

**Lost in Translation: An Intercultural Examination of Canadian Post-Secondary Marketing
Efforts Towards International Students**

By

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Dedication

To my biggest supporters and cheerleaders, Mama and Baba, this is dedicated to you. Thank you for instilling in me the importance of education and always pushing me to be a student of life. To Jana and Shukri, I hope this emboldens you to dream big and pursue the impossible. Thank you for all your love and support over the years.

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Abstract

Purpose: To understand the level of intercultural literacy exhibited by Canadian post-secondary institutions in their efforts to communicate and recruit international students through the use of targeted publications, such as the viewbook. **Design:** This project uses a case study approach that examines nine viewbooks from the top five universities in Canada using a heuristic developed from existing literature surrounding intercultural communication, cultural variations, and Hofstede's cultural dimensions. **Findings:** This study found that most of the institutions examined failed to demonstrate an adequate level of intercultural literacy, as most of their publications favoured Canadian cultural elements rather than adapting to the international audiences they wish to recruit. The findings of the study also highlight that there is often little to no variation between the international and domestic versions of the viewbooks, further illustrating a lack of effort in adaptation. **Originality and Value:** This research provides a tool that can be used by organizations and industries, domestically and globally, when trying to understand how to communicate effectively with individuals from various cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: intercultural communication, international recruitment, Canadian post-secondary institutions, cultural variations, Hofstede's cultural dimensions, international students

Paper Category: Capstone Project/Case study

Chapter 1: Introduction

In an increasingly globalized world, intercultural communication has become paramount to the ways individuals and organizations interact and engage with one another. Given that culture plays a significant role in our communicative behaviours and guides how individuals receive and respond to messages, organizations that wish to communicate with diverse audiences must understand the nuances and sensitivities of intercultural communications to be successful communicators (Leonard et al., 2009). While all organizations can benefit from increased intercultural communication competence, it is a crucial component of the internationalization strategies of Canadian post-secondary institutions. For post-secondary institutions, internationalization is an essential way to enrich campuses, build an understanding of other peoples and cultures, and eventually grow Canadian labour markets (Fomenko et al., 2019). One of the main methods of internationalization is the recruitment of international students. Currently, Canada hosts 530,540 international students and has aggressive targets to increase enrollments despite the fiercely competitive global recruitment market (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2021). International students bring an array of diverse perspectives and ideas, contributing to the innovation and excellence of Canadian campuses. As fundamental actors in the Canadian education field, post-secondary institutions must maintain open communication channels and engage with international students. However, despite the emphasis on internationalization, little research has been done on leveraging intercultural communication to recruit international students. Since international students come from diverse backgrounds, they are informed by pre-existing norms and values, impacting how they receive and interpret messages. Neglecting to understand these cultural variations can undermine communication efforts, leaving a gap between institutions and international students.

Importance of Internationalization for Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions

There is a consensus that international students are becoming increasingly sought after by Canadian post-secondary institutions. Over the past decade, international student enrollment has increased by 135%, and in 2020, Canadian post-secondary institutions welcomed 530,000 international students (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2021). While the rise in enrollment has been steady, Chen (2008) notes that post-secondary institutions have a strong desire to attract more international students to their campuses. Researchers have highlighted several reasons Canadian institutions are aggressively working on internationalization strategies. First, international students play an essential role in Canada's post-secondary landscape, enriching Canadian campuses with diverse perspectives. As Chen (2006) explains, international students provide cultural, economic and academic benefits to Canadian society and act as "ambassadors of Canadian education to the world" (p. 78).

Secondly, international students are viewed as a pathway for post-secondary institutions to develop a global presence and as an essential resource for the Canadian labour market (Davis, 1994; Fomenko et al., 2019). Finally, in addition to strengthening the excellence and innovation of post-secondary institutions, international students contribute significantly to the annual revenue of Canadian universities (Knight, 2000). For example, in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, international student tuition made up roughly 40% of all tuition fees, approximately \$4 billion (Statistics Canada, 2020). Scholars agree that internationalization will continue to be "a major theme for the next decade" (Davies, 1997, p. 83).

While post-secondary institutions push to increase enrollment, there is a struggle to foster engagement and interaction among prospective international students (Senyshyn, 2019). It is also suggested that "higher educational institutions view students as customers or the main

decision-makers as competitiveness increases in the education industry" (James-MacEachern & Yun, 2017, p. 345). As James-MacEachern & Yun (2017) highlight in their work surrounding higher education marketing, institutions must pursue differentiating recruitment and marketing strategies as they face the competitive recruitment landscape.

Therefore, this study seeks to understand how Canadian post-secondary institutions communicate with international students and to what extent they factor cultural variations in their recruitment efforts, particularly viewbook publications. To do so, I developed the following research questions, which will guide this study:

RQ 1: Does the content of internationally-focused promotional materials align with the cultural variations of their intended audience?

RQ 2: To what extent are internationally-focused promotional materials modified from domestic materials to cater to international audiences?

The following sections of this capstone will explore existing literature surrounding intercultural communications and cultural variations. This chapter will be followed by a methodologies section that will explain the case study approach utilized for this research. The findings and discussion chapter will follow with an in-depth analysis of the data and limitations of the study. This study will then conclude with a summary of results, areas of future research, areas of contribution and recommendations moving forward.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to summarize existing literature on the topics of intercultural communication and post-secondary communication. This chapter examines Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions and their impact on the effectiveness of communications. It also examines the recruitment and marketing strategies currently used by post-secondary institutions. The goal of this literature review is to establish the need for further research into the communication efforts of post-secondary institutions with international students.

The following chapter will begin with a methodology section, which will provide an overview of the strategy behind finding and selecting the literature for this topic. The findings of the literature will then be analyzed in the following sections: studies on the communication efforts from post-secondary, studies on the effectiveness of intercultural communication with international audiences, and studies on Hofstede's cultural variations. Finally, the review will conclude with key takeaways and insights from the articles and highlight the existing gaps in the literature, justifying the need for further research in this subject area.

Methodology

My search for literature began with the University of Alberta's library catalogue. Through the advanced search mechanism of the EBSCO site, I was able to access all of the catalogues, articles, and ebooks hosted through the university's library. In addition to the general database, I also utilized the Academic Search Complete Database and Scopus in my search. To narrow my search, I broke my research question into the following terms: 'intercultural communication' and 'cultural variance,' 'intercultural communication' and 'university' or 'college' or 'higher education' or 'post-secondary,' 'intercultural communication' and 'international students,' 'international education' or 'internationalization' and 'marketing' or 'communication' or

‘recruitment,’ and ‘recruit’ or ‘recruiting’ or ‘recruitment’ or ‘enrollment’ and ‘Canadian post-secondary.’ To optimize my results and maximize the relevance of materials, I used the Boolean method to create various combinations with my terms.

Once my initial search was completed, it was clear that limiters and parameters needed to be added to reduce the number of articles to a more manageable amount. Therefore, I used the following parameters to refine my search:

Peer-Reviewed Journals. In order to filter down the articles to the most relevant and impactful sources, I chose to only include peer-reviewed journals. This way, I could ensure that the articles had been reviewed and validated by other academics and therefore met a certain level of standards. Selecting peer-reviewed journals also allowed me to filter out materials such as magazines, newsletters, and trade publications, leaving me with just academic journals and books.

Publication Date. For search strings that focused on recruitment strategies from post-secondary universities, I chose to add a date parameter to narrow down the results. I made this decision because I wanted to focus on how universities have recruited international students in recent years, especially with the changes in the digital space. For these searches, I set the limiter to articles published between 2000 and 2022. For articles that focused on theories, such as intercultural communication competence, I forwent having a date limiter as research in this area stretches as far back as 1970, and I did not want to miss the literature and early building blocks of these theories.

Subject Filter. The final search parameter that I included was the subject filter. Given that intercultural communications can span various subject areas, such as medicine, law, and

education, I needed to make sure the articles were relevant. Therefore, I chose to filter my search results by a subject-specific database, the Communication & Mass Media Complete database.

Grey Literature. While the amount of grey literature included in this review is limited, it is important to highlight that I utilized sites such as the Canadian Bureau for International Education and government websites for continuously changing data and statistics. Additionally, I used Hofstede's Insights, a website that provides further background on Hofstede's dimensions and offers additional data such as country comparisons. Using these sites helped supplement the academic literature.

Organizing Literature. Once all of the literature was collected, I pulled the articles into a spreadsheet, where they were sorted based on relevance and category. The papers were sorted into the following categories: cultural variance, intercultural communication, post-secondary recruitment, and international student experience. From there, I prioritized the literature based on relevance and began analyzing the content.

Literature Review Findings

The following section will discuss the current literature surrounding recruitment efforts in post-secondary institutions, will highlight the importance of culture within communication, and will explore Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

Current Recruitment Efforts at Post-Secondary Institutions

In their research, James-MacEachern & Yun (2017) highlight several marketing methods universities employ to recruit international students. These tactics include utilizing "brochures, websites, social media, prospectus, media relations, [and] alumni networks" (James-MacEachern & Yun, 2017, p. 346). Similar research by Novak (2011) shows that publicity and positive mentions in the media is also an effective strategy to recruit students. Additionally, Rosyidah et

al. (2020) note that social media has become an invaluable channel for universities to connect with prospective students and foster Alumni communities, which are often a source of information and influence. Finally, in another study focused specifically on recruitment within the Asian market, researchers found that students strongly preferred web and print recruitment materials (Gray et al., 2003).

While there is an extensive list of recruitment tactics available to choose from, studies suggest that it is essential to know which tools work best within different markets and segments (James-MacEachern & Yun, 2017). For instance, researchers have found that a "lack of market orientation and customer focus" has led to gaps between the information institutions provide and the information students seek (Mortimer, 1997, p. 225). This sentiment is echoed in the research of Hemsley-Brown (2006), who found that there was a "substantial information gap between choice factors identified by students in surveys and the information that had been provided by universities in their print communications" (p. 325). Given that the characteristics of marketing and information provided by institutions rank second among the factors influencing student choices, institutions must understand how to align their efforts with the needs of their target audiences (Chen, 2008).

As Fomenko et al. (2019) show in their research, academic institutions recruiting international students must be prepared to engage with diverse populations. Research by Xiao (2021) found that language barriers and cultural identities play a significant role in international students' reactions to marketing efforts. Therefore, James-MacEachern & Yun (2017) explain that in order for institutions to successfully recruit international students, they "must be prepared to differentiate their range of recruitment strategies according to potential international students' national and cultural background" (p. 357). Likewise, Gray et al. (2003) found that prospective

students have "different media preferences which might be related to differences in cultural values, levels of Westernisation and communications infrastructure in their home countries" (p. 111). The research highlights the need for institutions to adopt intercultural communication in their recruitment efforts. Fomenko et al. (2019) argue that intercultural communication is the pathway to having meaningful interactions with international students. The following sections further discuss the role of culture within communication and highlight how cultural variants play a role in communication and medium preferences.

Culture and Communications

The role of culture in communications has been a topic of interest for researchers for several years. The literature surrounding this subject area suggests strong ties between culture and communications. As defined by Hofstede (1980), "culture consists of a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour shared by members of a social unit" (p. 3). It informs how we behave and plays a significant role in communication (Gudykunst et al., 1996). According to Leonard et al. (2009), culture impacts how people communicate, what they communicate, and with whom they communicate. Culture determines how individuals encode and find meaning in messages and affects our perceptions at both an individual and societal level (Leonard et al., 2009; Kastanakis & Voyer, 2014). It also impacts how we respond to different modes and styles of communication (Kastanakis & Voyer, 2014). Samovar et al. (1984, as cited in Leonard et al., 2009) suggest that culture is the foundation of our communicative behaviours and that when cultures vary, so do communication practices.

