

**A NARRATIVE STUDY OF STUDENT SOCIALISATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ACADEMICS
WITHIN AN INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION STUDY CENTRE IN
AN ENGLISH RUSSELL GROUP UNIVERSITY**

A Thesis presented by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements of the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

Newcastle University

November 2024

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Abstract

The 'marketisation of higher education' concept has gained significant currency in recent years. Market-oriented reforms in higher education, including the introduction of tuition fees, competition between institutions, and the increasing emphasis on student choice, have all characterised change within higher education, as universities and colleges have faced challenges related to funding, global expansionism and increasing institutional competition. Nevertheless, debate continues as to what extent academics have adapted to such significant change, especially within how students in one context learn to be students preparing for a different context, educationally and socio-culturally. The research reported in this paper originated from personal practice as a teacher-educator within an International Foundation Centre (IFC). Integrating theory relating to Socialisation, Internationalisation, and the Business of Education, together with appropriate conceptual analysis, configures a suitable research methodology based on Narrative design. The study's participants were a group of IFC teacher-educators, and the research took place over a period of two academic years, 2020-2022, that critically spanned COVID-19, so the findings revealed a complex interplay of expectations and changing relationships that occurred directly because of the Pandemic. Narrative testimony and documentary data revealed that the experiences of academics as they worked with students' progress, their academic skill development, and their approaches to how they were endeavouring to develop specific skill and knowledge portfolios were changing quite significantly. Students expressed socio-cultural differences in their forms of engagement and learning, employability experiences, and involvement with related opportunities when reflecting on their disciplinary learning journeys. Moreover, the richness of social-relational experiences reported by the educators was becoming more significant in mediating student progress and achievement. The study findings illuminate the risks in the competitive dynamics of Russell Group universities and their dependent reliance on the recruitment of non-EU international students. The points of originality of this study are an exploration of the growth of an under-researched institutional formation in the marketisation of higher education in the United Kingdom, the international pathway provider. It is also original in reflecting an analysis of changes from the staff's perspective concerning changing conceptualisations of student hood and consequent student socialisation in an International Foundation centre context. Implications for educator development are identified, as are policy indications for higher education institutions.

Key words: Socialisation, Higher education, International Foundation Centres, Pathway Courses, Marketisation, International Students, Academic Teachers, Narrative

Acknowledgements

I must thank my supervisor, Professor Caroline Walker-Gleaves, and my doctoral progress panel members, Dr James Stanfield, and Professor Pauline Dixon, for their continued support during the various stages of this research.

Part-time doctoral level research is taxing in stamina and emotional terms, particularly when it extends over seven years. Balancing it, alongside a pressured full-time work environment, a busy family life, ongoing executor and school governance tasks, and the unexpected wholesale change provoked by a global pandemic made this an unforgettable but often surprisingly enjoyable experience.

I especially want to thank the two people who were instrumental in ensuring this thesis was submitted. The support of my wife, Joey Murray, was priceless and was tireless at home. Joey was a star. Joey - when I came home from work, you were always positive and encouraging. During the write-up of this thesis, you made sure I focused and was not distracted by life's chores. Thanks for all the support. IOUs have been written.

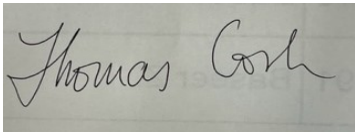
Professor Caroline Walker-Gleaves supervised my individual academic research at the University and in online communication. There were difficult periods during this extended knowledge construction when I was ready to give up and settle for a consolation prize. Caroline, thank you for making sure that I did not. Your reassurance, professional guidance, and inspiration sustained this project and were crucial to getting it over the finish line. I will always be grateful for your efforts. You are indeed an exceptional colleague and friend.

To everyone else along the way, the busy IFC teachers who volunteered their time, experiences, and insight to participate in the research. My bosses for being flexible and financially supporting the doctorate. The colleagues who responded to requests for help, and not least, the University for granting me more time to finish.

Thanks, everyone, most sincerely.

Disclaimer

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or processional qualification.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored, slightly textured surface. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Thomas Cosh".

Thomas Cosh

Ed. D Candidate

October 2024

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

1. DfE: Department for Education
2. DfTI: Department for Trade and Industry
3. ESL: English as a Second language
4. Gao Kao: PRC National High School Exams
5. HE: Higher Education
6. HESA: Higher education Statistical Agency
7. HoC: House of Commons
8. HoL: House of Lords
9. HEPI: Higher education Policy Institute
10. IFC: International Foundation Centre
11. ICEF: ICEF.com, International recruiters' network
12. IELTS: International English language Testing System
13. MIT: Massachusetts Institute of Technology
14. NAFA: Association of International Educators
15. NCUK: Consortium of UK university-led Pathways
16. Non -EU: Non-European Union country
17. OfS: Office for Students
18. ONS: Office for National Statistics
19. PG: Postgraduate Students
20. QAA: Quality Assurance Agency
21. THE: Times Higher education publications
22. TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language
23. UG: Undergraduate Students
24. UKCISA: UK Council International Student Advice
25. UUK: Universities UK

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale for the Thesis

The rationale for this thesis is the unprecedented global trend among non-EU international students seeking to enroll in UK higher education providers (HESA, 2023). Alongside this context are the parallel forces driving institutional competition and the 'Marketisation of Higher education' in the UK (Marginson, 2006; Findlay, 2017). Innovative structural changes and competitive stances have emerged, notably from the Russell Group of research-led universities. Universities have entered commercial partnerships with international education corporations that aim to increase recruitment and extend globalisation simultaneously. These partnerships, generally joint ventures but sometimes contract services, are termed 'International Foundation Centres' (IFCs) in the sector and the study. Examples of such providers are Study Group (Cardiff University), Kaplan (University of Glasgow) and INTO (Queens University of Belfast). In some countries, these corporations who run such Centres are called 'Pathway Providers' (NAFSA, 2023; ICEF, 2016). IFCs in the UK provide recruitment, subject and language preparation services for non-EU international students.

Although this context has become critically important to the financial stability of a number of HE institutions, there are significant research gaps in the field of study that would aid understanding of their recruitment and development mechanisms, not to mention the pedagogical strategies they employ. These latter are extremely important since universities with ostensibly very different and explicit aims and mission statements are the aspirations of the students within the IFCs. Most significantly, there are conceptual gaps concerning the differences in the way that these institutions position student hood (Straker, 2016; Lomer & Mittelmeier, 2023) and social constructivist learning with respect to their chosen degree institutions, even though IFCs ostensibly and explicitly prepare students for the latter (Pearson, 2020; Seviour, 2015). In addition, there are practical gaps in the understanding of the adoption of specific teaching strategies for socialisation and inclusion amongst the professionals who teach in IFCs and who are routinely from different – frequently much more applied – backgrounds to

mainstream higher education staff within the disciplines, who have almost uniformly emerged through research routes in comparison (Minirinis & Ahlberg, 2020). As a result, this study is original in several significant ways.

This study considers the experience of teachers employed in these partnerships as they engage and prepare international students to gain entry to undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses in a Russell Group University campus setting. It also provides a critical understanding of how the institutional policies in IFCs inform the relationships and expectations that tutors develop in the context of a complex learning culture. Moreover, the study adds knowledge and data to the literature in an under-researched institutional formation in UK higher education, the dynamics of the commercial partnerships established between International Education corporations and their partners Russell Group Universities.

1.2 International Student Growth

The growth in international student numbers seeking enrolment in universities outside their country of origin has grown exponentially in the first 20 years of the 21st Century, from 2m in 2000 to 6.2m in 2020 (UIS, 2022). Several countries have captured a significant proportion of the global demand for overseas university places. The top 4 ranked destination countries with the largest market share are the US, the UK, Australia, and Canada. The UK and Australia have switched ranks to take second place several times over the last ten years. In 2021/22, the UK was second after the United States, recruiting 679,970 international students in 2021-22 (HESA, 2023). According to the representative body, Universities UK, within this total, there were approximately 538,635 non-EU international students enrolled in British degree courses in 2021/22. The proportions by level were 39% on undergraduate courses, 54.5 % on postgraduate taught courses and 6.6% on postgraduate research degrees (UUK, 2023).

A significant feature of the UK higher education market has been the extraordinary growth in new postgraduate students' numbers from non-EU countries (including during Covid), increasing from 49% of total PG enrolments in UK universities in 2017-18 to 61% of total postgraduate enrolments in 2021-

22. The number of non-EU undergraduate students has also increased (albeit at a declining rate) over the same period 33 % from approximately 165,000 in 2017-18 to approximately 221,000 in 2021-22 (HESA, 2023). The picture of growth changes when looking at new students only, however. An analysis of the HESA data compared pre-covid numbers from 2019/20 with 2021/22. It found that the overall growth rate for new non-EU students was 37% (with PG students at 53% and UG students at 8% growth). The same data analysis found that overall EU student numbers in the UK have sharply reduced by 21%, and new EU students have fallen by an extraordinary 53% (British Council, 2023d).

Overall, in 2021-22, non-EU students represented approximately 20% of the total student population at British higher education providers. (HESA, 2023) [See Note 1 in footnotes]. Most non-EU students originate from Asia [see Note 2 in footnotes for key countries], although Nigeria is a notable exception. Approximately half of all non-EU international students in the UK are from India and China, as this survey shows:

In 2021-22, "Chinese and Indian students made up 27.8% and 22.1% of all non-EU students at UK higher education providers respectively" (UUK, 2023, para 11).

UK universities and the Russell group has captured an increasing share of lucrative international student markets since 2008. Conceptually, the 'Marketisation of Higher education' can be argued to have been advanced by this competitive success. Over 50% of Russell Group Universities had established commercial partnerships with the international education corporations that stands behind these IFCs by 2017 (HoL, 2017: Appendix A). By associating themselves with prestigious UK academic brands, the IFCs improve their competitive positioning with non-EU international students, their primary target market and how, by entering these partnerships, the Russell Group increase their capacity to recruit globally.

1.3 Russell Group of Universities as Recipients of this Growth

Pull factors can be considered economic, environmental, and cultural incentives that attract students to a place or activity (Nikou & Luukonen, 2023). Some of the significant pull factors for international students from countries such as China (Chen, 2016) are recommendations from contacts about tuition in English-speaking countries; institutions that offer undergraduate and Masters' levels higher education in English, the primary international business language; Further pull factors for students, their families and agent advisors, are universities who sit higher in the global reputational rankings systems for elite research universities, such as those offered by the Times Higher education, QS and China's ARWU/CWUR rankings (Nikou & Luukonen, 2023). Countries that oversee liberal study visa regimes offering work visas after graduation and other employment incentives are a popular focus with international students (UKCISA, 2023).

The largest recipients of successful international student applications in 2021-22 for higher education places in the UK are the Russell Group of Universities, with 38% of the total (Cosh, 2023d). The Russell Group is a network of 24 of the UK's most research-intensive institutions. It is often, therefore, regarded as the most prestigious with associated competitive entry, and these universities have significant reputational and competitive advantages (Britton et al., 2021).

