



Faculty Perspectives on International Students' Educational Experiences in PPPs in Ontario

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DOI: 10.53103/cjess.v4i1.204

Abstract

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that public-private partnerships offer an effective platform not only for developing economic and socially significant projects, but also for finding effective mechanisms, such as increasing collaboration and a greater variety of joint programs, recognizing students' prior learning, and reducing barriers to student mobility. Surveying 300 part-time faculty members in multiple PPPs through a snowball survey method. This article compared faculty perceptions of value with the expected value of the Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs; P3) programs in Ontario catering to international students at satellite campuses. Through a critical examination of data, the author delves into comprehensive findings and offers recommendations to gain a deeper understanding of the matter from the faculty's perspectives. It presents an overview of PPPs in education, student value from faculty perspectives, opportunities, and challenges of implementing partnerships. Moreover, it provides recommendations for future best practices tailored to ensure the success of private and public initiatives in the sector, throughout the collaboration between educational institutions and the government is essential to ensuring international students' well-being during their educational programs. A proposed well-being of International Students in Higher Education (WISHE) was further proposed.

Keywords: International Students, Public Private Partnerships, Educational Programs, Mental Health, Well -Being, Language Barrier

Introduction

Theoretically, public-private partnerships in education provide international students with the same rights and privileges as other college students, and access to the appropriate student support services, whether offered on the partnership campus, in the community, or through the college's main campus. Accordingly, in 2022, 25000 students enrolled in PPPs in Ontario (CBC News, 2022). Within the context of the PPPs parameters, this article will explore P3s and the current educational situation to determine if they align with and meet students' expectations throughout their educational journeys.

This paper aims to initiate a comprehensive understanding of the perceived value of PPP education among international students from the perspective of the faculty and the level of support that international students receive.

As a general rule, educational PPPs involve funding for services provided or managed by private companies. Evidently, there is a gap in the literature to assess the success or failure of these partnerships. Despite praise of P3s, disinterested analysts have difficulty accessing and locating PPP performance data. As most relevant data is controlled and limited by PPP participants, including government-specialized PPP units, evaluating success is challenging. In contrast, the media and publications tends to focus on negative experiences. According to Greenfield, (2021) Ontario colleges depend too much on international student fees. Furthermore the Minister of College and University (MCU) found that, the absence of plans to mitigate this risk, underscoring the importance of multiculturalism in Ontario's post-secondary sector, and pledging to "review these recommendations as part of its considerations when developing an international post-secondary education strategy". These students are exploited by schools, bosses and landlords (University World News, 2023). The stresses experienced in these areas of their lives, as well as by the temporariness of their immigration status – and that which comes after their graduation – combined with the stresses of the COVID pandemic to cause a mental health crisis (Greenfield, 2021). Due to their mandates, various auditors generally concentrate on auditing than comprehensive evaluations.

Limitations of the Study

Students' perspectives had been intended to be studied, but many obstacles prevented the author from doing so, including the inability to get IRB approval and confidentiality restrictions. Furthermore, faculty members do not provide enough information about their colleges, particularly for undisclosed personal reasons. The Canadian Government has stopped providing data on part-time faculty, thus leading to a gap in the data. Accordingly, Ontario colleges used to report the number of full-time and part-time academic staff annually. Since 2004, part-time faculty has increased from 62.1% to 67.5%; part-time faculty outnumber full-time faculty by more than two-to-one. Furthermore, we were unable to survey all colleges. A majority of PPPs viewed the survey but did not complete it. The author had to contact individual colleges or universities to conduct the survey but received minimal or no responses. Considering our goal of 10 PPPs, the response rate was minimal. We conducted our survey using the Typeform app, which reached 300 instructors, 67 % viewed it, only 39.5% responded. As part of our snowball sample, we included faculty members from one PPP who are simultaneously faculty members of another PPP.

PPPs Overview

Two characteristics define "public-private partnerships" in the Canadian context, including providing public services and infrastructure and partners to transfer risk. The absence of these two concepts would mean that public-private partnerships would not qualify for inclusion in the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships (CCPPP). A public-private partnership can take many forms and gradually involve private capital or expertise. The option of straight contracting out is an alternative to traditional public services. Other arrangements allow independent finance, design, construction, operation, and possibly temporary ownership under public administration.