Additionally, culture influences our perceptions of media and its effectiveness (Leonard et al., 2009). Perception influences the "identification, organization, and interpretation of sensory stimuli" and plays a vital role in how individuals see the world around them (Alder et al., 2013;

DeVito, 2015, as cited in Hinner, 2020, p .45). Culture and perceptions are fundamentally interrelated because the cultural context an individual grows up in influences their understanding of specific contexts (Brekhus, 2015; Cole & Scribner, 1974; Fisher, 1997; Nisbett & Maiyamoto, 2005, as cited in Hinner, 2020). Culture also impacts framing, as it teaches us what is relevant or irrelevant (Hinner, 2020). According to Hinner (2020), framing is an essential aspect of perception and communication because people use frames to filter the information they believe is more relevant than others. Hinner (2020) also explains that framing plays a vital role in intercultural communication because it can help individuals understand and respond to specific situations.

Cultural Variations

When it comes to how culture impacts communications, it is important to consider variations of culture. A study conducted by Hofstede (1980) yielded four dimensions of culture that are now widely used as the basis for understanding variability amongst individuals from different countries. Hofstede's (1980) original dimensions of culture included individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity-femininity. In later years, Hofstede (2011) added long-term vs. short-term orientation and indulgence vs. restraint to the dimensions of culture. Hall (1976) contributes to this area of research by examining how individuals from high-context (HC) and low-context (LC) cultures interpret communications differently. There is also a direct correlation between HC-LC cultures, Hofstede's dimensions, and media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984, 1986). For this literature review, I will be focusing on the dimensions of individualism-collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, and long-term vs. short-term orientation. The following section will examine each of these variations in detail.

Individualism-Collectivism Variation. The individualism-collectivism dichotomy offers insight into how individuals from different cultures communicate. According to Gudykunst et al. (1996), the tendencies developed from being socialized within an individualistic or collectivistic culture influence the values of the individual and how they perceive themselves and others around them. Research into this cultural variation suggests that individualism vs. collectivism plays a significant role in individual and group behaviours and accounts for the variance observed across cultures (Leonard et al., 2009). Hofstede (1980) developed an individualism index, ranking countries on an individualism-collectivism spectrum. Countries and regions considered to be individualistic include North America, Northern Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, whereas Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia are considered collectivist (Anderson & Lehman, 2019). Individualists are characterized by preferring to work alone, placing emphasis on personal goals, variety and pleasure, and valuing personal autonomy and self-actualization (Hofstede, 1980; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Anderson & Lehman, 2019). In contrast, collectivists prioritize group goals, prefer to work with others, view themselves as interdependent, and value order and duty (Hofstede, 1980; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988).

As Gudykunst et al. (1996) explain, cultural individualism-collectivism directly impacts communication because it informs the norms and values that guide behaviour. As individuals are socialized within their respective cultures, they adopt patterns of interaction which then form the basis of their communication styles (Gudykunst et al., 1996). This notion is reaffirmed by Anderson & Lehman (2019), who suggest that although communication styles vary widely across cultures, the relationship between communication and individualism-collectivism is apparent. While there are many key differences between individualistic and collectivist cultures,

the following characteristics were emphasized throughout several pieces of literature. The first is that people from individualistic cultures tend to communicate directly with less emphasis on thoughts and feelings (Singelis & Brown, 1995; Yang et al., 2021). Individualistic communication tends to be low in context, codified, and transmitted through formal channels (Triandis, 1990, 1995, 1998 as cited in Leonard et al., 2009). In a study comparing Japan and the United States, Okabe (1983) found that individualistic cultures value the verbal aspect of communications, including directness, more than collectivist cultures (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). Additionally, individualistic cultures emphasize clarity in conversation and view clarity as one of the hallmarks of effective communication (Kim & Wilson, 1994, as cited in Gudykunst et al., 1996). In contrast, members of collectivist cultures perceive directness as the least effective pathway for communication (Kim & Wilson, 1994, as cited in Gudykunst et al., 1996). As explained in Yang et al. (2021), individuals from collectivist cultures value relationships and, therefore, value communication methods that do not harm relationships and lead to direct conflict. Collectivists emphasize context, prefer richer and synchronous media, and value two-way communication (Rice, 1998, as cited in Leonard et al., 2009). Often with collectivistic cultures, the message is embedded within context, meaning that the receiver has to use contextual clues to fully understand the sender's intent (Leonard et al., 2009). According to Kastanakis & Voyer (2014), a key finding in their study is that overall, "interdependent/collectivist people perceive and process more of the world than independent/individualist people" (p. 430). In studies regarding cultural dimensions, individualism and collectivism strongly influence communication effectiveness, with power distance and uncertainty avoidance playing a slightly smaller role.

Power Distance Variation. Power-distance looks at the extent to which unequal distributions of power are accepted (Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 2001 as cited in Leonard et al., 2009). In cultures with high power distance, individuals expect to be told what to do and accept hierarchy as a central principle (Hofstede, 2001 as cited in Leonard et al., 2009). As Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey (1988) highlight, differences in power within high power distance cultures are considered natural. Conversely, cultures with low power distance rely more on interdependence and are more concerned with equality among individuals (Leonard et al., 2009; Hofstede, 1980). Studies show that high power distance variations are prevalent in Asian cultures, whereas North American cultures value low power distance (Leonard et al., 2009).

In the context of communication, Leonard et al. (2009) argue that high power distance cultures are likely to use different mediums to communicate than low power distance cultures. In high power-distance cultures, communication preferences reflect the need for clear distinctions between superiors and subordinates (Leonard et al., 2009). Additionally, these cultures tend to use cues and symbols that maintain the status distance and reaffirm hierarchies in communication (Leonard et al., 2009). In contrast, those in low power distance cultures will use symbols that reduce the power distance (Leonard et al., 2009). Regarding the medium of communication, higher power distance culture has a preference for richer media as it is considered more effective for organizational communication (Leonard et al., 2009). Opposite to that, low power-distance cultures find value in lean communication mediums that present information through words without the additional context and nonverbal cues (Yang et al., 2021).

Uncertainty Avoidance Variation. This dimension of cultural variability looks at the "extent to which people feel threatened by ambiguous situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these" (Hofstede and Bond, 1984 as cited in Gudykunst &

Ting-Toomey, 1988, p. 389). According to Triandis (1989), high uncertainty avoidance cultures avoid deviation from norms and prioritize conformity, whereas low certainty avoidance cultures challenge conformity and thrive from innovation and creativity. In addition, high uncertainty avoidance groups are risk-averse and are unwilling to accept failure or ambiguity (Hofstede, 1980). Similar to collectivist cultures, high uncertainty cultures emphasize the achievement of group goals and do not value individual ambition (Leonard et al., 2009). On the other hand, low uncertainty avoidance cultures encourage risk-taking, competition, and conflict (Mueller & Thomas, 2000, as cited in Leonard et al., 2009). Despite the connection to risk, Hofstede (2011) notes that uncertainty avoidance should not be interchanged with risk avoidance, as they are not the same concept. Low uncertainty cultures typically do not need much structure and find uncertainty motivating (Shuper & Sorrentino, 2004 as cited in Leonard et al., 2009). On the other hand, certainty-oriented individuals cannot reconcile with uncertainty and look to logic devices for sense-making (Leonard et al., 2009).

In communication, low uncertainty avoidance individuals favour lean media, whereas higher uncertainty avoidance individuals prefer rich media (Leonard et al., 2009). If a receiver is from a low uncertainty avoidance culture, they will have a higher tolerance for ambiguous messages, unlike high uncertainty avoidance individuals who find ambiguity and lack of context confusing and undesirable (Yang et al., 2021). Leonard et al. (2009) suggest that there are two ways in which individuals can deal with uncertainty, either by seeking information directly or by turning to others for direction. Additionally, research suggests that technology reduces inherent uncertainty within communication and organizational tasks (Leonard et al., 2009).

Masculinity-Femininity Variation. As defined by Hofstede (1980), masculinity-femininity looks at these two facets as societal concepts rather than individual

characteristics. According to Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey (1988), masculinity and femininity are not opposite ends of a spectrum; cultures can exhibit both to some degree. When it comes to high-masculinity cultures, "men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life" (Hofstede, 2011, p. 120). Within these cultures, work over family is prioritized, and there is admiration for the strong (Hofstede, 2011). On the other hand, cultures with low-masculinity or high-femininity characteristics find a balance between both genders, with both men and women having opportunities to be authoritative or modest and caring (Hofstede, 2011). These cultures balance family and work and show empathy to the weak (Hofstede, 2011). When it comes to communication, masculine cultures prefer direct communication with little regard to feelings (Singelis & Brown, 1995; Yang et al., 2021). Feminine cultures place more value on relationships and thus communicate in a way that will result in less conflict and foster relationships (Yang et al., 2021).

Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation Variation. This dimension focuses on a "culture's orientation toward time, the future, the present or the past" (Hui-Jung Chang, 2011, p. 1108). Long-term cultures value forward-thinking and emphasize the importance of working towards a future reward. This cultural group is characterized by status, perseverance, grit, work ethic, thrift and is motivated by the avoidance of shame (Hui-Jung Chang, 2011). Conversely, short-term cultures believe that most important life events have occurred in the past or are currently taking place (Hofstede, 2011). These cultures are characterized by the need for instant gratification, reciprocation of greetings, favours and gifts. They also value tradition and personal steadiness (Hui-Jung Chang, 2011). Regarding communication, time orientation is important as long-term cultures better resonate with future-oriented communication efforts that may be less

direct. In contrast, short-term cultures prefer direct communication that is reciprocated and immediate (Hui-Jung Chang, 2011).

Hofstede's Dimensions & Semiotics

An important part of this research is the application of semiotics to the images and text of recruitment and marketing materials of post-secondary institutions. Semiotics examines communication through the structure of language, signs, and symbols (Craig & Muller, 2007). Semiotics looks at "meaning-making" by examining the relationships between the signifier and signified and how they convey messages (Craig & Muller, 2007). According to Zahedi & Bansal (2011), in regards to Hofstede's dimensions, "the signifier constitutes the observable components of an image, [the] signified is the hidden cultural dimension under investigation, and signification is the recurrent observed relationship between the signifier and the cultural dimension" (p. 155). There has been significant research around web elements and their relationship to Hofstede's dimensions. The following section will highlight the various signifiers observed across literature and their relationship to Hofstede's dimensions.

Individualism-Collectivism. Materials created for individualistic audiences tend to include images that feature individuals, focusing on youth and action (Marcus & Gould, 2000). Images tend to convey individuals smiling or may feature multiple individuals, with one person taking the focus (Zahedi & Bansal, 2011). Additionally, photos may have single objects such as statues, toys, or a tree be the prominent focus (Zahedi & Bansal, 2011). In regards to colours, soft colours such as pink or red are considered appealing to individualistic cultures. Alternatively, images targeted towards collectivist audiences tend to have pictures of groups that are diverse in age and experience (Marcus & Gould, 2000). Typically for collectivist-oriented material, groups in images are composed of a mix of genders or feature only males and no

females (Zahedi & Bansal, 2011). For non-human objects, these items are presented in multiples, with no one object taking the focus (Zahedi & Bansal, 2011). Finally, when it comes to colour, the use of dark and sombre colours such as black, dark blue or gray signifies a collectivist dimension.

In addition to photographic elements that speak to individualism-collectivism, researchers highlight the following indicators of individualism and collectivism on web platforms: online discussion forums, newsletter subscriptions, and family themes (Singh & Baack, 2004; Singh & Matsuo, 2004)

Power Distance. For cultures with high power distance, images tend to showcase leaders, faculty, and people with authority (Hamid, 2017). Additionally, images that signify a high PD culture include symmetry, tall hierarchies, a focus on official seals and national emblems, photographs of leaders, monumental buildings, and monuments (Marcus and Gould, 2000; Selthofer, 2018). Zahedi & Bansal (2011) take this research further by highlighting that in high PD cultures, images will include multiple individuals with one person in focus, non-smiling faces, and men in formal attire. As for non-human elements, Zahedi & Bansal (2011) suggest that images include grandeur buildings, solid man-made structures, and full-scale buildings. In addition to photos, high PD cultures appreciate organizational hierarchy information, mention of awards, and messages from the CEO or President of an organization (Hui-Jung Chang, 2011). Conversely, images geared towards low PD cultures feature students or ordinary people, with no defined authoritative figure, an even representation of both sexes, and individuals smiling and partaking in everyday activities (Hamid, 2017; Zahedi & Bansal, 2011). Beyond human actors, low PD images can also highlight buildings with no grandeur or are not shown to full scale,

natural landscapes with no tall trees, asymmetry, and shallow hierarchies (Zahedi & Bansal, 2011)

Uncertainty Avoidance. Regarding high uncertainty avoidance (UA) cultures, researchers have found a preference for less abstract images, images that feature families and people supporting each other, and non-smiling faces (Hamid, 2017; Zahedi & Bansal, 2011). High UA cultures also prefer limited amounts of data, limited scrolling on websites, and redundancy (Selthofer, 2018). Finally, content curated for high UA audiences tends to contain more colour, video and audio cues (Hui-Jung Chang, 2011). Regarding low UA cultures, content for this group can be more abstract, feature people smiling, and have more choices. (Marcus and Gould, 2000; Zahedi & Bansal, 2011).

