Analysis of Recruitment Strategies Used by Vancouver-based School Districts in Attracting
Chinese Students in Their International Secondary-School Programs

Qinghua ZHAO

University of British Columbia
Abstract

The main purpose of this research project is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the recruitment strategies used by some Vancouver-based school districts in terms of their impacts on Chinese students’ choice of high schools, and enrollment decisions from the perspective of administrators in charge of international departments. Data were collected from interviews with administrators from two Vancouver school districts and from on-line documents. Data were analyzed by using a pull-push model (Chen, 2006), which led to the formulation of recommendations for possible improvements for Vancouver-based School Districts with respect to effectiveness of promotional activities. The research findings reveal quality of Canadian education, inclusive Canadian environment, and Canada policy toward international students as pulling factors in attracting Chinese students. Specifically, proximity to China is an important factor in pulling Chinese students to Vancouver area from the perspective of administrators. In particular, the findings suggest that websites, agents, and seminars are effective promotional tools used by participating school districts in highlighting these pulling factors. The nature of the recommendations made to participating districts is to emphasize pull factors when conducting seminars or designing brochures and websites in attracting international students from China.

Keywords: push-pull model, marketing strategies
Chapter One: Introduction

“B.C. Premier Christy Clark announced that her government will take steps to increase by 50 per cent over the next four years the number of international students who study in B.C. on September 20, 2011[sic]” (Fowlie, 2011, p.3). According to Christy Clark, “international students currently generate about 22,000 jobs in B.C. and bring an estimated $1.25 billion into the provincial economy. She added that each 10 percent increase in the number of students [translated] into an estimated 1,800 new jobs and a $100-million boost to the provincial GDP” (Fowlie, 2011, p.3). “Today 3.7 million post-secondary students study internationally, growing to an expected seven million by 2025. Canada hosted more than 218,000 international students at all levels [in 2010]. They injected $6.5 billion into the Canadian economy, more than exports of either coniferous lumber or coal. Over $300 million annually in government revenue and 83,000 Canadian jobs are directly attributable to international education” (Gupta, 2011, p.2).

International students are an important group contributing to national and provincial economies and cultural diversity (Chen, 2006; Chen, 2007; Fowlie, 2011; Gupta, 2011; The Ministry of Advanced Education of British Columbia, 2012; Plant, 2004; Wang, 2007). International students’ recruitment is a global issue in terms of education marketization, which exists in many countries such as Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and
Australia. In competing for international students, some countries such as Australia take aggressive actions to attract potential students while some countries like Canada facilitate student transition process from the perspective of policy. On this issue, the Canadian government vows to “position Canada as a destination of choice for talented foreign students and skilled workers by more aggressively selecting and recruiting through universities and in key embassies abroad” (Government of Canada, 2002, p. 9). Educational marketization manifests itself by focusing on the needs of educational clients and following marketing logics to operate an educational institution by responding to students’ choices (Hanson, 1992; Harvey & Busher, 1996). The number of students choosing the United States as a destination will decrease from 127,000 to 120,000 in 2015; the number of students to Canada will increase by over 30% from 51,300 in 2008 to 68,100 in 2015; the number of students choosing Australia will rise from 91,600 in 2010 to 110,800 (As cited in Vancouver weekly newspaper, 2011). These statistics show that by 2015 students choosing Canada will increase by 32.75% while students choosing Australia will increase by 20.96% respectively. By contrast, students choosing the United State will decrease by 5.51%. From these statistics, we can see that increasingly more international students will choose Canada as a destination to continue their education. Besides the obvious increase, we can notice that students’ choices may change from time to time. However, it is important to know what factors influence students’ choices in determining educational destinations and what impacts these factors may have with regard to marketing strategies used by some school districts in British Columbia in attracting international students.
In the Report *Foreign Students in Canada 1980-2001*, Iturralde and Calvert (2003) pointed out that amongst source countries, the number of students from China increased the fastest in recent years. “Students from China arrived at 17,913 & 12,279 in Canada in 2005 and 2006 respectively according to UNESCO, far more than the number of students from other countries” (Zheng, 2010, p.55). Figures from the British Council (2011), which is the United Kingdom's international organization for cultural relations and educational opportunities, indicated that approximately 270,000 Chinese students studied overseas in 2011, and the number was predicted to increase to 300,000 by 2012.

As mentioned before, China is a large source country for providing international students and increasingly more Chinese high school students choose to continue their high school education in other countries (Iturralde & Calvert, 2003; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2008; Wang, 2007; Zheng, 2010).

International students play a significant role in the context of B.C from a revenue perspective, and school districts need to know the expectations of students in order to adapt and/or formulate effective marketing strategies. However, existing research on recruitment strategies used by school districts to attract international high school students from a marketing perspective is minimal (West, 1992). When I completed my literature review, I found very few references from a marketing perspective, focusing on how to recruit international teenage Chinese students and factors influencing their decision-making outcomes. This paper addresses this gap in the existing literature and examines recruitment strategies used by school districts in Vancouver in terms of their effectiveness to attract
Chinese international students. “The challenge that Canada faces is that we know very little about what influences international students' choices” (Chen, 2007, p.78). Therefore, understanding perceived personal incentives of international students in choosing a destination from administrators' perspective and how to use effective promotion activities and marketing strategies are significant to current and future research. This study helps to address the lack of literature concentrating on how recruitment strategies used by some Vancouver-based school districts are effective in influencing adolescent Chinese students and their motivation to choose high schools in B.C.

**Organization of the paper**

This paper has five chapters. Chapter One introduces the primary issue of this research paper, significance, and research questions.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature on marketization of education as a commodity, its impact on students’ recruitment and enrollment, as well as discussing an account of the pull and push-factors model and how it can be used in understanding what seems to attract Chinese students to Canada. Education as a commodity in an international marketing environment is examined because it provides re-conception of marketing and regards international education as a marketable service, which needs to follow marketing logic to be carried out successfully. A Push-Pull model is studied for the reason that it offers current research a theoretical base, which leads to the formulation of recommendations in Chapter five for possible improvements for Vancouver-based School Districts with respect to effectiveness of their promotional activities. Push factors influencing Chinese students’
choice of Canada are studied because these factors play an important role in the design of
effective promotion activities or marketing strategies conducted by school districts. Finally,
pulling factors in attracting Chinese students to Canada are explored in this chapter in how
school districts highlight them when promoting their educational programs.

Chapter Three addresses and justifies the choice of the research methodology I used in
this case study. The case study strategy is adopted in this research because a concrete
discourse is more useful in describing experiences of participants than identifying shared
patterns of their behaviors. In particular, on-line document analysis is utilized to collect and
analyze promotion activities and marketing concepts used by school districts. Individual
interviews are additional methods of data collection that have been employed to learn about
administrators’ perspectives about marketing strategies in recruiting Chinese high school
students. I conclude this chapter by outlining and discussing the limitations and
delimitations of the methodology I chose to carry out my research.

Data from interviews and document review are analyzed in Chapter Four, and key
findings are highlighted according to the research questions. Findings are coded by using a
coding scheme and compared with reviewed literatures. Some findings are consistence with
results of former research while some gaps are identified in this research. For example, a
discrepancy between findings of this research and former literatures was identified with
regard to “push factors” (Sirowy & Inkeles, 1984; Chen, 2006; 2007; Zheng, 2010).

In conclusion, Chapter Five revisits the major research questions, and discusses my
findings and outlines their implications in terms of the effectiveness of current marketing
strategies developed and used by participating school districts in relation to which push and pull factors seem to influence Chinese students’ choice of B.C. as an educational destination.

**Personal Motivation**

I received my first Master’s degree in China majoring in Economics. After graduation, I was an educator in an educational company named *New Oriental Education & Tech. Group Inc.*, and later on, I was promoted as a marketing manager. During those nine years of teaching mixed with managerial experience, I taught approximately 6,000 students, most of whom were eager to study abroad. The observations I made during this time led me to conclude that most students seek further education outside China due to perceived differences in educational quality between here and abroad. Many Chinese parents and students value Western education as superior to that in China in terms of educational philosophy and educational results. In China, students are expected to memorize and repeat, while in Canada, students are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills. From my observations, some other students are driven by immigration plans of their families or expectation to study in an English-speaking environment.

After immigrating to Canada in March 2010, I got a job in *New Oriental International College* (NOIC) in Toronto and was transferred back to China. In 2011, I was promoted to be the director in chief in the NOIC Beijing office, and part of my job was to recruit students from China to Canadian high schools.

My research interest in international students was driven by my interactions with my
co-workers from different countries and my business background. I began to focus on a
marketing concept and strategies used by Vancouver-based school districts in attracting
international students, especially Chinese students aged thirteen to eighteen. Being an
international student myself and having majored in Education, I believe that the individuals
in charge of international programs will gain new understandings, information, and
knowledge from this research about how to enhance their own recruitment strategies.

**Problem Statement and Research Questions**

This research investigates the nature and effectiveness of recruitment strategies used by
some Vancouver-based school districts in influencing and attracting Chinese students’
choice of high schools, and “enrollment decisions” (Chen, 2006, p.77) as perceived by
individuals in charge of international programs of participating school districts in the Lower
Mainland. The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of administrators about the
nature and effectiveness of promotional activities they used in attracting Chinese students in
their international secondary-school programs. Through their account of their own
experiences, I examined their perception of which factors seem influence Chinese students’
choice of B.C. as an educational destination. I focus on the content, nature and perceived
effectiveness of marketing strategies used by Vancouver-based school districts. In this paper,
the term “international student” refers to Chinese high school students who pursue their
secondary education in Canada.

The study is significant for the following reasons. First, participants could develop a
better understanding of themselves as administrators in promoting their programs and be
aware of the effectiveness of their marketing strategies, which might impact the future enrollment of Chinese students in their districts. Second, the results will be reported back to participating school districts in Vancouver. The findings and implications will provide school districts with information about the international education market with regard to the recruitment of Chinese students and suggest a possible way to improve the design and implementation of their marketing strategies. Third, other Canadian education institutions can obtain knowledge about how to promote their programs in China and enhance the effectiveness of their enrollment activities.

To address these issues, I investigate the following questions:

1. What kinds of recruitment strategies are used by the three Vancouver-based school districts in order to attract Chinese students who want to pursue their education in Canada?
2. What is the marketing concept used by each selected school district in determining what recruitment strategies need to be used to attract Chinese students and why?
3. What is the understanding of individuals in charge of recruiting international students in selected school districts regarding what Chinese students value in choosing a Canadian high school?
4. What are the perceived impacts of those recruitment strategies in terms of successfully attracting Chinese students to Vancouver?

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this Chapter, I have located relevant academic literature by using key words such as “marketization of education” and “educational recruitment strategies”. The purpose of this
literature review is to provide evidence that my current research can add to the existing literature (Creswell, 2011). The following literature review is divided into four sections. First, I introduced concept of education as a commodity that can be marketed in an international environment. Second, I present the literature addressing the notion of a pull-push model which is examined for the purpose of providing a theoretical base for current research. Third, I explore in more detail the push factors related to home country and a potential host country. Finally, the literature dealing with pulling factors in attracting Chinese students to Canada is explored.

**Education as a Commodity in an International Marketing Environment**

Traditionally, marketing was viewed and discussed as a business activity (Kotler & Levy, 1969). In 1969, Kotler and Levy advanced the view that marketing was a relevant discipline for all organizations insofar as all organizations could be said to have customers, products, and marketing tools (p.12, p.13). From their perspective, the concept of marketing can be broadened into the educational field because customers, products and promotional tools can be identified. Kotler (1998) defined marketing as “the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets to achieve institutional objectives” (p.50). Hanson (1992) explored the definition of marketing in the educational field and suggested that, “a marketing strategy in public education is not the same as in a private business where the intent is to influence potential customers to purchase the product. However, such a strategy would be essential in public schools if they operated within an open marketing
environment of parental ‘choice’” (p.25). To differentiate a marketing strategy used in public education from the one used in the private sector, Hanson proposed that public education was under controlled market conditions because enrollment within a specified attendance area was guaranteed, which led to the aim of educational marketing as one of putting schools and students/parents into a mutually supportive working relationships in order to improve the productive capacity and quality of both schools and students. According to Hanson, a marketing strategy initiates a cyclical process that not only gathers and distributes information but involves changing educational programs in response to that information. In marketing language, educational change is really product design in the face of shifting consumer demands. While Hanson advanced the definition of marketing, it is worthwhile to examine whether all public schools are under controlled circumstances. Currently, in B.C., there is no guarantee of stable enrollment for any school, which causes some schools and school districts to market their programs internationally in order to fill empty seats and generate funding in order to sustain their operation. Harvey & Busher (1996) suggested “education is a service to customers or clients, although that statement raises questions about the nature of the service and the identity of its consumers/clients” (p.26). The opinion of Hanson claims that education can be viewed as a marketable commodity, which resonates with views of Harvey & Busher (1996) in that they all regard education as a marketable service. Also, claims from Harvey Busher provide administrators in charge of international departments with information on focused groups of clients in developing marketing strategies to attract Chinese students. They analyze seven Ps – product, place, promotion,
price, people, process and the physical evidence of production that schools need to plan in promoting their programs. Harvey & Busher (1996) pointed out “marketing functions include customer education as well as sales. Schools can explain what opportunities are offered to students such as how and what are taught” (p.27). Schools, as service providers, provide programs that need the interaction between product provider and consumers. As well, schools help students and parents identify the particular program they will receive and the quality of the service offered. From this point of view, it is clear that Harvey and Busher regard students as customers and schools as service providers in market circumstances.

Market conception of education and the use of marketing strategies in attracting students are central to these scholars' arguments related to the concept that education can be regarded as a kind of commodity. Further, Kotler (1979), Lubienski (2001) and West (1992) suggested that public schools needed to market themselves by branding themselves as an educational destination of choice in order to counter declining enrollment. Kotler (1979) pointed out that administrators were struggling to keep schools alive in the face of rapidly changing societal needs, increasing public and private competition, changing client attitudes, and diminishing financial resources. Lubienski (2001) highlighted the view that education was not effectively provided in a system that does not rely on the market mechanisms of consumer choice and competition between providers. West (1992) concluded that secondary schools of all types had become more concerned with marketing. Further, West (1992) found out that this was due in particular to the introduction of open enrollment and formula funding, the largest contributor to which was the number of pupils on roll at the school.
Their discussions enrich current research academic knowledge of marketing in educational field and provide this paper with information about marketization of education. These discussions offer current research lens through which education is not viewed as a kind of free production. Instead, educational programs can be operated by marketing mechanisms. These claims made by Kolter, Lubienskiand and West dig into the roots of educational marketization which provides information on the marketing concepts used by school districts in determining why recruitment strategies need to be used to attract Chinese students. Kolter (1979) proposed “nonprofit organizations can introduce marketing in a number of ways, such as appointing a marketing committee or task force, hiring an advertising agency or marketing research firm, hiring a marketing consultant, or appointing a marketing director or marketing vice president” (p.37). From Kolter’s point of view, public schools are nonprofit organizations which can introduce marketing elements into operation processes. Although Lubiensky (2001) explored the issue of marketing within the context of charter schools in Michigan, not within the context of marketing educational programs to international students, his arguments of marketing educational program provide clues for administrators and me as a researcher as well. Lubienski (2001) highlighted the view that “education is not effectively provided in a system that does not rely on the market mechanisms of consumer choice and competition between providers” (p.644). Further, he explained “if something about a charter school is objectionable for the parents of a student, they can talk to the teacher or building administrator; if the concern is not addressed, the parents have the market-style option of withdrawing the student” (p.658). West (1992)
discussed a number of strategies which schools might consider in response to parents’ expectation in determining their marketing strategies. West examined what factors were important in parental choice of a specific school, and what sources of information were used to assist parents in making a choice. According to West (1992), “school brochures and prospectuses are a widely read source of promotional material and their importance should not be under-estimated. Articles in the press are another source of information for prospective parents. The ethos/atmosphere of schools is an important factor in the choice process” (p.220). From the perspective of these scholars, marketing logics can be applied to the educational fields; education is a marketable service and schools are viewed as service providers, students and parents are customers, programs in schools are considered as products, tuition fees as pricing, and promotion activities as marketing tools.