Types of PPPs

The following is a discussion of their models:

1. Operation & Maintenance Contracts (O&M): Public assets, such as water/wastewater treatment plants, are operated by private operators, and the public entity retains ownership of the asset
2. In the build-finance model, construction costs are financed only during the construction phase in the private sector.
3. In design-build-finance-maintain (DBFM), the private sector designs, builds, finances, and provides hard facility management (hard fm) or maintenance services.
4. DBFMO (Design-Build-Finance-Maintain-Operate): The private sector designs, builds, finances and provides hard-fm or maintenance services. The operation of assets such as bridges, roads, and water treatment plants are also included in the project.
5. A concessionaire invests in and operates a facility for a fixed period of time before returning ownership to the public (Deloitte, 2023).

These PPP agreements require a bidding process and the relevant on-time and on-budget criteria. Additionally, PPP offers cost savings notably through more compatible incentives or larger economies of scale. It emphasizes consumer benefits and costs. A successful PPP must positively impact employees and the private sector. Furthermore, PPPs should add value to the government by creating net improvements to infrastructure, preventing future affordability issues, and maximizing value for taxpayers. Government initiatives such as the Modernized Skill Trade and Apprenticeship provided a platform for these educational partnerships (Deloitte, 2023)

Public-private partnerships are increasingly being used by the Canadian government to build complex and risky infrastructure projects such as public hospitals, waste-water plants, roads and bridges, and transit systems. Across Canada, P3s have

delivered 170,000 square feet of new school space, 4,790 hospital beds, 170 courtrooms, and 930 kilometres of roads.

In some cases, public-private partnerships are the most effective approach to building and managing infrastructure, but they aren't always the best option. Governments conduct qualitative and quantitative due diligence activities to determine if applying a P3 model is the most effective way to deliver a project. For example, a value-for-money analysis compares project delivery costs using a traditional procurement model with a P3. Across Canada and abroad, several studies have examined P3s' benefits and drawbacks. An increasing amount of empirical evidence suggests that P3s can contribute substantially to protecting the public sector from the risks associated with large projects. The studies show that P3s are often delivered on budget and with efficiency and innovation gains, but many governments lack the essential data needed to compare P3s with traditional projects. For improved project outcomes, public sector sponsors should develop a disciplined, planned approach to collecting and analyzing project data as an increasing number of projects reach advanced maturity levels.

Educational PPPs in Ontario

Initially, the Canadian Government required international students to complete full apprenticeships, which included on-the-job training and classroom instruction, prior to entering any educational program. Notably, the apprenticeships are quite lengthy as they take several years to complete and are costly. The Ontario government implemented a new policy in 2019, known as the Modernizing Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Act. As a result, public colleges in Ontario were able to offer standalone certificates and diplomas in skilled trades without requiring students to complete full apprenticeships, and offer certificate and diploma programs in skilled trades, preparing students for employment. These programs are shorter in duration and less expensive than traditional apprenticeships, making them more accessible to a wider audience. By implementing this policy, the Ontario government aimed to improve and streamline the province's apprenticeship program while addressing labor shortages. To maintain Ontario's competitiveness, public colleges in Ontario and across the country entered into private partnership agreements to deliver programs leading to Ontario college credentials.

International Students Enrolled in PPPs

In Ontario 25000 students enrolled in PPPs in 2022 (CBC News 2022; Erudera, 2023). It is important to note that there are multiple perspectives regarding the situation of international students in Canada. Punjabi University's Regional Center conducted a study in 2018 on the socioeconomic profile of study visa applicants in Punjab. This study included 540 students enrolled in various English language training centers in Bathinda

(Kahlon, 2021) highlighted that despite the fact that this sector is very lucrative for Canada, the profits it makes from international students have a social cost. As a result of Canada's international student program, One Voice Canada raised concerns regarding the problems faced by Indian international students (Kahlon, 2021). According to the study, a significant number of international students come from low- and moderate-income families. Having their children pursue an expensive Canadian education is primarily motivated by improving their financial situation. It is essential to consider the perspectives and experiences of international students in Canada because of the many burdens they face. Major urban markets have high living costs and exorbitant tuition fees that impose a financial burden (Kahlon, 2021). A recent survey found that nine out of ten students are concerned about their expenses. Furthermore, international students in Canada are experiencing mental health issues, which may impact their academics. In addition, the study discussed how Australia experiences suicide problems. Student mental health needs have become increasingly complex as the student population diversifies, allowing students who previously avoided post secondary education to access it. International students experience has been difficult; with second language socialization, and being a significant minority considered "at risk" for academic failure. Testimony from educators described adaptation issues, including: loneliness and disorientation, stresses from pressure to succeed academically, and inadequate homestay condition.