Masculinity-Femininity. When it comes to cultures that rank highly in masculinity, images often feature more males, males in higher-ranked positions than females, or one male in a position of authority (Callahan 2005; De Troyer et al. 2006; Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010; Tang 2011). Photos also feature men in formal attire and do not depict smiling faces (Zahedi & Bansal, 2011). In terms of non-human elements, images that signify masculinity contain solid man-made structures, full-scale buildings, and buildings of grandeur (Zahedi & Bansal, 2011). The colours associated with this dimension tend to be black, dark blue, gray, or other sombre colours (Zahedi & Bansal, 2011). Alternatively, for low-masculinity cultures or more feminine-leaning cultures, images can depict multiple women or one woman in a position of authority. There is often an emphasis on family or relationships with portrayals of husband-wife relationships and children (Zahedi & Bansal, 2011). Individuals in these images are often shown smiling, laughing, talking or studying with one another (Selthofer, 2018). There are typically no pictures of buildings, focusing more on esthetics and natural sights (Hamid,

2017). Finally, for colours, pink, soft reds and soft colours are often connected with low masculine cultures (Zahedi & Bansal, 2011).

High Pragmatism-Low Pragmatism. Cultures with high pragmatism or long-term orientation resonate with images of traditional learning, classroom settings, and time-honoured norms. In contrast, short-term oriented cultures will resonate with images that showcase new methods of teaching, extracurricular activities, and games (Hamid, 2017). Long-term orientation cultures focus on the future, and text reflecting future-thinking sentiments, such as vision statements. On the other hand, short-term orientation cultures focus on the present and connect with text that is geared towards immediate action, such as frequently asked questions (FAQ) sections and press releases (Hui-Jung Chang, 2011).

Limitations of Existing Literature

Although various researchers have alluded to the fact that marketing toward international students needs to be informed by intercultural understanding and sensitivity (James-MacEachern & Yun, 2017; Gray et al., 2003), there is very little, if any, literature on this topic. In my search, I found an abundance of articles discussing the role that culture plays within communication and the importance of intercultural communication competence. Researchers such as Hofstede (1980), Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, (1988), Hall (1976), Leonard et al. (2009), and Hinner (2020) contributed work that looked at cultural variations (individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance), high-context and low context cultures, media richness and framing theory, respectively. However, while this work provides a general basis for intercultural communication, it has not been applied in the literature examining post-secondary recruitment efforts. In fact, it appears that rather than using intercultural communication theory as the basis

of their strategy, most institutions pursue recruitment efforts informed by marketing theory employed in the business world (Hemsley-Brown, 2006).

Additionally, in my search for relevant literature, I found a significant amount of research done around Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) in the context of integrating international students into western classrooms. For example, Senyshyn (2019) and Watson et al. (2020) propose first-year seminar courses designed to help students gain the intercultural communication competence needed to help them transition to North American campuses. These studies offer a different perspective on ICC by focusing on helping international students to understand their host institutions' culture and communication standards rather than looking at how institutions can meet the cultural needs of these students. This area of research highlights the needs of ICC, and yet it places the onus on the students to shift their cultural understandings and neglects to understand the communicative needs of prospective international students.

The final limitation of the literature is that it fails to distinguish between different cultural groups. As Leonard et al. (2009) argue, "cultures are not monolithic and, within each societal culture, people vary" (p. 858). International students hail from various regions of the world, and even within those regions, there are massive variations in culture. Therefore, there needs to be literature that not only examines how recruitment efforts should be adjusted for international students; there also needs to be research done into the communicative needs of international students from different cultural backgrounds.

Summary

Overall, this literature review presents apparent gaps in the subject area of international recruitment and positions me in a favourable position to pursue further research in this area. The existing literature points to the importance of intercultural communications as a basis for

effective outreach efforts, which I plan to leverage for this study. Specifically, Hofstede's (1980) framework will provide insights into the cultural dimensions, from which I will develop a heuristic that I can use to analyze recruitment materials from various post-secondary institutions in Canada. A content analysis, using these ideas, can yield answers to the following questions:

RQ 1: Does the content of internationally-focused promotional materials align with the cultural variations of their intended audience?

RQ 2: To what extent are internationally-focused promotional materials modified from domestic materials to cater to international audiences?

The desired impact of this research is to facilitate better communication between post-secondary institutions and international students. By studying how culture impacts the perception of communication, we can begin to identify gaps that currently exist in our efforts. This is important for several reasons. Firstly, gaps within communications mean that institutions are using up resources and labour on ineffective outreach, and during a restrictive budget climate, wasting resources is highly unfavourable. Secondly, international students are an important demographic, not only to post-secondary institutions but also to the country as a whole, as they contribute significantly to innovation, the workforce, and the overall gross domestic product. In identifying these gaps, institutions can tailor their communications to provide more equitable opportunities for engagement and foster strong relationships with prospective international students.

The following section will further discuss the methodologies involved in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The following section discusses the methodologies used for this research project, which seeks to understand the intercultural literacy levels of post-secondary institutions. The chapter will begin by restating the research problem and the guiding research questions, as well as providing a justification for using a case analysis approach for this study. Next, I will provide a recap of the theoretical framework, which will serve as the starting point of my research and analysis. Following that, I will explain the data gathering and sampling methods that I used to narrow down the list of universities and respective publications I would examine. Data analysis will then be discussed, along with input on the coding process and the software I used, MAXQDA 2022. Finally, I will provide insight into how I maintained reliability and validity in this study, as well as touch on the ethics and challenges and limitations involved with research of this kind.

Research Problem & Questions

This research aims to determine the extent to which post-secondary institutions in Canada display intercultural literacy when communicating with international audiences. Using Hofstede's cultural dimensions as a guiding theoretical framework, this study employs a case analysis approach, which lends to quantitative count and qualitative content analysis. The quantitative count allows the content to be ranked based on Hofstede's dimension, while the qualitative analysis further explores themes and relationships that have emerged throughout the case study as they pertain to intercultural literacy. In order to answer the research problem posed by this study, the research will be guided by the following research questions:

RQ 1: Does the content of internationally-focused promotional materials align with the cultural variations of their intended audience?

RQ 2: To what extent are internationally-focused promotional materials modified from domestic materials to cater to international audiences?

Research Design

The following section breaks down the research design into three components: examining the case study approach, expanding on the theoretical framework and explaining the data sampling and gathering methods. This study uses a case study approach to answer the research questions. According to Range (2021), a case study approach provides an excellent opportunity for a researcher to focus and provide insight on a particular issue by analyzing the environmental and cultural context surrounding it. Moreover, as Range (2021) explains, "investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" may lead to lessons or implications that can be applied to similar cases (p. 3). For the purposes of this research, the case being explored is the 2022 domestic and international viewbook publications of Canadian post-secondary institutions. As Range (2021) suggests, the objective of this research is to extrapolate the findings of this research beyond the viewbooks and provide insights that institutions can use on other communication efforts that require intercultural nuances. In this instance, the viewbooks offer a solid basis for exploration as they are standard documents produced across post-secondaries with the intention of recruiting both international and domestic students. As such, the viewbooks are the ideal test case to analyze through Hofstede's theoretical framework.

Using a case study also lends to a mixed methodologies research approach, which provides a more holistic understanding of how well the viewbooks perform when examined through an intercultural lens. According to Neuendorf (2002), using both quantitative and qualitative research "may be viewed as different ways of examining the same research problem" (p. 420). They suggest that the triangulation of methods "strengthens the researcher's claims for

the validity of the conclusions drawn where mutual confirmation of results can be demonstrated" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 420). For this mixed-methods approach, a quantitative count of the coded images will determine how the viewbooks rank on Hofstede's model. In contrast, a qualitative analysis will highlight the relationships between the different dimensions and further explore the nuances between the domestic and international versions of the viewbook.

Theoretical Framework: Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

The research design for this study builds upon existing theoretical frameworks surrounding intercultural competencies and Hofstede's cultural dimensions. As established in the previous chapter, culture plays a significant role in communication. As Leonard et al. (2009) highlighted, "culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates...how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, [and] the meanings they have for messages" (p. 856). Hofstede's framework plays a vital role in intercultural communication as it is perceived to be a clear and easy instrument to determine the cultural variations that impact our understanding and reception of communication (Leonard et al., 2009).

For this study, I will be using the Hofstede dimensions of Canada, China and India as benchmarks to determine the level of intercultural literacy amongst the viewbooks. The reason for this approach is because the domestic viewbooks are generally geared towards Canadian audiences and, therefore, should correlate with the Hofstede scores for Canadian culture. Conversely, as the majority of international students attending Canadian universities are recruited from China and India, it would be fair to assume that the international viewbooks should favour the Chinese and Indian cultural dimensions, which are relatively similar on the Hofstede scale. Therefore, using Canada, India and China as points on the ends of an intercultural continuum

will allow me to see to what extent international viewbooks are adapted from their domestic counterparts and if that is even the case with certain institutions. It will also provide a benchmark as to how far institutions still need to adapt their content to truly meet the needs of an international audience with a different position on Hofstede's dimensions.

As discussed earlier, Hofstede's dimensions are composed of six elements, five of which are relevant to this study. Those dimensions include individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, and pragmatism (Hofstede, 1980). Further semiotic research surrounding Hofstede's framework (Marcus & Gould, 2000; Zahedi & Bansal, 2011; Hamid, 2017; Selthofer, 2018) has yielded a list of signifiers attributed to each of the dimensions. The following table outlines Hofstede's dimensions with their corresponding signifiers.

Table 3.1 *Signifiers of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions*

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions	Signifiers
Individualism-Collectivism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of individuals in an image 2. Number of objects in frame 3. Representation of age 4. Copy referencing individual vs. group
Power Distance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Images of authority figures vs. ordinary people 2. The demeanor of individuals (smiling vs. serious) 3. Architecture vs nature 4. Symbols of authority/power

Uncertainty Avoidance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abstract images 2. Amount of information 3. Representation of support vs. solitude 4. The demeanor of individuals (smiling vs. serious)
Masculinity-Femininity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The gender of individual 2. The gender representation of authority 3. The demeanor of individuals (smiling vs. serious) 4. Architecture vs nature
Pragmatism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Location of activities 2. Type of activities represented 3. Number of individuals 4. Time-orientation of text

Combined, Hofstede's dimensions and the signifiers provided me with a solid basis to develop a heuristic to evaluate levels of intercultural literacy. The heuristic tool serves to answer the research questions and acts as a coding document for content analysis. Using the signifiers as coding elements, visual and textual aspects of the viewbooks were analyzed to determine their adeptness for intercultural literacy.

Data Gathering and Sampling

As this study established that it would be focusing on post-secondary institutions within Canada, the purpose of the data gathering and sampling process was to determine which

post-secondary institutions and respective publications would be selected to further examine. The QS World University Rankings (2021), considered the "world's most popular source of comparative data about university performance," served as a selection tool to determine which post-secondary institutions would be selected for this study. Based on the QS rankings, the universities listed in Table 2 were the top five institutions in Canada and the subjects of this case study. Given that these institutions were intentionally selected, this study uses a non-random selection method (Merrigan et al., 2012).