**Theoretical Base: the Push-Pull model**

A push-pull model has been used by some scholars as a conceptual framework to understand destination decision-making processes utilized by students and their parents (Chen, 2006). “Push factors are factors [mainly] associated with the home country. Some push factors are positive, and some are negative in nature. Pull factors are generally positive factors that attract international students to the destination” (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2008, p230). Student mobility and sites attractiveness (school districts in a specific location) is decided by “a function of the combined 'pull' factors and 'push' factors as influenced by intervening obstacles” (Sirowy & Inkeles, 1984, p.65).

Chen (2006, 2007) has investigated pull and push factors influencing East Asian students
in choosing Canadian graduate schools, and provided insightful findings that the decisions were influenced by three domains: student characteristics, significant others and external push-pull factors. According to Chen (2007), in choosing a host country, "student characteristics include socio-economic background, personal characteristics and preferences" (p. 760). Socio-economic background directly influences students’ choice of a specific country. Students from low-income families might choose to continue their education in Asian countries or in China. Some students choose a host country because of their personal characteristics, such as academic ability, and preferences to a specific educational destination. “Significant others include encouragement from family/spouse, relatives, professors, sponsors, or employers. External push-pull factors include positive and negative forces from the home and host countries, personal driving forces due to external influences, and institutional characteristics” (Chen, 2007, p.760). Chen dug into factors influencing East Asian students' decision-making process from the perspective of intrinsic and external forces. Intrinsic forces are factors related to students’ personal motivation and background, such as students’ preferences of a specific institution or program and the financial foundation of their family. According to Chen, many international students prefer to consider English-speaking countries to pursue their further education. Further, Chen reported “for many self-funded master’s students, the cost of graduate education and living expenses were a concern. They were looking for a high-perceived quality of education at a competitive cost” (p.768) External forces are forces that have external influences on students’ choice, such as environment of the destination and characteristics of institutions. Chen (2007) found
out “factors related to Canadian environment exerted the most influence in pulling international students to Canada” (p.764). As well, Chen investigated “institutional characteristics – academic pulling factors were ranked with very high importance” (p.768). These forces are complex and combine together to influence international students' choice of a destination and institution. Firstly, international students will choose a host country according to their personal characteristics. If they have low academic ability, they might not choose to study abroad. Then, they will determine a specific country with respect of their personal preference and their financial background. Finally, they will choose a specific institution based on pulling factors of schools. In current research, student characteristics means that the family needs to have a financial foundation to support a teenager to study abroad and that students and parents prefer B.C as a destination.

As well, Chen identified the academic pulling factors, which had the most impact on international students' decision making process. However, Chen did not examine policy factors in depth pushing international students to study abroad which underpins Chen's discussion. The suggested reason for this missing factor is because Chen (2006, 2007) conducted research with graduate students whose decision making process was less likely to be influenced by governmental policy in his or her home country. Additionally, international students who participated in the study conducted by Chen (2006, 2007) reported that the economic and political ties between Canada and the home country were considered to be of very low importance in influencing their choice of Canada.

In this sub-section, I review literature regarding a push-pull model, which provides
information regarding current research’s approach to a theoretical framework when analyzing Chinese students’ movement. In choosing an educational destination, students are influenced by multiple and complex factors and these factors play different roles in student decision-making processes. Some factors are pushing students to leave their home country and some factors are attracting students to a potential host country.

**Push Factors Associated with Home Country and a Potential host Country**

Push factors are conditions that drive international students, especially Chinese students, to leave their home country or not choose a potential host country and pursue their education in a specific country. Most of these push factors are coming from students’ country of origin, and some of them stem from a potential host country such as the U.S. This domain of literature is reviewed to examine previous studies on reasons that induce Chinese students to not choose to continue their education in their country of origin or a potential host country.

**Chinese policies toward student mobility across national boundaries.** Jie Zheng got her Master of Education in Theoretical, Cultural and International Studies in Education at the University of Alberta and her thesis *Exploring international student mobility: neoliberal globalization, higher education policies and Chinese graduate student perspectives on pursuing higher education in Canada* examined the social and educational phenomenon of Chinese student mobility. Her discussions provide current research with political perspectives in analyzing students’ movement. Zheng (2010) addressed China’s rationale and policy toward overseas studies in a chronological way as following:

Before the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (P.R.C.), in order to popularize Christianity in China, the Western missionaries selected the appropriate
students in China and sent them to European countries to study religion and western culture. After the Establishment of the P.R.C. because of the common belief in socialism and China’s urgent domestic demand for modernization construction in industry, science and technology, in 1950s and 1960s, China quickened her pace to dispatch students to the Soviet Union and East Europe for studying and obtained great help of cultivating talent in sophisticated technology for China’s scientific frontier from the Soviet Union. There was a significant increase in dispatching students abroad for masters study since 1982, however, as the domestic higher education system [has] been on the track and the ability of cultivating graduate students [was] enhanced, the number of dispatched students for masters and undergraduate studies abroad decreased. After 1980’s, the policy towards self-supported overseas studies became stricter owing to the official consideration of “brain drain”. The Ministry of Education simplified the review process of applications for self-supported overseas studies in 2002 and China’s government enacted new regulations to provide positive assistance to those who want to study abroad. (p.55; p.60; p.62)

This section draws on the analysis and review of Chinese policy toward sending Chinese students studying abroad in order to find out how policy influences students’ movement. Zheng (2010) showed us the changes of Chinese policy and the impacts of these changes on Chinese students in choosing to study in other countries. According to Zheng, Chinese policy refers to the policy towards self-supported overseas studies. This policy has influenced Chinese students’ decision-making process for the reason that the process of
applications for self-supported overseas studies need to be reviewed by the government in China. Students' migration trend is influenced by Chinese policies toward student mobility across national boundaries. Before the policy changes of China, the Chinese government was reluctant to allow Chinese students, including high school students, to study abroad and it was very difficult for Chinese students to study overseas, no matter if it was at their own expenses or with the support of the government. In these circumstances, it was difficult for a Western high school to enroll international students from China. During the period of structuring policy toward self-supported overseas studies, individuals were confronted with various difficulties, even in the process of application for passports. Graduate students can only apply for studying abroad after they serve their work unit for over two years because of the official consideration of “brain drain” (Zheng, 2010, p.62).

In recent years, increasingly more talents with international views and familiar to different cultures are needed to contribute to economic growth of current Chinese society. With such human resource development and economic growth imperatives in China, the Chinese government has realized the importance of sending people to study abroad, based on the assumption of reverse brain drain. By assuming reverse brain drain the Chinese government supposes that the talents will come back to China and serve Chinese society when they complete their education in other countries. Only after the Chinese government opened national policy and encouraged students to study abroad, could Chinese students have a choice in their own decision-making process. At the same time, schools in Western countries have the opportunity to implement marketing strategies in China and enroll
Chinese students to study abroad. Therefore, in this paper, changes of Chinese policies toward student mobility across national boundaries are regarded as push factors from the home country influencing Chinese students' study abroad decision-making process. The discussion of this kind of push factors can rationalize marketing strategies used by schools to attract students in a specific period when Chinese government opens up policy and encourages students studying abroad. The change of policy direction influences the way marketing strategies are designed to attract Chinese students to a Western country in terms of choice of promotion timing and advertising content. Additionally, this discussion will help the researcher in analyzing promotion activities used to attract Chinese students in Chinese circumstances.

**Attitudes toward studying abroad.** Chen (2006) investigated factors influencing student decision making processes by using a sample of 140 students from East Asia who enrolled in graduate programs at two Ontario universities. Chen (2006) observed “studying abroad [is] viewed positively in China, Korea and Taiwan, but it [is] perceived negatively in Japan” (p.83). Similarly, Zheng (2010) found out “it should be noted that contemporary Chinese people are adopting a more open attitude towards the outside world”(p.75). Given this positive attitude, Chinese students have preferences of accepting education from other countries and are eager to study abroad although some of them do not have good financial capabilities. On this issue, Zheng (2010) has found “Chinese students pursuing graduate studies abroad depend heavily on scholarships provided by overseas higher education institutions and though family background and parents’ social-economic status still
influenced students’ decisions regarding further study abroad, students from both high-income family and low-income families often stressed their own efforts to win an offer from overseas universities” (p.6). Their findings provide current research insights of cultural and economic factors influencing students’ choice of a destination. These insights include cultural preference of Chinese students toward experiencing education abroad and the important role of financial foundation in students’ decision-making process.

Popaduik (2009) mentioned political, economic, and academic reasons that push Asian adolescent students to study abroad. According to her findings, some parents had concerns of political and economic instability of Taiwan and some of them feared the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997. In 1979, Taiwan broke ties with the U.S., which was a motivating factor, or push, for some parents to send their children to a Western country due to concerns over instability. The same thing happened when China claimed sovereignty over Hongkong. Additionally, Popaduik (2009) pointed out academic factors in Asian students’ mobility process. Some students are not competitive when taking college entrance examination at home countries and seek to find opportunity to continue their higher education abroad. She also observed other motivations, including an interest in experiencing new things and a personal preference for location.

Positive attitudes toward studying abroad, political and economic reasons, and academic factors are examined by scholars, including Chen (2006), Zheng (2010) and Popaduik (2009). Therefore, these attitudes and reasons for study abroad act as push factors influencing why young Chinese students choose Canada as a host country in order to pursue
further education. Chen (2006) proposed “in reviewing push-pull factors related to the respondents' home countries and Canada, it is worth noting that positive push factors exerted more influence --- in making the decision to study abroad” (p.83). As well, Zheng (2010) suggested “why do Chinese students prefer to study in Canada across the Pacific when they have multiple choices? Through these interviews, such preference is clearly explained by various factors, including those that are closely related to the policies and others related to personal reasons” (p.80). The discussions of these push factors provide the lens through which to examine marketing strategies used by institutions in attracting students. As Zheng (2010) observed “social-cultural and academic rationale of recruiting international students can be observed from [international student movement] China to Canada” (p.70).

**Reasons for not choosing the U.K, the U.S or Australian as destination.** The U.S, the U.K, Australia, and Canada are four major competitors in the area of international education (Chen, 2006; 2007). Many international students choose Canada as a destination partly because of negative factors from other countries.

Chen (2006) proposed “international students said they shied away from Australian graduate schools for two main reasons - the academic year cycle and image problems” (p.94). “Australia's aggressive marketing and recruiting effort targeting undergraduate [students] in the East Asian countries has had a negative impact on highly qualified potential graduate students.” (p.94). The nature of these negative impacts were explored by Chen (2006) and included poor quality or lack of academic credibility on the part of the university as Australian universities mainly conduct their marketing strategy by using under-prepared
undergraduate students who could not pass university entrance examinations in their home country in order to target clients. In terms of aggressive promotion, Kotler (1979) proposed that intensifying promotions regarding equating marketing were qualified as aggressive promotions and resulted in no real improvements in schools’ competition, teaching quality, and students’ services. On this issue, Kotler (1979) expressed a similar opinion and argued that aggressive promotion could attract the wrong students to the college—students who drop out when they discover they do not have the qualifications to do the work or that the college is not what it was advertised to be. Given the factors mentioned above, the impression of Australian schools, high schools or post-secondary schools, on Chinese parents and students are not as good as that of other Western countries.

Chen (2006) reported “the universities in the United Kingdom [are] generally considered [being] of high quality by [international students]. The most mentioned reasons for not choosing the British universities were the higher cost of living and tuition fees and the length of the programs” (p.94). From Chen’s perspective, price factor plays an important role in student decision-making process when they choose an educational destination.

Chen (2006) also mentioned the visa factor pushing international students from the U.S, stating “[the U.S] was the first choice country for many international students. The interviews revealed visa as a factor that pushed international students away from choosing American universities. According to Karuppana & Baraib (2011), tighter visa restrictions by the U.S government is one of reasons for the declining of international students. Chen (2006) and Karuppana & Baraib (2011) share a common point in their discussions that difficulty to
obtain a visa from the U.S government pushes international students away from the U.S and to choose other countries as an educational destination.

In the current research, negative factors influencing international students to stay away from other countries such as the U.S., the U.K, or Australia will be viewed as push factors from a potential host country in students' decision-making process. The discussion of this kind of push factors has outlined several important linkages pertaining to this study of marketing strategies used by school districts to attract students. First, in promoting their programs, Canadian school districts should avoid using aggressive marketing strategies. Second, price should be considered by school district when advertising their programs. Third, the Canadian government should ease the process visa for application of international students.

**Hukou system and The National Higher Education Entrance Examination.** The National Higher Education Entrance Examination, commonly known in China as Gao Kao, is an examination held annually in China, which is an academic prerequisite for entrance into almost all higher education institutions. Students must take this examination in their last year of high school, and it determines their academic learning achievements.

The Hukou system in China dates back to the Tang Dynasty in the seventh century. If a student takes classes in one of the high schools in “A” province because his or her parents are working there, the student must go back to his or her hometown to take the national examination when he or she is in the last year of high school. The problem is that the curriculum is controlled by the province, and is quite different in the various provinces. It is
a nightmare for a student who is schooled in “A” province to take the National High Education Entrance Examination in “B” province. This student will definitely be evaluated as having a poor academic performance due to these differences. In order to give children more opportunities to study in universities, many parents are eager to send their children abroad when they are close to finishing their high school education. This explains why increasingly more juniors choose to study overseas in their earlier years than previous generations.

This domain of literature reviewed push factors related to home country and a third country. In this sub-section, I investigated literature regarding policy in China towards self-supported overseas study, and how change in policy pushes Chinese students to continue their education abroad. Second, I examined attitudes toward studying abroad and this positive attitude encourages Chinese students to further their education in a Western country. Third, political forces, cultural preference and negative factors from a third country were studied. Finally, I reviewed Hukou system and Gaokao in China, which push some Chinese high school students to make the decision to study abroad. Based on understanding of these push factors, current research can develop a framework that expects under-driving forces to motivate international students seeking educational experiences in Canada.