These problems have been exacerbated by the economic impact of COVID-19. International students are vulnerable and have been found to be in need of assistance in several government studies. One of the key recommendations emphasizes the importance of consistently evaluating students. This study proposes a two-fold approach to safeguard the well-being of international students. Firstly, the international student program be comprehensively evaluated from 2014 to 2020 through an in-depth evaluation. Second, tuition fees for international students should be regulated and reduced. The offices of international students at post-secondary institutions need more funding and training to provide specialized services (Kahlon,2020). Without any reforms that address the underlying causes, it is difficult to imagine these issues being mitigated.

Methodology

As part of this investigation, the primary research question and objective is to determine the satisfaction of faculty with international students enrolled in PPPs in the Greater Toronto Area. Through both qualitative and quantitative methods utilized to gather and analyze the research data, the author gained more insight into the issue. Therefore, part-time faculty were selected from PPPs in the Greater Toronto Area for the sample. As per Statistics Canada, (2021) part-time faculty who teach at different PPPs are considered twice as many as full-time faculty teaching at more than one college. The

study utilized a snowball method characterized by recruiting participants who fit the research criteria and then referring additional participants within their social networks. A survey comprising 41 questions was formulated for distribution to 300 faculty members in P3.

Findings

The survey, which consisted of 41 questions, addressed student satisfaction from faculty perspectives. Survey participants were provided with a consent form acknowledging their anonymity, assuring the no risk involved in the survey. Through the snowballing sampling method, the author distributed and aimed to collect 300 surveys across multiple PPPs in the GTA. While 296 individuals viewed the survey, only 116 participants completed it, resulting in a 39.5% completion rate. On average, the participants took 10 minutes to complete the survey.

Demographics and Experience

Based on the conducted survey, 73% of the participants reported possessing a master's or doctorate degree, and English is their native language. On the other hand, 26.7% of the participants did not hold a master's or doctorate degree in English.

Reviewing the participants' experiences, 69% of the faculty had previous Canadian teaching experience. Notably, the Canadian experience within PPPs is significant. Consequently, 20% of respondents had no Canadian teaching experience. Furthermore, 72.4% possessed relevant teaching experience in Canada, 25% outside of Canada, and 2.6% had no prior experience. 56% of the faculty indicated that they have additional full-time employment aside from teaching. 55% of the respondents teach courses with WIL or COOP elements, whereas 44% indicated otherwise. Thus, the study determined that some programs still lack experiential learning opportunities. Accordingly, 90% of faculty believed their program aligned with labor market needs, while 9% disagreed. Approximately 75% of faculty members were confident students could find jobs aligned with their degrees, while 25% did not know or had doubts about their student job prospects. To the study's objectives, the faculty rated the educational quality of their programs. As a result, 90% of respondents stood satisfied with their current academic programs, while 9% were dissatisfied. Among the survey questions, faculty had to indicate whether they knew of or heard of instances when students were dissatisfied with lectures or instructors. In response, 49% responded in the affirmative. Furthermore, 95% of lecturers have never received complaints about their lectures.

In an examination of the college's facilities and equipment, 25% of the respondents indicated that students have complained about the college's facilities, and 29% have complained about the inadequate equipment and resources. 55% of the

surveyed faculty expressed that student services could be improved. Consequently, 75% of respondents reported that they would assist students with setting goals and developing strategies for adequate resources for students, whereas 13% did not. Furthermore, according to faculty respondents, 60% believe teaching methods need improvement, while 20% indicated that the orientation needs improvement. In light of class sizes, 31% of the faculty members responded that they were unsatisfied with the current size of classes. Regarding their classes' dropout rate, approximately 18 percent reported a five to ten percent dropout rate. Based on an assessment of the work environment, on a scale of 1 to 7, 83% indicated that their work environment was cohesive, compared to 5% who reported that it was incohesive.