Table 3.2 *Rankings of Canadian Post-Secondaries (QS World University Rankings, 2021)*

Canadian Ranking	Global Ranking	Post-Secondary Institution
1	=25	University of Toronto
2	=31	McGill University
3	45	University of British Columbia
4	118	Université de Montréal
5	119	University of Alberta

Once the institutions were selected, the next step was to decide which publications or communication tools I would examine for this study. As referenced above, I decided to analyze the viewbook publications. Viewbooks are publications created by post-secondary institutions with the purpose of recruiting both international and domestic audiences. They highlight the institutions' culture, campus, community and academic programs.

Viewbooks serve as the ideal subject for this study for several reasons. First of all, they are standard across all Canadian post-secondary institutions, meaning that it is a consistent variable to examine. Additionally, institutions often create both a domestic and international variation of the document, meaning I could review the international version of the publications for levels of intercultural literacy and also compare the domestic and international versions to see how the latter had been adapted for a global audience. Finally, viewbooks serve as an ideal test case for this study as they are primarily visual publications, meaning that they contain more content to examine as opposed to a webpage or a recruitment email, which often lack the same level of visual media. Therefore, the latest viewbooks from each university were chosen. Table 3 lists the viewbooks that were analyzed for this study.

Table 3.3 *Institutions and their respective viewbooks*

Post-Secondary Institution	Viewbooks
University of Toronto	University of Toronto Domestic Viewbook 2022-23
University of Toronto	University of Toronto International Viewbook 2022 -23
McGill University	McGill University Domestic Viewbook 2021 -22
McGill University	McGill University International Viewbook 2021 -22
University of British Columbia	University of British Columbia International & Domestic Viewbook 2021 -22
Université de Montréal	Université de Montréal Domestic Viewbook 2021 -22
Université de Montréal	Université de Montréal International Viewbook 2021 -22
University of Alberta	University of Alberta Domestic Viewbook 2022 -23
University of Alberta	University of Alberta International Viewbook 2022 -23

Data Analysis

After collecting and categorizing the viewbooks, the content within publications was coded using the heuristic outlined in Appendix A. The heuristic aims to determine whether the viewbooks rank high or low in each cultural dimension. The coding tool breaks down Hofstede's dimensions into their corresponding signifiers, as described above in Table 1. Each signifier works within a binary. For example, for the dimension of individualism-collectivism, a signifier is the number of people in an image. This signifier is then broken down into two components,

images with one individual and images with two or more individuals. The following process breaks down the analysis process for these signifiers.

- *Initial coding* identified which of Hofstede's dimensions and their corresponding signifiers were to be attributed to the images, headlines, and large text boxes within the viewbooks. The viewbooks were uploaded to MAXQDA 2022, a coding software, where the content within them received a coding based on the signifiers. An image, text or headline could receive multiple codes depending on its content. MAXQDA 2022 provides a total tally of the number of items under each code, which is then recorded in an excel sheet.
- *Assigning value to the signifiers.* Once the tallies were compiled for each signifier, the next step was to give a numeric value to each category to determine how the content ranks on Hofstede's model. Given that each signifier is a binary, representing each end of the spectrum for the dimension, the signifier is given a code dependent on which of its two components had a greater count. If a signifier's component representing the low end of the dimension outweighed the other component, it would receive a numeric value of 1. Alternatively, if the elements representing the high end of the dimension were coded more frequently, they would receive a numeric value of 2. Table 4 illustrates this process further.
- *Determining dimension rankings.* Each dimension has four to five signifiers attributed to it. After each signifier is given a value, all of the signifiers for specific dimensions are totalled. If the total is above an established value benchmark, the viewbook ranks high on that particular dimension. Alternatively, if the total is below an established value benchmark, the viewbook ranks low on that specific dimension.

Table 3. 4 *Numeric Value Assignments for the Binaries of Cultural Dimensions*

Dimensions	Binaries	Numeric Value
Individualism-Collectivism	Low Individualism (High Collectivism)	1
	High Individualism (Low Collectivism)	2
Power Distance	Low Power Distance	1
	High Power Distance	2
Uncertainty Avoidance	Low Uncertainty Avoidance	1
	High Uncertainty Avoidance	2
Masculinity-Femininity	Low Masculinity (High Femininity)	1
	High Masculinity (Low Femininity)	2
Pragmatism	Low Pragmatism	1
	High Pragmatism	2

Once all of the data was coded, assigned value, and ranked, further quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted on the data. In regards to quantitative analysis, an overall count of the signifiers, codes, and content and additional statistical analysis took place to further add context to the dimensional rankings and how each institution measured up amongst the others. For the qualitative analysis, further thematics were pulled, specifically when analyzing the domestic and international viewbooks, to provide a more holistic narrative of the data.

Reliability and Validity

According to Carmines & Zeller (1979), "reliability can be defined as the extent to which a measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials" (as cited in Neuendorf, 2002, p.141). When it comes to content analysis, reliability is of the utmost importance to guarantee that the content is coded objectively and to ensure validity (Neuendorf, 2002). Typically, there would be multiple coders involved in the process of analyzing the content; however, for this study, I was the sole coder due to time and resource constraints. Therefore, I took additional steps to achieve an acceptable level of reliability. First of all, I followed the theoretical framework closely and let the literature guide my analysis of the content. I also kept a clear guideline of which content I would code and what the content would need to include to be coded a certain way. I also checked each document's coding twice to ensure that nothing was missed along the way.

Ethics

According to the University of Alberta Research Ethics Office, studies exempt from ethics review are those that use "publicly available information that is legally accessible to the public and protected by law or where the information is publicly accessible, and there is no reasonable expectation of privacy" ("Research Exempt," n.d., para 4). Therefore, the following research did not require ethics approval as all of the data was collected from publicly available documents and websites.

Challenges and Limitations

When undertaking this study, I found two challenges emerged. The first challenge is concerning being the sole coder for this research. Due to limited time and resources, I was only

able to analyze the top five institutions in Canada, which means that my sample size was relatively small for the type of insights I am hoping to gather. While it would have been ideal to analyze the top ten institutions, the size limitations were essential to preserve the reliability and validity of the study, as I was required to double-check each of the document's coding twice. The other challenge I encountered was that one of the institutions, the University of British Columbia, only had one viewbook to analyze, as they do not create separate viewbooks for their domestic and international audiences. This created some difficulties in the analysis, which I will discuss further in the next chapter.

Summary

This study seeks to understand the extent to which post-secondary institutions in Canada display intercultural literacy when communicating with international audiences. To answer the guiding research questions of this study, a case study approach was used to further examine the viewbook publications of the top five post-secondary institutions in Canada. Hofstede's cultural dimensions served as the theoretical framework, providing a basis for the heuristic that was developed to code the visual content of the viewbooks and the lens through which the content was analyzed. Following data collection and coding, a quantitative count and qualitative analysis were applied to the data to understand how the viewbooks ranked within Hofstede's dimensions and further understand how the themes from the viewbooks related to intercultural literacy.

The following chapter will present findings and discussion.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

The following section will present the findings and discussion of the content analysis of the post-secondary viewbooks. The purpose of this study was to leverage Hofstede's cultural dimensions into a heuristic that could determine the level of intercultural literacy exhibited by Canadian post-secondary institutions. To answer the posed research problem, a content analysis, guided by the following research questions, was employed.

RQ 1: Does the content of internationally-focused promotional materials align with the cultural variations of their intended audience?

RQ 2: To what extent are internationally-focused promotional materials modified from domestic materials to cater to international audiences?

The following chapter displays the data collected from nine viewbooks from the top five Canadian universities as it relates to each of Hofstede's dimensions. Following the presentation of data, a discussion will highlight the significance of this study and provide recommendations for increased intercultural literacy amongst institutions and organizations, both in the educational sector and beyond.

Findings



Data was collected from the domestic and international viewbooks of the top five Canadian universities; however, it is important to note that the University of British Columbia only produces one variation of the viewbook to be distributed among both domestic and international prospective students. Therefore, the analysis only contains data from nine viewbooks.

Individualism-Collectivism. The first dimension that I examined was individualism-collectivism. Four signifiers pulled from existing literature (Marcus & Gould,

2000; Zahedi & Bansal, 2011; Hamid, 2017; Selthofer, 2018) were examined for this dimension- the number of individualism in an image, the age diversity of individuals, the number of objects in focus in a picture, and the use of collective vs. individual copy.


For the number of individuals in an image, if a viewbook had more photos of one person represented than an image with two or more people, then the viewbook received coding for individualism and vice-versa. Among the nine viewbooks, only two had more pictures of individuals than groups - the University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta domestic viewbook. The remainder contained more group photos than individual photos.

Figure 4.1 *Examples of individual vs. group image modifications*

Individualistic	Collectivist
 <p data-bbox="203 1570 732 1675">University of Alberta domestic viewbook (University of Alberta, 2022)</p>	 <p data-bbox="824 1465 1398 1570">University of Alberta international viewbook (University of Alberta, 2022)</p>

Regarding age diversity, a diverse age range indicates collectivism, whereas a focus on youth depicts individualism. All the viewbooks contained more images of young individuals than those that included diverse age groups, which is understandable considering that these publications are intended to showcase university students, who often tend to be younger.



Figure 4.2 *Examples of age uniformity vs. age diversity*

Individualistic	Collectivist
 <p data-bbox="203 1276 738 1392">University of British Columbia viewbook (University of British Columbia, 2022)</p>	 <p data-bbox="824 1092 1360 1207">University of British Columbia viewbook (University of British Columbia, 2022)</p>

The next signifier examined was the number of objects in an image, such as books, sporting items, trophies, etc. A multitude of objects is an indicator of collectivism and singular objects, individualism. It is important to note that some viewbooks, such as the Université de Montréal's domestic and international viewbooks, did not contain images with singular or

multiple items to examine. Of the remaining viewbooks, all except the University of Alberta's international viewbook included more images of singular objects than numerous objects.

Figure 4.3 *Examples of individualistic copy vs. collectivist copy*

Individualistic	Collectivist
 <p>University of Toronto domestic viewbook (University of Toronto, 2022)</p>	 <p>University of Toronto domestic viewbook (University of Toronto, 2022)</p>

Finally, I looked at the use of collective vs. individual copy, headlines and large textboxes using language such as "I, you, your" and "we, us, our." For copy that used the former set of copy, it was considered individualistic, and for copy that used the latter, it was coded as collectivistic. Of the nine viewbooks, only two contained more collectivistic than individualistic language. Those two viewbooks were the University of British Columbia's and the University of Alberta's international viewbook.

Figure 4.4 *Examples of individualistic copy vs. collectivist copy*

Individualistic	Collectivist
 <p data-bbox="203 758 732 869">University of Alberta domestic viewbook (University of Alberta, 2022)</p>	 <p data-bbox="823 768 1398 879">University of Alberta international viewbook (University of Alberta, 2022)</p>

According to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), Canada scores an 80 on this dimension, meaning that it is highly individualistic, whereas China scores a 20 and India scores 48, meaning they are collectivistic. As such, I assumed that the international variations of the viewbooks should be more in line with collectivist values, while the domestic versions would demonstrate more individualistic values. However, the data tells a different story. Among the nine examined viewbooks, only three viewbooks were coded for low individualism/high collectivism - two of which were international viewbooks. The Université de Montréal scored low on individualism for both the domestic and international versions of the viewbook, and the University of Alberta's international viewbook was also considered low on the individualism dimension.



Table 4.5 *Individualism-collectivism rankings across universities*

University	Ranking
University of Toronto - Domestic Viewbook	High Individualism
University of Toronto - International Viewbook	High Individualism
McGill University- Domestic Viewbook	High Individualism
McGill University- International Viewbook	High Individualism
University of British Columbia - Combined Viewbook	High Individualism
Université de Montréal - Domestic Viewbook	Low Individualism
Université de Montréal - International Viewbook	Low Individualism
University of Alberta - Domestic Viewbook	High Individualism
UAlberta of Alberta - International Viewbook	Low Individualism

Power distance. The next dimension I examined was power distance. According to existing literature, six signifiers are associated with this dimension - images of authoritative figures vs. ordinary individuals, smiling vs. stoic demeanours, individuals in formal settings vs. individuals partaking in everyday activities, images of grandiose architecture vs. images of nature, messages from authoritative figures, and mentions of awards and rankings (Marcus & Gould, 2000; Zahedi & Bansal, 2011; Hamid, 2017; Selthofer, 2018).