**Pull Factors Attracting International Students to Canada**

Pull factors are under-driven forces that attract international students to a host country. They are the reason associated with the choice of Canada and the various factors used to consider students’ choice of Canada. In the previous sub-section, I reviewed factors
encouraging international students to leave their home country. However, I did not explore the reason why they choose specific destinations. In this sub-section, I complement this issue by examining why they choose Canada as a host country to pursue their further education.

**Students’ preference as pulling factors.** Student preferences were investigated by Chen (2006), Waters (2005) and Zheng (2010) in order to understand the reasons that lead to students' choices of Canada as a destination. Chen (2006) investigated factors influencing East Asian students’ choice of Canada as a destination. Her findings reveal academic, environment and visa/immigration pulling factors and push factors from a potential host country. Waters (2005) used in-depth interviews with current immigrant students and returnee graduates to explore student mobility between Canada and Hong Kong. Zheng (2010) examined Chinese graduate student migrations to Canada in pursuit of higher education and analyzes student movement primarily from a policy perspective.

Most international students are attracted by the Canadian [natural] environment, and they choose a Canadian institution because of the safe, diverse and multicultural Canadian environment (Chen, 2006; Chen, 2007; Zheng, 2010), and linguistic environment in which people speak English (Zheng, 2010; Waters, 2005). They are also impressed by the lower costs in relation to that of the U.S and the U.K (Chen, 2006; Chen, 2007) and the good quality of higher education (Zheng, 2010). Many are attracted by Canada’s proximity to the U.S (Chen, 2006; Chen, 2007), which they think might help them in the future in obtaining a visa for the United States (Chen, 2006; Chen, 2007; Zheng, 2010). Chen (2006) also found
that students from Hong Kong “reported the family/associate tie to Canada to be more important in choosing Canada” (p.88; Chen, 2007, p.768).

Pull factors influencing Chinese students to come to Canada include educational quality, immigration policy, and cultural environment (Chen, 2006; Waters, 2005; Zheng, 2010). Because of different educational philosophy and educational system, many Chinese students regard Canadian education superior to that in China. Waters (2005) examined the place of education in family migration strategies. Some students choose Canada as a destination because they would then be eligible to apply for immigration under the Canadian Experience Class after graduation with a Canadian higher education degree according to Canadian immigration policy. Some Chinese students choose Canada as an educational destination because of cultural environment, which is diverse and less discriminatory.

Personal preference plays an important role in students’ decision-making processes. Characteristics of Canadian society, proximity to the U.S and a family plan of immigration to Canada influence students’ preferences in choosing Canada as an educational destination. Discussion of students’ personal preferences can help school districts understand students’ motivation in choosing an educational host country and develop promotional activities that can be easily accepted by potential students.

**Canadian and B.C policies toward international students.** Chen (2006) indicates “Canada's future sustainability and growth will depend on new immigrants who are educated skilled workers. The international student population has been viewed by many as a pool of preferred potential immigrants” (p.78). The term ‘international student’ refers to
those “who have crossed a national or territorial border for the purposes of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin” (UNESCO, 2006, p.178).

Zheng (2010) argued “though as an important member of OECD, Canada [was] not as enthusiastic as the U.K or Australia to propagate marketization of higher education to international students at first” (p.63). However, economic pressure, especially impacts of global recession of 2009, “may result in the government’s policy adjustment towards the higher education export services by recruiting more international students” with the view that international students can contribute to Canada both economically and socially (Zheng, 2010, p.64).

In B.C., the Ministry of Advanced Education of British Columbia (2012) stated that B.C. needs to welcome and provide an additional 47,000 seats to international students over the next four years.

[In Canada,] of B.C.’s estimated 94,000 international students, about 12,000 currently pursue K-12 education at B.C.’s public and private schools. Growth in these student numbers over the past four years has been about 12 percent. To achieve [this] target, the K-12 system will need to serve an additional 6,000 international students by 2015/2016, representing 13 percent of the province’s overall targeted growth. (p.12)

Like in B.C., education funding in all Canadian provinces has been under pressure in recent years, and recruiting international students as been seen as a way to fund schools, and benefit communities and their economy (Chen, 2006; Plant, 2004). As well, being an immigration country, there is always a domestic need for human resources. Specifically,
beginning September 17, 2008 students could start applying for permanent residence under the Canadian Experience Class. Within this new policy, foreign students who graduate from a Canadian higher institution are considered to have the qualities necessary to make a successful transition from temporary to permanent residence. Their familiarity with Canadian society, language proficiency and qualifying work experience are evaluated during their application for permanent residence and this offers a potential source of future immigrants (Plant, 2004, p.4; Chen, 2006, p.78).

The B.C. government regards China as one of the biggest target countries from which to recruit international minds. Encouraged by these policies, schools in B.C., including high schools, have taken action to market their programs and attract international adolescent students in China. (Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012). In this study, policies of the federal and B.C. governments will be viewed as pull factors influencing Chinese high school students’ choice of B.C. as a destination.

Economic pressure and human resource needs of Canada and B.C. make the government adjust policies in order to attract international students. Building on an understanding of the contribution of international students with familiarity of Canadian society and linguistic proficiency, the Canadian and B.C. governments have made efforts to facilitate the transition process of international students. Examining Canadian and B.C. policies toward international students informs me regarding what kind of governmental information matters and should be included in promotional materials.

**Support from institutions.** One of factors influencing students’ decision-making
process is whether they can get support from institutions, which can facilitate the student
transition process. The aim of student migration is to experience education in a specific
educational organization. Failing to provide support services might have negative influences
on students’ choices. This part of the literature review examines pulling factors in attracting
international students to Canada from the perspective of a specific destination. International
teenage students are more vulnerable than other groups and have difficulties in adjusting to
lives in a new country (Popaduik, 2009; 2010; Kuo and Roysircar, 2004; Karuppana&Bararib,
2011). Popaduik (2009) conducted research to explore the facilitating and hindering events
associated with the transition and adjustment of Asian adolescent international students. She
found out that unaccompanied secondary school students require extra support and direct
intervention in their transition process. Kuo and Roysircar (2004) investigated acculturation
of Chinese adolescents in Canada by using a sample of 506 Chinese adolescents living in
Canada. They found out “a higher level of acculturation was related to migrating at a
younger age, a longer duration of residence in Canada, a higher [socioeconomic status], and
greater proficiency in English reading ability” (p.148). Karuppana & Bararib (2011)
indicated that perceived discrimination has a strong, negative impact on international
students’ educational experiences and learning results. Their discussions provided
information to school districts about how to assist student transition processes and use it as a
kind of marketing strategy to attract international students. The perception of a satisfactory
academic experience at the host institution will have direct impacts on student
decision-making process when they choose an educational destination. Kuo and Roysircar
Ruggin et al. (2004) identified that international adolescent students were confronted with high levels of acculturative stress and have low acculturation levels. Acculturative stress refers to a reduction in health status, such as psychological and social aspects, of an individual when he or she is experiencing the adjustment process. Low acculturation levels means an individual finds more difficulties in adjusting to the social and cultural environment of a host country. They found out “international students have reported particular difficulties in communication skills” and “the extent of English proficiency differentiates Chinese immigrants of varying levels of acculturation” (p.145). From this point of view, helping Chinese international students improve their English language skills, which is a positive pulling factor for Chinese students, can ease their acculturation process and reduce their acculturative stress. International students always face challenges coming from different cultures and find difficulties in the acculturation process as compared with their local peers. International adolescent students often need extra assistance to adjust to new multicultural environments, and are often confronted with discrimination and racism. Language barriers and the need for cultural adaptations are also identified by many researchers as issues of concern (Cited in Kuo and Roysircar, 2004; Chiu & Ring, 1998; Lay &Nhuyen,1998). Short (2002) pointed out challenges faced by immigrant adolescent students, including limited English proficiency. Additionally, Short (2002) indicated that high school students need targeted intervention strategies beyond traditional ESL (English as a Second Language) courses to prepare them for graduation from high school. Given the many difficulties and barriers international students encounter, especially adolescents, ESL is only one of many
available methods that can be utilized as other services, such as social support, can be provided.

Popadiuk (2010) suggested “[Canadian high schools] may be better prepared to support [international students] while attending high school in Canada” by easing their transition challenges, and discusses many barriers, including local customs or cultural differences, language barriers, feeling of racism and homesickness, faced by adolescent students in making decisions and experiencing dilemmas (Popadiuk, 2009; 2010). If adolescent international students “[receive] timely and accurate information that [helps them] alleviate real or imagined concerns before they [come] to Canada or during their sojourn, the transition [will be] less stressful” (p.1736). Popadiuk (2010) also mentioned some help that “assist students, including a teacher explaining and then helping the student to learn something that they did not understand; a friend giving them money to go shopping when they had nothing to spend; university students tutoring international high school students after school; another student helping with vocabulary and lab work; being allowed to rewrite a test and ask questions during the test. Feelings of relief, happiness, acceptance, and confidence were common outcomes, and the international students often liked the person who helped them” (p.1536). As a Psychologist, Popadiuk focused her research on transition and adjustment process of international adolescent students, and provides suggestions to counselors for supporting international students.

In this sub-section, I explored literature about pulling factors in attracting Chinese students to Canada. First, I studied literature about why Chinese students choose Canada as
an educational destination from students’ perspectives, which plays a vital role in students’ decision-making processes. Second, I investigated research on Canadian and B.C policies toward international students, including Canadian immigration policy and government’s efforts to facilitate the transition process of international students. Finally, I examined support from institutions as a positive pulling factor in attracting international students. As a service provider, educational institutions should satisfy the needs of potential clients – international students. Assisting their acculturation process and helping them to reach their full potential in order to achieve better learning outcome are pulling factors in enticing international students.

**Concluding Comments**

In this Chapter, I reviewed four domains of literature respectively. Firstly, I identify literature regarding education as a commodity in an international marketing environment with the purpose of re-defining the concept of marketing and broadening a marketing concept into the educational field. Without this, I would not be able to develop further discussion about how to market educational programs. Only if education is defined as a marketable commodity can current research investigate how to promote it. Otherwise, the marketing element cannot be introduced into the educational field and education operations need not to follow a marketing logic. Secondly, I examined literature about the push-pull model which provides the current research with a theoretical base. Literature on push factors associated with home country and third countries were studied to help me understand the reason for encouraging international students’ decision to study abroad. Finally, literature
related to pull factors attracting international students to Canada was explored in order to assist me in gaining a clearer idea of the why international students choose Canada as an educational destination. These four domains of literature help to formulate the following discussions about marketing strategies used by school districts to attract Chinese students.

My literature review clearly outlines that there is little literature concentrating on the marketing and recruitment strategies in attracting Chinese adolescent students to pursue their further education in Canada. Research on marketization of education, international students in secondary schools and marketing strategies in the educational field are mostly conducted by researchers in the areas of management and psychology. Researchers from the management area including Hanson, Harvey, and Kotler broaden the traditional concept of marketing and propose that education as a service should be marketed. Investigators from psychological fields conducted research on the acculturation process of international students and gave recommendations to counselors about how to facilitate international students’ transition process in their daily work. Kotler (1969; 1998) believed that marketing is an important issue in improving students’ enrollment, while findings from empirical research conducted by Chen (2006) indicated that marketing has little impact on international students’ decision process. In reviewing the main sets of factors influencing the choice of a Canadian graduate school, Chen (2006) found out “the factors related to the Canadian graduate school had the strongest influence, followed by the factors related to Canada, and then the factors related to study abroad decisions” (p.92). Chen (2006) proposed “institutional characteristics had the strongest influence on international students
when choosing a Canadian graduate school, followed by factors related to the Canadian environment, economic factors, and visa/immigration factors. Factors related to marketing, information, significant others, and Canada-home relationships had little influence on the decision-making process” (p.92). According to Chen (2006), pulling factors influencing students' choice of an institution have the most impact on their decision-making process and most students are not attracted by promotion activities conducted by institutions.

Table One: push-pull factors derived from reviewed literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Push-pull factors</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pull factors influencing choice of Canada:</td>
<td>Canada's policy toward international students; The quality of education; Inclusive characteristic of Canadian environment; Visa/Immigration factors; Costs; Family and associate tie to Canada; Support from schools; Students’ preference</td>
<td>Chen, 2006; Chen, 2007; Liu, 2005; Plant, 2004; Zheng, 2010; West, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push factors influencing choice of Canada:</td>
<td>Chinese policies toward student mobility across national boundaries; Negative factors push international students away from third countries: the U.S, the U.K, or Australian to Canada; Positive attitude toward study abroad; Hukou System in China; The national higher educational entrance examination in China</td>
<td>Chen, 2006; Chen, 2007; Popaduik, 2009; 2010; Short, 2002; Wang, 2007; West, 1992; Zheng, 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Chen mentioned marketing factors, she did not conduct research focusing on marketing strategies used to attract international students. West (1992) stated that no literature directly examines factors important to different groups of students from a
marketing perspective (p. 212). This current research will fill this gap by investigating marketing strategies used by Vancouver-based school districts in recruiting Chinese adolescent students.

Additionally, some researchers in the psychological field, including Kuo & Roysircar (2004), Popadiuk (2010) and Ying (2001) tried to address the social-emotional well-being of the adolescent students in adjusting to a new culture and way of life. They examined the academic, psychological, and behavior adjustment conducted by unaccompanied Asian sojourners who were to study in Western countries and find that this group of students need more help and support in the transitional process of acculturation. These findings might provide more information on the potential needs of students as well as help administrators in charge of international departments to adjust their recruiting strategies by addressing support service information, such as providing information on acculturation and psychological wellbeing of current students on their websites.

**Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

The current study investigated the nature and impacts, as perceived by administrators, of recruiting strategies used by three British Columbia (B.C) urban school districts in trying to attract Chinese adolescent students to their high schools. The current research adopted a case study strategy by using a combination of document analysis method and semi-structured interviews as sources of data. Interview sites and participants were selected by criteria in terms of the size of their international program.

**Sites of Study**
This case study was composed of three school districts in Vancouver, which have the biggest international programs in terms of enrollment or revenues generated by international students. These sites were chosen following a careful analysis of their respective websites in terms of enrollment, revenues, description of international program and offshore tuition fees. Specifically, size of the international programs and tuition fees generated from the international department were important determinants in choosing the study sites.

**Selection criteria of sites.** I created the following table based on 2011/2012 amended annual budget of offshore tuition fees and size of programs in different school districts, in order to find out which school districts have the most number of international students based on the budget tuition fees generated from international departments. Three school districts were selected according to this criterion.