International students are drawn to Russell Group universities for various compelling reasons (Furey et al, 2014; Zhang, 2023; ICEF, 2023). These institutions have well-established reputations for academic excellence. Both Oxford and Cambridge Universities are renowned globally, competing directly with Harvard, Stanford, and MIT in the US. Some have a consistently high rank in the global rankings, like LSE and Imperial College (THE, 2019; THE, 2024). The Russell Group brand is a benchmark for overseas employers, agents and parents considering university selection in the UK from Asia. It suggests a high-quality education for students and endorsement of their English proficiency.

Furthermore, these universities' robust international networks foster global exposure and facilitate valuable networking opportunities. Russell Group universities offer culturally diverse environments and

reputationally vibrant student communities in major UK cities, enriching the educational experience. Moreover, an extensive research infrastructure and prominent star researchers make them appealing hubs for those seeking innovative R&D opportunities. Lastly, the Russell Group's prestigious reputation carries potential career benefits, as graduates often enjoy enhanced employability prospects, contributing to a vital pull factor for international students seeking a globally recognised education and career opportunities (HEPI, 2021; IUUK, 2020).

The Russell Group consists of the following universities: the University of Birmingham, University of Bristol, University of Cambridge, Cardiff University, Durham University, University of Edinburgh, University of Exeter, University of Glasgow, Imperial College London, King's College London, University of Leeds, University of Liverpool, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), University of Manchester, Newcastle University, University of Nottingham, University of Oxford, Queen's University Belfast, University of Sheffield, University of Southampton, University College London (UCL), University of Warwick, and the University of York (Russell Group, 2024). In the United Kingdom, most international students admitted to Russell Group institutions are accepted on a direct entry basis (footnote three). They are recognised to have attained the subject and language qualifications from previous studies to satisfy their destination universities' admission requirements. If their language scores are marginal, students should improve their effective language capabilities (beyond the formal TOEFL /IELTS level) (Thorpe et al., 2017). Universities offer English language programmes (pre-sessional, in-sessional and English Academic Purposes courses). These run before and during the academic year of their degree courses (Pearson, 2020).

Most UK universities, not just the Russell Group, offer pre-course and in-course language preparation (NCUK, 2023) to attract more international students. These language courses contribute significantly to international student university retention and graduation prospects (Crosthwaite, 2016). A significant minority of non-EU international students who intend to apply to Russell Group University have lower high school qualifications, language competencies, and college degrees that do not satisfy their destination university's direct entry admission requirements. These students are recruited onto degree

Pathway courses (of 9 months duration) with the potential to provide them with pre-qualified first-year entry or second-year entry to an undergraduate degree or a Masters' degree in the Russell Group and to other British Universities (British Council, 2023b). Such a large pool of latent demand with demonstrable purchasing power from the two largest global population centres and other Asian countries has created a fast-developing market in international education. In such a globally competitive environment, British and American International Education Corporations have emerged, often partly funded by Equity Finance alongside their founders, to create a global supply chain to recruit some of this demand.

The Russell Group of Universities have subsequently developed long-standing institutional partnerships with these private-sector multinationals to widen the scope of their global recruitment capability. The main International Education Corporations in the UK, such as Kaplan, Cambridge Education Group, Study Group, INTO University Partnerships and NAVITAS, have invested jointly with individual Russell Group university partners and other UK Universities to recruit and prepare international students for a wide range of degree courses at undergraduate and graduate level (Cosh, 2023e). This network of corporate pathway providers has been well established in the UK since 2009, establishing a comprehensive set of relationships with Russell Group and other university partners. Evidence to Parliament demonstrated the extent of these partnerships, (HoL, 2017) with 63 university partnerships disclosed, of which 13 were with Russell Group. These partnership agreements are commercially confidential private data outside this study's scope to discover.

There have been, as demonstrated earlier (HESA, 2023), steady rates of growth of international student recruitment across UK universities. Approximately 40% of this recruitment in 2021-22 sat within the Russell Group of universities, with 255,445 international students from a UK national total of 679,970 (Appendix B). This study commenced in response to the need for critical discourse about International Foundation Centres and international student recruitment in the UK in the academic literature. The relationships between IFCs and their partner universities is a significantly under-researched area within models of institutional formation. Several high-level analyses of the 'Marketisation of Higher education'

such as (Marginson, 2006) and some supply-side studies (Findlay et al., 2017) exist. However, there needs to be discoverable extant literature on this adjunct industry sector focused on IFCs in the UK. International Foundation Centres represent a substantial capital investment by both sets of partners, deploying significant resources that operate across a significant minority of higher education institutions in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, affecting many thousands of international students each year.

However, there is a research gap, a need for survey data on progression and retention, and no assessment of the longitudinal effects of International Foundation Centres is extant in the Literature. IFCs have been instrumental in designing many new access points for international students to higher education in the UK, engaging tens of thousands of international students. However, there have yet to be any discoverable critical peer-reviewed evaluations of the broader effects of this institutional innovation on the UK's publicly funded universities.

Footnote 1: From HESA's 2023 data, the total number of non-EU PG and UG students in 2021-22 was 559,825. The total number of students given as enrolled was 2,862,620. Non-EU students as a percentage of the total number enrolled was therefore 19.55%

Footnote 2: Asia is diverse geographically, culturally, linguistically and ethnically. Their populations are distributed over vast land and sea masses. Specifically, South Asia - Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and East Asia, primarily China and Taiwan. Southeast Asia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Footnote 3: From HESA, 2023 data (Figure 3 - HE student enrolments by level of study. Academic years 2017/18 to 2021/22) These Universities only accept new students as total 'non-UK domicile' and full-time 'mode of study'. The total number of international students on full-time courses in 2021-22 was 636,060, of which approx. Three hundred forty-five thousand were PG, and approximately two hundred ninety thousand were UG, these were all direct entries.

1.4 Professional Background

My father's family are expatriate Scots who were instrumental in creating national railway systems and extensive farms in Latin America and were all born abroad but educated in English private schools. My mother met my father overseas when he worked for a US company. My Jesuit school in Glasgow (an independent day school) was international in outlook and mobile in alumni. The MBA, MPhil, and BA that I hold come from Scottish universities, and with further study I have acquired two PG teaching certificates both from English HE. Before teaching, I held three senior roles over 20 years, in management and consulting in public sector economic development and education system reform, living and working in Europe and the South Atlantic. I have first-hand experience in both international business and education.

This thesis is rooted in 12 years of professional pedagogic practice, working on a Russell Group university campus as a module leader and classroom teacher and working for an international education corporation (or Pathway Provider) in England. The company ZZZ operates a large 'International Foundation Centre' (or IFC) in a joint venture partnership with its partner Russell Group University, one of many partnerships that this company has with universities in the UK, Australia, and the US. Such an institutional formation is emblematic of the theory of the 'Business of Education', and the 'Marketisation of Higher education' (Findlay et al., 2017).

An IFC teacher workload is intensive and requires resilience. IFC 'academic' staff are expected to be adaptable and willing to flex their teaching capacity. They must do 20 face-to-face contact hours per week, plus the weekly informal, unpaid socialisation hours and scheduled personal tutor pastoral care, and cover duties. Teachers are expected to teach larger groups if a course has more demand. The company's business imperative drives efficient production of teaching services, re-organising teams and teacher workloads that generally increase per academic year. My experience is in supporting approx. 130 -220 students per academic year, in two staggered cohorts, starting each September and January. I have been fortunate during this time to have collaborated with a team of approximately 15

very experienced, supportive professional teacher-educators from diverse industry, managerial, and university language centre backgrounds. This team has become expert at managing an annual, nine-month cycle of pedagogic and socialisation tasks to maximise the progression of IFC students to their respective first or second-year entry points at the undergraduate and master levels.

1.5 Research Questions and Objectives

Three purposes defined this study. The first purpose was to examine staff narratives of their experience of socialising international students for UK Higher education in International Foundation Centres settings in the North of England.

The research questions relating to this purpose were:

- How do IFC staff narrate the socialisation of international students in Higher education in theory and in practice?
- How are IFC staff beliefs and practices in relation to socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management?

The second purpose was to analyse how the concept of socialisation is understood and shaped by the organisational concept of progression in International Foundation Centres in UK HE.

The research question relating to this purpose was:

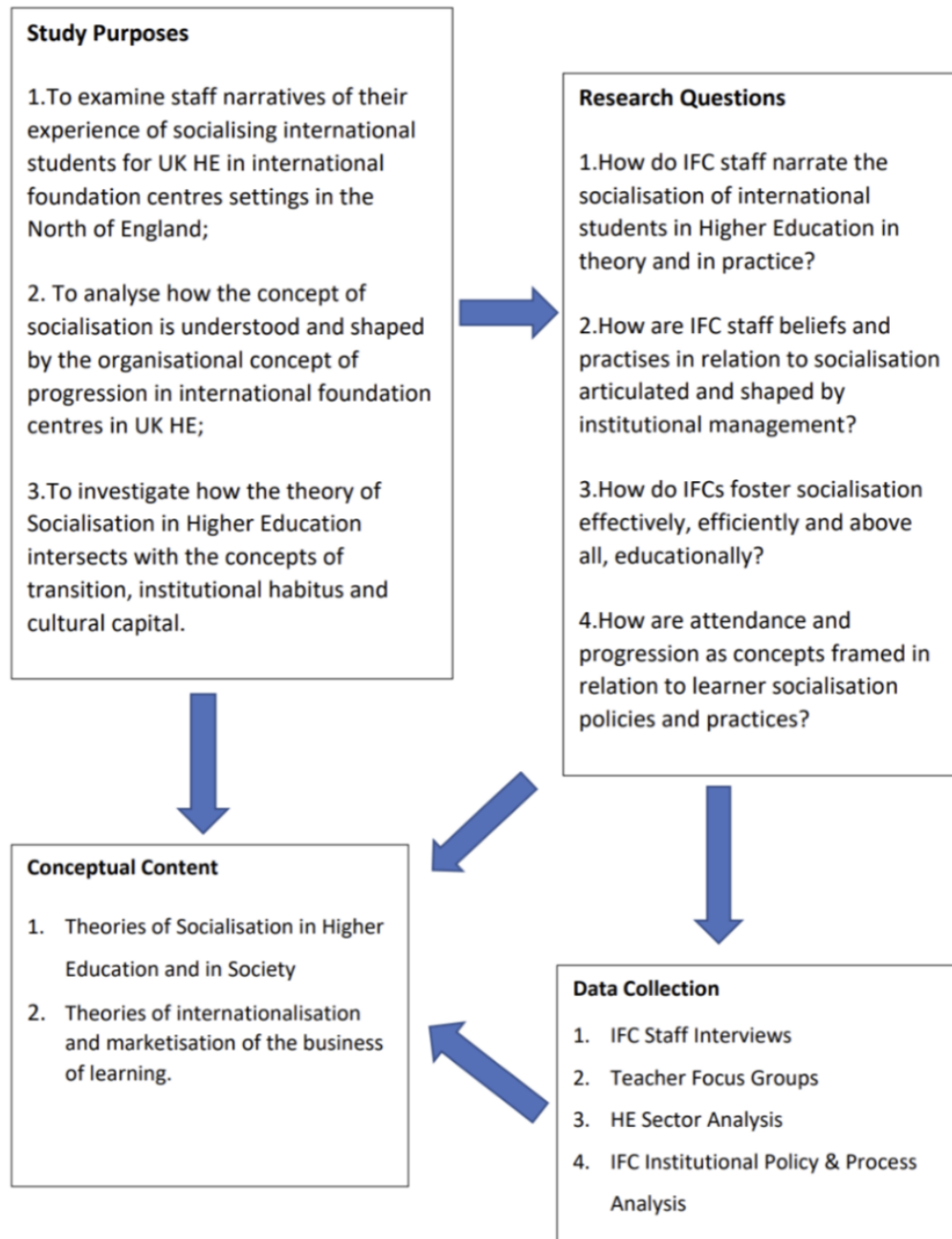
- How are attendance and progression as concepts framed in relation to learner socialisation policies and practices?