When looking at the first signifier, images that include authoritative figures denote a high power distance, whereas images with ordinary individuals denote a low power distance. Images that included faculty, professors, and university administration, such as the president, were considered to contain authoritative figures. Images of students were considered to have the latter. Across all of the viewbooks, there were more images of ordinary people than of authoritative figures, which was to be expected as the primary focus of the viewbooks is to depict students and less so the faculty.



Figure 4.5 *Examples of authoritative figures vs. ordinary figures*

High Power Distance	Low Power Distance
 <p>University of Toronto international viewbook (University of Toronto, 2022)</p>	 <p>University of Toronto domestic viewbook (University of Toronto, 2022)</p>

For the next signifier, I examined images to determine whether there were more images of individuals smiling or individuals expressing serious or stoic demeanours. A photo showing a smiling group was considered low power distance; if a picture showed the alternative, serious



expressions, it was labelled high power distance. All nine viewbooks included more images of individuals smiling than being serious.

Figure 4.6 *Examples of smiling vs. serious individuals*

High Power Distance	Low Power Distance
 <p>Made for research that matters</p> <p><small>Aiman Hadif, Cognitive Science, class of 2021</small> <small>At McGill's Rue Lab, Aiman worked closely with people suffering from a range of psychological issues and traumas, from post-traumatic stress disorder to major depression. His most important mentor was his Principal Investigator, Dr. Michael Lifshitz. "The biggest thing he taught me, alongside coding, running participants and analyzing data, was to never give up—in research and in life."</small> <small>Discover Aiman's research experience</small></p> <p>McGill University international viewbook (McGill University, 2021)</p>	 <p>McGill University domestic viewbook (McGill University, 2021)</p>

I then looked at images of individuals in formal dress and settings versus individuals partaking in everyday activities. Pictures of the former were coded as high power distance, and the latter was considered low power distance. Images examined for this signifier included those depicting students and faculty in suits at conferences, galas, and networking events and those of individuals in casual clothing in classroom settings, outdoors, and informal areas. Again, all of the viewbooks contained more images of everyday activities than they did formal, leaning more towards low power distance.

Figure 4.7 *Examples of formal vs. casual settings*

High Power Distance	Low Power Distance
 <p data-bbox="203 877 787 991">University of Toronto international viewbook (University of Toronto, 2022)</p>	 <p data-bbox="824 856 1360 970">University of Toronto domestic viewbook (University of Toronto, 2022)</p>

The next signifier focused on the inclusion of images with large architecture and man-made buildings versus pictures of nature. Large architecture and grandiose buildings are associated with high power distance; conversely, nature is associated with low power distance. Four of the nine viewbooks contained more images of buildings and structures than nature. These include McGill University's domestic and international viewbooks and the University of Alberta's domestic and international viewbooks.

Figure 4.8 *Examples of large architecture vs. nature*

High Power Distance	Low Power Distance
 <p data-bbox="201 1066 779 1178">University of Alberta international viewbook (University of Alberta, 2022)</p>	 <p data-bbox="821 1075 1399 1186">University of Alberta international viewbook (University of Alberta, 2022)</p>

According to Hui-Jung Chang (2011), messages from a CEO or president indicate high power distance. Therefore, all the viewbooks were scanned for the inclusion of a message from the university president. Out of all the viewbooks, only the University of Alberta's international viewbook included a welcome message from the president.

Figure 4.9 *Example of a message from the president of the University of Alberta*


High Power Distance

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The University of Alberta is home to an exceptional community of students and researchers who are leading the way in innovation, problem solving and community building. Our diverse network of scholars challenge themselves and each other as they seek out truth and shape how our world will look in the future. Your unique talents and interests will enrich our community. Join us for a learning experience that will transform you and prepare you for success in an ever-changing world.

Bill Flanagan

Bill Flanagan, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Alberta



ABOUT THE PRESIDENT

Bill Flanagan is the 14th president and vice-chancellor of the University of Alberta. President Flanagan, JD, DEA, LLM, served as the dean of law from 2005 to 2019 at Queen's University. He was president of the Council of Canadian Law Deans from 2011 to 2014, and served on the National Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters. His work in support of HIV/AIDS research and initiatives has made him a well-recognized and respected public figure.

University of Alberta international viewbook

(University of Alberta, 2022)

Finally, I looked at the mention of awards or accolades received by the universities as showcasing these accomplishments is an indicator of high power distance. All of the universities mentioned awards, meaning they all were coded for high power distance.

Figure 4.10 *Example of award mentions*

High Power Distance	
 <p>McGill University international viewbook (McGill University, 2021)</p>	 <p>University of British Columbia viewbook (University of British Columbia, 2021)</p>

According to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), Canada is considered a low power distance culture, scoring 39 on the Hofstede scale. In contrast, China and India are more high power distance cultures, scoring 80 and 77, respectively, on the scale. Going into this analysis, I assumed domestic viewbooks would demonstrate low power distance, whereas international viewbooks would showcase higher power distance. However, that is not entirely the case. While the domestic versions do indeed lean more low power distance than their international counterparts, all viewbooks, with the expectation of one, are low power distance. This means that the international versions of the viewbook have not been accommodated to reflect this cultural dimension accurately for their target audience. The one viewbook that did not score low on power distance was the University of Alberta viewbook, which appears to have an equal balance of high and low power distance, landing an equal score between the two.

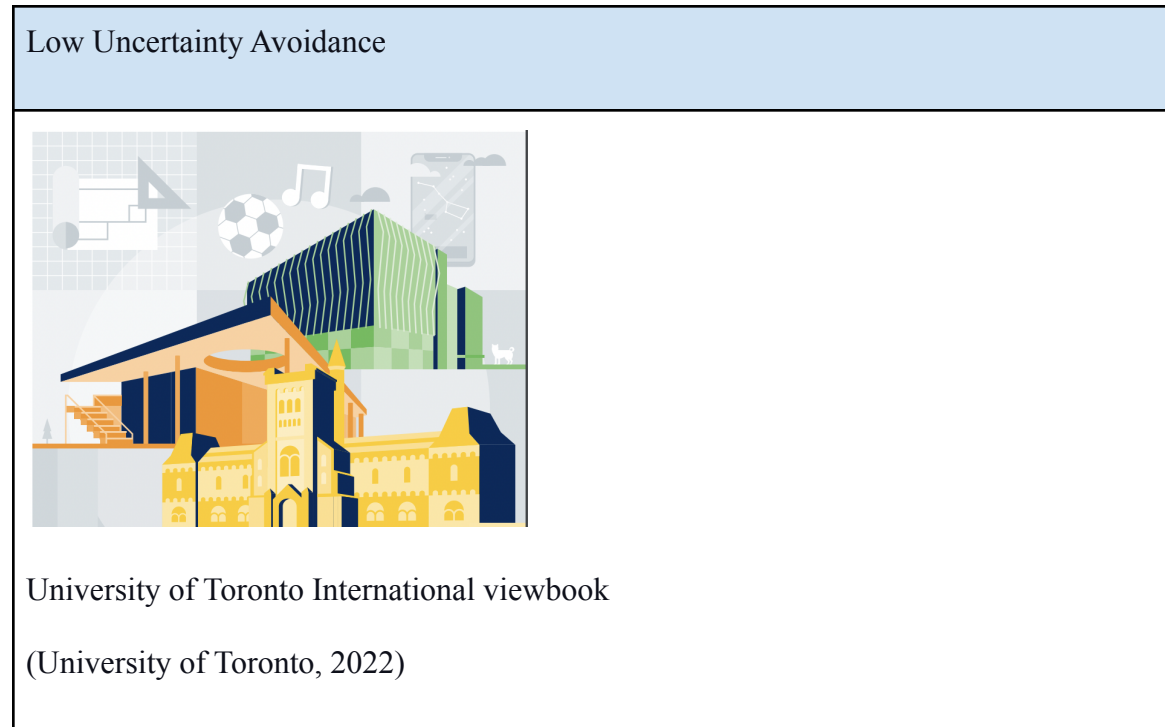
Table 4.6 *Power distance rankings across universities*

University	Ranking
University of Toronto - Domestic Viewbook	Low Power Distance
University of Toronto - International Viewbook	Low Power Distance
McGill University- Domestic Viewbook	Low Power Distance
McGill University- International Viewbook	Low Power Distance
University of British Columbia - Combined Viewbook	Low Power Distance
Université de Montréal - Domestic Viewbook	Low Power Distance
Université de Montréal - International Viewbook	Low Power Distance
University of Alberta - Domestic Viewbook	Low Power Distance
UAlberta of Alberta - International Viewbook	Equal

Uncertainty Avoidance. Regarding uncertainty avoidance, four signifiers are associated with this dimension. Those signifiers include the presence of abstract photos, images showcasing individuals supporting each other versus individuals alone, pictures of smiling individuals, and the presence of links.

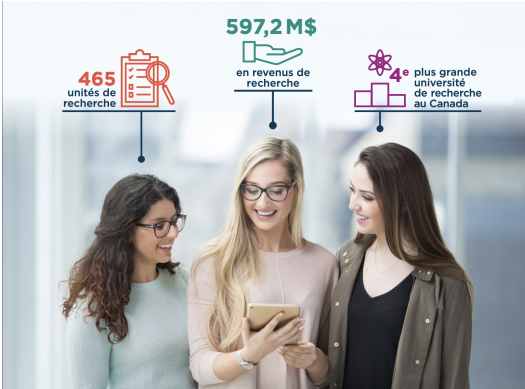

I first examined the publications to find if any included abstract images. Abstract images are considered to indicate a low level of uncertainty avoidance. All viewbooks contained abstract images, meaning they received coding for low uncertainty avoidance for this signifier.

Figure 4.11 *Examples of abstract images*



The next signifier I looked at was images that depict individuals supporting one another versus images that showed individuals alone. If a photo showed a group of individuals supporting one another, it is considered to be ranked high on uncertainty avoidance. Conversely, if an image shows an individual alone, it is categorized as low uncertainty avoidance. Three viewbooks included more pictures of individuals alone than groups supporting each other. These include the University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta's domestic and international viewbooks.

Figure 4.12 *Examples of supportive groups vs. individuals*

High Uncertainty Avoidance	Low Uncertainty Avoidance
 <p>Université de Montréal - Domestic Viewbook (Université de Montréal, 2022)</p>	 <p>Université de Montréal - Domestic Viewbook (Université de Montréal, 2022)</p>

In the power distance section, the signifier of smiling individuals was already analyzed. However, this signifier is applied to multiple dimensions, including uncertainty avoidance. In the case of this dimension, smiling individuals indicate high uncertainty avoidance, whereas the alternative means low uncertainty avoidance. As discussed earlier, all of the viewbooks included more images of individuals smiling than not, which means that this signifier is coded as high uncertainty avoidance.

The final signifier for this dimension is the presence of links. According to Hui-Jung Chang (2011), excess information, including the presence of links, indicates a low level of uncertainty avoidance. All of the analyzed viewbooks included links that redirected back to the institution's website. Therefore, all the viewbooks were deemed low on uncertainty avoidance for this signifier.

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) indicate that India, China and Canada all score low on the uncertainty avoidance dimension, with India having a score of 40, China placing slightly lower with a score of 30, and Canada having a score of 48. Given that all countries rank low on this dimension, my expectation for both the domestic and international variations of the viewbook was that they would also rank low on uncertainty avoidance. In this instance, the viewbooks correctly reflected my assumptions as all the documents were coded as low uncertainty avoidance.