Table One: description of international programs of 13 school districts in Vancouver and 2011/2012 amended annual budgets of offshore tuition fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of school district</th>
<th>Description of international programs</th>
<th>Offshore Tuition Fees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. school district A</td>
<td>School district A has a tradition of over 55 years of academic excellence and scholarship and has the largest international education program in Canada. The school district provides a wide variety of academic and career programs for students from K-12. The formats of the program are long-term program and short-term program. Home stay, athletic and outdoor opportunities are available in schools. Trained teachers provide ESL support to international students, but the website does not indicate the level of ESL.</td>
<td>2011/2012 amended annual budget of offshore tuition fees: 15,730,300; 2010/2011 amended annual budget of offshore tuition fees:15,730,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. school district B</td>
<td>School district B's international education program provides international students Grade 12 diploma program and summer school program. Also, they offer courses in academics, fine arts,</td>
<td>2013 annual budget of offshore tuition fees: 15,697,627; 2012 amended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Tuition Fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Offers ESL support to international students. 2013 annual budget of offshore tuition fees: 13,474,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Offers ESL support to international students. 2013 annual budget of offshore tuition fees: 12,396,067; 2012 amended annual budget of offshore tuition fees: 11,231,780</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Provides international counselor and ESL instructor to assist students when necessary. 2011/2012 amended annual budget of offshore tuition fees: 8,800,270. 2010/2011 amended annual budget of offshore tuition fees: 8,824,869.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Offers several programs to international students. 2011/2012 amended annual budget of offshore tuition fees: 8,195,600; 2010/2011 amended annual budget of offshore tuition fees:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>2013 Annual Budget of Offshore Tuition Fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>In school district E, international students may choose to complete secondary school graduation or take a general studies program at one of seven secondary or twenty-eight elementary schools. The format of the program is not available on the website, or other specific information about the program. Each secondary school has an international counselor available to assist the international students with course selection and programming as well as offering support and guidance throughout the year(s) of study. ESL support is not mentioned by the school district on the related website.</td>
<td>$8,257,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>School district F’s international program has been operated since 1982 and has attracted students from over 40 countries. There are three formats of programs: long-term program, short-term program, and summer program. The international program provides ESL support, but the website does not indicate the level of support. Also, home stay coordinator, counseling and assistance services, international student advisor are available in schools.</td>
<td>$7,246,000; 7,678,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>School district H’s international student program allows overseas students to enter Grades 8 through 12 at selected secondary schools, and under certain circumstances, K-7 at selected elementary schools. No further information about the program can be accessed on the website. School district H employs a home stay coordinator to organize and facilitate an efficient home stay program to provide support for host families and students requiring home stay. Advisors, administrators, and counselors are available to counsel students.</td>
<td>$7,417,800; 7,909,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>School district H’s international student program allows overseas students to enter Grades 8 through 12 at selected secondary schools, and under certain circumstances, K-7 at selected elementary schools. No further information about the program can be accessed on the website. School district H employs a home stay coordinator to organize and facilitate an efficient home stay program to provide support for host families and students requiring home stay. Advisors, administrators, and counselors are available to counsel students.</td>
<td>$7,318,772; 5,750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School District</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>School District I</td>
<td>Offers a wide range of education options that meet the needs of international students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>School District J</td>
<td>Offers long term study programs for international students aged 5 to 17.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>School District K</td>
<td>Provides full-year and short-term academic programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>School District L</td>
<td>Offers long-term academic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
district L

studies for students from K-12, allowing students to study for one semester, one year, or to complete high school. The program provides long-term students with immersion experience focusing on academic study. The school district also offers short term programs including morning English classes, afternoon activities, and home stay with Canadian families. No information about staff support and ESL support can be accessed on the website.

annual budget of offshore tuition fees cannot be found on website.

13. School district M

School district M offers the Graduation program and students will enroll in a full time course program, will receive regular intensive language instruction, and will be encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of school and family life. The short-term immersion program and the summer program are also available. Special services for international students are provided, including home stay coordinators, professional team of counselors, career advisors, international student advisors, work experience coordinators, and home stay program.

2011/2012 amended annual budget of offshore tuition fees cannot be found on website.

Among the thirteen school districts mentioned above, the available 2011/2012 amended annual budgets of offshore tuition fees are listed in the following table:

Table Two: 2011/2012 amended annual budgets of offshore tuition fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School districts</th>
<th>2011/2012 amended annual budget (CAD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School district A</td>
<td>$15,730300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district B</td>
<td>$13,474250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district C</td>
<td>$11,231780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district D</td>
<td>$8,800270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district E</td>
<td>$8,195600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School districts 2011/2012 amended annual budget (CAD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School district F</th>
<th>$7,678000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School district G</td>
<td>$7,417800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district H</td>
<td>$7,318772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district I</td>
<td>$5,990136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district J</td>
<td>$4,050000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district K</td>
<td>$3,300000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district L</td>
<td>Cannot be found on website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School district M</td>
<td>Cannot be found on website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on multiple factors including curriculum, programs and the size of generated funds by international students, three districts were invited to participate in my study. Specifically, revenues were the deciding factors in this selecting process. These three school districts are: school district A, school district B, and school district C. I used the letters of A, B and C in referring to participating school districts for ethics reasons.

**Data Collection Procedure**

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with administrators from international departments of school districts, and from online documents collected from the website of the three selected school districts in B.C. Data collected from interviews and documents were used to analyze and critique the nature and perceived impacts of recruitment strategies used by selected school districts in attracting Chinese teenage students.
and reasons why they adopt particular strategies.

Websites from school districts, with an emphasis on marketing promotional activities, were used to investigate what has been done by institutional administrators with regard to the recruiting of international students. Such data were used in the discussion in the finding section of this research paper addressing what can be changed in enhancing the effectiveness of recruiting international students. Qualitative data collected from interviews in selected school districts were used to identify what kinds of recruitment strategies were used in order to attract Chinese students from the perspective of institutions and individuals who are in charge of managing and growing their school districts' international programs. Additionally, data obtained from interviews provided information on what were the perceived impacts of those recruitment strategies in terms of successfully attracting Chinese students to Vancouver. Data collected from both interviews and on-line documents were explored to determine what is the understanding of institutions and individuals in charge of recruiting international students in selected school districts regarding what Chinese students value that are instrumental in choosing a Canadian high school and the marketing concept used by selected school districts.

In the current research, I dealt with marketing strategies, which could be explored and understood through data collected by interviews and document review of websites of selected school districts. Thereafter, the data and derived research findings were compared to the findings from the literature review. The review of online documents was undertaken in order to find out about marketing and recruitment strategies used to attract students by
selected school districts. The data collected through the interviews were analyzed in a way to find out the perceived impacts of those marketing strategies and the concept and intention in relation of the effectiveness of their marketing and recruitment strategies from the perspectives of those in charge of international students programs. I compared the data and developed insights that led to an understanding of their impacts as perceived by research participants which informed concrete suggestions on marketing strategies and promotional activities to school districts in Vancouver.

**Interview.** The current research included interviews of administrators in charge of international education programs in order to investigate what the main motivation of international students is in choosing their school districts, what strategies they should adopt to attract those students, how they design their website, what assumptions they should hold to attract those international students, and how they decide to choose specific information on their website. I used semi-structured interviews to gain in-depth insights into perspectives of administrators in charge of international programs, concerning their choice of particular marketing strategies and promotion activities. Interviews were audio taped with a recorder and I typed text files using a computer. Text files created through interviewing participants were converted and transcribed into computer files for analysis. Data gained from interviews were organized by the criteria of participants and interview locations, into computer files. Participants were given the opportunity to review the final transcript and add, delete, or alter in any fashion the transcript’s information. After the transcripts were written and proofread, I sent them to participants by email in PDF format. Participants could scan the signed
Williamson (2002) found that interviewer and inter-interviewer reliability could be a problem and also mentioned factors which might bias an interview, including personal characteristics of the interviewer. This research attempted to address this challenge when selecting interviewees. The selection standard for current research was to look for people who are in charge of an international department and who were open and happy to share his or her experience with others. Additionally, before interviews the participants received emails from me indicating the potential benefits of participating in this study. Ethical approval from UBC and participating school districts were also provided to interviewees to assure them the confidentiality of their participation. Williamson (2002) regarded individual interviews as ideal for interviewing participants who were not hesitant to speak, who were articulate, and who could share ideas comfortably. Considering confidentiality, the real name of participants is replaced with Administrator (A1 and C1). In current research, A1 and C1 had quite different personalities. A1 was articulate while C1 seldom explained her opinion in detail. The common characteristic of two participants was that they were too busy to find time to conduct an interview. In terms of school district A, I called and emailed to the secretary of A1 several times and finally settled our meeting time in April. When I contacted school district C, the marketing director agreed to participate in the research. However, the interview was cancelled because she encountered an emergency and called me to cancel the interview just the day before our meeting time. Finally, she recommended another marketing manager who could help me to finish the interview. Right before
interview, I introduced myself and my experiences, in order to help them to familiarize themselves with my research and personal background. We had great conversations about the company where I worked for almost ten years and they all had connections with that company which was one of the biggest agents they had in China. These conversations provided me the opportunity to gain their confidence in me as a researcher. Creswell (2009) also mentioned ethical issues raised by interviewing, such as “whether [the researcher has] permission for individuals to participate” (p.219) and “whether [the researcher] will protect the privacy of responses.” (p.219) I addressed these issues and concerns in the current study. I submitted an ethics application to the Behavioural Research Ethics Board at UBC in March, 2013. After obtaining a certificate of approval from UBC (see Appendix A for more information on the certificate of approval), I sent invitation application packages to three selected school districts for internal ethics permission. School district A and school district C responded to my application by giving permission to contact their employees. Thereafter, through e-mail I sent invitation letters (see Appendix B for more information on invitation letters) to administrators in charge of the international program in these two school districts. When we conducted interviews, both participants signed the consent forms and returned them to me.
Table Three: protocol of questions used to guide the interview (administrators)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of question for focus group:</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part one: general questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening question</td>
<td>How long have you been in an administrator position in international education in your department?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition question</td>
<td>From your perspective, what are the advantages for Chinese students to come to B.C? Why should they come here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part two: factors influencing choice of destination by students</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>In your experience, what are factors that might influence Chinese students to choose to study abroad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>In your opinion, what are the reasons for Chinese students to choose B.C as a place to study?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>In your opinion, why did some Chinese students not choose other countries? What is so attractive for Chinese students to come here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part three: benefits to Chinese students in choosing Canadian high schools</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>In your opinion, what are the benefits for Chinese students to attend a Canadian high school in your province?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>In your opinion, what are the potential challenges for Chinese students in attending a Canadian high school? How do they overcome those challenges and how are they supported in addressing those challenges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part four: marketing strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>In your experience, what are the factors that influence students’ choice of school district?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>What strategies does your school district use to attract Chinese students, e.g. websites, fairs, etc.? How did you come to using specific ways of marketing your school district? What are the most effective strategies? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>In your opinion, what is attractive about your school or school district?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>How did you design your website? Is it an effective tool for promoting your district? What is the reaction of your target audience to your website?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>How did you decide what information to include in your website? Do you seek feedback from members of your target</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key question</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>audience with regard to the kind of information you include into your website or other forms of communications?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>What strategies are you using in marketing your program? Are they effective? Why? How do you assess the effectiveness of your marketing strategies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>Do you review your promotion strategies from time to time? How? Do you change them sometimes? Why?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part five: supports from institution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key question</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>What supports does your school district provide to Chinese students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>What is the degree of satisfaction of Chinese students in relation to their educational experience in your school district?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Document review.** To ensure reliability and validity of the results of interviews, document review excerpted from participant districts’ website was conducted in the current research. The purpose of document analysis was to investigate the nature of marketing strategies used by the participating school districts. The documents on websites of selected school districts may have an implicit bearing on their marketing strategies. Recruitment strategies and marketing concepts are usually tied to information on websites because international students usually have access to the internet, which offers them opportunities to learn about school districts and programs. Therefore, analyzing digital documents online contributed to current research with an understanding of market strategies in a comprehensive way. On-line documents from three selected school districts in the Greater Vancouver area were studied to examine the extent to which they promote their programs along the characteristics of their school districts and programs. Information obtained from websites of selected school districts provided me with what has been done by school districts with regards to marketing strategies and helped the researcher to understand the use
of push and pull factors in attracting Chinese students to Canada.

Documents were placed in context and coded for analysis, according to the coding scheme. These documents enriched my knowledge of promotion activities done by school districts before I conducted interviews. Also, when completing my discussion, I used data collected from these documents to examine interview data and vice versa.

**Data Analysis**

Data gained from documents and interviews with individuals in charge of international programs from selected school districts were analyzed according to the following coding scheme (see Table Four):

**Table Four: coding scheme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pull factors</td>
<td><strong>Attractions of host country:</strong> responses, statements or questions providing information on the <em>why</em> associated with choice of a host country; the under-driven factors used to consider with regard to students’ choice of Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada's policy toward international students</td>
<td>Responses, statements or questions providing information on perceived impacts of the policy in terms of attracting Chinese students to Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of education</td>
<td><strong>Educational philosophy:</strong> responses, statements or questions providing information on teaching style and teaching method as perceived by administrators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Educational outcomes:</strong> responses, statements or questions providing information on reputation enjoyed by Canada educational system and the way teachers foster learning of students in Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental and social characteristic of</td>
<td><strong>Natural environment:</strong> responses, statements or questions providing information on what environmental characteristics seem to influence students’ choice to come to Vancouver: beautiful natural view and environment; warm climate; cleanliness and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canadian environment</strong></td>
<td><em>Social environment:</em> responses, statements or questions providing information on what social characteristics seem to influence students’ choice to come to Vancouver: friendliness of Canada to international students; on safety of Canada as a place to study and live from the perspective of international students; on diverse and multicultural characteristics of Canadian society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs</strong></td>
<td><em>Tuition fees and living expenses:</em> responses, statements or questions providing information if cost differential of education and living expenses in Canada compared with that of the U.S or the U.K influence the choice of Chinese students to come here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visa and immigration factors</strong></td>
<td><em>Study permit:</em> responses, statements or questions providing information on how easy or difficult it is to obtain a visa; on the difficulties of getting study permit from some other countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family and ties to Canada</strong></td>
<td>Personal relationship with Canada: responses, statement or questions providing information with regard to the extent of family ties to Canada; and on other non-academic factors influencing students’ choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing strategy</strong></td>
<td>Marketing concept and promotional activities: responses, statement or questions providing information on the nature and content of the marketing strategies or method used by school districts in attracting international students; activities or ways of promoting their programs abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Push factors</strong></td>
<td><em>Conditions that drive students to leave the country of origin:</em> responses, statements or questions providing pushing information related to homeland from perspective of administrators; and information on negative factors avoiding students to go to a potential host country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese policy toward student mobility across national boundaries</strong></td>
<td><em>Impacts of policy:</em> responses, statements or questions providing information on the ways the policy is changed, and on perceived impacts of policy on encouraging Chinese students to study abroad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Negative factors associated with third countries** | *Offer and visa availability:* responses, statements or questions providing information on failure to get offers from schools in the U.S; difficulties or failure to obtain
Data collected from interviews and on-line documents were coded and categorized according to the codes outlined in Table Four. “Coding is the process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data” (Creswell, 2011, p.243). Transcripts obtained from interviews were divided into five different parts and labeled according to the main idea contained within each segment. The first part is general questions to assist the interviewer when familiarizing the participants with the study. Part two is about factors influencing choice of destination by students. Part three is related to benefits for Chinese students in choosing Canadian high schools. Part four explores marketing strategies and the final part is about supports from institutions. Labels, such as marketing strategies and supports from institutions, were used as codes to describe the underlying meaning of segments of text. Themes were developed from codes generated through the coding process.
Data about criteria used by school districts to refuse applicants and how they changed their websites have been discarded because these data have no direct relationship with research questions. Overlap and redundancy codes were eliminated in the current research, and similar codes were put together to form potential themes when investigating recruiting strategies adopted by school districts. In this paper, similar codes like “The quality of education”, “inclusive characteristic of Canadian environment”, and “Canada's policy toward international students” have been put together to form a theme “pull factors influencing choice of Canada”. “Word of mouth”, “use of website”, and “support from institutions” were formulated into a theme “marketing strategy used by school districts”. Code such as “Differences between the Chinese and Canadian educational systems” has been eliminated because it is redundancy with the code “the quality of education”. The findings were interpreted with caution and seen as indicative rather than definitive, because of the small number of samples. Results of data analysis were compared with findings of the literature review and a gap deserving further research was identified.