The third and final purpose was to investigate how the theory of Socialisation in Higher education intersects with the concepts of transition, institutional habitus, and cultural capital.

The research question relating to this purpose was:

- How do IFCs foster socialisation effectively, efficiently, and educationally?

Fig 2 Representation of Study Schematic



1.7 Significance and Contribution of the Thesis

This narrative study evidenced two significant differences in staff stance and perspective between the IFC and its partner university that suggest future further investigation and evaluation opportunities.

First, there is a so what question. Does it matter that there is a gulf in the preparedness, focus, and staff attitude to the socialisation of international students between the IFC and its partner university in the first year(s) stages of their undergraduate and Masters' degree courses? Of the two cohorts of students (ex-IFC and direct entry students), does one confer greater advantages on attainment, affective impact, degree outcomes and career destination? Longitudinal studies using qualitative, quantitative, and narrative survey data have significant potential.

Another difference identified in the narrative study was the cultural differences in the perspectives and beliefs held by university academics about IFC staff and students compared to their IFC counterparts. There are questions related to the IFC as an explicitly commercial organisation within the University. What flows from this are ethical and moral reservations and questions on the validity of the standing of international students entering the University through the costly IFC route. Further questions are raised about the University's ethical stance as a partner in the IFC and the financial beneficiary of the partnership arrangement in tolerating these perspectives among its staff. The University lacks frank discourse about the ethical consequences of maintaining the "necessary evil" of using international student revenues to cross-subsidise internal universities' finances.

The first original contribution of this study is to provide a deep, richly textured layer of narrative evidence from very experienced teachers with an average of 10 years of experience since the IFC study established its partnership on campus. Studies have yet to be found in the literature focusing on the socialisation of non-EU international students in England in this specific form of institutional public-private partnership in higher education. This study is significant because this form of public-private partnership, or joint venture, is now pervasive among Russell Group universities seeking to recruit international students. However, evidence of its economic, political, social, and ethical dynamics must

be present in the literature. This study contributes new knowledge and original insights into a complex and significantly under-researched area of higher education. These are the institutional partnerships and attention on the non-direct entry segment of international students in higher education. It also provides insights into IFC teachers' beliefs on their practice in teaching and socialisation as a relationship.

The second original contribution that this study makes has broader systemic implications. The study provides empirical evidence of the financial dependency relationships that non-EU-international student fees play in the financial sustainability of individual Russell Group universities. As this study illustrated in the discussion, two Parliamentary committees expressed serious concerns (HoL, 2023) and (HoC, 2022) regarding the Office for Students' lack of effective regulation of higher education institutions. They point to OfS' complacency, lack of willingness to intervene, and weakness of scrutiny into the financial resilience of Russell Group universities. It found that international student fee revenues cross-subsidised individual universities' operations and investments. Parliament flagged this as a serious systemic risk to the Higher education system. This dependency on revenues from a few foreign states' citizens may be subject to geopolitical shifts. It cannot be relied on long-term to support higher education and individual institutions. Parliamentary records of these committee proceedings in 2022 and 2023 (ibid) provide extensive evidence and examples of concern.

1.8 The Outline of the Thesis

1.8.1 Introduction

Chapter One sets the context for the study, analysing the growth in international student mobility, globalisation, and student pull factors towards UK higher education. It introduces the Russell Group of Universities and the emergence of International Foundation Centres. The UK trend to institutional partnerships in the context of increased global competition to recruit international students is set out. The section raises various concerns, including UK universities' dependency on international student fee income for cross-subsidy and parliamentary concerns about the sector's regulation and exposure to risk. The need for peer-reviewed discourse on the impact of this sector on Higher education is identified. The purpose and objectives of the research are then introduced. A diagram shows the relationships between the study's purposes, research questions, conceptual content, and data collection. The significance and contribution of the research to new knowledge are discussed, particularly concerning differences in partner culture, perspectives, evidence of sector dynamics and systemic risk. The keywords frequently used in the study are listed and defined.

1.8.2 Literature Review 1

Chapter Two consists of Literature Review 1. This chapter introduces the first of two conceptual frameworks behind the study. This is the Business of Education and the Marketisation of Higher education that sits as a topic within this. It explores how international education has become a pivotal domain in higher education alongside the wider forces that have shaped the higher education landscape in the UK over the last 25 years. The exponential growth in demand from international students and the global competition among HE institutions to gain market share from developing and middle-income countries is outlined. The theorisation around the emerging themes in this domain are discussed with a summary illustration of the concepts that are going forward for the purposes for this research. This demonstrates that the conceptual framework is evolving.

1.8.3 Literature Review 2

In Chapter three, Literature Review 2, a separate literature review of this thesis, considers the Socialisation of students in Higher education through International Foundation Centres and HE Pathways. Three theoretical frameworks used in the study's data analysis are considered. First, a discussion of Bourdieu's model of habitus that approximates socialisation takes place and engages with the linked concepts, including Institutional habitus, Cultural Capital and Transition. Second, the Weidman model of Socialisation in Higher education is extended conceptually in the discussion identifying critical processes, including integration, retention, adaptation, and transformation. Finally, in the context of the study participants, (teachers) model of socialisation, the salience of Vygotsky's social-constructivist model of learner engagement is considered with a specific conceptual focus on Scaffolding, Groupwork and Peer Learning.

1.8.4 Methodology

Chapter Four sets out the research design, presented in the context of the socialisation of international students in International Foundation Centres. Methodological issues of validity and integrity and the topic's affective dimensions are raised. Two main theoretical frameworks are considered, with an intersectional dynamic identified, suggesting tensions between the institutional expectation of student agency in socialisation theory and systemic barriers that can hinder students' success. A holistic approach is postulated to address a range of interconnected factors and the diverse needs of international students. An appraisal of Weidman's and Bourdieu's socialisation models leads to significant new theorisation in the discourse, representing a noteworthy variation in the conventional narrative of Socialisation and a novel explanation for the acquisition of institutional habitus and cultural capital. The subjectivist, social constructivist approach in its ontological and epistemological orientation is discussed. It explores the various dimensions of narrative research methodology and the strengths of an interpretative narrative analysis. The chapter includes a rationale for qualitative research discussing various key topics, including the researcher's role, the study's design, the selection

of sites and participants, data collection and management, focus groups, documents, Limitations, Validity and Reliability, and Ethics Considerations.

1.8.5 Findings

Chapter Five of the study presents the findings arising from the data - the purposes of the study and the related research questions. The study bases its findings on analysing teachers' narration of socialising with international students. Specific aspects of the subject were selected based on common aggregated themes emerging from teachers' stories. The themes follow a narrative structure based on teachers' extensive collected quotations. The six themes found are: 'Socialisation as a specialist service'; 'The effect of working online in lockdown'; 'Employer's policies and instructions influencing staff'; 'The Influence of the Business Imperative'; 'Attendance and Progression as contested metrics' and finally, 'the Salience of the Personal Tutor'. In Figure 14 – the six narrative themes are aligned with the study's four research questions. Each theme starts by presenting a summary of findings from the data. These are based on a detailed interpretative narrative analysis of the data, supported by selected quotations from the study participants.

1.8.6 Discussion

In Chapter Six, the study's primary theoretical frameworks, the Business of Education, and the Marketisation of Higher education, frame the discussion. It outlines the context of Globalisation and the growth of international student demand in the UK. It highlights an under-researched feature of the Marketisation discourse: the trend to partnerships between individual universities and International Foundation Centres (IFCs), commonly known as Pathway providers. Financial and marketing considerations sit at the heart of these partnerships and their intersection with the Marketisation of Higher education. The study's quantitative analysis of Russell Group institutions shows the extent of institutional reliance on non-EU international students (China and India) fee income to cross-subsidise domestically focused university activities. This trend is forecast to continue as more students are recruited, despite concern expressed by Parliamentary committees in 2022 and 2023. It is not clear that partner institutions, particularly Russell Group Universities, are considering these ethical decisions. The

partnerships illustrate how market-oriented practices extend beyond traditional educational boundaries and can lead to the commodification of education that impacts their traditional academic mission. Findings from each narrative theme are discussed through the lenses of mainstream and humanist literature on international students and their socialisation, and in some, by applying constructivist learning theory. The study then answers the four research questions, the discussion informed by a commentary rooted in the literature. Several limitations of the study are then identified.

1.8.7 Conclusion

The conclusions and implications of the study are recommended to university academics, university administrators, teachers of all descriptions and within all contexts, and not least, future researchers. IFC teacher's professional identities and commitment were shown to be engaged with the development of their students as critical, reflective human beings. The IFC-based socialisation processes revealed by the study go beyond existing theories of student adaptation and, more critically, introduce a novel explanation for repurposing a student's 'Cultural Capital' and accelerated acquisition of institutional habitus. Study narratives show that a pre-condition for teacher socialisation and pedagogy was the parallel deployment of the Business of Education by the International Foundation Centre's organisational infrastructure.

The study evidenced two significant differences in staff stance and perspective between the IFC and its partner university that suggest future further investigation and evaluation opportunities. A cultural difference found among university staff, as related by IFC teachers, suggests that there are ethical and moral reservations and questions on the validity of the standing of international students entering the University through the costly IFC route. There is a lack of frank discourse in the University about the ethical consequences of maintaining the "necessary evil" of using international student revenues to cross-subsidise internal universities. Two original contributions of the study are identified. One concerns the creation of new knowledge by providing evidence on an under-researched part of the Higher education sector. The other draws on the study's original research demonstrating the individual

and collective institutional dependency of the Russell Group and its exposure to significant systemic risks in relation to student recruitment, progress and achievement.

