do? Write a letter to Justin Trudeau, hey can [you] confirm that I will be eligible [when] there is no such thing? (Sophia, 948)

Many international students and Canadians alike, including educators and potential employers, do not fully understand the manner in which the immigration process functions in Canada, creating difficulty and frustration for the students who are trying to get employment after graduation. Mariana, another participant, also heard similar stories from her Brazilian friends in the Brazilian expatriate community:

People from different industries like insurance or banking when they go [to] look for a job after the program they say you are good for the business but [only] when you become a permanent resident [can] you come talk to us because we are not going to hire you without a work permit (Mariana, 1183).

Listening to the frustrations of the group interviewed, it was evident that the Brazilian international students felt anger, betrayal and resentment with the way educators advertised their post-secondary programs and with potential future employers. The students perceived an insensitivity towards what was in written print concerning potential post-certificate employment and the exclusion of timely potential employment as a result of perceived bureaucratic red tape as it pertained to appropriate visas and work permits. The Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy wanted to attract international students in order for them to possibly immigrate (FATDC, 2012) but the current process is making it very challenging to do so.

Differences in Day to Day Life between Canada and Brazil

The second theme of this study focused on the Brazilian international students' life experiences in Canada. Determined to make the move to another country, participants in this study were willing to make the necessary adjustments, whether financial or emotional:

I always say if you leave your country you have to be sure of what you're doing, you can't go and test the waters because [when you experience] the first thing that is hard you will go back. You have to be 100% sure that you're leaving and not looking back and that is the decision (Sophia, 958).

Sadly, some participants in the study have already returned to Brazil or are no longer with their partner resulting in their partner going back to their home country. This transition can be too much to handle for many international students but for the majority, it is worth the difficulties to live in Canada.

Why choose Canada.

In Brazil I had a public job, my husband as well [had a public job] and we were very level in society. We didn't come here because of money, we had money in Brazil, we had a good apartment, we had a car, we could travel internationally, we could do what we want but we decided really to come to Canada because you cannot have just money in Brazil (Amanda, 623).

The Brazilian international students who participated in this study had both family and a comfortable life in Brazil so that the question is posed, what factors motivated students to leave it all behind? Every participant had done a lot of research before choosing Canada and they all had different reasons for choosing this country. Rosa did "a lot of research to the best cities in the world to live and most of them are in Canada" (Rosa, 130). The reason that the participants chose Manitoba was mainly due to the cost of living and the province's immigration. Rita stated,

Canada was the cheapest, and the closest. I don't speak Spanish so it needed to be English and Manitoba was the cheapest so it was better. It was a little bit bigger [population wise] than the other provinces that were cheap as well but there is nobody living there so I chose Manitoba (Rita, 218).

Julia, like many participants in the study, was looking for the easiest place to immigrate, “Manitoba is the province where immigration rules are easier I would say compared to the other provinces (Julia, 751)”.

Seven (7) of the twelve (12) participants in this study had a relative or a spouse living abroad before coming to Canada, which influenced their choice. Rita could not readjust to Brazil after being abroad, “since I went back to Brazil I had this feeling that I wanted to leave again. I was looking for more (Rita, 212)”.

Julia felt the same way “twelve years ago I moved to London, England and I spent five years there. Once I got back to Brazil I said Oh My God I have no roots anymore so I have to go abroad again. Then I decided to come to Canada (Julia, 742). Brazil’s endemic corruption, are finally attracting global attention due to the recent World Cup and Summer Olympics but Brazilians have faced challenges for many years. In addition to corruption, inflation rates are higher than most developed nations, which requires middle-class Brazilians to work longer hours to maintain the same standard of living. Brazil’s inflation rate reached 9.0% in 2015, although recent government initiatives are lowering this percentage (Focus Economics, 2016). In addition to a multitude of economic problems, Brazilians also face a soaring crime rate. As a result, many Brazilians wanted the peace of mind living in a community that was both economically stable and safe. Recent media releases profiling Brazil have labelled Brazil as the "murder capital of the world" (Forbes Magazine, 2016).

Sophia was tired of all the corruption in Brazil and also needed that change:

The corruption is killing every aspect of the country like killing our healthcare system, killing our education and we pay ridiculously high taxes but don't see the return. Public health is awful, public education is awful, security is awful. It's bad you have to pay twice if you want a decent service you have to pay private healthcare, private school and when you're paying 40% on taxes as our GST and PST is 37% so you just feel like there

is no way out of that because things just keep getting worst and worst. I always knew I didn't belong there anymore. Going back is not an option, it never was (Sophia, 535).

Every participant mentioned safety, and a lack of optimism for Brazil, as the main reasons for leaving their home country. Luiza felt always on edge being in Brazil, “ [we] catch ourselves holding our purse in the street and looking sideways and walking to the other side of street because there might be someone that might be a threat” (Luiza, 26). Mariana came to Canada because the crime in Brazil was more personal to her than the other participants, "I was kidnapped in Brazil. Violence was increasing in Brazil so it was mainly for security reasons. I know lots of people who have been through dangerous situations” (Mariana, 1086). When asked about how safe they feel now, Nina replied:

Yes it's a wonderful thing to be able to walk to school at 7 in the morning and not be afraid. Even in the beginning of the morning there was this guy who stopped me and asked for money, I told him I don't carry money to college, he was very nice, he smiled, said thank you. I used to work in a very dangerous place, I used to drive my car but it was a very dangerous neighbourhood so I was always afraid when I had to [go to] work to my car. I don't have this feeling here. It's amazing (Nina, 339).

Amanda had that same feeling of safeness in Canada:

For example in Brazil, I had a very poor cell phone because I did not want to buy another one because people steal cell phones in Brazil a lot. This could be a simple thing for a Canadian or someone from another nation but for Brazilians this feeling is very precious, very special for us because we are safe (Amanda, 629).

In 2009, 10.9% of the Brazilian population was living on less than \$2 per day (World Bank, 2012). Cerqueira, Carvalho, Lobão, & Rodrigues (2007) conducted a study where they added the spending on police, prisons, private security, public health, and loss of human capital (from premature deaths caused by violence), and personal loss from robbery and theft and discovered that the cost of crime in Brazil was estimated to be R\$92 billion in 2004, or 5.1% of GDP. With

these statistics, it is understandable why participants in the study felt frustrated with the current system in Brazil and needed change.

Weather. The weather was something that the Brazilian participants were concerned with before immigrating to Canada but the majority have taken to it better than they had originally anticipated. Luiza stated, “the weather was nice actually it was too hot for me, even though I am from Brazil” (Luiza, 27). She added, “I didn’t feel trapped. I didn’t feel depressed. I like it, when the snow left us I missed it.” (Luiza, 115).

Many other participants like Julia actually missed the winter when it was gone, “We don't mind at all the winter actually we are missing the winter already” (Julia, 830). Mariana had similar thoughts to the other participants concerning the cold weather, “Winter - everyone was scaring us off but it went okay. It wasn't the worst thing actually now that we have the really hot days we miss winter” (Marianna, 1140).

In contrast, for some participants, the weather was just too different from what they were used to in Brazil and it became very challenging to adapt,

Crazy. Too cold. it started to get cold by mid-October and then it ended in March so it was a long time. The beginning was nice because it was very different especially when it started snowing. Then it started snowing too much and it was really messy. You get dirty all the time and you have to dress up 100 clothes you have to put on (Rita, 290).

For the participants interviewed, the stresses associated with the extremes in Canada’s climate were different; however, they were perceived as not being a decisive factor in choosing to remain in or leave Canada. One might even argue that the sentiments made echoed those of Canadians born in the country who too like to comment and often complain about the weather.

Socializing in Canada. As pointed out in the literature review, both Canadians and international students can benefit from associating with one another. Canada would seem attractive to international students because there are so many immigrants already in Canada. In

2011, Canada had a foreign-born population of about 6,775,800 people. They represented 20.6% of the total population, the highest proportion among the G8 countries (Immigration and Ethical Diversity in Canada, 2016). Sophia pointed out, “my first shock was to learn how many immigrants are here because I wasn't aware of that and I was walking and seeing people speaking so many different languages and dressing in so many different ways” (Sophia, 850). However, Brazilians in the study explained in the interviews that it was very difficult to associate with Canadians and they faced many different challenges.

Gabriela spent more time in Canada than any of the other participants and for that reason she attributes to having gone through the most challenges. In her interview, she explained the costs of accomplishing her goals Canada:

The ones that were from countries like India and Brazil they can feel that they are treated a little bit different. I got what I wanted from this. I became an orthodontist in this country which is very difficult to do but it came at a very high cost emotionally and mentally because the working environment here in Canada feel very entitled and make[s] the students life hell (Gabriela, 972).

When asked why she believed the citizens of Canada made her life feel like hell, she explained,

I think a lot of them thought what a benefit, what a privilege you have to be chosen to be in this great environment and of leaving a third world country to be here. So it was expressed to me one way or another for many, many years in both Alberta and Manitoba (Gabriela, 974).

Julia, who spent the second most amount of time in Canada of all the participants, shared similar views of being treated differently:

Some of them [natural born Canadians] are very bias against immigration and your broken English. I noticed that some people try to avoid you because they don't understand you and they feel uncomfortable asking you again what did you say (Julia, 820).