**Ethical Considerations**

The researcher sought permission to conduct the investigation in three school districts and sought permission to access the database. “To gain support from participants, [the researcher conveyed] to participants that they [were] participating in a study and [informed] them of the purpose of the study” (Creswell, 2009 p.231) by e-mail or through telephone conversations. Every effort was made to protect the privacy of participants. The researcher protected the participants’ anonymity, and the procedure of interview and research report
providing confidentiality to the participants. The real names of participants did not appear in the research report, and A1 and C1 were used instead. Secondly, the interviewer got the consent of school districts and the research purpose was explained to all the participants. Thirdly, the interview of administrators was conducted separately to avoid them influencing each other during the interview. The participants may provide false information on their marketing strategies in order to protect their own competency if they are interviewed together, which may bias the current research.

Before conducting interviews, the study was submitted to UBC’s Behavioral Research Ethics Board for approval, and all participants received copies of relevant consent forms (see Appendix C for more information on consent form).

Limitation of the Study

In the current research, the researcher focused on the nature and perceived impacts of marketing strategies used by administrators of selected school districts in attracting Chinese students from the perspective of district administrators in charge of international students programs. The first potential limitation of this study was that the selected school districts were not necessarily representative of the entire province. The current research chose the samples by size and tuition fees generated by international departments. However, the selected school districts were not necessarily typical of the larger population.

A second limitation of this study was its reliance on on-line documents of selected school districts and interviews to paint a picture of how individuals shaped, implemented, and experienced various marketing strategies. As a kind of recruitment tool, websites might
only provide information with the purpose of attracting potential international students to choose their school districts, which might indicate a lack of objectivity. As well, participants answered the interview questions based on their own experiences, which might be subjective.

The results of this study were limited by the factors of time, location, resources, gender of interviewees, and my ability as a researcher to reach and gain the confidence of participants. First, the interviews were conducted from April 2013 to May 2013 before school districts enrolled their new students. If a later time was chosen to conduct interviews, tested results would be expected and obtained. Second, on-line data were collected in 2013 and participants provided answers based on experience before 2013, which might influence applicability of results of current research in a later time. Third, school districts plan and implement their marketing strategies partly based on their locations. Current research chose two urban school districts, which might not represent characteristics of other school districts located in rural areas. Four, current research explored marketing strategies based on limited on-line resources and two interviews, which might impact the universality of current research. Five, all the participants were female which might influence the results of research. Female and male might hold different views when formulating and conducting marketing strategies. Apart from that, some administrators who might have concerns about the business secrets of their school districts might give false information on critical questions that might bias the research.

A third limitation was related to the use of a case study as a research design. Firstly, case studies, as a qualitative research methodology, was not typical of participating school
districts. Secondly, the findings of case study were based on expertise and experiences of interviewees, which might render current case study findings invalid in terms of objectivity.

**Reporting and Disseminating Results**

The findings of the study has been reported to the International Education Program Departments of the participating school districts in Vancouver to help them ascertain what could influence the choice of Chinese students and their parents and factor these findings into improving their marketing strategies. Also, the findings of this research will be reported by the researcher as a graduating paper to fulfill the requirement of M.Ed. of Educational Administrator and Leadership of Educational Department in University of British Columbia.

**Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion**

Research methods, as indicated in the methodology section, have been used and data were collected from both document review and two individual interviews. These data revealed the key features of marketing strategies used by Vancouver-based school districts and the factors influencing Chinese students’ choice of B.C. as an educational destination from the perspective of administrators.

**Document Review of Websites of Selected School Districts**

I reviewed digital documents online, as they are effective means of promoting activities in the competing market and are used to raise the level of awareness of potential international students, especially to address the interest of parents. They provide international students and parents with easy and quick access to information about the
programs being offered and sometimes they even enable school districts to promote their districts through the use of video and digital information online. The application process was not investigated in this research because I was curious about what factors render the students to make the final decision, not what they are supposed to do after they choose a specific school. With regard to recruitment strategies used by Vancouver-based school districts in attracting Chinese students in their international secondary school programs, websites of selected school districts were explored and three themes developed.

**Recruitment strategies used by the three Vancouver-based school districts.** By examining online documents from three Vancouver-based school districts, three kinds of marketing strategies were identified, and are as follows. First, websites were used as a major type of promotional method in attracting international students. Second, school districts described what kind of support they could offer to facilitate students’ transition process, which can be regarded as a type of marketing strategy. Third, school districts regarded university entrance as a kind of attraction in recruiting international students.

**Use of website.** After examining websites of selected school districts, I found that school districts regard websites as a major means regarding marketing strategy in attracting international students. Information about programs, tuition fees and the application process are offered on the website, in order to help international students familiarize themselves with potential school districts. Additionally, all of the websites translate core information into Chinese for the convenience of Chinese parents and students, which is a good marketing strategy in attracting Chinese students. Specifically, the website of school district A has a
Q&A (question and answer) section which includes questions that potential students might ask and provides answers to problems that students might encounter during their application process. This finding was supported by data obtained from interviews. Both interviewees believed that it is very attractive and effective to translate program information into potential students’ mother languages in recruiting prospects.

Support from schools. For international students, who might face great challenges in a new learning environment, it is recognized that sometimes they may have barriers to overcome. All of these barriers will slow down their transition process without support from institutions. Data gathered from websites suggest that two kinds of support matter from the perspective of school districts. The first is language support. To attract prospective international students, school districts are dedicated to creating a supportive environment to assist students in overcoming a language barrier, which is one of the biggest challenges for newcomers. For instance, in school district C, international students with low English proficiency will be placed in a combination program of English as a Second Language (ESL) support with a number of appropriate academic courses. A second example is school district A’s website that states the fact that it has trained teachers who provide ESL support to international students. Additionally, school district A provides registered international students with an online English learning program, which is convenient and flexible. The other option is home stay support. For international adolescent students and their parents, home stay is an important issue to consider and school districts provide a solution for finding home stays. “Home stay in [school district A] is more than just food and lodging – it is
a chance to take part in all aspects of family life” (School district A). Homestay students may choose to participate in home stay with a local family while enrolled in a Vancouver public school.

Language support and home stay support are complementary forces in students’ decision-making processes. Further, they constitute marketing strategies used to attract international students because both of these items facilitate students’ transition process. This finding confirms findings from Popaduik (2009; 2010), Short (2002), Wang (2007) and West (1992) who believed that home stay support and language support were considered when students make their final decisions. As well, this result was echoed by information provided by interviewees who regarded support from their schools as a type of attraction in enrolling international students.

*University entrance.* Chinese high school students choose to study abroad with the purpose of entering a qualified university and experiencing higher education, which is different from China (Wang, 2007; West, 1992; Zheng, 2010). Based on knowledge of the expectations of Chinese students, school districts focus their educational results on university entrance. “Excellence in academic success – our students are accepted at the best universities in North America and the United Kingdom” (School district C). “Many international students intend to obtain the British Columbia Graduation Diploma, which allows them the opportunity to enter colleges and universities in North America and many countries abroad” (School district C). “International students who have been registered in our program for at least four years will not have to write the TOEFL (The Test of English as a
RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Foreign Language) examination to be considered for entrance into a B.C. college or university” (School district A). Similarly, school district B indicates that college and university admission are important by stating that, “students who successfully complete the requirements for Grade 12 graduation have the necessary qualifications to apply to post-secondary institutions” (School district B).

These finding that suggest university entrance can be viewed as an effective promotion activity confirmed the opinion from West (1992) who advocated that university entrance statistics is an influencing factor when parents choose secondary schools for their children. A similar conclusion was obtained from data collecting in interviews, and both respondents expressed that they used university entrance as a kind of marketing strategy in recruiting Chinese students.

Use of websites is regarded as a kind of marketing strategy because it provides information about the program and acts as an advertisement. Support from schools and university entrance qualify as marketing strategies, in that they are used as attractions in recruiting international students. Also, data obtained from interviews indicates that use of websites, support from schools and university entrance are marketing strategies used by school districts, which corroborates what has been found when analyzing the websites.

Justification of marketing strategies in attracting international students used by school districts. Characteristics of Canadian society and the quality of Canadian education were both identified when exploring online documents of three school districts. These two items are seen as pull factors for international students to choose Canada as a destination.
Based on knowledge of these pull factors, school districts formulate their marketing strategies in recruiting Chinese students.

**Inclusive characteristic of Canada environment.** In this paper, an inclusive characteristic of Canada’s environment means that Canada is friendly to international students and is considered as a safe place to study and live. Many students are attracted by the positive Canadian environment: safe, diverse, and multicultural. Some students like beautiful and natural views and the environment in Canada. An inclusive characteristic of the Canadian environment is indicated by school districts on their websites, and this sub-section is developed with relation to pull factors in choosing Canada as a destination.

School district C indicates, “Canada is well known for its high standard of living, quality healthcare, clean and safe environment, and peaceful communities” (School district C). Similarly, school district A provides information online that “[Canada] enjoy[s] a mild climate with a safe environment and an affluent lifestyle” (School district A). All of the websites use the inclusive characteristic of the Canadian environment as an attraction to potential international students. Natural environment and social environment are categorized under this sub-section. Natural environment, such as location, climate, and beauty, is mentioned and used as a promotional tool to attract prospective international students by three websites; some school districts view resorts as attractions. “Canada has been named by the United Nations as the best place in the world to live more times than any other country” (School district C). School district B indicates online that “Vancouver is located in British Columbia province, on Canada's Pacific Ocean coast. Vancouver is among the top ten
international cities to visit. Our city is situated between the mountains and the ocean, and has warm summers and mild winters. Students have the chance to live in one of the most progressive, safe and beautiful cities in the world” (School district B). In enrolling international students, inclusive social environment is regarded as a positive factor by the websites, which echoed the findings of Chen (2006; 2007), Popaduik (2010) and Zheng (2010). Three websites of the selected school districts put an emphasis on the multicultural, safe, and diverse characteristics of Canada. “Because Canada is a country of immigrants, over 6,000,000 people in Canada list a non-official language as their mother tongue. Some of the most common non-official languages include Chinese, Italian, German, Punjabi and Spanish.” (School district C). As seen in this statement, a multi-cultural characteristic is suggested and as a country of immigrants, Canada represents a welcoming host for international students. “Canada is well known for its high standard of living, quality health care, clean and safe environment, and peaceful communities” (School district C).

The quality of Canadian education system. Among the three websites, school district C indicates the quality of the Canadian education system: “Canada's education system ranks amongst the best in the world and, above all, in native English speaking countries” (School district C). Based on information collected online, academic results and educational quality of institutions are presented with the purpose of attracting prospective international students. Similarly, data from interviews corroborate what has been found from the websites. C1 expressed her opinion by saying that “[we have] good public education system in [B.C. and B.C.] has a reputation for excellent quality of education (interview C1, May 9 2013)”.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES
Likewise, A1 hold the idea that “we have the best reliable public education system in the world. The quality of our education system [attracts international students come to B.C] (interview A1, April 18’ 2013)”

**Value factors influencing international student choice of a Canadian high school.**

Under this theme, academic factors, administrator factors, and schools’ location/environment were identified from online documents as value factors influencing international student choice of a Canadian high school.

**Academic pulling factors.** The selected school districts put emphasis on an academic pull factor\(^1\) and regard it as one of the most attractive in recruiting international students. On this point, school district C states that “[School district C] is a leading public school district, and is certified by the Provincial Ministry of Education. Today, [School district C] is recognized as a leader in education in Canada. Burnaby’s standing was recently reflected in a review by the Ministry of Education”. School district A declares on its website that it is “consistently rated by British Columbia Ministry of Education as one of the best districts in the province” and that it has the tradition and history of academic excellence. (School district A). School district B states that, “credentials earned in [our] school district are recognized worldwide”.

**Administrative pulling factors.** On the websites of selected school districts, courses and programs are introduced with the purpose of introducing “products” and attracting students. They provide course information from different perspectives. School district C indicates that

---

\(^1\) academic pull factor: the schools’ reputation/quality/ranking and atmosphere/ethos/philosophy are ranked highly by students in choosing institutions.
they provide “unique courses, school clubs and extracurricular activities” (School district C). School district A provides information on different kinds of programs including long-term programs, short term programs, and summer intensive English and culture programs. School district B believes that their schools offer high quality programs and dedicated teachers.

**School’s environment/location.** All the selected school districts describe their environment and locations to prospective students. “Located in the center of Greater Vancouver, [school district C] offers the exciting opportunity for students from overseas to study in one of its 8 secondary or 41 elementary schools while experiencing a beautiful part of the world” (School district C). “[School district C] offers the best in urban and residential living” (School district C). On the website of school district A, I found the following discourse: “[s]ituated between the Pacific Ocean and the Fraser River in scenic natural surroundings – close to Vancouver and Whistler. We are only 30 minutes from downtown Vancouver by car or Sky Train. Two major universities, Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia, are both a short commute from [school district A]”. “Nestled in the mountains and edged by the Pacific Ocean and Fraser River, [our school district] truly is an ideal setting for international students with excellent year-round recreation, shopping and ethnic dining” (School district A).

In their own context, all three school districts acknowledged student programs, location, and support to meet the different needs of international students. Data gathered from websites of selected school districts provide implications for marketing information, though specific information of promotional activities were not accessed by the researcher during the
document review process. Key information has been obtained with the purpose of confirming data collected from digital documents of the B.C. government and face-to-face interviews.