1.9 Key terms used and adopted in the thesis

a. Socialisation

The process through which students acquire the knowledge, skills, values, dispositions, and behaviours necessary to transition to academic success and integration into their chosen academic community, professional lives and broader society.

b. Higher education

HE is the learning and research experiences offered by colleges, universities, and other post-secondary institutions, leading to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees or certificates, advancing knowledge, and fostering intellectual, personal, and professional development.

c. International Foundation Centres

IFCs are campus-based educational institutions that, in partnership with a university, offer preparatory language and subject programmes, sometimes known as Pathway courses that with support services, assist international students to acquire the knowledge, dispositions and skills to satisfy the entry requirements for admission to degree courses at the University facilitating their socialisation and transition into higher education.

d. Marketisation

Marketisation is the process of introducing market principles, competition, and consumer choice into traditionally non-market sectors, such as public higher education, often aiming to increase efficiency and attract demand but sometimes resulting in issues like commodification or inequality.

e. Academic Teacher

An academic teacher works in an educational institution, typically at the college or university level and is responsible for imparting knowledge, facilitating learning and the development of critical skills, and guiding students in a specific academic subject or field of study.

f. International Student

An international student is an individual who crosses borders travelling from their home country to another country, usually holding a student visa to gain entry, to enroll in academic courses at colleges or universities in the host country and has the potential to contribute to cultural diversity and exchange in the host country's educational system and society.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW Part 1: The Business of Education

2.1 Introduction

International education has become a pivotal domain in higher education, in an increasingly interconnected world driven by globalisation's economic and social forces (De Wit & Altbach, 2021). The rapid internationalisation of British universities in the twenty-first century can be viewed in part, as a function of the competition between elite individual institutions to maintain their global prestige and status (Marginson, 2006; Marginson, 2012) such as Oxbridge versus US Ivy league universities. And on the other, universities in the Russell Group that sit atop a stratified national university system, exporting research and tuition, to attract the most talented international scholars and students (Marginson, 2006).

Across the UK Higher education sector, universities have sought to meet the enormous growth in demand from international students and gain market share from developing and middle-income countries, (Scott, 2011) with British Universities ranked second globally in providing a diverse and dynamic learning environment for non-EU international students from south, east, southeast, and central Asia to the UK. (HEPI et al, 2023; HESA, 2023). In this context and a focal point of this study are International Foundation Centres (IFCs), sometimes known as international study centres or pathway programmes, which serve as a critical conduit for a significant segment of international students to gain access to higher education institutions in popular destination countries such as the United Kingdom, (QAA, 2022 Appendix 6). Higher education institutions and their private partners are recognised as a key export sector by the British Government (DfE, 2021).

Many IFCs are commercial, institutional partnerships between international education corporations and members of the prestigious Russell Group of research-intensive universities (HoL, 2017; British Council, 2023). Pathway courses bridge linguistic, academic, and cultural gaps, facilitating the socialisation of international students and their successful transition to UK universities. The success of

these programmes hinges on curriculum content, institutional partnerships, and policies but also the intensive process of adaptation, acquisition of cultural capital and exploration of new modes of Learning within the classroom.

This doctoral research explores this growing aspect of international education by focusing on educators' experiences facilitating international students' socialisation in International Foundation Centre Pathway courses. Specifically, it examines the narratives and perspectives of educators as they reflect on their engagement with students through the transformative process of socialisation in this setting. Investigating this under-researched institutional formation in international education aims to contribute theory, knowledge, data, and insight to the literature where little exists. It hopes to stimulate future research and inform institutional policy, socialisation and pedagogical practice focused on improving the international student experience in the International Foundation Centres (IFCs) situated in the UK. It seeks to do this by eliciting the answer to four questions:

- How do IFC staff narrate the socialisation of international students in Higher education in theory and practice?
- How are IFC staff beliefs and practises about socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management?
- How do IFCs foster socialisation effectively, efficiently and above all, educationally?
- How are attendance and progression as concepts framed about learner socialisation policies and practices?

2.2 Main Bodies of Theory and Knowledge guiding this Research

This study draws upon two bodies of theory that guide the investigation to accomplish these objectives. The twin conceptual pillars of this research are theories of the Business of Education and, specifically, the marketisation of Higher education, the corpus of which is discussed in this chapter. The second twin pillar of this thesis are theories of Socialisation in Higher education notably Weidman and Bourdieu (Weidman, 2006; Bourdieu, 1977) and in the Pathway context, theories of Social-constructivism and

Socio-cultural learning from authorities such as Vygotsky and Bruner, (Woods et al, 1976) and (Vygotsky, 1978). These and other contributors to the literature are discussed in Chapter Three – Literature Review 2.

2.3 Literature Review 1: The Business of Education and Marketisation of Higher education

The first important pillar of this research is an exploration of the implications of the "Business of Education," with a specific focus on the Marketisation of Higher education (Marginson, 2006; Findlay et al, 2017; Altbach & Knight, 2017). This lens allows us to explore how commercialisation and market forces influence the socialisation dynamics within international pathway programmes. Furthermore, the research considers relevant theories of internationalisation of universities that provide contextual frameworks for understanding the global dimensions of higher education and the international student phenomenon, these include Academic Capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2009), Innovation hubs (Etzkowitz, 2006) the cultural dimensions of internationalisation (Lumsby & Foskett, 2016) and institutional positioning within the global Knowledge economy (Naidoo, 2011; Marginson 2010).

2.3.1 *International Foundation Centre Pathways and the Business of Higher education*

The primary theoretical framework that stands behind this study is the 'Business of Education' within higher education institutions, primarily focusing on the 'marketisation of higher education' (Britton et al, 2021). It explores the market-orientated reforms in higher education in the United Kingdom, including the introduction of tuition fees, competition among institutions, the quest for efficiency and the emphasis on student choice. The study is conducted on the city campus of a member of the Russell Group of universities, which are known for their research-intensive focus and competitive entry standards (Musselin, 2018). These institutions respond to marketisation by adopting business-oriented practices and leveraging marketing strategies to attract domestic and international students (HEPI, 2021; 2023). This sits within a wider context of increased globalisation and internationalisation of higher education (Altbach & Knight, 2007) and the integration of regional Higher education networks in Europe and Asia among others (De Wit & Altbach, 2021). Like many UK universities the Russell Group have

extended their international commercial partnerships beyond research, exchange programmes and overseas campuses to maximise the recruitment of international students (HEPI, 2021).

A notable aspect within the marketisation discourse is the emergence of partnerships between universities and International Foundation Centres (IFCs), known as Pathway Providers (Brennan, 2021; QAA, 2022). These partnerships intersect with critical elements of marketisation theory, including commercialisation, competition, student choice, and quality assurance. IFCs and their Russell group partners publicly assert values such as global citizenship, diversity, inclusion, transformation, and international collaboration in their corporate missions (see, for example, the websites of LSE, 2024; UCL, 2024; Durham, 2024). Financial and marketing considerations are central to these partnerships, shaping the evolving landscape of higher education within market-oriented systems (UUK, 2022; HESA, 2023). The findings of this study shed light on the dynamics within Russell Group universities. Many of these research-led universities are engaged in long-term commercial partnerships with international corporate education corporations, (HoL, 2017) reflecting broader challenges posed by marketisation in the UK's higher education sector. Striking a balance between financial sustainability and academic integrity remains critical for institutions navigating the complexities of marketisation (Cosh, 2023).

The release of data from the higher education statistical agency (HESA, 2023) and reanalysed by others, (UUK, 2023; HEPI, 2023; Cosh, 2023) has demonstrated the extraordinary growth in international student recruitment experienced by British universities in the three years from 2018-19 to 2021-22. This can pose several risks and challenges for UK research-led universities. There is a system wide recognition that there is an overreliance on international student tuition fees to cross subsidise the income gap that Universities have been experiencing (HoL, 2023). This has been caused by the fall in the real value of domestic students' fees due to Inflation and real term rises in university costs that have eroded the purchasing power of per capita fees (HoC, 2022).

2.3.2 Criticism of the regulation of Marketisation in Higher education

A noteworthy component of the literature around publicly funded universities and their marketisation strategies, is contemporary scrutiny on the oversight of the higher education system by several Parliamentary committees and institutional commentators. Their reports have reviewed the institutional focus of the HE system regulator, the Office for Students and UK higher education providers on international student recruitment to generate fee income. One commented:

“This dependency comes with risks and there is a worrying complacency that this premium from international student fees can be banked for the long-term despite in an increasingly competitive international environment and the risk that geopolitical shifts could cause changes in student numbers” House of Lords (2023:4).

There have been significant other criticisms of the role of the Office for Students (OfS) the regulator for higher education providers in the oversight of universities and their finances. The OfS has been found, allegedly, to suffer from institutional inaction, complacency, insufficient system risk management and a lack of maintenance of good relations with HE providers. Attention was drawn in these reports to the OfS lack of concern that HEIs were over reliant on international student revenues, compounded by the OfS aggressive expansion of the number of international students planned for recruitment to 2026. The source of these concerns includes the National Audit Office, Committees of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, and numerous witness testimonies including the Russell group, and an independent OfS report on provider engagement, (NAO, 2020; HoL, 2023; HoC, 2022; OfS, 2023).

Moreover, the fact these commentaries are post-covid suggests a metaphorical line in the sand is being drawn by the regulatory community. The committee in its findings went on to criticise the university regulator for their complacency in not giving due regard to the scale of these challenges:

“We were surprised by the OfS (Office for Students) Chair’s assertion that the sector’s finances are “in good shape”. This is not an assessment that we or most of our witnesses share” House of Lords (2023: 29).

The National Audit Office has found that the Universities faced systemic medium-and -long term risks (NAO, 2022). As have others:

“Some institutions have relied on increasing cross-subsidisation from international student fees to make up for the real-terms fall in resources for teaching home students”. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS, 2023: Para 35)

The overall trend direction seems to be that universities, like those in this study will continue to recruit increasing number of international students as they shadow wider education policy. The Office for Students forecasts that postgraduate student numbers will increase by 130,000 FTE between 2022 and 2025 with 60% of that number being non-EU international students (OfS, 2023).

UK Higher education financial and destination data for international students from 2021-2022 was analysed (HESA, 2022, 2023a). A sample of 18 Russell Group universities (excluding Oxbridge) of new undergraduates and postgraduates from non-EU countries (excluding the US) found an average of 38-78% of total fee income came from two countries, India, and China. It also found that non-EU international students represented between approximately 20 and 34 of total income for these universities (Cosh, 2023). Universities UK also found that the growth in non-EU Masters’ students over the period was an extraordinary rise of 53% (UUK, 2023).

2.3.3 The Growth of Market Intermediation

The backdrop to this sharp growth has been the acceleration in the international marketisation of higher education that has progressed over a 25-year period, (Marginson, 2006; McGettigan, 2013).