These quotes are similar to the research findings of Sam (2001) and Grayson (2007), which found that international students face many forms of discrimination and bias resulting in few domestic friendships.

The Canadian personality. The participants in this study had mixed opinions over the personality of Canadians. When asked to describe Canadians, some were very positive in their response, like Luiza, “People here are very polite, helpful and friendly” (Luiza, 29). Nina had a great experience when she went shopping for groceries:

We were at Costco one day and this older man was helping [us] with groceries and things like that. I get a little emotional. It was an amazing experience for me being so far away from my family and you can reach out to people even if they don't know you. People here are more polite than Brazil. More respectful (Nina, 377).

For Mariana, Canada met her expectations, “I expected people would be nice and they were. I think the thing they say that people here are friendly which is true” (Mariana, 1147). Rosa believed you have to really take the initiative to get to know Canadians:

Here in Canada people who are from here I noticed are more reserved, they are more cold, so to develop that relationship you have [to take] more time. You take more time to really start to speak with the person about personal things (Rosa, 153).

For some participants, this was very challenging because Canadians wanted to keep their distance from international students:

all I know [is] that Canada is supposed to be friendly but I don't think it is. I feel people are very closed here for international peoples, immigrants or refugees. Canadians are very nice, I'm not talking about you but the ones that I met are really nice, really polite but it stops there. Nobody is really open to try to have a deeper relationship. It was weird at the beginning (Rita, 272).

Nina also felt that Canadians were not friendly:

They don't say good morning to other people. Sometimes when you hold the door and they say thank you that's it. It was actually an observation from one of the teachers that it is the first time she had so many international students and she said it is a very good experience because you guys are clappers and you're always laughing and talking (Nina, 366).

Stereotypically, Canadians are quiet and personal nature, and this demeanour has unknowingly created a barrier to prevent integration of international students. Trice (2007) found that the majority of domestic students interviewed had no interest in making friends with international

students. Julia, during her interview, offered some interesting insights on what Canadians could talk about to get to know Brazilians better:

I don't know if it is bias, maybe they are afraid, they don't want to make you feel bad so they keep that distance. For example, my classmates never asked me anything about Brazil, never, they never asked the main drink in Brazil, what they do. One thing that they asked me about Brazil is about the slums, all the poverty in Brazil. So I don't know if they know enough about Brazil, I don't know if it is something they are interested in learning about. I know everything I possibly can about India because I have some friends from India. I know so many things about Columbia because I have a Columbian friend. So we talk to each other, but my Canadian friends never ask me anything about Brazil. Probably because I notice here you are not allowed to ask about background, where you came from in order to not generate bias but they do generate bias. It's funny. It's interesting because I don't know if they are afraid of offending you in any way or if it is just the culture of not asking questions about your past or your background. The thing we love the most to talk about is our country so I never had any opportunity to talk to classmates about it. Never (Julia, 822).

Julia, and others in the study group, felt that Canadians, in their politeness and in order to not inadvertently offend anyone of a different background than themselves, closed themselves off to topics that were most personal to the international students and thus the Canadians were perceived as cold and distant, even if that was not their intention.

Cultural differences. The cultural differences between Canada and Brazil were a lot greater than originally anticipated by the study participants. One participant tried to describe the difference in the simple act of greeting people:

We never know how to greet people. We always want to hug, we always want to kiss and we never know if it would be embarrassing for us. It's like we are invading your space and in the beginning we don't know what to do, do we just shake hands. In Brazil if you meet someone that you don't even know you kiss on the cheek and if you know the person and if you just shake hands you are offending the person. Why are you shaking my hand? Do I have some flu? Is there any problem with me? The first time I met someone out of school I was really, I didn't know what to do (Luiza, 98).

Nara gave a specific example where the cultural differences created awkwardness between a Brazilian friend of hers and a Canadian father:

Sometimes we don't know what a polite thing to do is. Sometimes we think we are being polite and were not. In the Art Gallery, a child fell down on the floor and a friend of mine, a Brazilian tried to help the child but the dad of the child did not like. In Brazil if a child fell we would help, we could touch their hands. Here we don't know if we can say if your child is cute. With dogs we don't know if we can pet them. In Brazil it's different we can touch, hug. I don't know if I can hug someone here (Nara, 486).

Rosa felt it was her personal fault for not being able to associate with Canadians because of a barrier she herself created:

They are very nice but sometimes it can be my barrier I am just afraid to show myself and I say rude things or just do some rude things. Brazilians are more closer, they hug, they kiss, they talk about their families and here not everybody wants to talk about that and so I was afraid to cross this line with them so I think I don't have Canadian friends because I have this barrier (Rosa, 192).

Many participants, like Rosa, explained that they did not know how to interact with Canadians and were constantly worrying whether what they were doing was correct or proper. Rientjes et al. (2012) found that this uncertainty increased stress levels when interacting with peers and teachers.

Number of Canadian friends versus Brazilian friends. Participants in the study were asked how many international friends they had made in Canada in comparison to how many Canadian friends they had in total. Every participant indicated that they had more international friends than Canadian friends since arriving in Canada. Many participants in this study were unable to make a single Canadian friend. On average, the participants in the study indicated that they had one to two Canadian friends. In contrast, the average number of international friends, including other Brazilians met in Canada, was ten to fifteen friends. These results are similar to the findings of the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) (2015) survey which indicated that 54% of the 3,000 international students in Canada reported having no Canadian friends.

Classroom peers. The participants in the study had mixed classroom experiences. The majority of students were in classes with mostly international students, like Nina, “35 international students” (Nina, 343) and Mariana, “38 of the 41” (Mariana, 1076). On average, 80% of the participants’ classes were comprised of international students with the lowest ratio being 50%. Classes full of international students posed problems for the Brazilian international students. Nina had to deal with classmates who could not communicate with her in English:

When I chose this program for a year, I came [and then] I found out it was exclusively for international students. I have to face some things in my class like people who don't speak English that well and they don't even understand me. So one or two people, maybe three in my class spoke good English (Nina, 326).

When asked how many of those international classmates were Brazilian, most participants either had none or just a couple of others. Rita stated, “Just me, I have not met any Brazilian taking any kind of education course here yet” (Rita, 262). Amanda similarly said, “Just me [who is] Brazilian. “When Rita was asked whether there were other Brazilians in her class, she replied, “In the whole education Master’s I have not seen one other Latin” (Rita, 278). When asked why there were so few Brazilians in education, the participant shared some interesting insights into the cultural differences in the value of education “I do have an idea because its education and education is not something valued in Latin America (Rita, 280)”.

Since the majority of the participants’ classes were comprised of immigrants, the participants were asked which cultures made up the majority of international students. Their reply was overwhelmingly Chinese and Indian. Nina had a little more variety of cultures represented in her class, “We have like three Vietnamese, one from Jamaica, another born in the Philippines and there is one South Korean girl. The rest however is Chinese and Indian” (Nina, 347). Mariana’s class was also predominantly composed of international students from India, “Almost two thirds of my class were from different provinces [states] in India” (Mariana, 1080).

While Amanda's class was mainly comprised of students from China, "I think out of the seventeen students in the class there were four nations - Brazil, China, Korea and India. Koreans just two, myself Brazilian, and the rest were Indian and Chinese" (Amanda, 676). Sophia had similar experiences when asked which culture made up the most students in her respective classes, "Chinese. A lot of Indian kids too" (Sophia, 895).

Amanda did not enjoy her experience studying with other international students, "From my classroom I had one friend. In the classroom, with mostly international students a natural divide occurs where students stick together with their own countries." Julia discussed a similar natural occurrence, "Now where I study I tend to go to Latin people. People from Mexico, Columbia, Brazil so this is a natural selection we do [it] to ourselves but that's very true, we see people grouping by countries" (Julia, 772). These results are similar to Trice (2007), where professors stated that international students stick together with others who are from similar cultures.

The Brazilian international students understood this natural tendency for students from other countries to form their own groupings, both social and educational, but it placed a lot of stress for the Brazilian international students as they found themselves in the minority demographic. Participants who had no other Brazilian or Latin students in the class often studied in social isolation. Mariana pointed out how she could never talk with her classmates because they never spoke in English, "Since the majority of the students were from [other counties] they kept all the time together and most of the time they were together they were speaking their own language" (Mariana, 1068). Where there existed diverse backgrounds in the classes, also existed many different accents, making group work very difficult for participants like Mariana "We have

six or seven different nationalities and some of the accents were very difficult so it was difficult to understand them at the beginning (Mariana, 1072)".

In addition to the differences in ethnicity, the age of the participants' classroom peers also made it very difficult for the participants to pursue friendships because they had little in common besides being international students. When Nina was asked about her classmates, she stated, "they are all very young. I was not expecting them to be so young. It's like I am 33, the other Brazilian is 34. We are the oldest in the class. The Chinese students are 19-21 [years of age]" (Nina, 351). Nara had a similar experience, "They [other students] are like 18 years, 20 maybe four including me are above 30 [years of age] (Nara, 473)". Amanda discussed the experience and age difference as a difficult gap:

I am 31. With my age there was four, the rest were very young 19, 20 which for this course is reasonable. For me I have a graduation, post-graduation, master's degree so this college was very frustrating for me because it was [like] high school - too teenager for me (Amanda, 678).