**Key Findings from Interviews**

A total of two participants took part in the interviews and each interviewee spent over half an hour sharing their ideas with me. Although they have different personalities and business backgrounds, both participates have been in the field of international education for over ten years and have gained valuable knowledge from their everyday work. Important information was obtained from these in-depth interviews. Transcripts were coded using the coding scheme and altogether four themes developed through examining the interviews, which attempted to answer the main research question regarding recruitment strategies used by Vancouver-based school districts in attracting Chinese students in their international secondary school programs. Research questions about marketing strategies, rationale of recruitment strategies, what kind of factors Chinese students value in choosing a Canadian high school and the impacts of these strategies from the perspective of administrators were addressed and answered by data collected through the interviews.

**Description of marketing strategies used by selected school districts.** This theme highlighted strategies used by school districts to recruit students, especially the Chinese market. Key words “market”, “marketing”, “strategy”, “promotion”, and “advertisement” were identified and the code word “marketing strategy” was used in developing this theme.

**Word of mouth.** In response to my question regarding the most effective strategies in
recruiting Chinese students, C1 said: “Word of mouth! Word of mouth is the most effective strategy” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). Similarly, A1 regarded word of mouth as the best advertising they can have as well. A1 expressed this by stating that,“[w]e talk to our students, they say that they just love it, and it met all their expectations, and they talk to their friends, and more and more students keep coming because they've heard from their friends. We have students transfer from other school districts because [they heard of our school district from other students]. They are like: ‘oh, this is really the best for study, the best place to be’” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). If students have loyalty and feel that they are able to reach their educational expectations in a specific school, they will recommend their school as a good destination to prospective students. Their comments on programs and schools will be references to Chinese students who plan to study in Canada. During the literature review and online document review process, similar information about word of mouth as a kind of marketing strategy was not accessed and would need further study to confirm.

**Use of website.** Both participates use websites to provide program information and made them multi-lingual to ease understanding of target students and parents. To facilitate the enrollment of Chinese students, they translate their website into Chinese, which is welcoming to Chinese students and parents, and can ease information access in the Chinese market. “The website is one of the most effective [ways of advertisement]. I just kind of combined what we are using, what goes effectively. Websites are very effective because we do have our website in Mandarin, so the parents and students say that's very helpful. We
have very good feedback from our website. People say that they like our district because they like our website in Chinese. We keep, you know, trying to list it better on search engines, and search engines in China, get new, you know, get new video and put it on there and we try to do some We-chat (an application, a kind of social media). Different things to make it more interactive, and it has been one of our greatest tools, you know, for, once maybe somebody gains interest in [our school district], that probably makes the difference and then they make the decision they actually come. It tells all the basic information about our program and our school district, and it links to each of the school's websites, so people can also look at that particular school” (interview A1, April 18, 2013).

Likewise, C1 expressed that, “[w]e have a website that is translated into Chinese, lots of commercial materials that are translated into Chinese. We want to make it multilingual, so the students could click on their language, the parents particularly click on their language, and all the information is in your language. We want to make sure [that] there was extensive information on the website about Canada, about B.C., about [school district C], about our schools, our programs, how to apply, with forms, anything that somebody going to website should be up to answer 99.9% questions that they would have from that website. You also want to make sure we have a strong [Search Engine Optimization] as well” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). When I examined the websites of selected school districts, it is evident that they provide detailed program information to audiences and many languages are used with the purpose of providing target audiences with a better understanding of this information.

This finding confirms an opinion from Philip (1979) who indicated that implementing
marketing for a college included distributing programs by announcing time/place and price them by using tuition/fees. Also, these findings echoed what has been found during the online document review process that, using the website, is an effective kind of marketing strategy used by selected school districts.

**Agent, education fairs and seminars.** School districts build good agent networks when promoting their programs in China, and some school districts send staff to work in China. “Education fairs, you know, trade tours, are a great way to get into the market, meet agents, and meet parents and students” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). “Agent, agent seminars. So once we get to know agents doing seminar and training sessions with their staff as well as sometimes they will host, they will bring in students and parents at the agency and we will meet with them. That is effective too” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). A2 indicated “we do educational fairs, [and] we do seminars” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). “We have a strong recruitment team, and we have somebody who is based in China who goes to visit, we have a large network of agents in China” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). Further, C1 stated that they do seminars in conjunction with the agent and they have a lot of agent support in China.²

Both respondents recommended agent/education fairs/seminars as a kind of promotional method to enroll prospective students. However, this finding is not currently

---

² In China, there are many agents that can help students apply to schools outside of China and assist students in obtaining study permits. These agents have lots of student resources and consultants explain program information and school information to prospective students. Also, agents usually conduct marketing activities with the purpose of introducing school information to potential students.
supported by literature and document review, which calls for future study to investigate the effectiveness of this method.

**Support from institutions.** This sub-section dealt with challenges in which the student was either directly involved or observed by administrators and explores supports provided by institutes to relieve students’ stresses.

Given that many Chinese students have greater language barriers than peers from other countries (interview C1, May 9, 2013), A2 highlighted the importance of the students themselves making an effort and how they can best use support provided by schools. Similarly, A1 pointed out that “speaking English is always the biggest challenge. I mean speaking versus reading and writing. And, so again that is the participatory part – speaking English” (interview A1, April 18, 2013).

C1 perceived English to be the biggest challenge for Chinese students, and she also provided suggestions for students to improve their English. “The first challenge, the biggest challenge is English. It is not the academics that holds [Chinese students] back. It is the lack of English that holds them back. To overcome those challenges, they have to be proactive themselves. They have to make friends with non-Chinese speaking students. They have to get involved in school activities and community activities where they are not speaking Chinese. We give support through offering a strong ESL program for those students” (interview C1, May 9, 2013).

Additionally, C1 stated that “The other challenge is that a lot of Chinese students come from one child policy families, right? So they are not used to being independent --- So, that
is the challenge for them” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). This response is insightful and it points out the root of many existing problems, including learning problems faced by Chinese adolescents. By saying the root of many existing problems, I refer to their lack of independence, which has close a relationship with their low proficiency in English. In a new environment, many Chinese students have difficulties in overcoming their languages barriers by themselves.

In response to my general question “What supports does your school district provide to Chinese students?”, two participants mentioned such items as home stay, ESL support and International Students Support Workers. Firstly, in both school districts, home stay services are provided to assist international students’ adaptation to a new environment. During the interview, C1 said: “We have home stay programs here. So we find home stay for those students who want us to find home stay, and some students find home stay on their own or through an outside agency” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). A1 had the same response as C1: “We can [help them] find the home stay if they want that” (interview A1, April 18, 2013).

Secondly, in both school districts, workers who can speak Mandarin can ease Chinese students’ transition and help them adjust to a foreign environment, which might be helpful with academic achievements. A1 detailed their staff support: “We have two teacher coordinators, a vice principal, and two youth workers whose job is to support the students in all the schools. So we have, you know, a Chinese speaking youth worker and Korean speaking youth worker. We have the two teacher coordinators who are constantly in touch with, contact with the schools, the councilors---” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). C1
introduced ISW (International Students Support Workers) support in [our] School District:

“We have got ISWs. ISL. International Students Liaison to the school. I have mentioned that we have the ISWs who speak Mandarin” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). Thirdly, ESL programs are offered by school districts. As discussed before, language is one of the biggest barriers faced by Chinese students. To solve this problem, school districts are dedicated to supporting international students with ESL programs. A2 recognized the importance of language support when she stated that “I mentioned earlier on that we have a support system for ESL, so they do ESL parallel to academics. So they have their ESL program, but they need more than the ESL program” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). Instead, the participant then goes on to call for initiative by the Chinese students by stating that: “It is not enough to have 2 hours of English in school and speak Chinese for the other 22 hours. This is not enough, right? You cannot do that, right? ESL should be the basis during the day of school, but you have to go out and practice, that between classes you have to speak English. After school, you have to speak English. On weekends, you have to speak English. And they do not, right? They do not. They belong together, and they speak Chinese all the time” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). A1 indicated that they have the ESL teachers and they are ESL specialist themselves. (Interview A1, April 18, 2013). This finding confirms findings from Popaduik (2009; 2010), Short (2002), Wang (2007), and West (1992), which regard availability of language support and home stay support from institutions as attractions in enticing international students. Also, this result was confirmed by data obtained from online document review from selected school districts.
University entrance. C1 told me that Chinese students who study in B.C. and graduate with a local diploma will enter university in North America. “[Chinese students] graduate from a B.C public high school with the Dogwood Diploma, then that is their ticket to applying to universities right across North America” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). I observed from my experience that if a student obtains a Canadian high school Diploma, he or she would be more likely to be accepted by a university in North America than their peers in China with a Chinese high school Diploma.

A1 not only mentioned university entrance, but she pointed out the readiness of Chinese students from high school in B.C. “All of these students are aiming for university, and they gain by graduating from our high schools. They gain better access to universities in Canada, in the United States, and all over the world. They also are more successful once they are accepted in university, and are enrolled in university because they are used to our school system, our expectations, our standards, and they have more ability to interact with their fellow students” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). Students who graduate from a Canadian high school are more likely to fit in at a post-secondary institution in North America because they understand the educational philosophy, they gain better English proficiency, and they are cultivated and more independent about their learning. This finding confirms findings from the literature review of West (1992) and online document review of selected school districts that support the opinion that university entrance statistics is an influencing factor in choosing a destination institution.

Under this theme, five sub-sections were identified and some of them are closely related
RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

to findings from the document review. Use of websites, support from school districts, and
university entrance as types of marketing strategies were supported by both document
review and interviews, which provide implications for school districts in choosing effective
promotion activities. With regards to marketing strategies, findings from interviews offered
more information such as word of mouth and agent/seminar as kinds of enrollment methods.

In terms of marketing strategies used by school districts, the commonalities between the
findings made from the analysis of the websites compared to what have been found in
interviews are use of website, support from schools, and university entrance. Websites can
deliver program information, educational philosophy of schools, and contact information for
registration. School districts regard websites as a kind of advertisement and they translate
core information into different languages to attract potential students in different target
markets. Both participants mentioned support from schools, which includes language
support and home stay support, which confirms findings from the document review and
literature review. Based on data collected from online document and interviews, university
entrance is a key criterion for international students’ decision, which echoes with findings
from West (1992).

The potential difference between findings from interviews and document review is that
interviewees regarded word of mouth, agents, and education fairs/seminars as good
strategies in recruiting international students. Online document review and literature review
did not provide similar information about these two kinds of marketing strategies, which
deserves future study in order to clarify these findings.
Choice and justification of recruitment strategies. This theme dealt with under-driven factors influencing Chinese students’ choice of Canada as an educational destination. Given these factors, school districts determine their recruitment strategies in promoting their programs. Two sub-sections including pulling factors and push factors influencing choice of B.C. were identified under this theme.

Pull factors influencing choice of Canada. In developing this sub-section, key words “attraction”, “pull”, “encourage”, “excellent”, “quality”, “gain”, and “benefit” were identified and a code word “pull factors” was used in analysing data collected from interviews. Respondents provided valued information ranging from Canadian government policy to language concerns in attracting Chinese students to Canada. Most of the points indicated by interviewees can be supported by reviewed literature and documents. The interviewees mentioned the quality of Canadian education, the inclusive characteristic of the Canadian environment and visa factors as pull factors, which echo the findings of Chen (2006), Chen (2007), Plant (2004), Popaduik (2010), West (1992), Zheng (2010) and Liu (2005). Similarly, the websites of school district A, school district B and school district C reflect this information as well.

The quality of education. Both respondents identified the difference in educational philosophy and the aim of education between the Chinese and Canadian educational systems; they regard it as a pulling factor from the perspective of the quality of education in recruiting Chinese students to B.C. Al reflected on the differences in education between Canada and China. As she compared, “[t]hese educational systems allow students to
participate and really want them to be responsible for their own learning and express themselves. So they really learn to be more confident about themselves, more clearly and focused about their goals, and plans, and life. Moreover, they gain a better understanding of their skills, their own skills of aptitude and interests, and how to best utilize those in the world” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). From this point of view, A1 believed that students in Canada are nurtured to be more responsible for themselves and confident with long-term goals. In the interview, A2 shared her own observation about this difference, from which some problems in China’s education system are found. It is these deficiencies that result in the Chinese students’ decision to look for a standard education opportunity abroad. “There is also the educational system in China that is very different from educational system [in Canada]. Again, [Chinese students] are used to being spoon-fed. ‘Here is the information, ok? Remember it, and repeat it back’. That is not how we do it here in Canada. It is more of critical thinking and opinions. It is not just reputation, right? So it is very different type of, type of educational philosophy. More participatory [in Canada] while in China it is basically learn and repeat, and that is not, does not happen here. So that is the challenge for [Chinese students]. Thinking for themselves, showing initiatives that is not developed in China. The other things developed very well in China, but those skills are not developed in Chinese education system and they are valued here. So Chinese fall behind because they are not used to that” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). By the word “spoon feed”, C1 expressed the idea that Chinese students were used to being provided with ready-made opinions, and were deprived of the opportunity for original thoughts and judgments. These reflections are insightful, as
they point to the deficiencies in China’s education, and is also constructive as they identify barriers to be overcome by Chinese high school students.

From the institutions' perspective, by knowing these differences they can improve their enrollment strategies and put emphasis on the strength of the Canadian educational system in attracting Chinese students. Institutions might include the knowledge of these differences in their brochures or websites, and indicate various impacts of these differences on the students' personal development. Also, consultants of institutions could explain to parents why they should choose Canada as a destination for their children.

Additionally, A1 and C1 talked of a high standard of education in B.C. Both of them believed that one attraction for Chinese students is the quality of education in B.C. It was identified by A1 that, “[Chinese students] need high academic standards. They are very serious students. They want to be successful in their study. So they want to go toward a very high standard of education, which is what they find in Canada and in B.C. I think it is again the higher standards of the education system, the quality of our education system, our results of the OECDP international test. We have the best reliable public education system in the world” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). Further, A1 was proud of B.C’ educational system and qualified teachers, indicated by stating that “[w]e have very well supported government public education system. Highly qualified teachers, you know, government certified, and many of them with Master's degrees from top universities.” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). Similarly, C1 said: “It's good education, excellent education. Good public education system in British Columbia. [One of the reasons that Chinese students choose B.C as a destination]
is that British Columbia has a reputation for excellent quality of education” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). Because of deficiencies of the Chinese education systems perceived by many scholars, such as Liu (2005) and Wang (2007), Chinese students are eager to pursue their further education in a more qualified education system which B.C. can provide. The image and reputation of Canada’s education system are regarded as superior to that of most other English speaking countries, which influences Chinese students’ choice when choosing a destination for study.

The quality of education as a pull factor in attracting international students to Canada was also explored by Chen (2006), Plant (2004), Wang (2007), West (1992) and Zheng (2010) who indicated that the quality of Canadian education enjoyed a good reputation and students were attracted by Canada’s leading position in certain research areas. This finding was also confirmed by results from online document review.

The quality of education acts as a pulling factor influenced the way that research participants have integrated this key feature in the formulation of their marketing strategies in attracting international students. Based on the acknowledgement of the quality of Canadian education, interviewees believed that students will recommend their programs to other potential students, which help them formulate “word of mouth” as a useful marketing strategy. Additionally, due to the confidence of their educational results, participants use “university entrance” as an effective promotion activity in recruiting international students. When they utilize websites as a kind of promotional method, participants integrated information about the quality of education into their program information, which is an
attraction to Chinese students.