Governments have encouraged Universities to consider market solutions in higher education such as

treating students as customers, (Tomlinson, 2015). British higher education growth is harnessed and orientated towards the supply of exports, as set out in the UK's International Education Strategy, (DfE & DfTI, 2023) and the targets of the Office for Students (OfS, 2023). Institutionally, universities recover the costs of their higher education provision by reallocating university places to students who pay high market fees (House of Lords, 2023). The global reputational advantage conferred on the Russell group by the institutional rankings of UK universities placed in the top 100 in the International Educations Ranking such as QS and THE, are critical in influencing student demand (ICEF, 2017). Russell Group institutions were placed 4 in the top 10 and 17 in the top 100 for 2024, (QS, 2023). The Times Higher education (THE, 2023) rankings had similar placements. Rankings are criticised for being flawed (Altbach, 2010).

The function of market intermediaries such as agents and International Foundation Centres is to use their networks to identify, aggregate and acquire a pipeline of students which can be channelled to specific university course. Agents are unregulated in the UK higher education market. They work closely with individual international offices in the UK and the university commercial partners such as IFCs (BUILA, 2021), (ICEF, 2023) Two thirds of Asian students use Agents to support their choice of university, student agents receive commission (British Council, 2023b). British University, international offices and International Pathway providers marketing and recruitment services work closely with Agents (DfE, 2019).

The largest five private International Pathway providers operated across 68 universities in 2017 (HoL, 2017 – Appendix A). The Russell Group was reviewed for the study in 2023 to identify active partners from Study Group, Kaplan, Navitas, Cambridge Education Group and IUP (INTO), with NC-UK the largest internal pathway course provider operating across a range of Universities (Appendix C). Sample data from Glasgow University (GIC, 2023) operated by Kaplan and Cardiff University operated by Study group (Study group 2023) was accessed to provide case histories. These partnerships align with the competitive aspect of marketisation, where universities increase international student enrolments to boost revenue and global rankings, (Naidoo, 2016).

Many UK domiciled students from non-traditional backgrounds do not satisfy entry requirement but can enrol on ‘Access courses’ to increase participation in Higher education (Brennan, 2021). These students do not receive the systematic socialisation support available in IFC based pathways,

“Looking at access to Russell Group universities, young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are also under-represented in these institutions. While the proportion increased from 19% to 21% between 1997 and 2014, their share compared to other institutions decreased, from 38% below the rest of the sector to 45% below” (Sutton Trust, 2023: 11).

2.3.4 Pathways of International Study: an under-researched sector of higher education.

Any review of the ‘Business of Education and the Marketisation’ of higher education needs to consider two further salient features of the literature in this domain. First there is lack of footprint of the sector in the academic literature. No peer reviewed empirical studies researching international corporate pathway providers in the UK have been discovered. The research has identified multiple commercial partnerships between Pathway providers and Russell Group universities. The most frequent institutional formation for these partnerships on campus is the International Foundation Centre offering degree Pathway courses linked to these universities, an institutionally ubiquitous model across the Russell Group (Appendices A & C). The recruitment of non – direct entry international students via these Pathway courses, into the Russell Group and indeed to UK universities generally has generated recent controversy (Sunday Times, 2024, THE, 2024). Their absence in the British higher education literature is puzzling. In such an under-researched sector, the one area with some evidence of studies in the literature, is academic research concerned with linguistics. These studies, focus tangentially on pre-sessional language courses that provide traditional English language training for direct-entry students undertaken in universities and is a service provided by many International Foundation Centres, (Pearson, 2020).

Numerous searches in academic databases such as ProQuest, Science Direct, Scopus, and the Web of Science for key words and combinations of these, such as: 'Pathways', 'pre-degree Pathways', 'Pathway providers,' 'International Study Centres', 'International Foundation Centres, 'Foundation Degrees' generates nil returns from UK studies and institutions, other than access courses which are widening participation degree pathways. This is a separate domain from this study, concerned as they are with publicly funded, UK domiciled students and non-traditional learners not International self-funded students. The only common and frequent return from these searches is British universities and pathway providers advertising their Pathway courses and centres.

As an explicit tool of marketisation in Higher education, the presence of corporate pathway providers and their International Foundation Centres on campus are usually not disguised. Their branding on campus, online in webpages and social media and in published materials demonstrates the embedded strength of their institutional partnerships with universities (HoL, 2017). It is puzzling that scholars in the Russell Group, as with researchers in every university, routinely investigate the impact of institutional decision making on the strategic and operational activities of their research subjects. This extends across academic disciplines, from political science, history, education, sociology to all social sciences. Yet they appear to have ignored the aggregated effects of such a significant trend and innovative development in institutional partnerships in UK higher education.

At this point the so-what question arises, why is scholarship in the literature concerning IFC Pathways in the UK absent? It is present in the US and Australia. Is it because it is deemed irrelevant to higher education and a transitory feature of the institutional landscape. Is the structural reliance of the Russell Group on international student fees to bridge the gulf in their revenues, as advanced in this study, simply not controversial? It is widely recognised by regulators as a structural risk and ethical concern and incrementally emerging in print journalism as a given (Sunday Times, 2024), THE 2024). Is it just the cost of doing business? In recent years the recruitment of international students and the implications for the sustainability of UK universities has been raised (HoL, 2023; HoC, 2022; NAO, 2022) but is it so

embedded as an operating assumption in Higher education that it simply uninteresting? This study suggests that over-reliance on a limited number of sources of revenue is an issue for investigation.

2.3.5 *The Gap in the Literature*

So, there is a gap in the literature in the discourse of 'Marketisation of higher education' as revealed by this study. The literature review found little evidence of peer reviewed studies on International Foundation Centres and the corporate pathway provider sector from UK academic sources. Where this study provides a contribution to Literature is the insights that emerge in the 'Business of Education' from teachers situated narratives of their pedagogic and socialisation experiences of working with international students in International Foundation Centre, in a Russell Group University. The narrative themes reveal and illuminate the extent to which business structures and processes condition and shape the work of International Foundation Centres. For example, there is the commercial modulation and commodification of the academic year by the IFC. It recruits two staggered intakes of international students per year, to maximise the volume and potential revenues from the potential pipeline of students to their university partner destination courses. The IFC is driven by considerations of efficiency and costs in its service delivery design. This is congruent with the marketisation of higher education discourse. It is also illustrative in the lower relative wages and sustained increases in workload across the IFC compared to university colleagues. And the focus on monitoring and disciplinary processes to engage with 'student attendance' and 'progression' as a mechanism to minimise commercial and regulatory risk.

In the marketisation of higher education there needs to be a wider critical discourse about universities pursuit of the recruitment of students on higher fees as a means of growing fee income as it raises the question of institutional ethics. Universities work in an ethical context. Ethical decisions are being made about recruiting increasing numbers of non-EU students (25% of the student population) with the intention of offsetting the losses from the inadequate financing of domestic student places (75% of the UK student population). Drawing on these findings it is not clear that universities are taking ethical considerations into account. The notion that the large flows of non-EU international students into UK

universities are the results of a balanced public discourse by the students in their home countries on the relative merits of a British institution over another international rival is problematic.

Over the last 10-15 years, Access and Equity Issues have been increasingly raised in the marketisation context (Bowl et al, 2018). While these partnerships expand access to higher education for international students, concerns may arise about whether they are equitable and accessible to all, including those from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds. Advance HE (2023) identified less favourable student outcomes differentiated by ethnicity and gender. Equity considerations are important within market-oriented systems to ensure that higher education provides structural social mobility, economic development, and ethical responsibility. The intention is to limit the concentration of educational opportunities among the few and promote a more equitable and ethical set of arrangements in UK, Higher education.

Moreover, for teachers in the business of Education there is a tension between acting to advance institutional compliance, participate in attendance warnings and expedite the socialisation and support of students. This underlines the ethical considerations faced by teachers, personal tutors and their employer, the International Foundation Centre in the context of the pursuit of a just and inclusive society. In market-oriented educational systems, ensuring equity is essential to fostering structural social mobility, promoting economic development, and upholding ethical responsibilities.

2.4 Internationalisation trends as the context for institutional development

The socialisation of international students and the congruent emergence of commercial pathway courses in Russell Group universities are informed and contextualised by theories of the internationalisation of universities. There is a considerably body of theory on internationalisation extending over 40 years (Mittelmeier & Yang, 2021). Knight defined it as:

“The process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2003: 2).

Altbach & Knight (2007), draw a distinction between the process of globalisation and institutional internationalisation, where universities foster a global outlook, frame policies and practices and initiatives that are international in scope and flow from this stance. According to this perspective institutional motivations are varied: to cope with the changing global academic environment: to acquire knowledge; to re-purpose research and teaching for commercial advantage; to harness language acquisition programmes as part of the recruitment of a more diverse student body. This in turn enhances cross-cultural interactions that potentially enrich the educational experience. Russell Group universities actively align their internationalisation and recruitment strategies to attract students to their direct entry and pathway programs, emphasising the global scope of their universities as they seek to shape the demographic composition and cultural dynamics within these courses. (Manchester, 2024; Newcastle, 2024; UCL, 2024).

Moreover, theories of internationalisation emphasise the importance of comprehensive support services for international students that accelerate adaptation (Andrade, 2009) and integration (Tinto, 2017) and advance acculturation, (Berry, 2006) as advocated by Altbach and Knight (2007). Russell Group universities recognise the unique challenges faced by international students and offer specialised pastoral support through their pathway programmes (British Council, 2023b; QAA, 2022). This includes academic, linguistic, and cultural support to facilitate a smooth transition and foster a sense of belonging with the university community. Such support services are integral to ensuring the successful socialisation, continuity, and retention of international students in their chosen academic courses of Russell Group universities.

2.4.1 Models of Internationalisation - Academic Capitalism and the Triple Helix Model

For the purposes of this study, the influence of theories of academic capitalism and the triple helix university, were explored (Marginson, 2006; Etzkowitz, 2000). Such perspectives shape and develop the internationalisation discussion within the Russell Group, and the recruitment and socialisation of international students. The concept of academic capitalism highlights the increasing

commercialisation of universities, (Marginson, 2006) with high-status institutions like some of those within the Russell Group aligning their development, with near-to market technology research and development, that exploits their proximity to clusters of venture capital, and firms in technology corridors such as Silicon Valley, California, and Cambridge and London. This influences the design and delivery of undergraduate and Masters' programmes as universities seek to capitalise on these hubs, focusing their international student recruitment on revenue generation and to promote their reputations further. The triple helix model of Henry Etzkowitz (Etzkowitz, 2006) emphasises the interconnectedness between academia, industry, and government in driving innovation in the knowledge-based economy'. Institutional education and research are centrally funded and harnessed to support the development of human capital in a changing labor market and economy. Universities provide infrastructure and services to business, and knowledge transfer maximising the efficiency of investment in new goods and services and capital accumulation. The triple helix model proposes that students, staff, and researchers become opportunistic actors, deploying their intellectual capital in an entrepreneurial fashion engaging directly with the wider economy. Most Russell Group universities maintain collaborations with industry stakeholders and initiatives such as local start-up programmes deliberately designed to engage with staff researchers and students. Consequently, they provide a potential backdrop to the socialisation experiences of the wider student body including international students and IFC pathway students. The institutional mission of the international university is not uncontested.