While the classes were mostly comprised of international students, the Brazilians remain in much different circumstances than their peers as a result of being in a minority demographic, including the differences in their age, their relationship status and their life experiences. Julia, in her interview, discussed how her priorities were very different from her peers:

I would say that [it is] the age that puts you apart. I am 43 and the average age is 28, 29 and because I have a daughter, I have a family, I am not single person anymore. Most of the people in the program are single, they go out together and they form a bond very quickly and I am not part of that group for natural reasons (Julia, 820).

Sophia also referred to this difference:

It was different, we had people coming straight from high school and we had others like me that's spent years in university and then there were others, Brazilians, that had spent more years than me with school and work. I would say on average the Brazilians were the oldest because most of them are in the same situation after they have graduated. They have Masters Degrees but have to go to college to immigrate as a way to get there. A lot of them also had a lot of work experience (Sophia, 897).

With this subsequent age gap, life experiences and the cultural differences between Brazilians and their other international student classroom peers, it was very difficult for Brazilians to make lasting friendships.

Freedom of expression. While participants in the study found Canadians to be very reserved and cold, many of them mentioned the tolerance Canadians show to diversity as one of their best traits. Carla in her interview compared the tolerance of Brazilians and Canadians:

I would say Brazilians are more open to make friends but Canadians are more open minded. For example if you go to Brazil and try to speak Portuguese, probably they are going to laugh at you just because it is funny but I know I have a strong accent and you [Canadians] don't make fun of that (Carla, 540).

Sexism was brought up by some of the participants with contradictory views. Sophia felt that in comparison to Brazil, Canada was less sexist, “Socially speaking Brazil is so sexist and I never noticed that until I came to Canada. I knew we were a little bit but not as much I can see now (Sophia, 867). In contrast, Gabriela had a much different view and faced difficulties in school for being a female, “I think Canada is a much more sexist country then they lead on. Very much so. I had a very, very hard time being a female in my program. It was very difficult” (Gabriela, 989). When asked to elaborate, Gabriela discussed a specific incident that occurred in her program:

I had written harassment. I reported to the university and nothing happened. Someone writing, texting and emailing me calling me a whore. You take to the university and they do an investigation and it's just a slap on the wrist. To me, if that happened in Brazil people would be expelled, no question about it. I never faced in my life so much putting a lid on things and sweeping it under the rug. It is a very sexist environment. For one I was the only female in the program [orthodontist] at the beginning. It was very hard (Gabriela, 991). I never expected this from Canada and I went through so many hard times studying here. I [have] never seen so much sexist behaviour in a first world country. I think people are rude for the sake of being rude but here especially (Gabriela, 999).

Outside of the post-secondary institution, Gabriela expressed similar experiences:

There is not even one time I open my mouth and people are saying what did you do. I am an orthodontist, what, I thought you were the dental assistant. There has not been one single time that people have expressed extreme awe that I am a young female and I am a professional, a specialist in dentistry. They think that every female should be in a lower kind of job so I think that that is a view that is very toxic. I don't know if it is the cost of childcare because most females are stay at home moms or they are working part time in order to stay with the kids because childcare is so expensive. I understand that - but I don't think we should lower the expectations for females because of that. Females are not expected to be in the role I am and I take offence to that. I smile and I nod but its offensive just because of my gender (Gabriela, 1029).

Hwang and Goto (2009) highlighted some discrimination faced by Latins. None of the other participants expressed such extreme difficulties as Gabriela had studying in Canada, but her experience does show that Canada, in some cases, has a way to go in building tolerance for female international students.

Culture shock. Every participant in the study felt some sort of culture shock studying in Canada. Rita stated in her interview, “It was really hard in the beginning. I was living with my mom before I come and I never lived by myself” (Rita, 232). Julia started questioning herself after immigrating to Canada, “I remember not liking the city at all. I was thinking Oh My Gosh what have I done. I just left the most beautiful city in the world. I said this place is horrible” (Julia, 768). Amanda also felt the stress building up and questioned her move to come to Canada “I was thinking Oh my God I don't think I am in the correct way because here we need to prove to everyone we are able to do our job (Amanda, 625)”. While all participants experienced struggles, all of them said they did not regret their choices while keeping in mind the ultimate goal of immigration was to provide a better future for their families.

Summary. Brazil's corruption, violence and financial crisis were listed as factors for leaving Brazil to study in Canada. All of the participants expressed an intention to immigrate. They were studying in Canada with the intention of making Canada a permanent home. An

additional theme that emerged from the results described the difficulties Brazilians faced when interacting with Canadians. The participants were asked about the cultural differences between Canada and Brazil and many responses indicated that closeness was something they missed from living in Brazil. This feeling of isolation was exasperated when some participants felt that Canadians, in their politeness and multi culturalist ideologies, closed themselves off to topics that were most personal to the international students. As such, the participants' Canadian peers were perceived as cold and distant. These results illuminated the difficulties that Brazilian international students face with seclusion since cultural differences emerged to be more of a barrier than originally perceived.

Studying in Canada

The next theme that emerged was the experience of studying in Canada. Right from the beginning of the first class, the Brazilian participants experienced unique challenges. For example Luiza did not want the rest of the class to know she was a dentist in Brazil but was forced to present her background on the first day of school to her peers making it impossible to hide (Luiza, 42). All of the participants in the study worked as professionals in Brazil before arriving in Canada to study and most felt uncomfortable revealing their prior established professions. There was a feeling that they wanted be seen as part of the group who were still in the process of studying to achieve their career goals and not as a group who had met their previous goals and now were switching these goals.

Program hours and class sizes. The Brazilian international students all had similar hours at the post-secondary institution, "8.00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, every day with no breaks at all except for lunch for an hour, sometimes half an hour" (Luiza, 46). Some, like Gabriela, had school on Saturday, "It's full-time Monday to Friday 8:00 am to 6:00pm and

some Saturdays so we had no time to do anything else” (Gabriela, 1036). The class sizes varied across the programs from 50 students in one class to just 9 students in another class with an average of 30 students per class.

Program challenges. The international students all faced challenges. Amanda had difficulties being with the same professor everyday of her program:

I had just one teacher everyday 8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.. She was very good and had a lot of experience but we had a lot. In the day it would be two hours one subject and then she changed for another subject but it was same teacher so it was tiring (Amanda, 668).

Experiences unique to Brazilians. All of the participants had studied in a post-secondary institution in Brazil and most have had experience in their career field in their home country. Even though they had this experience, when asked if the programs were similar with respect to teaching methodologies by professors or assignments, they all replied “no”. Some of the participants took different programs from those which they had studied in Brazil but even the strategies of delivering course content was very different, making it difficult for Brazilian international students to adjust, “It’s just different than Brazil I do not think I can describe or even know how different it is” (Luiza, 49). Rita mentioned that a difference between studying in Canada and Brazil is that in Canada, the professors ask the students to put their own opinions into their papers “Sometimes it is hard, it is very personal and it’s hard sometimes to share this kind of information with someone that is just going to read the paper (Rita, 295)”.

A positive difference between Canada and Brazil, according to Rosa’s experience is the first day of school in Canada where everything is explained to the student:

the first day they try to explain everything to you so you know what to expect in the future in the course and how the system is for everybody not just for us who are coming from another culture but for everybody (Rosa, 149).

Julia mentioned that another difference was the academic seriousness of the post-secondary institutions in Canada:

The first thing is my experience back in my college in Brazil is that I was young and I didn't take it too seriously but I can see university didn't take it as seriously as they should for example I have a course in my diploma in Brazil which is Spanish and I never did this program but it says on my transcript I have so many hours in Spanish and actually have very good grades in it (Julia, 782).

Apparent from the vast differences in educational experiences between Canada and Brazil, Canadian post-secondary institutions recognize very little of previous Brazilian experience:

They recognize nothing. I will perform a theory test and then a practical test and depending on my mark I would be allowed to apply for a bridge program. If I am accepted by the University it is a 2 year course. After that, there is another test. Which means 1 year and half plus 2, 3 years and half to be a dentist again if everything goes correct (Luiza, 90).

Workload. While many of the participants took academically demanding programs in Brazil, including dentistry, law and engineering, all the participants in the study found the programs in Canada to be much more demanding than anticipated:

I wasn't expecting it to be easy because I knew it wasn't going to be easy but at the beginning it was really hard. I would spend the whole day studying for a class at night. [For] the [assignment] papers, professors expect different things than what professors expected in Brazil (Rita, 293).

Julia felt that she did more work in the short time she had been in Canada when compared to her entire previous educational life, "I did more work here than I ever did in life. In the four years for my graduation in Brazil I never worked as hard as here" (Julia, 787). This workload can be more difficult to manage because of the different stages in their lives and the family responsibilities that their international or non-international peers may have:

We had assignments every day, it's crazy, it's completely overwhelming. Especially in my situation, that I have a family so I am not by myself. I get home, I have to set-up dinner, I have to take care of my daughter and her homework and then when she is done I am able to do my stuff. So it was very intense here, lots of assignments. In Brazil usually we have one exam, one final exam. Maybe you can have a middle term, a final and one assignment. That's it. Here you have all the quizzes, then you have a midterm and then you have a final. You have all the assignments and all of this you must do to complete

your grade. So I would say it's more fair here because they are not evaluating the one piece of paper (Julia, 785).