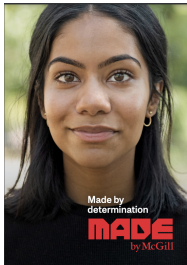
Table 4.7 *Uncertainty avoidance rankings across universities*

University	Ranking
University of Toronto - Domestic Viewbook	Low Uncertainty Avoidance
University of Toronto - International Viewbook	Low Uncertainty Avoidance
McGill University- Domestic Viewbook	Low Uncertainty Avoidance
McGill University- International Viewbook	Low Uncertainty Avoidance
University of British Columbia - Combined Viewbook	Low Uncertainty Avoidance
Université de Montréal - Domestic Viewbook	Low Uncertainty Avoidance
Université de Montréal - International Viewbook	Low Uncertainty Avoidance
University of Alberta - Domestic Viewbook	Low Uncertainty Avoidance
UAlberta of Alberta - International Viewbook	Low Uncertainty Avoidance

Masculinity-Femininity. There are four signifiers for the dimension of masculinity-femininity. Several of these indicators have been discussed throughout this chapter as they apply to multiple dimensions. These signifiers include smiling versus non-smiling individuals and pictures of nature versus buildings. In regards to masculinity-femininity, more images of smiling individuals are an indicator of low masculinity. Therefore, all viewbooks are coded as low masculinity for this signifier. For images of nature vs. buildings, more images of man-made structures imply high masculinity. Therefore, McGill University's domestic and international viewbooks and the University of Alberta's domestic and international viewbooks score high on masculinity for this signifier.


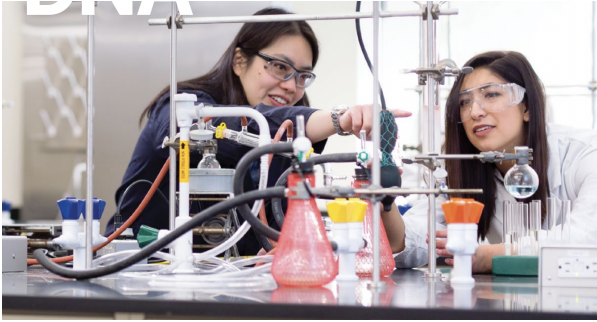
The new signifiers for this dimension include the number of images with only males versus the photos with either only females or a combination of both sexes and the number of images of men versus women in positions of authority. For images of males versus females, all of the viewbooks contain more images that include only females or a combination of both sexes, meaning that on this signifier, they score low on masculinity.

Figure 4.13 *Examples of images with males vs. females*

High Masculinity	Low Masculinity
 <p>McGill University international viewbook (McGill University, 2021)</p>	 <p>McGill University domestic viewbook (McGill University, 2021)</p>

Finally, for images that depict men and women in positions of power, four viewbooks showed more women in positions of authority than men. These include the University of Alberta's international and domestic viewbooks and the University of Toronto's international and domestic viewbooks. Consequently, these viewbooks scored low on masculinity for this signifier.

Figure 4.14 *Examples of images with males in authority vs. females in authority*

High Masculinity	Low Masculinity
 <p data-bbox="203 1165 706 1281">University of British Columbia (University of British Columbia, 2021)</p>	 <p data-bbox="820 1039 1404 1155">University of Alberta international viewbook (University of Alberta, 2022)</p>

According to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), China and India score 66 and 56, respectively, on this dimension, meaning they are more masculine-driven. Alternatively, Canada has a score of 52, meaning it is somewhat equal between masculinity and femininity, with a slight push towards the masculine side of the spectrum. Therefore, my assumption for this dimension was that all of the international viewbooks would favour masculinity, whereas the domestic viewbooks would have an equal representation of masculinity and femininity. However, that is not what is reflected in the analyzed viewbooks. All the viewbooks, except

McGill University's international and domestic viewbooks, which scored an equal ranking, leaned more towards low masculinity.



Table 4.8 *Masculinity-femininity rankings across universities*

University	Ranking
University of Toronto - Domestic Viewbook	Low Masculinity
University of Toronto - International Viewbook	Low Masculinity
McGill University- Domestic Viewbook	Equal
McGill University- International Viewbook	Equal
University of British Columbia - Combined Viewbook	Low Masculinity
Université de Montréal - Domestic Viewbook	Low Masculinity
Université de Montréal - International Viewbook	Low Masculinity
University of Alberta - Domestic Viewbook	Low Masculinity
UAlberta of Alberta - International Viewbook	Low Masculinity

Pragmatism. The final dimension to examine is pragmatism, which looks at short-term and long-term orientation. There are four signifiers associated with pragmatism - traditional learning vs. new methods of teaching, images of classroom settings vs. extracurricular activities, photos with one individual vs. multiple individuals, and future-orientated text vs. present-focused text.

The first signifier looks at images that showcase traditional methods of learning, such as lectures, versus new ways of teaching, such as interactive, hands-on instruction. Pictures that show the former are considered to have a low level of pragmatism, whereas images with the latter are deemed to have a high level. Six of the viewbooks featured more images of innovative instruction than traditional teaching, meaning they are coded as having a high level of pragmatism for this signifier. These viewbooks include the University of Toronto's domestic and international viewbooks, McGill University's domestic and international viewbooks, the University of British Columbia's, and the University of Alberta's international viewbooks.


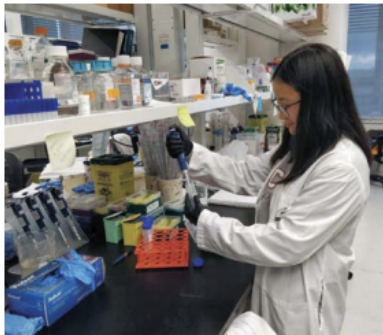
Figure 4.15 *Examples of innovative teaching methods vs. traditional teaching methods*

High Pragmatism	Low Pragmatism
 <p data-bbox="203 1381 779 1491">University of Alberta international viewbook (University of Alberta, 2022)</p>	 <p data-bbox="824 1407 1323 1516">University of British Columbia (University of British Columbia, 2021)</p>

The next signifier looks at images that highlight a classroom setting versus images that reflect extracurricular activities. Classroom settings indicate a low level of pragmatism, whereas extracurricular activities exhibit high levels. All of the viewbooks, with the exception of the

Université de Montreal's domestic and international viewbook, included more images of extracurricular activities than images of classroom settings.

Figure 4.16 *Examples of extracurricular activities vs. classroom settings*



High Pragmatism	Low Pragmatism
 <p>University of Toronto domestic viewbook (University of Toronto, 2022)</p>	 <p>University of Toronto domestic viewbook (University of Toronto, 2022)</p>

The signifier examining the number of individuals in a picture was previously discussed in this chapter in relation to the individualism-collectivism dimension. With respect to this dimension, more images of individuals than groups reflects a high level of pragmatism, whereas more images of groups demonstrates a low level. The University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta domestic viewbooks were the only two viewbooks to contain more images of individuals than groups, meaning that they were considered to have a high level of pragmatism for this signifier.

Finally, the last signifier I examined was that of future-oriented versus present-oriented copy. Future-oriented copy refers to vision statements, while present-oriented text refers to current calls to action. Except for the University of Alberta's international viewbook, all of the

viewbooks contained more instances of present-oriented text. Therefore, they all ranked as low pragmatic for this signifier.

Figure 4.17 *Examples of future-oriented text vs. present-oriented text*

High Pragmatism	Low Pragmatism
 <p>University of Alberta international viewbook (University of Alberta, 2022)</p>	 <p>University of Alberta domestic viewbook (University of Alberta, 2022)</p>

When it comes to pragmatism, Hofstede (2010) found that China was a very pragmatic country, with a score of 87 on the dimensional scale, while India is viewed as relatively pragmatic, with a score of 51. Alternatively, Canada ranks low on this dimension, receiving a score of 36. Therefore, I had assumed that the domestic viewbooks would reflect a low level of pragmatism while the international viewbooks would depict a higher level of pragmatism. However, that was not entirely the case. Most viewbooks received an equal score on the dimension, meaning they did not rank high or low on pragmatism. Only the University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta's international viewbook ranked high on pragmatism, with only one of those publications being specifically created for an international audience. The only viewbooks considered low on this dimension were the Université de Montréal's international and domestic viewbooks, which again does not align with my assumption for this dimension.

Table 4.9 *Pragmatic rankings across universities*

University	Ranking
University of Toronto - Domestic Viewbook	Equal
University of Toronto - International Viewbook	Equal
McGill University- Domestic Viewbook	Equal
McGill University- International Viewbook	Equal
University of British Columbia - Combined Viewbook	High Pragmatism
Université de Montréal - Domestic Viewbook	Low Pragmatism
Université de Montréal - International Viewbook	Low Pragmatism
University of Alberta - Domestic Viewbook	Equal
UAlberta of Alberta - International Viewbook	High Pragmatism

Overall Rankings

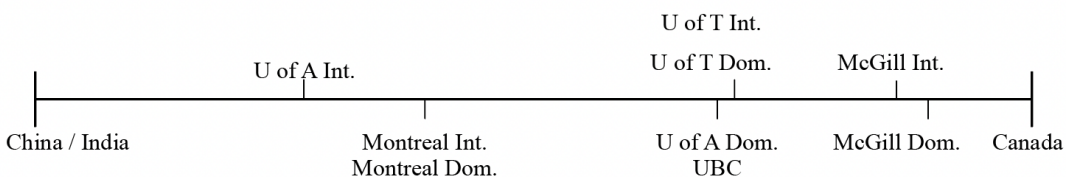
Tallying all of the rankings across dimensions for each institution, I was able to determine where the domestic and international viewbooks aligned regarding Canadian and Chinese and Indian culture. Viewbooks that had three or more dimensions that aligned with the Chinese or Indian dimensions were determined to be slightly internationally-focused to completely internationally-focused, whereas institutions that had less than three corresponding dimensions were considered Canada-centric and not culturally adept. Table 10 highlights how the universities ranked, and figure 18 visually represents where universities lie on the continuum

of Canadian and Chinese and Indian culture. As shown below, the majority of institutions are Canadian or slightly Canadian-focused, with only the University of Alberta's international viewbook leaning somewhat towards an international focus.

Table 4.10 *Overall rankings across universities*

University	Cultural Focus
University of Toronto - Domestic Viewbook	Canada Focused
University of Toronto - International Viewbook	Canada Focused
McGill University- Domestic Viewbook	Very Canadian Focused
McGill University- International Viewbook	Very Canadian Focused
University of British Columbia - Combined Viewbook	Canada Focused
Université de Montréal - Domestic Viewbook	Slightly Internationally Focused
Université de Montréal - International Viewbook	Slightly Internationally Focused
University of Alberta - Domestic Viewbook	Canada Focused
UAlberta of Alberta - International Viewbook	Slightly Internationally Focused

Figure 4.18 *Canada-China/India Hofstede Continuum*



This data also highlights the lack of adaptation between the domestic and international versions of certain viewbooks. An emerging theme throughout my analysis was that several

institutions had identical domestic and international viewbooks, with the exception of one or two image changes. For example, the Université de Montréal had completely identical images and copy, the only difference being that the domestic version was written in French. McGill University's domestic and international viewbooks only differed in that the domestic version contained a cover photo of a female student, while the international version contained a male student on the cover. Similarly, the University of Toronto's domestic viewbook only differed from the international viewbook in that it had two additional photos, one of a tall building and the other of a hockey game with only men, and that it had replaced an image of smiling women to a picture of an Indigenous elder partaking in a smudging ceremony. Finally, the University of British Columbia only had one viewbook, ranked Canada-focused, demonstrating that the singular viewbook only serves Canadian audiences.

As Figure 4.18 shows, the only viewbook that was truly adapted was the University of Alberta's viewbooks, as the domestic version is shown to favour the Canadian side of the spectrum, whereas the international version was the most internationally-focused publication of all the viewbooks I examined. Furthermore, the University of Alberta's viewbook contains differentiating elements that make it clear that the publications are intended for different audiences. For example, the international version was the only one to include a message from the president, while the domestic version did not contain this element. In addition, the domestic viewbook replaced group images in favour of more individual pictures and student highlights. These are just a few examples of how the international viewbook was adapted from its domestic counterpart.

Discussion

Using Hofstede's cultural dimensions as a theoretical framework, this study set out to answer two research questions:

RQ 1: Does the content of internationally-focused promotional materials align with the cultural variations of their intended audience?

RQ 2: To what extent are internationally-focused promotional materials modified from domestic materials to cater to international audiences?