2.4.2 Criticisms of the International University

One of the main critics of the concept of the international university as a sustainable institutional formation is Susan Robertson. (Robertson & Dale, 2015) who contends that the internationalisation of universities has been co-opted by conservative ideological agendas that have led to the commodification of education. Robertson argues that universities are increasingly being driven by market forces, seeking to attract international students as a source of revenue rather than prioritising the pursuit of knowledge and the public good. She asserts that this commercialisation of higher

education undermines the traditional mission of universities and exacerbates inequalities between the north and south of the global education system, (Robertson & Komljenovic, 2016).

Marginson's critical analysis of the commercialisation of universities and the implication of internationalisation leads him to conclude that it has negative implications for academic values, institutional governance, and educational outcomes. He highlights the tensions between market-driven reforms and the traditional mission of higher education, as well as the challenges of fostering collaboration and equitable access in an increasingly globalised higher education landscape (Marginson, 2016). Giroux (2014) criticises the transformation of universities into market-driven entities and the consequences of this shift for academic freedom, social justice, and democratic values. He argues that the prioritisation of profit over the public good in higher education undermines the university's role as a site for critical inquiry, social critique, and intellectual engagement.

Overall, these critics challenge the notion of the international university as a sustainable institution, highlighting the ways in which conservative ideologies and market-driven forces undermine the core values of higher education and contribute to social, economic, and intellectual inequalities on a global scale.

2.5 UK Institutional data-analysis of student recruitment in 'Higher education'

The knowledge-creation and quantitative data analysis of the UK's institutional network of specialist organisations that focus on international student recruitment in Higher education in the UK provides a critical empirical backdrop to these theoretical discussions. These agencies are the Higher education Statistical Agency (HESA), Universities UK (UUK), The Higher education Policy Institute (HEPI) and the British Council. They monitor, collate, analyse and communicate quantitative and qualitative data on international students' characteristics, source countries, degree types, institutional destinations and the financial and operational performance of the HE system in the United Kingdom. HESA's primary role is to collect and report current and longitudinal national system statistics (HESA, 2023) from the UK's constituent universities and higher education institutions. It identifies trends and profile changes in

international student recruitment, destinations, and demographics alongside those of the broader UK student population.

The UUK, as a representative body for UK universities, has used this empirical base to advocate for policies and practices that explain the salience of universities' expansion of international student recruitment (UUK, 2023) as well as the sector's engagement and fostering of cross-cultural interactions. HEPI, as an independent non-governmental think-tank, has been distinctive in the frequency with which they critically analyse HESA data on the cost and benefits of internationalisation in UK higher education (HEPI, 2023). The British Council is the official government-funded English language and UK Cultural service. Globally distributed, its language testing centres, and local events facilitate UK HE exports and support the drive for international student recruitment. It reports on the sector's supply-side (British Council, 2023) and impacts on sector competitiveness. This network, independent of peer-reviewed scholarship, has highlighted the growing revenue dependency of UK higher education institutions on international student fees between 2017 and 2022. The UK regulator of Higher education, the Office for Students, and several UK Parliamentary Committee reports (HoC, 2022; HoL, 2023) have noted that the growth in international student numbers and revenues have cross-subsidised the gaps in government funding, a phenomenon with potentially profound implications for the financial sustainability of universities.

2.6 The Shaping of the Landscape of UK Higher Education

The international marketisation of UK higher education has progressed over 25 years as governments have encouraged Universities to consider market solutions in higher education, such as treating students as customers (Tomlinson, 2015). The economic focus of higher education is orientated towards the supply of exports as set out in the UK's International Education Strategy, DfE & DfTI (2023). Institutionally, universities recover the costs of their higher education provision by reallocating university places to students who pay high market fees (House of Lords, 2023). The global reputational advantage conferred by the institutional rankings of UK universities in the top 100 in the International

Education Ranking, such as QS and THE, are critical in influencing student demand (ICEF, 2017).

Russell Group institutions were placed 4th in the top 10 and 17th in the top 100 for 2024 (QS, 2023).

Market intermediaries such as agents and International Foundation Centres use their networks to identify, aggregate, and acquire a pipeline of students that can be channelled to specific university courses (ICEF, 2023). Agents are unregulated in the UK higher education market. They work closely with individual university international offices in the UK and university commercial partners such as IFCs (BUILA, 2021), (and ICEF, 2023)

An agent in international education is "a person or organisation that recruits international students and refers them to education providers. The provider does not employ them, but as private entities are contracted to deliver services to potential students and the provider"

BUILA (2021: 18).

Two-thirds of Asian students use Agents to support their choice of university, and student agents receive commission. Many HE providers pay commission on the placement of a student (British Council, 2023).

The competitiveness of the UK approach to recruiting international students is strengthened by the design of the official immigration system and migrant regulations. It maintains a flexible cross-border legal framework that facilitates the supply of international students to UK universities. The 'student', 'graduate' and linked 'work' visas enable students to reside, work and stay on after graduation. This acts both as a pull factor for international students and sets behaviour boundaries (UKCISA, 2023).

According to study participants, a key responsibility that their employer places on IFC teachers is to complete hourly class registers. This supports international students' compliance with the UK's immigration regulations, so that individual student behaviour does not jeopardise the IFC status as an international college under immigration law.

"The pastoral role of the personal tutor (in the IFC) is not about socialising international students but about being used to police attendance" (ICEF, 2023: 4).

Another strong pull factor for demand is "Employability". An international education website that regularly surveys the industry and international students observes that:

"Employability is now a strong driver of international student decision-making. When asked to rank the importance of employment opportunities at a prospective study destination, agents rated this factor 7.49/10." ICEF (2023: 3)

Publicised in the partners' corporate social media publicity, this enhanced demand for the services of the IFCs from students without entry qualifications.

The structural architecture ordering the debate on university quality is based on the world rankings organisations such as QS and THE, both based in London. Using reputational and internationalisation indices and English, they tend to strengthen the position of UK institutions in the world universities' rankings. Education rankings are criticised for these flaws, (Altbach, 2010). However, rankings are read and used by international students and their agents, particularly in Asia, so finance-influenced admissions can affect reputational strength.

An ongoing challenge for Russell Group Universities will be how to diversify recruitment to achieve institutional risk mitigation. Over-concentration has incurred institutional risks when preferred overseas markets demand changes. Recruiting students from specific countries may lead to a lack of diversity on campuses, limiting cross-cultural interactions and perspectives. In their desire to secure premium fee revenues, some universities and their intermediaries, including agents, may compromise academic integrity to attract international students, including those with lower English language proficiency. Among the study's IFC teachers, there was the belief and recounting of anecdotal evidence that entry

thresholds for students at undergraduate and postgraduate level, were lowered by the University on a case-by-case basis for students who did not qualify to progress to their chosen university course.

"a student without a progression score went to the reception centre, slapped down their transcript and was accepted for a master course they had not qualified for" (lan)

This depended on whether a department had secured its revenue level before the start of the next academic year.

"If they have met their target there is more scope for ethical behaviour" (lan).

There is an analogous widespread practise present in universities during the annual UCAS 'clearing' period where UG applications, without the set entry requirements for university courses can be accepted on lower qualifications to 'clear' vacancies. Ironically an economics definition of the term "clearing" is that what is produced in a market, will be sold at a price in the market.

Government policies influence the extent and nature of these partnerships (De Wit & Altbach, 2021), (British Council, 2023). The UK government actively regulates student immigration and labour market status and promotes higher education as an overseas export (UK DfE, 2021). It promotes such collaborations to drive international student and enrolment support the growth of their higher education sectors. Over the last 10-15 years, access and equity issues have been increasingly raised in the context of marketisation (Bowl et al., 2018). While these partnerships expand access to higher education for international students, concerns may arise about whether they are equitable and accessible to all, including those from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds. Advance HE (2023) identified less favourable student outcomes differentiated by ethnicity and gender. Equity considerations are important within market-oriented systems to ensure that higher education provides structural social mobility, economic development, and ethical responsibility. The intention is to limit the

concentration of educational opportunities among the few and promote a more just and inclusive society.

In summary, these elements collectively shape the landscape of higher education within market-oriented systems, where universities and pathway providers strategically navigate commercialisation, competition, quality assurance, financial considerations, branding, globalisation, government policies, and access and equity issues to meet the demands of an increasingly global and competitive education market.

2.7 The diversity of International Foundation Centres in the Russell Group

The rise of IFCs aligns with the marketisation trend of diversifying service providers in higher education. These providers specialise in services that target the needs of international students. Pathway programmes often include orientation and socialisation components to help students adapt to a new educational and cultural environment. They usually include language preparation and academic support appropriate to their destination course.

There is considerable diversity of IFC provision in the UK due to the range of partnerships that currently operate among the Russell Group of universities and other UK universities. The main international commercial operators of IFCs that dominate the UK market are Study Group, Kaplan, Navitas, IUP (INTO) and Cambridge Education Group. NC-UK is a joint university owned network provider that emulates the privately run pathway model. All offer IFC partnerships with Russell Group Universities. Chapter 5 discusses some examples using operational data from the academic year 2023/24 and official financial data from 2021-22 (HESA, 2023).