The participants described that the assessments were much different in Canada than what they were accustomed to in Brazil. Amanda did not have tests in her English program but she had a lot of assignments:

Never had a test just assignments, articles, reviews. I never had one exam. In Brazil there would definitely be an exam because Brazil likes exams. M I think it was not necessary this number of assignments and I don't know if the teacher could have seen all of them. Sometimes in a week we had one assignment per day (Amanda, 680).

When asked which method of assessment Nina preferred, she replied:

I like tests every week. I think it is important because in Brazil we have just two opportunities and with tests every week you have to study every week. Consequently, you're getting more information and you're learning more than in Brazil. We need to have a minimum of 80% so we need to study a lot (Nina, 464).

Sophia also preferred this level of workload because it kept her on track:

There [in Brazil] you would have your midterms and your finals but here you have activities every week- tests, quizzes, assignments which is good for me because it kept me on track (Sophia, 928).

Amanda wished there was more of a balance rather than submitting assignments or completing tests every week:

I like both but I don't like tests every week or assignments every week. I think there should be a balance because you can apply your knowledge with time and in a more relaxed way but I think tests are good as well because it proves if you know or don't know what was taught by the teacher (Amanda, 682).

For some participants, the program workload was so much greater in Canada that they would not recommend it to other Brazilians:

Don't do it. It's not worth it. I got sick from this process. It's not worth it. Now it's been a year I have started practicing and I still tell people studying to be dentists in the college to not do what I did. It's not good for your health. Awful, because there is so much studying involved, so the course load is really heavy and it's heavy for everyone. You're away from family and you deal with people on a daily basis that are awful. It's not worth it. I would not do it (Gabriela, 1045).

When asked if she would choose another profession if she knew the workload, Gabriela replied,

It would be very hard for to choose another profession but I think its best. Especially if you're older mind you - when I came here I was 24 years old it's been 10 years but I could not imagine someone in there 30's with children doing what I did. Health comes first (Gabriela, 1049).

Time constraints. Time constraints emerged as another sub theme. Participants in the study indicated that they needed to translate what they were learning into Portuguese to process the material then translate it back into English to answer the assessment, taking too much time:

Once at the end of the course we had a test and I did not have a time to write it. So I couldn't finish it. This really bothered me to write it in English takes more time, to read the test takes more time. It is not our first language. Even at the end of the course when I was used to doing things the time was just not enough - but I knew the answers. They just rip it from my hand, you're done and this is very frustrating (Luiza, 50).

Respect as international students. A few participants felt disrespected as students in comparison to their treatment while studying in Brazil. Luiza went into detail in an example:

I do not know if the code of ethics here is different in Canada than in Brazil but I think that there I can say "I don't want to" and I will be respected. Here I was not respected once when I said I didn't want too. [For Dentistry] here you have to have patients, treat patients there, there are some procedures that are done in the mouth and here before practicing on real patients we practice on each other. There is a procedure that was part of the curriculum that I do not need and I know I don't need it because I'm a dentist. I told the coordinator that I don't agree that I need this treatment. I think it has more negative consequences than positive so I do not want it. She said well if you don't sit to be a patient for someone, you won't have someone sit for you and if you don't have someone sit for you, you don't graduate. So she gave me an option, she said you can bring an outside patient, then you won't have to sit, they will sit for you. I said I only know one other person here who is an adult and I don't think adults need this procedure because it is for children. I don't know any children here. Then you have to sit and I told her okay I will sit but I know that I am not giving my free consent and I am having myI know I am not being respected. Does this apply everywhere in Canada or just here? This really freaked me out (Luiza, 51).

When asked if Luiza filed a complaint, she said:

The college lawyer told us that if we felt discriminated we could go to the human rights and they would have a talk with MDA and maybe make them change. But when I questioned our course leader whether this is a good option or would it be seen in a bad

way? Yes this would be seen as bad to your registry, we would be marked for saying we felt discriminated so we didn't do it (Luiza, 53).

While Mariana did not face any discrimination for being an international student, she mentioned during the interview that some of her peers had:

a few instructors did not take well that they had so many international students. They made some comments. For example one of her instructors in the same university told the class in a subtle way that the internationals are thinking they are coming here to steal others jobs (Mariana, 1103).

English language. For many participants in the study, difficulties in the program did not come from the subject material, but rather, the academic use of specific English. Brazilian international students were not prepared, “The subjects were not very hard to me because I was already a dentist so nothing was new but to learn all the terminology in English was a mission” (Luiza, 48). Rita stated in her interview “Academic language is very difficult. Its seems until today like a third language I am learning even though its English but it is different. (Rita, 266)”.

Although the majority of participants had experience with English before immigrating to Canada, they all indicated that the language was much harder than they anticipated, “in the first month the English it was so hard to understand in all the classes” (Luiza, 50). In fact, Amanda used her short study break to exclusively focus on English. She said that she had to “keep studying but when I finish my college now my focus will be English, English, English and improving my pronunciation and everything” (Amanda, 626). Mariana worked with English in Brazil and found, “Although I use to use English back home I had a lot of headaches in my first week because it was a whole full week from 8:00 a.m. -4:00 p.m. everyday listening to everything in English” (Mariana, 1071). Okorochoa (1996) revealed in their study that these language difficulties often led to confusion and struggles with the course content. For the majority of students in the study, the course content was just a review of what they studied in Brazil but the difficulty lay in the language.

Student/ teacher relationship. The relationship between students and teachers was another issue that proved to have contrasting opinions. Some participants felt that the Canadian professors wanted to keep a distance from their students, “We have one instructor that the relationship was more separated and it created more tension during the course. She was respectful to us but it was a different relationship” (Rosa, 155). Nina believed that in Brazil, the teachers were allowed to socialize more with the students and she believed this could never happen in Canada:

It is weird for me because it is a bit of a difference. Usually in Brazil sometimes you get, not intimate, but there are teachers who go to parties with students. Some of them take students. I feel this would never happen here. Actually on orientation day they said don't give teachers presents. It's not the intention of earning something from the teacher but it's common in Brazil. On Teacher's Day you bring them chocolate and presents. It's something that is common in my culture and it is totally different here. My baking teacher is very nice, she has three children, she told us a little bit about their life but [still] they keep their distance. It's different (Nina, 356).

Contrary to this view, other participants in the interview found that their professors in Brazil were more distant than those in Canada, who they perceived to be friendlier “Here the teachers are more friendly, closer to the students (Nara, 520)”.

Teaching style. The last sub theme that surfaced during the interviews was the difference in teaching styles and methodologies between Brazil and Canada. Some participants enjoyed the method of teaching in Canada:

In Brazil you have the notes from the teacher and you have to make your own notes so here it's easier because they give you everything. We have just one book, we buy one book and it's everything is in this book (Rosa, 200).

Rita had a similar experience in how educational material was presented:

The classes are kind of planned the same way where the teacher lectured a little bit and then it's open for discussion. Most of the courses that made the most impact in my life and into my practice were planned and given the same way (Rita, 264).

The participants in the study felt that in Canada, there was more to their marks than what they achieved on the test such as effort and attendance:

Brazil is very specific. I will teach you the subject, you go home, you study, you will be marked on the tests. That's it. You won't be graded for coming to class. This is totally different here. You are graded on your appearance, on your being early or not, on your participation which is amazing. I believe this is wonderful. Your interests, how you do the assignments, if you're trying or not to do well. If you're interested or not. I feel you're actually being graded on how you relate with your classmates as well. I have never seen that happening before (Nina, 352).

The participants noticed that their Canadian professors really care about the students' learning and whether they are successful. Nina explained, "The biggest thing is teachers are actually willing to teach. To prepare you for work, they are worried about your learning and you being a good employee and understanding what a Canadian employer would look for" (Nina, 354). Nara also believed that the professors were more dedicated to the students learning,

Here I think the teachers are more committed, they are concerned if you're going to the school and if you're learning. If you have some doubt they are totally available to help you or give you extra exercises. They are more concerned about your learning (Nara, 460).

Perhaps the professors in Canada are more committed to their teaching because Canadian professors take the student assessments of the teaching more critically. Rita found that the student questionnaires affected the professors' grading throughout the year, something very different than in Brazil:

I have seen those assessments where the student answer a questionnaire at the end of the course - talking about the professor and everything. I have noticed and have heard people saying that the next term [whether or not] this professor teaches the same course based on the results from our questionnaires (Rita, 204).

Some of the participants felt that in Canada, student evaluation was more objective and not reliant on teacher perceptions of the student:

Here it is just straight forward, it's technical, I don't mind if you're nice or not, I don't mind if you're bringing me coffee or not you have to do it [the evaluations] and that's it. In Brazil if you bring some coffee to the teacher and if you talk nicely, you become

friends with the instructor. Then your grade will be great. It doesn't work here (Julia, 783).

Similar to the study completed by Duanmu, Li, and Chen (2009) international students had difficulty adjusting from teacher-centered pedagogical approaches to student-centered teaching styles. Ramsey, Barker and Jones (1999) found that the majority of international students surveyed had difficulties in their professors teaching style.