_Inclusive characteristic of Canadian environment._ As analyzed during the document review, the Canadian environment can be classified into two categories: natural environment and social environment. In terms of first category natural environment, both participants in this study spoke of environment and how it impacted students’ choice of B.C. as a destination: the beauty and cleanliness of the city and the warm climate. _A1_ indicated “[Chinese students] want to be in the beautiful environment, with fresh air---. We live in the most beautiful part of Canada; we have a very scenic area---” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). Further, _A1_ expressed that “I think it is well known to be the warmest climate in Canada. It is very scenic and beautiful. It really is one of the top world cities, one of the best places to live in the world” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). Chinese students prefer to live and study in a place which has less pollution because most cities in China are polluted. When they decided to study abroad, climate and pollution are criteria considered by students and their parents.

With regard to the second category, social environment, _A1_ also suggested the importance of a welcoming environment in influencing Chinese students’ choice of destination. “It is welcoming environment and it is easy to make friends. Do they feel comfortable? Do they feel happy? Do they feel that they can prosper in that environment? It is safety. And Canada does have the reputation for safety which is well earned and well deserved, and in comparison to most the rest of the world” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). The welcoming community, the multiculturalism, and the beauty were mentioned by _A1_ several times during the interview. _C1_ also detailed her observation as following, “[w]e are
very welcoming. We offer a lot of support for Chinese students. And then in Great Vancouver area there is, you know, a lot of Chinese support systems in the community as well. We are welcoming and there is a lot of Chinese support within the community. [There] is the welcoming quality of Canada versus perhaps some other countries. They are not quite so welcoming to international or Chinese students” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). A welcoming community will encourage international students’ choice of host country and even foster their future decision of immigration. If there are anti-Chinese, Chinese Exclusion, anti-China, or Sinophobia trends as in some countries, Chinese students and their parents will change to another country as a host country instead. A welcoming community will provide opportunities for Chinese students to fully engage and immerse in the host culture, which can enhance their understanding of language and culture.

This pulling factor was also investigated by Chen (2006, 2007), Popaduik (2010) and Zheng (2010), who proposed that international students were attracted by the positive environment of Canada. Results from reviewed documents also confirmed that the inclusive characteristic of the Canadian environment performed as a pull factor in attracting Chinese students to Canada.

This key feature was integrated by selected schools when presenting program information on their websites, which indirectly influence the formulation of “use of website” as a type of marketing strategy.

Visa/Immigration factors. When sharing reasons for choosing Canada as a host country to study from Chinese students’ perspective, A1 perceived Canada’s policy, specifically its
immigration policy toward international students as a pull factor. She stated: “[Chinese students] like the opportunity to, you know, even though the students are supposed to make sure you’re returning to your home country. They really have the opportunity to immigrate to Canada and Canada welcomes young educated immigrants, encourages young educated immigrants. So immigration is a real attraction as well, I believe” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). Additionally, A1 pointed out that the number of international students from China has been increasing steadily and astronomically since 2008. Further, she attributed this phenomenon to the federal government policy in terms of study permit approval. A1 opened up her ideas in detail, “2008 was the year that it became easy for high school students to obtain a study permit to study in Canada. Before that, [there were] many post-secondary students, but that was not easy for high school students at all. So after that opened up, we just sky rocketed. Every year, [we have] more and more and more students from China” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). From my empirical experiences, combined with opinions obtained from my literature review, Canada’s immigration policy plays an important role in attracting international students, especially Chinese students. Also, visa availability is another concern for Chinese students in choosing a host country. Some Chinese students want to study in Canada, but cannot obtain a visa, which pushes them to change their minds and choose other countries as destinations. If the Canadian government opens up immigration and visa policies, Chinese students will be encouraged to consider Canada as a destination for further education.

This finding echoed with what has been found during the literature review process.
Chen (2006, 2007) and Karuppana & Bararib (2011) investigated visa/immigration as an influencing factor in students’ decision-making process. However, this finding cannot be confirmed by reviewed online documents which deserves future study.

Participants considered this as a key feature when formulating their marketing strategy of using agents because the role of agents includes facilitating student recruitment as well as visa application.

**Geographic factor.** Both interviewees provided new information about geographic factors in attracting Chinese students to B.C., which did not emerge in the reviewed literature. A1 pointed out commute time from China to B.C. when she said that “[Chinese students] will also be influenced by proximity to China, so the ease with which they can fly home and the parents can come and visit them. I think again people choose B.C because of proximity to China, to Asia. You know, just a shorter flight” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). Similarly, C1 told me that “[o]ne [factor influencing choice of B.C] is the accessibility. It is very easy for [Chinese students] to come to British Columbia. We are the gateway to the, to Asia. So it is just logistics” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). This finding exceeds my expected results since there is no clue or information in the reviewed literature and therefore further investigation is needed to in order to confirm this finding.

Selected school districts combined this key information when introducing their programs on their websites. Therefore, this feature was integrated into formulating “use of website” as a kind of promotional activity.

**English proficiency.** Both participants identified the English language issue as a pulling
factor in attracting Chinese students to B.C. “Chinese students gain many benefits from coming to B.C. We know that we need our children and our students to be global citizens and really have an intercultural understanding, international perspectives, and the ability of more than one language. So Chinese students gain those skills by coming to B.C and to [our school district]. They acquire language fluency in English, and the target language which is English” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). Further, A1 said that if a student studies in a Western country at younger age, he or she might gain a native speaking accent. C1 had the similar opinion that “[Chinese students] definitely need English in order to succeed and move forward in China as an individual and also as companies and businesses” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). This is an interesting finding as well because though it was identified by both respondents, it was not found in the literature review and therefore deserves further research.

This feature of pulling factor was translated into “support from schools” as an effective marketing strategy in recruiting Chinese students. In choosing to study in Canada, Chinese students aim to increase their English proficiency, which helps schools use language support as an attraction in promoting their programs.

Culture sensitivity. Both participants mentioned culture sensitivity as one of the benefits for Chinese students to learn in Canada. A1 expressed that “[Chinese students] gain an understanding of [Canadian] culture. So they are fluent in Chinese culture, Canadian culture, and maybe more cultures because this is a multicultural society. So they probably gain all kinds of cultural skills.” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). C1 conveyed that “[Chinese
Although both interviewees mentioned cultural sensitivity, similar information cannot be supported in reviewed literature and documents which calls for further investigation. This featured pull factor was integrated into formulation of seminars as a kind of marketing strategy. Schools introduced Canadian cultural characteristics when conducting seminars which can help Chinese students familiarize themselves with different cultures and ease their decision making process.

**Pushing factors from home country and a potential host country.** The content of this part was rarely echoed by reviewed literature and most codes generated from the literature did not arise under this theme. Further research needs to be conducted in order to learn more about how the Chinese policy toward study across boundaries influences students’ choices; failure to apply to the schools in the U.S push Chinese students to Canada; negative factors push international students away from third countries: the U.S, the U.K, or Australian to Canada; Hukou System in China, and the national higher educational entrance examination in China may influence Chinese high school student choose to B.C. as a place to further their education.

Due to different backgrounds and business experiences, participants gave different answers about push factors influencing the choice of B.C. for Chinese students. Under this theme, A1 rejected two push factors obtained from the literature review, which calls for future research. A1 deemed that failure to apply to schools in the US is not a push factor in Chinese students’ choosing process. She depicted that “[d]efinitely, the U.S is the important market,
but it is mainly a post-secondary market. There is no international program in the public schools in the United States. I mean it could be one school somewhere, but there is no program like here in Canada. Their public school system is not the Canadian public school system. It is very fragmented. You know, sometimes it is wonderful in one place. It is not the same thing at all. So they really cannot compete at the high school level” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). During the literature review, failure to apply to the schools in the U.S is regarded as one important factor for Chinese students to choose Canada as a host country (Chen, 2006; Chen, 2007; Zheng, 2010). The reason for this difference is related to the participating subjects. In the current research, I explored marketing strategies with regards to high school students, as opposed to the research conducted by Chen and Zhang, where the subjects were post-secondary students. According to A1, post-secondary education in the U.S. is more competitive than Canada, while high school students prefer Canada to the U.S. because of the great public education system.

To respond to my question about push factors from Chinese policy, A1 straightforwardly expressed, “No, I haven't [realized it]. If they are there, I am not aware of them. It has really been from the Chinese side. It seems that they are happy to have their students studying in Canada, and it was really our federal government that was very cautious about giving study permits to students from China until 2008. That might have been, they might have been talking to China and China might want that. I do not know, right? That could be a two-way decision” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). This observation contradicts with findings of Zheng (2010) who believed that Chinese students are influenced by
Chinese policy toward students’ study across boundaries. However, what I got from my experience as a marketing staff in an educational company and as a staff recruiting Chinese high school students to Canada, conflicts with what A1 observed. During the last decades, there were lots of Chinese students who could not pursue their study abroad because of Chinese policy. After the Chinese government opened up policy to encourage students to study abroad, there has been a flourishing trend in China in that students are eager to pursue further education in other countries.

With regard to push factors from China, C1 emphasized that it was positive attitudes that urged Chinese students to look for a better education abroad. C1 perceived attitude toward studying abroad as a push factor influencing the choice of Canada. “I think Chinese parents and, and students have become aware now that they need to look outward from China, that the ideal of globalized world. They need to get experience of another culture” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). Further, it is interesting to read that both participants held different views on the push factors and therefore it deserves further research from students’ perspective. The finding about push factors from the home country and a potential host country confirmed what has been found during literature review process. Further research might focus on student groups and gathering data from them with the purpose of comparison of push factors.

Due to their lack of knowledge of pushing factors from China aside, participants did not effectively integrate these push factors in the formulation of their marketing strategies to attract Chinese students.

**Chinese students’ value in choosing a Canadian high school.** This theme captures
how the characteristics of institutes, including academic pulling factors, administrative
pulling factors, and school’s environment/location/buildings, impact the international
students’ choice of schools. This theme contained hindering driving factors from the
perspective of administrators, which might be a rationale for Chinese high school students’
choice of B.C as an educational destination.

**Academic and administrative pulling factor.** A1 mentioned programs of the school
district A: “Lots of programs in our schools --- academic program, top academic results in the
province, top graduation rates” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). A2 introduced the fact that
school district C has the largest Advanced Placement (AP) program in Canada. Also, she
pointed out the importance of academic ranking for Chinese students in choosing Canadian
schools. “[Chinese students] also look at academic rankings because for [Chinese] that is very
important. That it is not so important or even significant for Canadian schools. But there is the
Fraser Institute Report, the only organization that ranks schools. Nobody in Canada values
this report. Unfortunately, in China they look at that, so they look at the academic rankings.

So there is another reason for them to choose a school district over another school district
because of the school rankings based on the Fraser’s report solely, right?” (interview C1, May
9, 2013). In Chinese circumstances, Chinese students are subconsciously influenced by
Chinese cultural traditions and parents’ expectations, which value test results and ranking
when they make the decision to choose institutions. When choosing a school as a destination,
Chinese students always put more emphasis on the administrative pulling factor, and regard
it as an important criterion. This result was backed up by findings from Chen (2006, 2007),
Wang (2007), West (1992) and Zheng (2010) who found out that schools’ reputation and programs are ranked highly by students in choosing an institution. Additionally, information obtained from online document review supported this information as well.

_School’s location and facilities._ C1 identified location as a pull factor influencing Chinese students’ choice of institutions. She told me that “one is location being in the centre in the Great Vancouver region. Location. Yeah, Ok? Most Chinese students want a large metropolitan location and that they do not want a small town. They want to be somewhere that is accessible to movies, and shopping, things like that. So location is the number one” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). From this point of view, Chinese students prefer a school that is located in an urban region where it is more convenient to study and live. Apart from that, A1 mentioned the great facilities of schools in attracting Chinese students. “Theatres, beautiful new facilities, you know, we do not have old schools” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). This finding was supported by reviewed literature of Chen (2006, 2007), Popaduik (2010), Wang (2007), and West (1992) who investigated that many students prefer to attend a school located in a metropolitan city found that safety, discrimination, tolerance, diversity, and multiculturalism within a city are factors influencing their choice of institutions.

_Perceived impacts of those recruitment strategies._ Both participants regarded recruitment strategies as an on-going process and they revisit their promotional activities from time to time. A1 articulates that their program started 14 years ago and they have changed it from paper-based to digital. Similarly, C1 regarded it an on-going process and they always reviewed promotional strategies through discussion. She explained that “we
always have plans in advance of the year, but that plan can change because something else might come up, we might decide that, you know, this is not effective anymore—So we are looking at the effectiveness of strategies, and what new is coming up; we try to be proactive” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). She further clarified that “we have to because the world is changing. Social media is changing. The requirement that students and parents are looking for is changing. And you just have to be, you cannot, you have to be very reactive. You have to be very proactive because it is a very competitive field” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). According to my question “are these strategies effective? Why? How do you assess the effectiveness of your marketing strategies?” C1 believed that the marketing strategies they used are “effective because we have one of the largest populations of the Chinese international students in British Columbia” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). Additionally, “probably in our international students program that 40% would be Chinese” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). When I asked “how do you assess the effectiveness of your marketing strategy?” C1 answered they assess it by applications. She explained in detail, “Not by the number of that application that come. So, and after that would be the number of applications that actually translate into, into revenue because not all the applications are accepted, and poor applications will fall through. But we need to see the number of the applications because that tell us x numbers of students and parents have visited our website, or they talk about [our school district], they are considering [our school district]”. As well, A1 said that “the assessment of effectiveness of everything we do is how many students we get.” “And our numbers from China have been increased astronomically, steadily and
RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

astronomically since 2008” (interview A1, April 18, 2013)

Conclusion

By using document review and in-depth interviews, the current study explored the marketing strategies used in recruiting Chinese students from the perspective of administrators in charge of international departments. One of the main purposes of this study is to provide school administrators with empirical data about the effectiveness of their promotion strategies, so that they might be better prepared to attract and support Chinese high school students. According to the research questions and interview questions, I highlighted common themes extracted from data collected from document review and interviews and then compared this data with the literature review.

When asked what constitutes the most effective strategies, both interviewees expressed the same opinion: word of mouth. Also, A1 and C1 centered their promotional activities on websites and agent network building. Use of websites was also identified as a kind of marketing strategy in the reviewed online documents. Additionally, support from institutions and chances for university entrance were regarded as effective recruitment strategies, which were suggested by both reviewed documents and interviews. Both participants admitted that they reviewed their promotional strategies from time to time because the world is changing and it is a highly competitive field. They have changed their marketing strategies according to the expectations of potential students and parents. Also, they both sought feedback from parents and students. A1 stated that they got feedback from a survey and some from face-to-face conversations. While A1 said they did not do anything like a survey, they will
ask focus groups for their opinions. Themes that emerged from collected data showed that administrators follow similar marketing strategies in promoting programs and they are eager to keep themselves more professional by reviewing promotional activity from time to time.