To answer the first research question, I delved into an in-depth analysis of the content of nine viewbooks from the top five universities in Canada, using a heuristic tool based on existing literature surrounding Hofstede's cultural dimensions. From this analysis, it was clear that the majority of international viewbooks were not tailored to their international audiences, as much of the content within these publications aligned with the Canadian cultural dimensions. Although most of the international documents fell short of being internationally focused, to address the second research question, I explored whether universities at least modified the international documents from their domestic counterparts to indicate an effort towards adaptation for international audiences. Again, it was apparent throughout my analysis that although most universities created two publications, they are producing essentially the same document for different audiences, reflecting an overall weak effort regarding intercultural adaptation and literacy within several post-secondary institutions in Canada.

I would argue that all the institutions examined for this study have a ways to go to fully adapt their communication materials for an international audience. The University of Alberta came the closest to having a fully adapted viewbook but still fell short of what would indeed be considered an interculturally adapted document.

Limitations of Study

Although this study puts forth a valiant effort to highlight the importance of intercultural literacy among post-secondary institutions, it is important to highlight some of the limitations of this study.

The first limitation is the small sample size examined for this study. As it stands, I concluded that the current effort amongst Canadian universities to adequately adapt their content for international audiences is lacking; however, this conclusion is derived from the examination of only nine viewbooks. There are 223 public and private universities and 213 public colleges and institutes in Canada (Council of Ministers of Education, n.d.); therefore, examining only the top five provides a narrow look into the actual recruiting efforts of Canadian post-secondary institutions. For a more holistic examination, it would be worthwhile to investigate a broader set of universities and colleges.

The second limitation is in the theoretical framework employed for this study. While Hofstede's cultural dimensions provided a solid foundation to build my research upon, the area of intercultural communication is vast and varying, meaning that there could be scholarship from other researchers that could counter the points I have made regarding cultural variations and adaptation. For example, authors such as Hall (1976), Gudykunst & Toomey (1988) and Chen (2008) all provide valuable insights into this area of study; however, I did not use their theories to build the heuristic from which I examined the viewbooks due to limitations in time. Therefore, future research in this area would benefit from integrating additional scholars to ensure that varying perspectives are captured and discussed.

Finally, it is important to note that there may have been coding bias involved in this study, as I was unable to recruit an additional coder to verify my coding due to resource

constraints. Although I set up checks and balances throughout the coding process, intercoder reliability may have been compromised without another coder. However, in my methodologies section, I am transparent about my coding process, and my data is available in the appendices for additional verification if required.

Summary

This study set out to explore the levels of intercultural literacy exhibited in the recruitment materials of post-secondary institutions. The findings demonstrate a gap in this area. Through a content analysis, using Hofstede's cultural dimensions as a framework for a heuristic, I've established that the majority of the universities examined do not exhibit the intercultural literacy required to adequately communicate with individuals from different cultures. Using Indian and Chinese cultural dimensions as a benchmark for international audiences and Canadian cultural dimensions for domestic audiences, I determined that most of the viewbooks, both domestic and international, favour Canadian dimensions, demonstrating a lack of adaption and intercultural literacy amongst these institutions. The majority of institutions also had identical domestic and international viewbooks, further highlighting the lack of commitment to tailor content to different audiences. However, these shortcomings need to be addressed by institutions if they wish to continue growing and diversifying their campuses.

The following section will provide an overview on future areas of research, and highlight how this research contributes overall to the area of intercultural communications.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The previous analysis has shown that of the five universities examined, only one demonstrated some level of intercultural literacy. The University of Alberta's international viewbook was most closely aligned with Indian and Chinese culture, whereas the domestic viewbook aligned more closely with Canadian culture. The remaining universities were either closely aligned with Canadian culture or did not have any significant differentiation between their domestic and international viewbooks. These findings indicate that universities may be wasting resources and marketing efforts by duplicating their publications and are likely not meeting their target audience's expectations.

Areas of Future Study

This study provides the first steps in this research area by identifying a gap among Canadian post-secondary institutions trying to recruit international students. However, additional contributions could still be made to provide a holistic understanding of this area of study. Primarily, while this study leans on existing literature to highlight the importance of intercultural communication and adaptation for international students, future studies can include first-hand testimonials from students recounting their experience with these publications. I believe that there is great value in hearing from prospective and current students to see if an adapted publication would indeed impact their reception of the marketing materials or if there is little impact in diversifying the content for a different audience.

It would also be helpful to cross-examine the viewbooks, particularly the international versions, with different countries where we recruit international students to see if the publications are completely lacking adaptation. This research focused solely on China and India, as they are the top two countries from which Canadian universities welcome international

students; however, we have seen a rise in international students from France, South Korea, and Vietnam in recent years (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2021), so it would be worthwhile to examine those cultures using the heuristic developed for this study.

Summary

This study aimed to leverage existing literature surrounding intercultural communications to understand the levels of intercultural literacy amongst post-secondary institutions in Canada and identify any gaps in their communication materials. Through the development of a heuristic that builds upon Hofstede's dimensions, this study uncovered how adapted recruitment publications are from a cultural standpoint. While the contribution of this study is minor, the development of the heuristic tool means that other researchers can replicate this study on other organizations and industries beyond the scope of post-secondary institutions, which this paper focused solely on. Additionally, the methodology and analysis of this study can be replicated in other post-secondary institutions globally as the race to recruit more international students becomes competitive year after year. Although this study looks at a small sample, it has very versatile applications and brings value to this field of academia.

Recommendations

After examining the nine viewbook publications, I provide the following recommendations to post-secondary institutions:

Recommendation 1: Determine the audience that you are targeting with your marketing materials and clearly understand their cultural understanding and expectations around communication efforts.

Recommendation 2: If the publication is intended for a domestic audience, the content should align with the Canadian cultural dimensions. Likewise, international publications should align with the intended audience, and viewbooks should be produced and sent to international audiences with similar Hofstede rankings for best results.

Recommendation 3: Institutions should continually check their content against heuristic tools, such as the one created for this study, to ensure that their content does not fall into cultural bias and does align with the dimensions and signifiers outlined in this study.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Heuristic Tool

Dimension	Artifact	Frequency	Coding
Individualism	Images with one individual		2
	Images with 2+ people		
	Images with diversity in ages		2
	Images focused on youth		
	Images with a singular object in frame		2
	Images with a multiple objects in frame		
	Copy referencing the individual (I, you, your)		2
	Copy referencing the group (us, we, our, together)		
Sum			8
Power Distance	Images of leaders, faculty, and people with authority		2
	Images of students or ordinary people, no defined authoritative figure		
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor		2
	Images of smiling individuals		
	Images of individuals (men) in formal clothing		2
	Images of individuals (ordinary) partaking in normal activities		
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments		2
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur		
	Message from the president (y/n)		1
	Mention of awards/ ranking (y/n)		1
Sum			10

Uncertainty Avoidance	Abstract Images (y/n)		1
	Images of people supporting each other		1
	Images of individuals alone		
	Images of smiling individuals		1
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor		
	Presence of links (y/n)		1
Sum			4
Masculinity	Images of males		1
	Images of females		
	Images of men in authority		1
	Images of women in authority		
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor		1
	Images of smiling individuals		
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments		1
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur		
Sum			4
Pragmatism	Images of traditional learning		1
	Images that showcase new methods of teaching		
	Images of classroom settings		1
	Images of extracurricular activities, and games		
	Images with one individual		1
	Images with 2+ people		
	Future oriented text - vision statements		1
	Text geared towards the present - calls to action		
Sum			4

Appendix B: University of Toronto Domestic Viewbook Coding Sheet

Dimension	Artifact	Frequency	Coding
Individualism	Images with one individual	10	1
	Images with 2+ people	43	
	Images with focused on youth	21	2
	Images with diversity in ages	6	
	Images with a singular object in frame	5	2
	Images with a multiple objects in frame	2	
	Copy referencing the individual (I, you, your)	14	2
	Copy referencing the group (us, we, our, together)	7	
Sum			7
Power Distance	Images of leaders, faculty, and people with authority	4	1
	Images of students or ordinary people, no defined authoritative figure	38	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	15	1
	Images of smiling individuals	28	
	Images of individuals (men) in formal clothing	10	1
	Images of individuals (ordinary) partaking in normal activities	38	
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	9	1
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	17	
	Message from the president (y/n)	n	1
	Mention of awards/ ranking (y/n)	y	2
Sum			7
Uncertainty Avoidance	Abstract Images (y/n)	y	1
	Images of people supporting each other	26	2
	Images of individuals alone	10	
	Images of smiling individuals	28	1
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	15	

	Presence of links (y/n)	y	1
Sum			5
Masculinity	Images of males	9	1
	Images of females/mix	40	
	Images of men in authority	3	1
	Images of women in authority	4	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	15	1
	Images of smiling individuals	28	
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	9	1
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	17	
Sum			4
Pragmatism	Images of traditional learning	5	2
	Images that showcase new methods of teaching	11	
	Images of classroom settings	5	2
	Images of extracurricular activities, and games	35	
	Images with one individual	10	1
	Images with 2+ people	42	
	Future oriented text - vision statements	4	1
	Text geared towards the present - calls to action	9	
Sum			6

Appendix C: University of Toronto International Viewbook Coding Sheet

Dimension	Artifact	Frequency	Coding
Individualism	Images with one individual	10	1
	Images with 2+ people	42	
	Images with focused on youth	20	2
	Images with diversity in ages	5	
	Images with a singular object in frame	5	2
	Images with a multiple objects in frame	2	

	Copy referencing the individual (I, you, your)	14	
	Copy referencing the group (us, we, our, together)	7	2
Sum			7
Power Distance	Images of leaders, faculty, and people with authority	3	
	Images of students or ordinary people, no defined authoritative figure	37	1
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	13	
	Images of smiling individuals	28	1
	Images of individuals (men) in formal clothing	10	
	Images of individuals (ordinary) partaking in normal activities	36	1
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	8	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	17	1
	Message from the president (y/n)	n	1
	Mention of awards/ ranking (y/n)	y	2
Sum			7
Uncertainty Avoidance	Abstract Images (y/n)	y	1
	Images of people supporting each other	25	
	Images of individuals alone	10	2
	Images of smiling individuals	29	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	12	1
	Presence of links (y/n)	y	1
Sum			5
Masculinity	Images of males	8	
	Images of females/mix	40	1
	Images of men in authority	2	
	Images of women in authority	4	1
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	12	
	Images of smiling individuals	29	1
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures,	8	1

	monuments		
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	17	
Sum			4
Pragmatism	Images of traditional learning	4	
	Images that showcase new methods of teaching	11	2
	Images of classroom settings	5	
	Images of extracurricular activities, and games	33	2
	Images with one individual	10	
	Images with 2+ people	42	1
	Future oriented text - vision statements	4	
	Text geared towards the present - calls to action	9	1
Sum			6

Appendix D: McGill University Domestic Viewbook Coding Sheet

Dimension	Artifact	Frequency	Coding
Individualism	Images with one individual	6	
	Images with 2+ people	13	1
	Images with focused on youth	7	
	Images with diversity in ages	1	2
	Images with a singular object in frame	4	
	Images with a multiple objects in frame	0	2
	Copy referencing the individual (I, you, your)	7	
	Copy referencing the group (us, we, our, together)	3	2
Sum			7
Power Distance	Images of leaders, faculty, and people with authority	0	
	Images of students or ordinary people, no defined authoritative figure	14	1
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	3	
	Images of smiling individuals	11	1
	Images of individuals (men) in formal clothing	0	
	Images of individuals (ordinary) partaking in normal activities	13	1

	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	8	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	6	2
	Message from the president (y/n)	n	1
	Mention of awards/ ranking (y/n)	y	2
Sum			8
Uncertainty Avoidance	Abstract Images (y/n)	y	1
	Images of people supporting each other	8	
	Images of individuals alone	6	2
	Images of smiling individuals	11	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	3	1
	Presence of links (y/n)	y	1
Sum			5
Masculinity	Images of males	3	
	Images of females/mix	15	1
	Images of men in authority	1	
	Images of women in authority	0	2
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	3	
	Images of smiling individuals	11	1
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	8	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	6	2
Sum			6
Pragmatism	Images of traditional learning	2	
	Images that showcase new methods of teaching	3	2
	Images of classroom settings	1	
	Images of extracurricular activities, and games	8	2
	Images with one individual	6	
	Images with 2+ people	12	1
	Future oriented text - vision statements	1	
	Text geared towards the present - calls to action	2	1