Summary. The Brazilians in the study often felt alienated due to the dynamics of the international classroom since most of their peers were from India or China. Julia explained that she only had one friend because most of the students were not Brazilian. The Brazilian international students understood this natural tendency for students from other countries to form their own groupings, both socially and educationally, but it placed a lot of stress on the participants as they found themselves in the minority. Participants who had no other Brazilian or Latin peers studied in social isolation. Mariana pointed out how she could never talk with her classmates because they never spoke in English. Further, the Brazilian participants were much older than the average international student. With this age gap, many of the priorities and responsibilities between the Brazilian international students and their peers were different. Julia understood that differences would make it very difficult to bond with her classmates. Brazilians studying in Canada had mixed opinions over the heavy workload the post-secondary institution provided. The majority of participants agreed that having multiple forms of assessments with presentations, tests, portfolios, small assignments and big projects were more beneficial and a better indicator of their learning than the one to two large tests that they were assessed by when they studied in Brazil.

Financial Challenges

Canada was chosen by many participants because it was perceived to have the cheapest cost of living. For most participants; however, things were much more expensive than they anticipated. This added stress to participants' studies in Canada:

It was like we had to spend a lot of money right now. It's not going to harm our financial situation but thank god my husband got a job now because it was getting really close (Nina, 328).

The government of Canada recommends a targeted amount of money that an international student needs to study in Canada. In some cases, the government asks for proof that the international student has that amount of money available. Sophia stated in her interview that she had to prove that she had liquid funds. When asked how much they had to have, the numbers varied considerably. Luiza stated in her interview that she had to have 30,000 dollars per year. Rita stated, "25,000 dollars which was needed to cover for the whole year" (Rita, 251). Carla received a letter stating, "it would cost from 8,000 to 27,000 dollars a year - it depended on how much I spend on things. So it was not very helpful" (Carla, 580). Julia had researched that, "they say that principle applicant must have 14, 000 dollars and 3,000-4,000 dollars for each dependent. Which is not accurate at all" (Julia, 812). Sophia believed it was, "enough to cover tuition in the first year of studies and I think it was 12,000 dollars extra [for additional expenses]" (Sophia, 902) and Mariana stated it was, "10,000-14,000 dollars for the first applicant and then another 4,000 dollars for the second applicant for a year" (Mariana, 1127).

Even through these different quotes, every participant stated that what was recommended was lower than what they actually needed. This posed an extra stress, more unique to Brazilian international students as their spending is higher than the average international students because, for the majority of them, they are accompanied by other family members when they move to Canada to pursue post-secondary studies. Julia explained:

Because they say that amount would be for one year and for my lifestyle it is not accurate at all. All Brazilian people are surprised at how much the cost of living is here. I thought it would be cheaper than it was - even though I did a lot research (Julia, 814).

For some participants, unexpected costs piled up and created stressful situations:

When I arrived here I received a letter saying that my tuition would increase more than 1,000 dollars and I didn't know that my books and all the study supplies I needed to pay separately. So in 6 months the money that I brought was almost at its end but my husband started to work 2-3 months after arriving. What he earns is like the minimum wage so we had a lot of times that we had to take care in our spending (Rosa, 184)

When I asked Mariana how much she had spent this year so far she said, "I actually did this calculation a few months ago and that does not include the car that we bought here. I think we spent, including my tuition almost 50,000 dollars" (Mariana, 1135). Sophia stated that she spent:

at least 30,000-35,000 dollars. You have to think you come here and you don't have anything, you have your clothes with you and that's it. You have to buy an apartment, you have to buy every single thing you put in that apartment and even more clothes. We come from South America - we don't have proper clothes for the winter. You have to buy everything. You just come here and it's yourself and two pieces of luggage (Sophia, 908).

When asked what type of things she had to buy she stated:

You have to pay for utilities, phone, Internet, transportation, clothes, furniture, food you can't do that with 12,000 dollars at all. That's impossible, that unrealistic. If you say oh 6 months paying for a family and you have zero income, your just taking money out of your savings so I don't think 12,000 dollars is enough if the person is unable to get a job right away (Sophia, 912).

Another issue that was brought up was the exchange rate as the Canadian dollar is currently three times the rate of the Brazilian currency, making Brazilian international students savings disappear very fast.

Tuition. Although several of the participants paid their tuition before arriving in Canada, many of them arrived at the post-secondary institution to see that the fees had unexpectedly increased. Luiza stated:

We had a surprise. When we came here we had all our fees already paid. We were supposed to not have to pay anything else. But then they came to us oh we increases your fees so we had to pay out of our pocket 1,550 dollars. This was a surprise, we were not prepared for that (Luza, 76).

Nina had the same thing happen to her, “for the program at the beginning it was supposed to be Costs varied per year with the initial intake costing much more than subsequent years like Julia’s first class, “this research class because it is the first class it is 1,000 dollars and next summer is going to cost 54 dollars even though it is the same thing. Just because I just arrived they have these extra costs” (Carla, 604). When asked if Carla knew what these extra costs were for, she replied, “I don't know. That is the thing they don't show” (Carla, 606).

The tuition costs of the participants in the study varied from 8,000 dollars per year to 70,000 dollars per year. All the participants were international students, which meant they had to pay different fees than their domestic peers. For many participants like Luiza, the difference was outrageous, “we [international students] paid thousands of dollars more for a one year program. If you are a Canadian citizen or PR [Permanent Resident] you pay less” (Luiza, 82). Amanda also saw a big difference in her program between Canadian and international student tuition, “It is expensive. Too expensive I think compared with the PR. It was 14,080 dollars. Too expensive and I know for Canadians or a PR it is 4,000 dollars. So 10,000 dollars more” (Amanda, 650). Julia, like the other participants, did not know why there was such a difference if nothing extra was being offered:

I just don't get why that difference is because they don't offer anything special for international students. They don't give any support, they don't give anything they wouldn't give domestic students. Of course in a market point of view I know they charge that because they can but I don't get why to be honest (Julia, 808).

An additional cost included textbooks, which participants like Julia felt were very expensive, “Oh my gosh textbooks is something that is so expensive here. I am spending more than 2,000 dollars in books” (Julia, 810).

Rent. Rent was another cost that was much higher than what was recommended by the post-secondary institutions. Luiza had the lowest rent because she split it with another couple at

650 dollars per month. Most of the participants had planned to spend around 800 dollars per month but for the participants interviewed, the housing standards at this price point were not suitable and many decided to pay more Nara justified:

We will spend a lot of time at home so we decided to pay a little bit more to feel at home, for a place that you like because in the other apartments that we saw, we didn't feel comfortable inside. In here we felt comfortable inside, there we could save money but we need to feel at home so what is more important (Nara, 438).

Carla had a similar experience, "I was thinking here to spend maximum 850 dollars but here I'm paying 1,152 dollars" (Carla, 572). Most participants did not want to share housing with other students because of the age difference between them and their peers as well as the majority of Brazilian students came with their spouses, which would have made living with others difficult. Another challenge that many Brazilian international students faced is that many of the building owners asked the participants to pay for several months of rent in advance. Such a request is illegal but as newcomers, they were unaware of the laws in Canada. Nina said in her interview, "we had to pay 6 months in advance" (Nina, 327). Amanda stated in her interview that they were aware that they would have to pay in advance from other Brazilians:

The first time we paid 1 year. When we arrived they calculate 1 year but we were expecting that because we are in the group on Facebook and before we came here my husband asked some Brazilians how they rent an apartment and they [were] told I paid 6 months, I paid 9 months so first range was 1 year (Amanda, 648).

Sophia in discussed the legality of the situation:

I know people who had to pay 1 year in advance which is illegal but when you're a new person here and you have to find somewhere to live and you don't know anyone okay I'll pay. Then you have 10,000 dollars stuck in your apartment for the year (Sophia, 914).

Other costs. The next cost was buying all of the furniture for the home because the participants in the study came to Canada with just luggage bags. Rita said, "Putting a house together, the basics like a bed and chairs and tables and things like that was the most expensive part" (Rita, 247). Another high cost was cell phones. Carla pointed out, "cell phone costs are

huge, it's the most expensive thing I think" (Carla, 573). Food was another cost that, Brazilian participants thought was high. Some participants like Rosa needed to use government aid to help to pay for the food:

in this period of six months for the food we tried to do use the food bank, and this helped us a lot because it's not too much I was like doing some calculations and it was like 300 dollars less than we would spend a month (Rosa, 188).

Participants, on average, spent about 500 dollars per month on food because most were buying food for more than just themselves. For example, Carla indicated, "we spend around 500 dollars a month for the two of us and we were expecting something just under 400 dollars" (Carla, 578).

Transportation was also costly. According to Luiza, it was "140 dollars a month. I think it is a lot" (Luiza, 74). Some participants in the study purchased a car because it was too difficult for both the husband and wife to use buses to commute everywhere. For Amanda, the cost of gas was "around 160 dollars. I use the car everyday just to go to college and come back" (Amanda, 644).

Summary. Living in Canada was more expensive than expected for Brazilian international students. The government and university recommended costs ended up being inaccurate for Brazilian international students. They could not share rent and food with other international students because they had come to Canada with their spouses and in some cases, children. Low rent units were not suitable for a family. The participants in the study chose their mental health and wellbeing over the cost when choosing a place to live.