Based on information about pulling factors and push factors influencing Chinese students’ choice of B.C. as an educational destination, school districts formulated their effective enrollment strategies. The quality of Canadian education and a welcoming environment were identified as major attractions to Chinese students when conducting document reviews and interviews, which echoed with findings of Chen (2006), Chen (2007), Plant (2004), Popaduik (2010), West (1992) and Zheng (2010). Some other factors, such as learning English and geographical factors influencing Chinese students’ eager to go abroad, were indicated by interviewees, but did not appear in documents from school districts and reviewed literature. This calls for further research. Participants held different views on price as a pull factor: A1 rejected price in influencing Chinese students’ choice of Canada as a destination, while C1 believed that students’ choices are influenced by the Canadian dollar and she took Australia as an example of a country that was too expensive for Chinese students to currently study because of the exchange rate. Observations from C1 coincide with the findings of Chen (2006) (2007) that the cost of education and living expenses in Canada compared with that of the U.S or the U.K is relatively lower and affordable. The difference of views of A1 and C1 stems from various personal observations, background, and the social economic situation of targeting markets in China. Further research studies might conduct interviews or questionnaires with students and their parents to find out their
When conducting the document review, push factors that emerged from the literature review were not seen in any excerpts from websites of selected school districts. Although respondents mentioned some of the push factors in choosing Canada as a host country that can be identified in literature review, they expressed different views as well. CI identified positive attitude toward study abroad and she believed that Chinese parents and students have become aware now that they need to look outwards from China and get experience of another culture. Her opinion echoed that of Chen (2006), Chen (2007) and Zheng (2010). AI rejected policy factors from the Chinese government and negative factors from third party countries. Her observation differed from findings of Chen (2006), Chen (2007) and Zheng (2010). From my experience, I would speculate that the discrepancy derives from differences in nationality, and thus is due to different cultural and social backgrounds. Chen and Zheng are both Chinese, which makes them more aware of push factors and more sensitive to Chinese policy; while, participants in the current study are Western people and so are hypothesized to have more attention focused on pull factors from Canada.

In choosing a Canadian high school, Chinese students valued administrative factors and the school’s location, which were suggested by both reviewed documents and interviews. Academic pulling factors, including school’s reputation and ranking, were indicated by online documents and interviews, which echoed with opinions from reviewed literatures such as Chen (2006), Chen (2007), West (1992), and Zheng (2010). As well, administrative pulling factors, like programs and courses offered by institutions, are ranked highly by
students in choosing institutions, which was indicated by both reviewed documents and interviews. Similar opinions were found from research conducted by Chen (2006), Chen (2007), Wang (2007) and West (1992). Findings from document reviews and interviews also suggest that many Chinese students prefer to attend a school located in a metropolitan city, which was consistent with findings from Chen (2006), Chen (2007), Popaduik (2010), Wang (2007), and West (1992).

With regard to my question of the degree of satisfaction of Chinese students in relation to their educational experience in various school districts, two respondents gave different answers. A1 believed that the feedback they got is incredibly positive. A1 told me: “We talk to our students [and] they say that they just love it, meet all their expectations---” (interview A1, April 18, 2013). C1 said that “[the feedback we received] generally is good. But the complaint is usually that [Chinese students] are not moving as fast as they thought they would, and the reason for that is their English. But again we provide all the tools for them, but they have to use them themselves. So that is the issue” (interview C1, May 9, 2013). When I conducted a document review of websites of school districts, I observed that all of the websites provide language, staff and home stay support to international students with the purpose of fostering academic success in students. The key problem for Chinese students to consider is how to make the best use of these available supports in order to meet their own expectations.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Future Study

This research examined the nature and effectiveness of marketing strategies used by participating school districts in influencing and attracting Chinese students’ choice of high
RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

schools in B.C. This issue deserves attention for the reason that a better understanding of the effectiveness of marketing strategies can contribute to school districts in terms of increasing the future enrollment of Chinese students in their districts. Additionally, West (1992) found that existing research on recruitment strategies used by school districts to enroll international high school students from a marketing perspective is minimal. This current research project was designed to fill this gap by investigating the marketing strategies used by school districts in Metro Vancouver in the province of British Columbia.

In recruiting Chinese students, the findings of this research identified the use of websites, support from institutions, and university entrance as the major types of marketing strategies used by school districts. The key features of these strategies are that they are not aggressive when promoting programs. They are regarded as services for international students, instead of a direct type of advertisement. However, they are qualified as effective because they deliver the necessary information to potential students in the target market. Additionally, they play a vital role in transitioning potential students into registered students. The use of websites provides channels that help Chinese students familiarize themselves with programs of interest. Support from schools offer what Chinese students can get when they need to overcome barriers, which can facilitate their transition process. University entrance acts as a learning result, which attracts international students, especially Chinese high school students. This research confirms the importance to Chinese adolescent students of the quality of Canadian education, an inclusive environment, and immigration plans, which is consistent with the findings of former research. Educational philosophy and educational results of the
Canadian public education system attracts Chinese students when they choose the
destination. Positive environments, natural and social, play an important role in students’
decision-making process. Compared to students who choose other English-speaking
countries to pursue their further education, those who choose Canada as a host country are
inclined to immigrate to Canada after their studies. Therefore, these three factors influence
Chinese students most when they choose Canada as a destination.

Acknowledgement of push factors from the home country should be changed because
marketing strategies of educational programs should be formulated based on knowledge of
target clients and be implemented according to the needs of potential students and parents.
During this process, the needs of students and parents are influenced, directly or invisibly,
by educational policy or events in their home country. Therefore, lack of knowledge of push
factors from the original country might weaken the effectiveness of marketing strategies
used by school districts. Also, findings about push factors from the home country would set
the stage to make credible recommendations about future research and improve current
promotional activities.

The methodology conducted in this research was primarily a case study strategy, with
the use of a combination of document analysis method and semi-structured interviews. Case
studies of selected school districts and participants provided the current study with
comprehensive information about marketing strategies they utilized and justification of their
effective promotional activities. Triangulation was adopted among data resources of the
literature review, document review and interviews to determine the consistency of data
RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

collected from these methods.

This research gathered informative data from interviews and documents, showing how push-pull factors impact Chinese students’ choice of B.C and specific institutes. This study also offered administrators in charge of international students with data on students’ expectations and marketing strategies, as conducted by their peers. Based on findings of pull factors, Canadian schools can revisit their recruitment strategies and utilize effective promotional activities by emphasizing pull factors when conducting seminars or designing brochures and websites in attracting international students from China. Based on this knowledge of push factors, the administrators in charge of the international department can revisit their timing and locations of promotional activities with the purpose of marketing their programs in China.

These findings have implications for the future outlook of Canadian secondary education, with respect to recruiting Chinese students as it provides concrete examples about how participating school districts can revisit and change their marketing strategies. Firstly, students who apply to study in Canada may also have a positive attitude towards immigrating as some students come to Canada with the possibility of future immigration. School districts may include immigration information on their websites and brochures as attractions to potential international students. Secondly, when promoting their programs, school districts may use achievements of former and current students as testimonials in attracting future students. Thirdly, in conducting marketing strategies in China, school districts may hire staff members who are culturally responsive practitioners and
RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

acknowledge the needs, barriers, values, background beliefs, traditions, and cultures of Chinese students with the purpose of promoting programs. Additionally, they could carry out active communication with potential students, and parents from different backgrounds to obtain first-hand information about students’ preference. The nature of these changes is to place the emphasis on pulling factors in terms of marketing strategies, such as the quality of education which is crucial in students’ decision-making process, the inclusive characteristic of social environment, and support from schools.

This research explored marketing strategies and influencing factors from perspective of administrators, which has several limitations that should be considered. First, participating school districts were selected based on program size and the 2011/2012 amended annual budget of offshore tuition fees. This group did not include school districts that have fewer international students. Future research may include a more specific focus on school districts that have the least number of international students, in order to investigate what has been done and what may be improved to increase enrollment. Second, the participants in this research were self-selected and those who wanted to share their own experiences with others contacted the researcher to participate. This could mean that administrators, who are out-going and find it easy to share opinions with others, dominate the interviewee group. Future research may include administrators who have different personalities. Third, both participants are female administrators who shared their views and experiences with the researcher. This could mean that females dominated the participating group. Future research may include male administrators to dig into effective marketing strategies they used.
More research with respect to impacts of marketing activities on students’ enrolment decision process is needed to understand push factors and factors influencing selection of Canadian high schools by Chinese students from the perspective of students and their parents who are the clients in educational markets. By knowing the incentives that drive the students’ enrolment decision process from the students’ perspectives, researchers can provide concrete suggestions to administrators. Based on further research information, administrations in charge of international departments can justify their promotional activities and improve the effects of their marketing strategies.
References


RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES


Vancouver School Board. Retrieved from: http://intered.vsb.bc.ca/


http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200207/12/eng20020712_99591.shtml


Appendix A
Certificate of Approval from UBC

The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
**Behavioural Research Ethics Board**
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road,
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

---

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:</strong></th>
<th><strong>DEPARTMENT:</strong></th>
<th><strong>UBC BREB NUMBER:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gerald Fallon</td>
<td>UBC/Education/Educational Studies</td>
<td>H12-01702</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other locations where the research will be conducted:
Coquitlam School District (sd43); Vancouver School Board (sd39); and Burnaby School District (sd41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qinghua Zhao</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SPONSORING AGENCIES:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PROJECT TITLE:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Recruitment Strategies Used by Vancouver-based School Districts in Attracting Chinese Students into their International Secondary School Programs?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expiry Date - Approval of an amendment does not change the expiry date on the current UBC BREB approval of this study. An application for renewal is required on or before: March 26, 2014
RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMENDMENT(S):</th>
<th>AMENDMENT APPROVAL DATE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>change in research locations</td>
<td>April 11, 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Name</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The amendment(s) and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

*This study has been approved either by the full Behavioural REB or by an authorized delegated reviewer*
International Department Coordinator

Dear Mr. /Mrs. ********:

The study is entitled: Analysis of Recruitment Strategies Used by Vancouver-based School Districts in Attracting Chinese Students in their International Secondary School Programs.

The main purpose of this research project is to develop a comprehensive understanding of recruitment strategies used by some Vancouver-based school districts and their impacts on Chinese students’ choice of high schools, and enrollment decisions.

We are asking for your help by having you participate in an interview pertaining to your personal experiences and views on enrollment strategies and factors influencing Chinese students who choose Canadian high schools within your school division/district. The interview should take approximately one hour to complete. If you are willing to take part in this interview, please indicate by filling out the attached consent form. Please return the consent form to us using the self-addressed stamped envelope.

Please understand that you may withdraw from this study for any reason, at any time. If you decide to withdraw, all the data collected from you will be destroyed if you choose. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. You are free to answer only those questions with which you are comfortable and you can ask to have the recorder turned off at any time. If you decide to be a participant in this study, together we will set up an appropriate date to have you participate in the interview. You will have an opportunity to
review the transcript of the interview if you desire.

There is minimal risk involved in this study. We will keep all comments confidential. There is no obligation to participate in the study since participation is voluntary. No penalty will accrue as a result of not participating in the study. No information will be used in the study that will identify a particular teacher.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact us at any time. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or toll free 1-877-822-8598. You may request an executive summary of the study’s findings by contacting me by email (Gerald.fallon@ubc.ca or qinghua0916@sina.com) or by phone at 604-822-5374 (work).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

M.Ed. Qinghua Zhao
You are invited to participate in a study entitled: Analysis of Recruitment Strategies Used by Vancouver-based School Districts in Attracting Chinese Students in their International Secondary School Programs. If you decide that you are interested in participating, please sign the bottom of the form to indicate your interest. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask any questions you might have. Please return the signed form to us in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

**Researchers:** Dr. Gerald Fallon at the University of British Columbia / M.Ed. Qinghua Zhao at the University of British Columbia. Contact information: (604) 822-5822 at work, or by email: Gerald.fallon@ubc.ca, or qinghua0916@sina.com.

**Purpose and Procedure:** The main purpose of this research project is to develop a comprehensive understanding of recruitment strategies used by some Vancouver-based school districts and their impacts on Chinese students’ choice of high schools. As an administrator in charge of the International Program in your district, you are invited to share their experiences with marketing strategies and factors that you deemed significant in influencing Chinese students in choosing Canadian schools.

**Potential Risks:** There is minimal anticipated risk associated with participation in this study. Participants have been sampled from a small group and therefore may be identifiable to others on the basis of what the participants have said. Participation in this study is voluntary and the anonymity of those who choose to participate in the study is assured in the presentation of results. Pseudonyms will be used to represent the school
division and participant’s names. Participants may withdraw from the study for any reason and at any point without penalty. There is no deception intended in this study.

There is no obligation to participate in the study since participation is voluntary. No penalty will accrue as the result of not participating in our study. No information will be used in the study that will identify a particular research participant. We will restate this ethical promise at the beginning of the interview.

**Potential Benefits:** It is possible that administrators may benefit from the opportunity to share their experiences for the purpose of reviewing their marketing strategies, but no benefits are guaranteed.

**Storage of Data:** All data will be locked and retained by Dr. Gerald Fallon for a period of five years in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the University of British Columbia. The Board Chair will be given an executive summary of the research results and a copy of the project upon request. In addition, the results may be presented at workshops and prepared for possible publication. There will be public access to the completed project at the Department of Educational Studies of the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia.

**Confidentiality:** The privacy of the participant will be protected in two ways. First, the lead-researchers will have direct contact with the participants who shall remain anonymous in the presentation of the results of the study. Although direct quotations from the interview may be used, participants will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying information will be removed from the report. Secondly, to further provide anonymity of the participants, data
collected will be aggregated prior to reporting results and will be securely stored by the lead-researchers. The content of the interviews will not be shared with anyone.

**Right to Withdraw:** Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study (notification by e-mail, letter or phone) for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort. If you withdraw from the study at any time, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed at your request.

**Questions:** If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask us at any point; you are also free to contact the lead-researchers at the numbers provided above if you have questions at a later time. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or toll free 1-877-822-8598. The Superintendent of Schools will be given by mail an executive summary of the research results and a copy of the project upon request. There will be public access to the completed project in the Department of Educational Studies of the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, if participants wish to view the results of the research.

**Transcript Review:** Participants will be given the opportunity to review the final transcript and add, delete, or alter in any fashion any of the transcript’s information. Once the transcript is written, it will be sent out by mail to the participants. A paid postage envelope will be provided with a return address on the envelope to be returned along with the signed transcript, including any changes that have been made by the participant.
**Consent to Participate:** I have read and understand the description provided above. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent to participate in the study described above, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.

Prior to the interview the consent form will be reread to you to ensure your interest in participating. Your consent form will be stored separately from the interview data.

__________________________________________
(Name of Participant)

__________________________________________ Date: ______
(Signature of Participant)

__________________________________________ Date: ___________________________________
(Signature of Researcher)