Sum			6
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Appendix E: McGill University International Viewbook Coding Sheet

Dimension	Artifact	Frequency	Coding
Individualism	Images with one individual	6	1
	Images with 2+ people	13	
	Images with focused on youth	7	2
	Images with diversity in ages	1	
	Images with a singular object in frame	4	2
	Images with a multiple objects in frame	0	
	Copy referencing the individual (I, you, your)	7	2
	Copy referencing the group (us, we, our, together)	3	
Sum			7
Power Distance	Images of leaders, faculty, and people with authority	0	1
	Images of students or ordinary people, no defined authoritative figure	14	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	3	1
	Images of smiling individuals	11	
	Images of individuals (men) in formal clothing	0	1
	Images of individuals (ordinary) partaking in normal activities	13	
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	8	2
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	6	
	Message from the president (y/n)	n	1
	Mention of awards/ ranking (y/n)	y	2
Sum			8
Uncertainty Avoidance	Abstract Images (y/n)	y	1
	Images of people supporting each other	8	2
	Images of individuals alone	6	

	Images of smiling individuals	11	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	3	1
	Presence of links (y/n)	y	1
Sum			5
Masculinity	Images of males	4	
	Images of females/mix	14	1
	Images of men in authority	1	
	Images of women in authority	0	2
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	3	
	Images of smiling individuals	11	1
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	8	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	6	2
Sum			6
Pragmatism	Images of traditional learning	2	
	Images that showcase new methods of teaching	3	2
	Images of classroom settings	1	
	Images of extracurricular activities, and games	8	2
	Images with one individual	6	
	Images with 2+ people	12	1
	Future oriented text - vision statements	1	
	Text geared towards the present - calls to action	2	1
Sum			6

Appendix F: University of British Columbia Viewbook Coding Sheet

Dimension	Artifact	Frequency	Coding
Individualism	Images with one individual	54	
	Images with 2+ people	35	2
	Images with focused on youth	40	
	Images with diversity in ages	5	2
	Images with a singular object in frame	2	
	Images with a multiple objects in frame	1	2

	Copy referencing the individual (I, you, your)	9	
	Copy referencing the group (us, we, our, together)	10	1
Sum			7
Power Distance	Images of leaders, faculty, and people with authority	4	
	Images of students or ordinary people, no defined authoritative figure	64	1
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	13	
	Images of smiling individuals	65	1
	Images of individuals (men) in formal clothing	4	
	Images of individuals (ordinary) partaking in normal activities	64	1
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	1	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	23	1
	Message from the president (y/n)	N	1
	Mention of awards/ ranking (y/n)	Y	2
Sum			7
Uncertainty Avoidance	Abstract Images (y/n)	Y	1
	Images of people supporting each other	33	
	Images of individuals alone	54	1
	Images of smiling individuals	65	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	13	1
	Presence of links (y/n)	Y	1
Sum			4
Masculinity	Images of males	25	
	Images of females/mix	60	1
	Images of men in authority	3	
	Images of women in authority	2	2
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	13	
	Images of smiling individuals	65	1
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures,	1	1

	monuments		
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	23	
Sum			5
Pragmatism	Images of traditional learning	6	
	Images that showcase new methods of teaching	8	2
	Images of classroom settings	9	
	Images of extracurricular activities, and games	27	2
	Images with one individual	54	
	Images with 2+ people	35	2
	Future oriented text - vision statements	2	
	Text geared towards the present - calls to action	9	1
Sum			7

Appendix G: Université de Montréal Domestic Viewbook Coding Sheet

Dimension	Artifact	Frequency	Coding
Individualism	Images with one individual	1	
	Images with 2+ people	4	1
	Images with focused on youth	4	
	Images with diversity in ages	0	2
	Images with a singular object in frame	0	
	Images with a multiple objects in frame	0	0
	Copy referencing the individual (I, you, your)	7	
	Copy referencing the group (us, we, our, together)	0	2
Sum			5
Power Distance	Images of leaders, faculty, and people with authority	0	
	Images of students or ordinary people, no defined authoritative figure	5	1
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	1	
	Images of smiling individuals	4	1
	Images of individuals (men) in formal clothing	0	

	Images of individuals (ordinary) partaking in normal activities	5	
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	2	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	3	1
	Message from the president (y/n)	n	1
	Mention of awards/ ranking (y/n)	y	2
Sum			7
Uncertainty Avoidance	Abstract Images (y/n)	y	1
	Images of people supporting each other	3	
	Images of individuals alone	1	2
	Images of smiling individuals	4	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	1	1
	Presence of links (y/n)	y	1
Sum			5
Masculinity	Images of males	1	
	Images of females/mix	4	1
	Images of men in authority	0	
	Images of women in authority	0	0
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	1	
	Images of smiling individuals	4	1
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	2	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	3	1
Sum			3
Pragmatism	Images of traditional learning	2	
	Images that showcase new methods of teaching	0	1
	Images of classroom settings	2	
	Images of extracurricular activities, and games	0	1
	Images with one individual	1	
	Images with 2+ people	4	1
	Future oriented text - vision statements	1	

	Text geared towards the present - calls to action	3	
Sum			4

Appendix H: Université de Montréal International Viewbook Coding Sheet

Dimension	Artifact	Frequency	Coding
Individualism	Images with one individual	1	1
	Images with 2+ people	4	
	Images with focused on youth	4	2
	Images with diversity in ages	0	
	Images with a singular object in frame	0	0
	Images with a multiple objects in frame	0	
	Copy referencing the individual (I, you, your)	7	2
	Copy referencing the group (us, we, our, together)	0	
Sum			5
Power Distance	Images of leaders, faculty, and people with authority	0	1
	Images of students or ordinary people, no defined authoritative figure	5	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	1	1
	Images of smiling individuals	4	
	Images of individuals (men) in formal clothing	0	1
	Images of individuals (ordinary) partaking in normal activities	5	
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	2	1
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	3	
	Message from the president (y/n)	n	1
	Mention of awards/ ranking (y/n)	y	2
Sum			7
Uncertainty Avoidance	Abstract Images (y/n)	y	1
	Images of people supporting each other	3	

	Images of individuals alone	1	
	Images of smiling individuals	4	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	1	1
	Presence of links (y/n)	y	1
Sum			5
Masculinity	Images of males	1	
	Images of females/mix	4	1
	Images of men in authority	0	
	Images of women in authority	0	0
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	1	
	Images of smiling individuals	4	1
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	2	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	3	1
Sum			3
Pragmatism	Images of traditional learning	2	
	Images that showcase new methods of teaching	0	1
	Images of classroom settings	2	
	Images of extracurricular activities, and games	0	1
	Images with one individual	1	
	Images with 2+ people	4	1
	Future oriented text - vision statements	1	
	Text geared towards the present - calls to action	3	1
Sum			4

Appendix I: University of Alberta Domestic Viewbook Coding Sheet

Dimension	Artifact	Frequency	Coding
Individualism	Images with one individual	16	
	Images with 2+ people	9	2
	Images with focused on youth	13	

2

	Images with diversity in ages	3	
	Images with a singular object in frame	5	
	Images with a multiple objects in frame	3	2
	Copy referencing the individual (I, you, your)	17	
	Copy referencing the group (us, we, our, together)	10	2
Sum			8
Power Distance	Images of leaders, faculty, and people with authority	2	
	Images of students or ordinary people, no defined authoritative figure	18	1
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	1	
	Images of smiling individuals	23	1
	Images of individuals (men) in formal clothing	2	
	Images of individuals (ordinary) partaking in normal activities	18	1
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	9	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	5	2
	Message from the president (y/n)	n	1
	Mention of awards/ ranking (y/n)	y	2
Sum			8
Uncertainty Avoidance	Abstract Images (y/n)	y	1
	Images of people supporting each other	9	
	Images of individuals alone	16	1
	Images of smiling individuals	23	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	1	1
	Presence of links (y/n)	y	1
Sum			4
Masculinity	Images of males	8	
	Images of females/mix	17	1
	Images of men in authority	0	
	Images of women in authority	2	1
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	1	

	Images of smiling individuals	23	
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	9	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	5	2
Sum			5
Pragmatism	Images of traditional learning	2	
	Images that showcase new methods of teaching	1	1
	Images of classroom settings	2	
	Images of extracurricular activities, and games	4	2
	Images with one individual	16	
	Images with 2+ people	9	2
	Future oriented text - vision statements	3	
	Text geared towards the present - calls to action	9	1
Sum			6

Appendix J: University of Alberta International Viewbook Coding Sheet

Dimension	Artifact	Frequency	Coding
Individualism	Images with one individual	3	
	Images with 2+ people	12	1
	Images with focused on youth	5	
	Images with diversity in ages	4	2
	Images with a singular object in frame	0	
	Images with a multiple objects in frame	1	1
	Copy referencing the individual (I, you, your)	7	
	Copy referencing the group (us, we, our, together)	11	1
Sum			5
Power Distance	Images of leaders, faculty, and people with authority	3	
	Images of students or ordinary people, no defined authoritative figure	12	1
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	3	
	Images of smiling individuals	10	1

	Images of individuals (men) in formal clothing	2	
	Images of individuals (ordinary) partaking in normal activities	12	1
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	22	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	4	2
	Message from the president (y/n)	y	2
	Mention of awards/ ranking (y/n)	y	2
Sum			9
Uncertainty Avoidance	Abstract Images (y/n)	y	1
	Images of people supporting each other	4	
	Images of individuals alone	11	1
	Images of smiling individuals	3	
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	10	2
	Presence of links (y/n)	y	1
Sum			5
Masculinity	Images of males	3	
	Images of females/mix	12	1
	Images of men in authority	1	
	Images of women in authority	3	1
	Images of non-smiling faces & serious demeanor	3	
	Images of smiling individuals	10	1
	Images of tall buildings, solid man-made structures, monuments	22	
	Images of nature, buildings with no grandeur	4	2
Sum			5
Pragmatism	Images of traditional learning	0	
	Images that showcase new methods of teaching	4	2
	Images of classroom settings	4	
	Images of extracurricular activities, and games	5	2
	Images with one individual	3	
	Images with 2+ people	10	1

	Future oriented text - vision statements	10	
	Text geared towards the present - calls to action	5	2
Sum			7

Appendix K: Overall University Rankings

	Individualism- Collectivism	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masc-Fem	Pragmatism
University of Toronto - Domestic	7	7	5	4	6
University of Toronto - International	7	7	5	4	6
McGill - Domestic	7	8	5	6	6
McGill - International	7	8	5	6	6
UBC	7	7	4	5	7
University de Montreal - Domestic	5	7	5	3	4
University de Montreal - International	5	7	5	3	4
UAlberta - Domestic	8	8	4	5	6
UAlberta - International	5	9	5	5	7
University of Toronto - Domestic	Individualism	Low Power Distance	Low Uncertainty Avoidance	Low Masculinity	Equal
University of Toronto - International	Individualism	Low Power Distance	Low Uncertainty Avoidance	Low Masculinity	Equal
McGill - Domestic	Individualism	Low Power Distance	Low Uncertainty Avoidance	Equal	Equal
McGill - International	Individualism	Low Power Distance	Low Uncertainty Avoidance	Equal	Equal
UBC	Individualism	Low Power Distance	Low Uncertainty Avoidance	Low Masculinity	High Pragmatism

University de Montreal - Domestic	Collectivism	Low Power Distance	Low Uncertainty Avoidance	Low Masculinity	Low Pragmatism
University de Montreal - International	Collectivism	Low Power Distance	Low Uncertainty Avoidance	Low Masculinity	Low Pragmatism
UAlberta - Domestic	Individualism	Low Power Distance	Low Uncertainty Avoidance	Low Masculinity	Equal
UAlberta - International	Collectivism	Equal	Low Uncertainty Avoidance	Low Masculinity	High Pragmatism