Obtaining Employment in Canada

Working in Canada emerged as a theme from the interviews because most participants came to Canada with their partner, who received a work visa, valid as long as their spouse was in school. All of the Brazilians had to accept jobs that paid significantly less and held lower social

status than positions they had left behind in Brazil. Mariana offered advice to other Brazilians coming to Canada looking for a job:

Be humble. You may need to take jobs that you wouldn't take back home but they help you a lot because that is how you are going to learn the language and adapt. I came with the same mindset that in Brazil someone in the middle class would not have an entry level job. We tend to think badly about those kind of jobs (Mariana, 1162).

When asked what type of jobs she was referring to, she replied, “to be a waiter or pushing carts like my husband does in Wal-Mart. Jobs at restaurants. Those are things that normally someone from the middle class in Brazil wouldn't take” (Mariana, 1164). Gabriela felt that Canadian companies hired Brazilians because they “know they can underpay them because they are desperate for a job” (Gabriela, 997). For the majority of participants, their partners were able to find a job quickly once they lowered their standards and looked for an entry-level job. Luiza said that her husband took one month to find a job because:

In the beginning he was looking for better positions because he has already worked as a cook and he knows how hard it is and he did not want to work on weekends. But once he realized it was better to start looking for any time job he applied for cook. When he started applying for employment as a cook he was employed in one week because he was good at it and he already worked as one in Brazil (Luiza, 15).

Resume/ cover letter differences. An additional challenge for participants' partners was their need to create a resume and cover letter. Luiza described in her interview:

It was hard. The process was completely different [than] in Brazil. We do not have a cover letter that you have here. Actually I do not understand the process because the employers want us to lie, they want us to sell ourselves and we are not trained to do this in Brazil. The cover letter is all about telling how amazing I am (Luiza, 17).

Nina also described some differences between the resume in Canada and in Brazil:

In Brazil it usual to put your age in your resume and here it is not even legal for someone to ask your age. If you're married or not you put that on the resume. Pictures on resumes there but not here. The order of studies and work experience. Here the biggest difference I see is you have to prepare your resume for that specific position that you're trying to achieve (Nina, 388).

Carla described a similar difference in resumes:

for example if I am looking for a job like a translator, I can say I am a civil engineer, I worked for the university, you know those big things and they would get my resume and say wow she is awesome but here if you do that they say your overqualified to the job so they don't call you for the interview which is really different (Carla, 598).

Julia felt that in Brazil, it is a lot less subjective than in Canada:

We have a resume and usually our resume is very long, very detailed and not so objective as is here (Julia, 796)". Some employers required Canadians references which made it difficult for the partners of some of the participants. Carla observed "to find a job here is more difficult because we need to have a reference from a Canadian company but the thing is if I have never worked [here] how am I going to get this contact (Carla, 595).

Working in Canada was a theme that emerged from the interviews because the majority of the participants in the study came to Canada with their spouse who had a work visa. All of the participants' spouses had jobs of lower status than what they had in Brazil. However, even though they were working in entry level positions, they stated in the interview that they would be willing to do it all over again to provide a better life for their family.

Brazilian Supports

This section will look at what supports that the Brazilian participants experienced from the school, government and other independent companies for working, living and studying. It will detail whether the students perceived the supports to be helpful. A discussion of which additional supports Brazilian international students indicated that they would have benefitted from will follow.

Living support. The first thing that Brazilian international students needed was a place to live. Most post-secondary institutions do not offer residence to families, so finding a place in a new city had its challenges. Sofia paid for a private company to assist her when she arrived:

They have a service where you pay them a certain amount of money and they will help you find an apartment and do all the basic set-up and we did that. I also know that some people will criticize what they do but for us it was the best money we could spend and because we didn't have to go through anything, he took us to the right places and we had zero problems. It was a very good support to have when you arrive into the city and you

don't know anybody, you don't know the laws and you don't know the rules. It was well worth it (Sophia, 916).

Four participants in the study paid between 300 and 500 dollars for the same service. It provided guidance in finding accommodations, showed participants where to get service cards such as health cards and took participants to basic shopping facilities.

Work support. Almost all the participants received support from Manitoba Start, which prepares job seekers for interviews, creates resumes and helps to match members to potential employees through their job bank. Rosa used this service:

we went to the Manitoba Start, there the government offers a lot of courses so he started with this two week course that gives all the instructions necessary in doing the cover letter, how to do the interview, to be prepared, the difference in what to expect, like what Canadian [companies] expect from their employees so we had good training (Rosa, 177).

Nina also recommended this service in her interview, “I took a workshop at Manitoba Start and it was very good. It really prepared me for the labour market here. It helped me write my resume” (Nina, 387). Further, both Carla’s husband and Julia’s husband received their jobs through Manitoba Start. For Nina’s husband, they prepared him well:

here for the specific position my husband got they prepared him with his resume, prepared him for his interview and in the end it was exactly how they told him it was going to be. When he left his interview he said it was best interview he ever had (Nina, 390).

Luiza mentioned that the Immigration Centre aided her husband, “When he was started to get assistance at the Immigration Centre [it was then] he got hired” (Luiza, 19). Sophia indicated that the college had an employment service which was very helpful in preparing for a job:

They have at the college an employment service that is for everybody, not just Brazilians, and you can go there with your resume and cover letter and they go over it with you. I don't think many people use it (Sophia, 946).

Sophia was the only participant who discussed this service so perhaps Sophia is correct in saying that not many people were actually aware of it or used it.

Academic support. Studying in a new country can pose many challenges for international students. In the study, students were asked about supports and programs that were offered for international students in schools. One program was a course that many of the international students took called Communications:

Which we are trained to do resumes and cover letters. It's not really a good program, I do not know if it really helped me. But at least they tried. This program was offered for everybody, not just international students (Luiza, 20).

Luiza mentioned in her interview that after submitting her resume and cover letter, she was unaware "if the instructor read it because she said "it's wonderful and bla-bla-bla and did not correct anything so I did not know if she meant it" (Luiza, 22). Another service that was offered for a couple of students was a personal instructor:

We called her our "Madrina", which is godmother in Portuguese. She is hired only with this purpose - to help international students to adapt to life in Canada. She was there in all our classes to help us with any issue we would have like understanding something in English or anything else (Luiza, 55).

Rosa explained in her interview that they had two Portuguese teachers who were helpful, although the instructor was strict, "no you're not allowed to speak in Portuguese, you will talk in English that is the reason you are here" (Rosa, 151). Regardless, Rosa,

Felt that these two instructors made it feel like it was home. Even if they are from another country, they are here for more than 30 years they try to keep their culture so it was like an example to follow (Rosa, 154).

These instructors were positive inspirations for the Brazilian international students, as they modelled that with hard work, they can accomplish their goals in a foreign country. Rita explained that her school had an,

International Centre in which they work only with intentional students and the staff is international as well. There all immigrants and most of them had come as an international student and just stayed in Canada. They help with everything, I remember it was around end of September. I was starting to buy my winter clothes for the winter here and I was kind of lost because Brazilians have different perspectives of the winter here and I wasn't really getting anywhere so I went there to talk to them. I set a time to meet with one of

the advisors and she talked me through every single step of the winter clothes which is great and then where to buy the cheap parts and what I could buy at Dollarama and what I should spend a little bit more money on it which was really good (Rita, 275).

Rita also mentioned that this Centre hired someone to help the students do their taxes for free and in the winter they did fun events like ice skating and they went out as a group to watch a hockey game (Rita, 275). Carla explained that the post-secondary institution offered English classes for 1,200 dollars per month but she found that they were too expensive for her and her Brazilian friends.

Amanda stated that they received a paper with “all the utilities telephones, like important telephone numbers for emergency, fireman, all the telephones including one person in the college that was there all time if you have any problem you can call this person” (Amanda, 708). Several participants were unaware of what supports were offered because they never used any of the available services. Gabriela said, “I don't feel that being an international student I needed everything else” (Gabriela, 1040). Nina explained that her instructors were very supportive. For example:

a couple months ago it was Ramadan and they actually asked the Indians about how they were fasting. The girls from India were asking me if I had an arranged marriage and I looked at them, like Oh my God really. They asked me if I married for love and things like that. They asked me all sort of questions that sometimes I don't believe. Even the Chinese [students] don't understand why Brazilians are so happy and smiling all the time (Nina, 353).

One time, the instructors allowed the students to converse with each other about the different cultures in the room, which really helped the students feel more comfortable to be in Canada and know that they were not alone with the challenges they faced.

Requests for school support. The Brazilian international students were asked what services they wished the school would have offered to better accommodate and support them in

their studies and their adjustment to living in Canada. Sophia requested that the school would have a

Canadian class [to have a] chance to know a little bit about Canadian history and the local things because we don't know, everyday people would tell you something and you would be like that is interesting please tell me more (Sophia, 944).

Rita recommended to “try to have a Brazilian person working there. They have all these different nationalities but they don’t have Brazilians” (Rita, 277). Another suggestion was having services, such as food services, open at night because Rita indicated that she only went to the school at night for her class. She said:

it’s amazing, especially there at the university everything is closed at 4:00 p.m. Which I am never there at 4:00 p.m. because [evening] classes start at 5:30 p.m., so it’s really, really bad because sometimes you spend the whole day working and go straight to university and your starving and there is nothing there (Rita, 282).

Other services that were closed for Rita included immigration services and academic support services. She indicated that access to these services would have helped her considerably throughout the school year.