Most IFCs from this study (Cosh, 2023b) are jointly branded with their university partner. This differentiates a pathway programme from competitors and offers a clear pathway to a specific Russell Group university. This is particularly important for international students who need to satisfy the University's standard entry requirements, thus enabling the University to capture a broader segment of

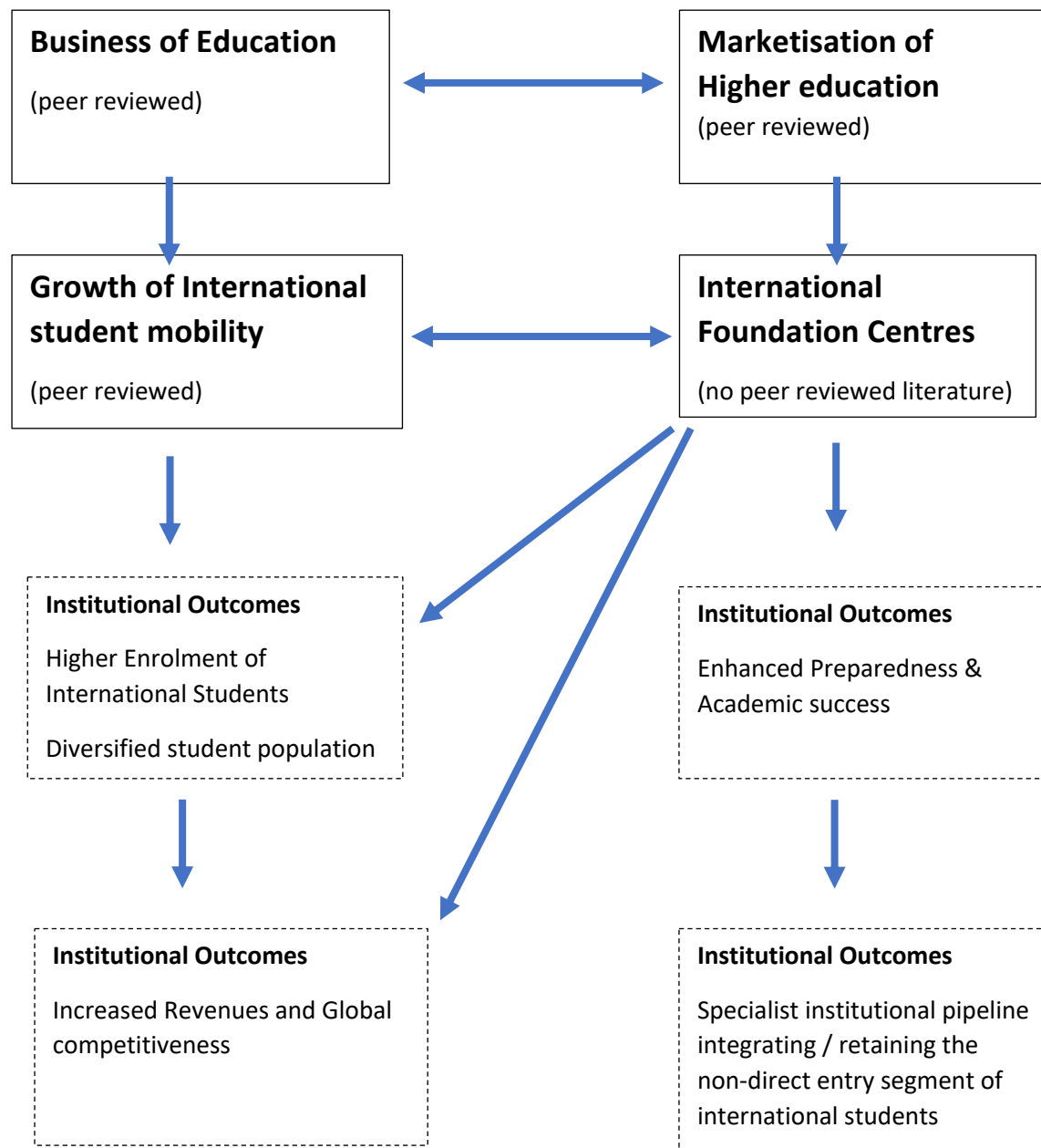
the potential market. The partners compete fiercely with other universities to attract international students (Marginson, 2006). This aligns with the competitive aspect of marketisation, where universities aim to increase their international student enrolments to boost revenue and global rankings (Naidoo, 2016). IFCs facilitate access to a broader international talent pool. Pathway providers offer students more options for how they can access higher education. This aligns with the concept of students as consumers in the marketised higher education landscape. Governments and higher education regulators often oversee partnerships with private sector providers to ensure that they meet immigration requirements and quality and accreditation standards.

In summary, these partnerships illustrate how market-oriented practices extend beyond traditional educational boundaries and can lead to a commodification of education that impacts the traditional academic mission.

2.8 Summary of the Key Concepts within the Literature Part 1

The business of education has been discussed within this chapter of the thesis. Business involvement as a structure for education has been both a cause and a consequence of the pathway model for foundation higher education that is presented within this thesis. However, because of increasing involvement of commercial partners, the links and complexity of such relationships have widened and deepened. Overall, the level of commercial business engagement and activity within all forms of education (not just higher education) is unprecedented in this century. However, in many cases – including the topic of this thesis, the literature has substantial theoretical and practical gaps, and therefore the literature and conceptualization must be careful and inductive. For this reason, before primary data collection took place, key concepts were identified in the peer reviewed literature for testing by focus group. These were the: “Business of Education”; The “Marketisation of Higher education” and “the growth of International Student mobility”. The concepts of “International Foundation Centres” or “Higher education Pathways” were absent in the peer-reviewed literature in the UK, but present in institutional online marketing and the publications of international education partner networks and intermediaries in the UK market, (see Figure 2 overleaf).

Figure 2 **Summary of Key Concepts in Literature Review 1: The Business of Education**



CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW Part 2: Learning & Socialisation Theory

3.1 Introduction

A central theoretical framework for this study is theories of Socialisation in Higher education and the way that this concept wraps around and intersects learning and teaching. These concepts are used as constructs and lenses to examine the institutional processes that enable students' successful progression and integration within educational institutions.

Academic socialisation into a culturally different university environment inevitably involves changes in aspects of students' identities, and the consensus among researchers (e.g. Brown & Holloway, 2008) is that whilst anxiety and stress diminish after the initial experiences, not every student experiences it to the same degree (Kuwhara, 2008). Literature shows that this depends on relationships with key academic staff, socialisation motivation of the students, the clarity of the structures into which students fit, and not least, the espoused and implicit expectations of the students as demonstrated through verbal, written and symbolic discourses.

Functional and normative theories of student development are influential in the literature. Weidman's model of undergraduate development and change (Weidman, 2006) posits that normative processes embedded in the institution's functions, environment, and social arrangements shape the development of new students' dispositions, habits and skills, leading to integration and successful transition. These sit alongside more critical humanist perspectives on education, which view universities as conduits for social reproduction that perpetuate societal inequalities (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' refers to deeply ingrained dispositions shaped by an individual's social background and cultural capital. The dynamics of power within institutional environments shape international students' educational experience and agency, impacting their ability to negotiate and navigate these settings.

These twin approaches serve as the conceptual lenses through which this study analyses and interprets existing literature and the research findings from the study. The discourse on the institutional processes involved in the socialisation of international students is extensive (Schein, 1968; Bourdieu, 1977; Tinto, 2017; Briggs et al, 2012; Li, 2016; Falcone, 2017; Weidman & DeAngelo, 2020; Andrade, 2006; Tierney, 2016; Reay, 2020). Such theorisation is broadly concerned with student retention, integration, adaptation, transition, diversity, and inclusion and from a more critical humanist perspective with social reproduction, cultural capital and power dynamics. The corpus of socialisation theory in higher education engages with and is located in universities and other institutional subjects (such as Bourdieu's elite schools of France).

This study is novel in its location in an International Foundation Centre, whose Pathways courses are situated in a Russell Group university campus. In this review, it was noted that IFCs are institutional expressions of the 'Business of Education', specifically the 'Marketisation of Education' in UK universities. As such, they are characterised as financially driven commercial partnerships between a Russell Group university and its multinational corporate pathway provider partner (QAA, 2022; HoL, 2017) to recruit international students for financial gain (HoL, 2023; IFS, 2023). In marketisation theory (Marginson, 2006; McGettigan, 2013), pathway providers and their partners must maximise profits. They do so by recruiting high volumes of students not qualified for direct entry to the university and jointly planning their accommodation, education, and socialisation so that these students are prepared for entry to the university's undergraduate and graduate degrees.

The socialisation questions in this study pertain to international students. They are posed in the context of a UK higher education landscape, where publicly funded universities are situated in market-oriented systems, where universities and pathway providers strategically navigate commercialisation, competition, student choice and customer feedback, quality assurance, financial considerations, branding, globalisation, government policies and access and equity issues to meet the demands of an increasingly global and competitive education market. The lens of Socialisation theory (Weidman, 2006;

Bourdieu, 1977) is applied to answer the question - How are attendance and progression as concepts framed in relation to learner socialisation policies and practices?

There are numerous socialisation delivery challenges associated with these arrangements for British higher education institutions: language acquisition /adaptation (Andrade, 2009; Pearson, 2020), persistence and retention (Tinto, 2017), migration compliance (UKCISA, 2023; ICIBI, 2021) new teaching & learning styles (Weidman, 2006) social integration, Briggs, 2012) new cultural capital acquisition (Bourdieu, 1977). The scope and scale of the personal challenges demanded of new international students as part of their socialisation in the UK are linguistic, psychological, cultural, social, administrative, familial and economic. A distinguishing feature of an international pathway course is that it is designed to anticipate rapid adaptive changes expected of all international students over nine months. In most cases, Pathways provides an intensive, integrated process of managed support in a socialisation service and interventions from Pathway staff and teachers (British Council, 2023b).

3.2 Critical Evaluation of Weidman and Bourdieu as applied in this study

In considering the fitness of the two theoretical frameworks for application in this study, evaluative assessments were made of each. Weidman's theory of undergraduate socialisation, proposed in 2006, has faced criticism from scholars. Authors such as Tinto argue that Weidman's theory may oversimplify the complex process of student integration by focusing primarily on normative processes within the institution, neglecting the role of individual characteristics and external factors (Tinto, 1993).

Similarly, Robinson & Bornholt (2007) have criticised Weidman and Tinto's frameworks for their limited consideration of the broader social and cultural contexts that shape students' experiences and transitions in higher education (Robinson & Bornholt, 2007). In addition, Astin has suggested that Weidman's theory may lack specificity in identifying the mechanisms through which normative processes influence student outcomes, calling for more empirical research to support its claims (Astin, 1990). Weidman updated his theory (Weidman & DeAngelo, 2020) to take account of criticisms on student diversity and the socialisation of graduate students but still needs to address the others

adequately. Despite these criticisms, Weidman's theory has the continued potential to contribute to the literature on the position of international students and undergraduate socialisation. This study will apply this lens informed by this evaluation but suggests further refinement and empirical validation are necessary to address these concerns and enhance its applicability to commercial partnership contexts such as International Foundation Centres.

The critical humanist theoretical lens adopted in this study, as a balance and counterpoint to Weidman is Bourdieu's approach to social theory of Education (Bourdieu, 1977). His concept of 'Habitus' is taken here as an approximation of the term 'Socialisation' not specifically identified in Bourdieu's corpus. This evaluation considered his concepts of Habitus, Cultural Capital and Institutional habitus as applied in this study.

It can be observed that the content and structure of his analysis of higher education systems have been heavily criticised (Archer, 2010) for downplaying individual agency and autonomy. Archer argues that Bourdieu's emphasis on habitus overlooks the capacity of individuals to shape their social trajectories actively. Lareau's position on Bourdieu's conception of Cultural Capital is that it is only one form of capital; others, economic and symbolic, provide leverage in institutional negotiation (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Giddens advances that Bourdieu's thesis is Cultural determinism. He asserts that Bourdieu oversimplifies the origins of the social practices and behaviours of students and staff in an institution as predetermined by one's cultural background and social position (Scott, 2007).