For the social and cultural fit and readiness of Canadian students, 60% responded that they are well adjusted, and 40% did not think so. Unfortunately, based on the survey data, 80% of participants believe that international students experience stress throughout the semester. Procrastination is at a 79% rate, in my opinion, justified by stress.

Students' English proficiency was rated 29 percent by 5 out of 7 faculty members, while 18 percent believed they lacked proficiency. Based on survey results, 57% of respondents needed one-to-one tutoring. According to the gender demographics, 48% of respondents were women, 47% were men, 1.7 indicated gender minorities, and 2.6 did not specify. The majority gave it an average rating of 5 out of 10 when asked about their teaching experience in a PPP in Canada.

A final question asked faculty to list the top five things their colleges could improve. In response to the survey, faculty indicated they wanted smaller class sizes, more real-life-oriented programs, networking events, green environments, computer labs, opportunities for job preparation, mental health support, and more space.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The actual performance of PPPs to date has been mixed, based on the literature available, so we will need to scholarly confirm and gather evidence from students to improve this sector. Public-private collaboration is essential for addressing clearly defined public needs by appropriately allocating resources, risks, and rewards. For the Modernizing Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Act to be successful, it needs to be focused and oriented to leverage the profitable mentality of the private sector and the experience of the public sector to utilize the P3 model and allow incumbents to reach and resolve the issues that have been affecting it.

Research intentions and recent initiatives are hindered by a lack of information making it difficult to implement these initiatives. Government involvement and support could facilitate this mission as scholars, educators, and educational institutions are interested in improving this sector. Using more application-based approaches in P3

programs is needed, rethinking academic development. Since international students lack cultural and social experience, it is crucial to evaluate and control their educational and career performance.

Furthermore, colleges lack facilities, student services, green spaces in housing, and networking opportunities for these students. The students are experiencing high levels of stress and need continuance support. The college's policies, academic policies, and policies governing confidentiality and privacy have significant policy gaps that must be addressed. Creating a framework for new service delivery models and shared mental health responsibility is essential (Cooke and Huntley, 2015).

New approaches to student mental health should be introduced, and institutions are shifting towards a "circle of care" model of care. Thus, both at the institutional and system levels, counsellors' roles are evolving concurrently with the development of a shared understanding of their roles. Support staff and other staff must be included in this understanding, along with private-sector agreements and new legislation regarding counselor accreditation (Cooke & Huntley, 2015). Hence, I recommend that educators and governments evaluate international students in higher education. Every six months, a joint public-private government project or department must be initiated under the Wellness of International Students in Higher Education (WISHE).

For Language Barriers Pre-arrival orientation programs that introduce students to the language and culture of the host country are required. English Language Re-Testing is required, as well as a realistic pre-arrival orientation. Providing on-campus support, such as ESL courses (intensive courses), can help students adjust and feel more confident upon arrival. Providing international students with local language partners or tutors. As always, supportive faculty are important. Technology usage for learning, and offering English electives. The use of technology continues to encourage students to immerse themselves in the language and sensitivity Training. To Provide ongoing resources and support throughout a student's academic journey.

Furthermore, facilities and equipment are crucial to students' ability to participate in extracurricular activities and develop a sense of community. College facilities and equipment provide high-quality instruction, support research, and innovation, and cultivate a positive learning environment. As a result, students and faculty at the institution are influenced by them in terms of attracting and retaining top talent. Few colleges, however, are overcoming this problem by allocating budgets for facilities and equipment such as the Ilac Group.

Conclusion

Partnerships between public and private sectors, often called PPPs or P3, are considered innovative. Inherently, it creates a "win-win" situation since it offers a variety

of public goods and services. There is no doubt that the interdependence between corporations and governments is increasing because of financial costs, accountability, quality of service, community engagement, or corporate influence on public policy (Roberston et al., 2003).

The PPP model, however, focuses on the asset's life cycle, affecting many decisions regarding the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of the project. Planning life-cycle costs protect the private sector from using it for other projects and keep it available for maintenance and repairs. Furthermore, cost and time overruns are often borne by the private sector because appropriate risks are transferred (Deloitte, 2023).

Additionally, a significant portion of the value of the project can be attributed to the following factors due to obligations to its shareholders, and the private sector has a very low tolerance for cost overruns and delayed projects. The P3 model reduces economic pressures associated with moving goods and people during construction and provides better access to health care and public services.

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