Carla wished that they would offer international students the same things they would offer a permanent resident in Canada. She believed, “in some way I am developing the country too because my research will stay here and I find this to be important to your country too” (Carla, 600). She wanted permanent resident status because then:

English course is free, they have lots of sources that help them find a house and the credit matter is not a big deal for those that have a PR. I know in United States they have free ESL classes which is like huge for someone who does not have English as their first language (Carla, 600).

Carla also wished that a guideline was developed to detail exactly what was needed when international students first arrive in Canada as well as a clear indication of how much tuition would cost. She stated that the institution said what costs might be but they were not representative of her actual costs upon arrival.

Nina requested that the instructors try to make the international students speak more English in class. She said that “it’s annoying for me and the other Brazilian because they [other cultures] split us out. They are very closed” (Nina, 372). Nina felt frustrated and she said, “you get a little sad. I will have to spend eight months with all of those people. I know I probably won’t make friends but I would like to have fun with my classmates” (Nina, 372).

Sophia suggested the development of a guide indicating what is acceptable and not acceptable in terms of behaviour and greetings because of the Brazilians style of “asking personal questions without knowing others on a personal level and kissing on the cheek to greet” (Sophia, 940). Gabriela felt that post-secondary institutions should hold their staff more accountable for their actions. She thought that “there should be layers of supervision so people are really doing a good job at the university, the assistants that are there have been there for 25 years and are still making the same mistakes” (Gabriela, 1025). She went on to state that professors are technically the leaders of the support staff but have no training in being managers.

Requests for government support. The next section discusses what the Brazilian international students wished the government of Canada would offer to better accommodate their studies in Canada. Nina believed that Canada already does enough:

We have health guarantee. I don't use it, I know that for underprivileged people - that some Brazilians are using the food bank. I would never use it, I don't think it's correct. You guys have so much to help Brazilians in difficult situations (Nina, 398).

Julia stated in her interview that she wished the government tried to establish more of a Brazilian community in major cities in Canada:

For example the Portuguese community has a building, a place they can meet, and have their socials - they are together. It would be so nice if immigrants could have a place where they could meet for free, even Community Centres. For example I am planning on having a meeting with the Brazilian women here. I feel that we have to support each other and I don't have a place to go, don't have a meeting place so then I realize that in some libraries you can have a room for free but you have to be a registered non-profit

organization so we don't have a place to go other than Tim Horton's. I didn't want to put people in a situation that they had to spend money in order to meet people. Maybe some assistance in that way could be super helpful to bring the community together and keep our own culture. As far as I understand the government doesn't want us to lose our own culture (Julia, 838).

Many of the Brazilians in the study faced intersections of the challenges indicated in this chapter but they were exceptionally frustrated with their disadvantage as they waited for their work visas. Sophia requested that the “process be automatic” to cut wait times, and give them a fair advantage in the work force. Mariana also requested they fast track the permanent resident system, especially for graduated professionals who are in high demand. Gabriela wished the government would “tell it how it is.” She stated that she was constantly discouraging Brazilians from becoming dentists in Canada,

Don't come because it's almost impossible. What I did was one in a million and I know that. It is extremely difficult. They shouldn't be recruiting professionals like physicians and dentists unless those people want to go to another route and practice something else but they cannot practice their profession here so I wish they were more upfront (Gabriela, 1043).

Gabriela wished that the government would stop recruiting international students that want to stay in Canada or at least explain to them the difficulty of doing so.

The participants in the study described some supports offered by the university and the government such as private tutors, extra English classes at a cost, International centers and Manitoba Start. The common requests that the Brazilian international students presented were free academic English classes, an accurate cost analysis of living in Canada and a place where Brazilians could collectively meet. All of the participants in the study had experienced challenges with academic English and wished they had free English courses like the United States “I know in United States they have free ESL classes which is like huge for someone who does not have English as their first language” (Carla, 600). Additionally the amount of liquid

funds recommended to live in Canada varied considerably, "it would cost from 8,000 to 27,000 dollars a year - it depended on how much I spend on things. So it was not very helpful" (Carla, 580). The participants in the study requested a guideline of what exactly they needed to do when first arriving in Canada as well as the exact fees included in post-secondary tuition. The participants stated that their institution said what costs might be but they omitted any cost breakdown.

Finally, the participants also requested a place where Brazilians could release stress with other Brazilians going through similar challenges. Julia stated in her interview that she wished the government tried to establish more of a Brazilian community in major cities in Canada:

It would be so nice if immigrants could have a place where they could meet for free, even Community Centres...Maybe some assistance in that way could be super helpful to bring the community together and keep our own culture. As far as I understand the government doesn't want us to lose our own culture (Julia, 838).

The participants in the study would benefit if the university created a space that Brazilians could meet to help each other mentally and academically.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The goal of this study was to enquire into Brazilian international students' academic and non-academic experiences while studying at Canadian post-secondary institutions. Research has looked at the countries of China and India, little research has looked into the challenges that Brazilian students face. Canadian Bureau for International Education (2014) stated 1188 Brazilian students were studying in a Canadian college or university in 2014. Data was collected from twelve participants in eleven different interviews. A phenomenological study analysis produced six codes that described the participants' experiences. For the first theme, participants discussed the challenges that they faced throughout the immigration process. This included misinformation from official websites concerning work permits and visas, as well as mistreatment by potential employers. All participants indicated that they were planning to immigrate no matter the cost which created an extra stress that international students at the typical age of 19-22 do not have. This echoed the point that Brazilian international students cannot be clumped together with other international students because their desires are different than those of other international students.

In the second theme, participants contrasted living in Canada with living in Brazil, along with the challenges that they faced with immersion into Canadian culture. Despite the fact that all participants had already attended post-secondary institutions in Brazil, studying in Canada proved to be different from studying in their country of origin. This transition can be too much to handle for many international students including those in the study as some of their partners or themselves have already returned to Brazil. The reasons Brazilians mentioned for coming to study in Canada was safety, stability and better quality of life. One participant even indicated that they had been kidnapped and held hostage in Brazil so going back was not an option. This

feeling of safety many Canadians and international students take for granted but not the Brazilians in this study. Living in Canada, participants felt that Canadians, in their politeness and in order to not inadvertently offend anyone of a different background than themselves, closed themselves off to topics that were most personal to the international students like their heritage and thus the Canadians were perceived as cold and distant, even if that was not their intention. Brazilians, unlike the majority of international students from other countries crave that closeness and connection that many Canadians avoid. This cultural difference strained the social support system even more than the average international student. Many participants in this study were unable to make a single Canadian friend and with the majority of their classes being immigrants from China and India, most suffered from academic isolation. In addition to the differences in ethnicity, the age of the participants' classroom peers also made it very difficult for the participants to pursue friendships because they had little in common besides being international students. This study has revealed that Brazilian international students face many different social barriers like age and being the minority demographic in comparison to other international students.

Challenges such as workload and academic English composed the discussion of the third theme. International students from Brazil have a workload from school that is more difficult to manage because of the different stages in their lives and the family responsibilities that their international or non-international peers may have. Some of the participants in the study were also providing for their children and spouse while studying in the post-secondary institution. One participant indicated that they had school from 8am-4pm, picked up the daughter from her after school program and made dinner for 5pm. Then from 6pm to 8pm she would help her daughter with homework and only after 8pm on the days she did not work night she could study and

complete her assignments. For many participants in the study, difficulties in the program did not come from the subject material because many had experiences similar back in Brazil, but rather, the academic use of specific English.

In the fourth theme, financial difficulties dominated the section, including misinformation provided by educational institutions regarding tuition and fees, as well as unexpectedly high housing prices. As a result of these unanticipated costs, the participants and/ or their spouses sought employment. The government of Canada recommends a targeted amount of money that an international student needs to study in Canada but discovered through this study the costs are considerably different for Brazilian international students. Renting a room in a house full of international students to save on cost was not a feasible option for Brazilians who were accompanied by their families. Utilities, phone, internet, transportation, clothes, furniture and food all cost more for Brazilian international students because of the different life situations they are in. The government having a one recommended amount for all international students is not only unrealistic but also extremely harmful to Brazilian international students who are giving up everything they have to come here based on that recommendation. Participants in the study have had to take extra jobs and begged for money from family and friends back home in Brazil to survive here because they were misinformed about the costs.

For the fifth theme, the participants discussed the challenges of preparing a Canadian resume and cover letter as well as the difficulty working in jobs that they were overqualified to work. For the majority of participants, their partners or they were able to find a job quickly once they lowered their standards and looked for an entry-level job. Social status is highly entrenched in the Brazilian culture so many participants in the study found it very demeaning and embarrassing to work jobs like in restaurants or clothing stores here in Canada that paid

significantly less than what they were used to in Brazil. This study uncovered a theme that most studies of international students do not have which is employment. This additional stress of providing for a family has created many international students from Brazil to seek employment in Canada in order to survive.

The final theme to emerge was the degree of support that the Brazilian participants felt was offered from the Canadian government and post-secondary institutions as well as other support that is required to be successful while studying in Canada. The topic of employment unique to Brazilian international students came up again as many of the Brazilians in the study were frustrated with the work visas process. While many post-secondary institutions had some supports for academic English many participants required other supports unique to Brazilians studying in Canada such as immigration and employment support.

Suggestions for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to discover the experiences faced by Brazilian international students studying in Canadian post-secondary institutions. This study explored a topic that has rarely been covered so more research is recommended to further our knowledge on how to support Brazilian international students. The following are several suggestions of research topics that expand upon the findings of this study:

1. The majority of the participants in the study were still in school as this study took place. Further research is required regarding the extent to which Brazilian international students were able to secure employment and the challenges that they faced in order to achieve that goal.
2. Further research needs to be conducted on the recruitment and retention of international students from Latin American countries.

3. The participants in this study offered a number of suggestions designed to improve the accommodations of international students studying in post-secondary institutions. Further examination is needed on what accommodations are most relevant to the international students and their community.
4. Many of the participants encountered financial problems when living in Canada. Further investigation should be conducted regarding the relationship between financial status and academic achievement.

This study revealed that Brazilian international students cannot be lumped together with other international students when looking at their experiences and needs for support. More research is needed to focus exclusively on Brazilian international students because they are the minority in international classes and they experience specific challenges as a result. This study has indicated that Brazilian international students make a bigger commitment and investment when leaving their home country to study in Canada in comparison to 19-21 year olds from another country, which creates more stress than a typical international student. In order to meet the afore mention challenges I would recommend that governments at various levels as well as administrators of post-secondary institutions implement the following policies and/or procedures: 1) Give international students a work permit the moment they graduate 2) Enforce an even ratio of international students to domestic students in every class 3) Provide a handbook in Portuguese explaining cultural differences and a guide to the school/city 4) Hire more Brazilian staff in post-secondary institutions 5) Make international students tuition the same as domestic students 6) Create a Brazilian center where students can meet for free to support each other.

Honouring the requests from the participants in the study can not only help post-secondary institutions attract and attain Brazilian students but also help the Canadian government

add to its skilled workforce. Giving international students a work permit the moment they graduate evens the playing field with domestic students as all graduates can apply for jobs at the same time. Not only does this make it fair but it encourages a more competitive market from which employers hire employees. This study has highlighted the many benefits of domestic students interacting with international students so classes evenly mixed needs to be enforced across all post-secondary institutions. Without this policy international students will always stick to those from the same culture speaking their own language creating an evident divide on campus. This divide as indicated in the study will be most detrimental to countries with minority international students in the classroom such as Brazil. An even mix in the classroom would enrich discussions and create an awareness of different cultures around the world.

Next policy that needs to be implemented is a handbook in Portuguese in order for Brazilians to gain a better understanding of the Canadian laws and culture. Participants in the study were frustrated because they did not know their rights in and outside of the school. A section which details the policies of the school, the laws of Canada and the Charter of Rights written in Portuguese would better assist Brazilians to become accustomed to Canada. Additionally, information on Canadian culture and why Brazilians may perceive Canadians as cold and distant could encourage Brazilians to understand and thus share perspectives and opinions with their domestic peers. A section on what supports are provided by the post-secondary institution would clarify confusions that the participants in this study indicated existed. The handbook could detail how resumes differ in Canada in comparison to Brazil. An example of this is the use of adjectives to describe ourselves and complement our experiences because which is something that is not customary in Brazil. Information on the purpose of a cover letter, tips on how to create one as well as example cover letters would help the Brazilian

community as the participants in the study indicated that, in Brazil, cover letters are not used. Also in this handbook, a map which of the post-secondary campus could include phone numbers for additional academic or living supports that exist. In addition, Brazilian students would benefit from a checklist with directions and phone numbers for Canada services such as opening a bank account, applying for a health card, permits, phone account, drivers licence, insurance etc. This information can reduce the stress for Brazilian international students so that they are not struggling to find these resources during school. A list of costs for these services as well as tuition, textbooks, rent and food could limit the shock that the participants in this study experienced upon arriving in Canada and learning the true costs of these goods and services. This Portuguese handbook would need to be available online so Brazilians could easily plan for their post-secondary education before travelling to Canada. In conjunction with this handbook, post-secondary institutions could offer a weekly class to discuss the handbook, the history of Canada, rights of International students and the class would provide the availability for Brazilian students to ask questions, immensely alleviating the stresses that the participants in this study experienced.

Post-secondary institutions may be able to retain more international students if the faculty and staff were diversified. Two participants in the study indicated that while they were not permitted to speak to their professors from Portugal in Portuguese, just them being there was beneficial to their overall wellbeing as it reduced their anxiety. Brazilian professors should be targeted to add diversity to post-secondary institutions. While high enrolment from international students is profitable for post-secondary institutions, it is not justifiable as this study has shown that few additional services are offered solely for international students. These services are not offered and participants have expressed that a reduction in international student tuition fees

would lessen much of the financial burdens that they faced. Since this would create less anxiety and stress while allowing international students to focus more on their school, lowering tuition fees may be an option to, in turn, contribute well-balanced and skilled international students to the Canadian workforce.

Finally, a Brazilian center located in every major city across Canada to give a place for Brazilians to meet and socialize with each other would support Brazilian international students. Brazilians are very different from other international students, as they need the social support that the participants spoke of -more than international students from other cultures. Participants in the study could not find a free, easily accessible place to help each other so this center could facilitate collaboration to benefit all.

Awareness of the differences between Brazilian international students and other international students is particularly important, given the societal framework of Canada, where civil liberties and needs of each minority group are equally valued under the Multicultural Act (Bill C-93-Canada, 1998).

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Appendix A. Consent Form

I _____ give consent to
 Name (please print)

participate in the research project entitled Brazilian International Students View On Their Academic and Non-Academic Experiences When Studying At a Canadian Post-Secondary Institution.

In giving my consent, I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I have read the Cover Letter.
3. I understand that interviews will be audiotaped but that these tapes will be securely stored and will be destroyed after five years, in accordance with University research regulations.
4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and no information will be used in any way which reveals his/her identity.
5. I understand that I can withdraw from participation in this project at any time.

Signature _____ Date _____

Name _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Name _____

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of the research study may contact
 Dr.Brady, Faculty of Education, Lakehead University at 1-807-343-8682

Appendix B:Cover Letter

Winnipeg, August 15, 2016

Dear Potential Participant,

I am a Masters Student at the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University under the supervision of Dr. Patrick Brady of Lakehead University. We are conducting a study entitled ‘Brazilian international students perspectives on their academic and non-academic experiences when studying at a Canadian post-secondary institution’. I would like to request your participation in this research project. Participation would take place at a place of your convenience for a duration of approximately 45 minutes.

This consent form a copy of which will be provided to you for your records outlines the confidentiality and anonymity in further detail. If you wish further information regarding your participation in the study please free to contact me Jonathan Burnham (jcburnha@lakeheadu.ca) or Dr. Brady (pbrady@lakeheadu.ca). Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The purpose of this study is to investigate some of the positive and negative experiences faced by Brazilian international students studying in Canadian post-secondary institutions. Your participation in this study will involve answering 8-10 open questions which will permit you to share your experiences studying in Canada. I hope this study will provide a further understanding on the part of International Education and result in better accommodation of the needs of Brazilian international students.

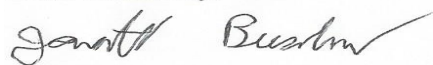
The data collection for this study will take place at a location of your convenience and with your consent will involve the use of an audio recording device. All participants will be recruited on a voluntary basis and have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without question or penalty. All participants will not be asked to reveal any identifiable information and may decline any question they do not feel comfortable in disclosing. Special care will be taken to guarantee the confidentiality of participants in this study. All data collected will use numerical IDs and will be filed in the Faculty of Education for five years in secure storage.

This research project is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from participating at any time period, with no prejudice or consequence. There are no foreseeable risks or potentially harmful effects to you as a result of participation in this research project. While there are neither compensation nor direct benefits to participants, your participation may result in a better understanding in accommodations for international students studying in a post-secondary university. Pre-print copies and summaries of results will be provided on request. The identity of all participants will be confidential in that their name, place of residence or institution attended will not be directly identified. The names of all individual participants, place of residences and institutions attended will be replaced with pseudonyms when any data is disseminated through print, electronic or verbal means.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood the information provided to your satisfaction and agree to participation as a subject. Your signature does not waive your legal rights nor release the researchers from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from participation in this study at any time, without prejudice or consequence. Feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation in this study. This study has been approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions related to the ethics of the research and would like to speak to someone outside of the research team please contact Sue Wright at the Research Ethics Board at 807-343-8283 or research@lakeheadu.ca.

A copy of this information form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Thank you for your time and interest,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Burnham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jonathan Burnham

August 15, 2016

[Participant's Full Name – in print]

[Participant's Signature]

[Date]

I would like to receive pre-prints and final drafts of dissemination materials or their summaries by:

Email at: _____

Regular mail at the following address:

[Participant's Signature]

[Date]

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What are some of the cultural challenges Brazilian international students face studying at a Canadian post-secondary institution?
2. What are some of the academic challenges Brazilian international students face studying at a Canadian post-secondary institution?
3. What are some of the financial challenges Brazilian international students face studying at a Canadian post-secondary institution?
4. What are some of the social challenges Brazilian international students face studying at a Canadian post-secondary institution?
5. What are some of the positive experiences Brazilian international students view studying at a Canadian post-secondary institution?