Despite such criticism, Bourdieu's theories of habitus, cultural capital, and field remain valuable tools for analysing the complex dynamics of higher education (Nash, 1990; Grenfell, 2009). They offer a holistic understanding of social structures and individual agency. Bourdieu's framework exposes hidden mechanisms of inequality transmission, shedding light on how cultural resources perpetuate social advantage or disadvantage within educational institutions. Bourdieu remains relevant to contemporary debates (Reay, 2020) on social mobility and meritocracy and in analysing the changing structures of educational institutions. His concepts provide analytical flexibility and have received

empirical support from scholars across diverse contexts (Giddens, 1979); while not without limitations, Bourdieu's theories offer insights that can be integrated with other theoretical perspectives, as in this study enhancing our understanding of educational inequality and social reproduction.

3.3 Conceptual frameworks relevant to Pathway course teaching and learning.

International students enrolled in Pathway courses generally exhibit significant gaps in their language skills, curriculum attainment, and the cultural capital required to successfully facilitate their transition to their preferred university destination, (Andrade, 2006; British Council, 2023b) it can also apply to Foundation courses in general, (where TOESL not EAP, English for Academic Purposes is taught). For Pathway course teachers to be effective in pedagogical and socialisation terms, their teaching and learning approaches must be underpinned by sound education theory. The range of potential learning theories and approaches that can be applied in this context is very large indeed. This review has, therefore, selected potential theory for discussion based on four principles: First, the theory's relevance in meeting international students' learning needs; second, their applicability to Pathway settings and practicality in implementation; third, they can demonstrate learning outcomes academically and socially. Fourth, these theories and approaches have regard and influence in education and pedagogy and are widely used in professional practice.

These criteria help ensure that the theories and approaches engaged in this discussion are not only theoretically sound, but also practical and effective in addressing the specific needs of international students in pathway courses. The narrative analysis at the centre of this study is based on teacher reflections of their experience in the socialisation of international students, it finds that educators advocate for and in all cases demonstrate varying degrees of a close fit between their professional practice and the theory discussed here. This part of the Literature Review will examine a range of potential learning theories and approaches and their relationship to practice in the context of IFC Pathway programmes: they are The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Situated Learning-Communities of Practice, Scaffolding, and Social Constructivism. And Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.

3.4 Constructivism and Socio-Cultural Learning Theory

The theoretical framework that lends itself most directly to the discussion in the context of this study and a lens through which to observe the practice of Pathway teaching, learning and socialisation of international students is International Foundation Centres is Constructivism, and its social-constructivist variant, socio-cultural learning theory. These are characterised here as 'Grand Theory' in the Education literature. Social Constructivist theory emphasises a holistic approach to learning that considers the social context of education. It diverges from traditional views of learning that posit it as a purely individual cognitive process. Social Constructivist theory values active learning, collaboration, and dialogue among learners and teachers. It has been successfully applied across different levels of education and subject areas, making it a versatile framework associated with prominent authorities in the literature, Vygotsky, Bruner and Piaget, respectively, (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976; Wadsworth, 1996). Vygotsky's Social-Constructivism, particularly his socio-cultural theory, aligns with this Literature Review's selection criteria for a relevant theory that fits with the study context.

In IFC Pathway programmes, social constructivism theory in practice, focuses on the importance of inclusive and collaborative learning environments that foster intercultural exchange and help international students adapt to new academic and social contexts. Social Constructivism shapes cognitive processes through collaborative knowledge construction while encouraging peer interaction and culturally adaptive behaviour. It is associated with educational psychology and cultural psychology. Vygotsky's ideas on cultural tools and symbols in learning also contribute to inclusive and culturally responsive curricula (Vygotsky, 1978). His approach has been influential in developing collaborative online technology platforms, (Laurillard, 2009) a persistent feature of pathway student participation. Bruner's constructivist theory highlights the importance of active engagement and problem-solving, critical elements of this grand theory. His work has informed learner-centred approaches and inquiry-based learning strategies, including developing models of Scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976).

Piaget's cognitive development theory appears to be less closely aligned to the social constructivist approaches of Bruner and Vygotsky that inform practice in IFC programmes. Piaget's contributions however help to understand how individuals construct knowledge and can still be relevant within this broader framework of interactive and collaborative learning (Wadsworth, 1996). Social Constructivism's comprehensive approach to understanding and facilitating learning, its impact on educational practices, and its adaptability across contexts and disciplines underscore its status as a grand theory in education and relevance to this study.

Behaviourism (Skinner, 1963) presents an alternative perspective on student learning. It emphasises conditioning, positive and negative stimuli reinforcement, and observable behaviours as the primary aspects of learning. This theory diverges significantly from the collaborative and socio-cultural approach of social Constructivism.

3.4.1 Zone of Proximal Development

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a conceptual model of co-constructed learning developed by Vygotsky, (Vygotsky, 1978) that emphasises the significance of social interaction and guidance in the learning process. The ZPD represents the difference between what a learner can do without help, and what he or she can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner. It represents tasks beyond the learner's current abilities but are attainable with their help. This theoretical approach fits the learning needs of many Pathway students. For international students in pathway programme classrooms, the use of scaffolding techniques by teachers, (Woods et al, 1976) allows educators to provide targeted support and challenges, bridging language and cultural gaps. ZPD impacts cognitive development by guiding students toward higher competence levels while fostering collaborative and culturally enriched behavioural processes. The process is rooted in educational psychology and developmental psychology.

The ZPD has several criticisms. Critics have argued that it does not apply to all social and cultural groups (Liu & Matthews, 2005). In the context of international students this differentiation can be

problematic. Teachers may find the approach difficult given it lacks a clear, objective methodology for determining the zone (Shabani & Khatib, 2010). An alternative theory and implicit criticism of the ZPD, comes from Behaviourism, associated with B.F. Skinner, who stated that observable behaviours and conditioning should be the primary focus of learning. The teacher's primary role is to provide appropriate reinforcement to strengthen desired behaviours.

3.4.2 Scaffolding

The concept of 'Scaffolding', attributed to Jerome Bruner (Wood et al, 1976) and tangentially to Vygotsky (Wells, 1999), has widespread currency in the pedagogical practice of secondary and tertiary education (Gaffney & Rodgers, 2018), both in teaching novice students and in its contribution to educational research. It involves providing temporary support and guidance to learners as they confront tasks slightly beyond their current competence level. In the context of international students on Pathways courses, educators widely recognise 'Scaffolding' as a process and pedagogic tool embedded in classroom and informal practice. It helps educators address language and curriculum challenges by breaking them down into manageable steps, gradually reducing support as students gain confidence and competence. This approach influences cognitive development by promoting skill development and confidence while fostering behavioural independence and self-efficacy. 'Scaffolding' is "a way of operationalising Vygotsky's 1987 concept of working in the zone of proximal development" (Wells, 1999:129). In the Vygotskian model, the primary goal of Scaffolding in teaching views the ZPD as a characteristic transfer of responsibility for the task to the student from the teacher (Mercer & Fisher, 1993; Wells, 1999). Scaffolding is grounded in the scientific discipline of educational psychology. Some critics argue that over-scaffolding can hinder students from developing independent problem-solving skills and self-directed learning. It can inadvertently lead to dependency on external support if not carefully managed (Stone, 1998).

3.4.3 Situated Learning

Another conceptual framework focused on group learning that potentially applies to pedagogy and socialisation in Pathway courses is the sociocultural theory of 'Situated Learning' (Lave & Wenger,

1991), which falls under the scientific disciplines of social anthropology and educational psychology.

‘Communities of Practice’, such as a cohort of international students enrolled in an IFC Pathway course, share an authentic learning cultural context; they learn socially and collaboratively through group learning. In the context of IFC pathway programmes, this approach is potentially very relevant, as it promotes engagement in real-world activities and social practices aligned with similar academic and cultural needs. By facilitating a sense of belonging and cultural adaptation, this approach could benefit international students cognitively, through contextual learning, and behaviourally by encouraging collaborative problem-solving.

While valuing its social learning benefits, this study agrees with critics who contend that this approach, may not sufficiently address individual learning styles nor adequately account for the diversity of learners within a community of practice (Hughes, 2010). The latter is a strong criticism in an IFC context, as groups can be very diverse, and some students are less linguistically and culturally prepared to participate in groups or make individual contributions. Other critics from theoretically more dominant traditions that are antithetical to Constructivist learning principles, such as Behaviourism (Skinner, 1963), stress instead the importance of structured reinforcement of positive and negative stimulus by teachers to condition and shape student behaviour and learning.

3.4.4 Bloom’s Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy sits in the disciplines of educational psychology and instructional design (Bloom, 1984; Anderson et al, 2001). It consists of a set of hierarchical models that is used to classify educational learning objectives into levels of complexity and specificity. The learning objectives covered by the Taxonomy are in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The theory categorises learning objectives by level, with the higher-level learning dependent on lower-level attainment. It spans basic recall of information to higher-order cognitive skills like critical thinking and creating.

IFC Pathway educators value the overall model for its conceptual clarity in illustrating cognitive progression and preparing students for the demands of university learning. IFC teachers apply the

framework to the design of curricula and assessments applied to international students. By addressing a diverse range of cognitive processes, the model ensures that students in Pathway programmes have practised the necessary thinking skills to address the challenges of undergraduate-level education. The taxonomy has been criticised (Seaman, 2012) for its perceived rigidity and the potential to compartmentalise learning into discrete levels. Being overly prescriptive may not account for the complexity of real-world problem-solving and inadvertently stifle creativity and discourage holistic thinking. The conceptual model continues to be used in APD and EAP modules and internalised through application in subject module tasks.

In summary, these theories and approaches remain highly regarded in current pedagogy within pathway courses and among novice learners in higher education due to their significant contributions to effective teaching and learning. They need to be continually adapted and refined in their application to respond to the unique needs and contexts of international students on pathways. These criticisms emphasise the importance of a holistic, balanced, and flexible approach in educational practice. Behaviourism, as championed by B.F. Skinner, stands as a significant alternative to the theories discussed earlier. While the theories discussed earlier emphasize cognitive and sociocultural aspects of learning, behaviourism places greater emphasis on external stimuli and behavioural responses as the primary mechanisms of learning. This positions behaviourism as a notable alternative perspective in the field of education and teaching methods on pathway courses.

3.5 Summary of the literature in part 2

In consider whether IFCs foster socialisation effectively, efficiently and above all, educationally, several different perspectives need to be adopted. First is the theoretical lens that views IFC pathway providers as institutional expressions of the marketisation of higher education. As education businesses, they provide a service to a globally distributed set of paying customers, their 'Cash nexus'. They need repeat business to succeed reputationally and commercially; their fees are high. Their service guarantee is to equip students with the language skills, dispositions, and subject knowledge valued by their destination university so they can prequalify alongside direct-entry students. In the literature, it satisfies the

conditions of the Weidman model in preparation for undergraduate studies. The IFC mobilises institutional resources, a structured learning context and managed processes to "connect(s) students with salient normative environments in higher education" (Weidman, 2020:25). The IFC model of socialisation can also be argued to be effective using a neo-Bourdieuian framework.

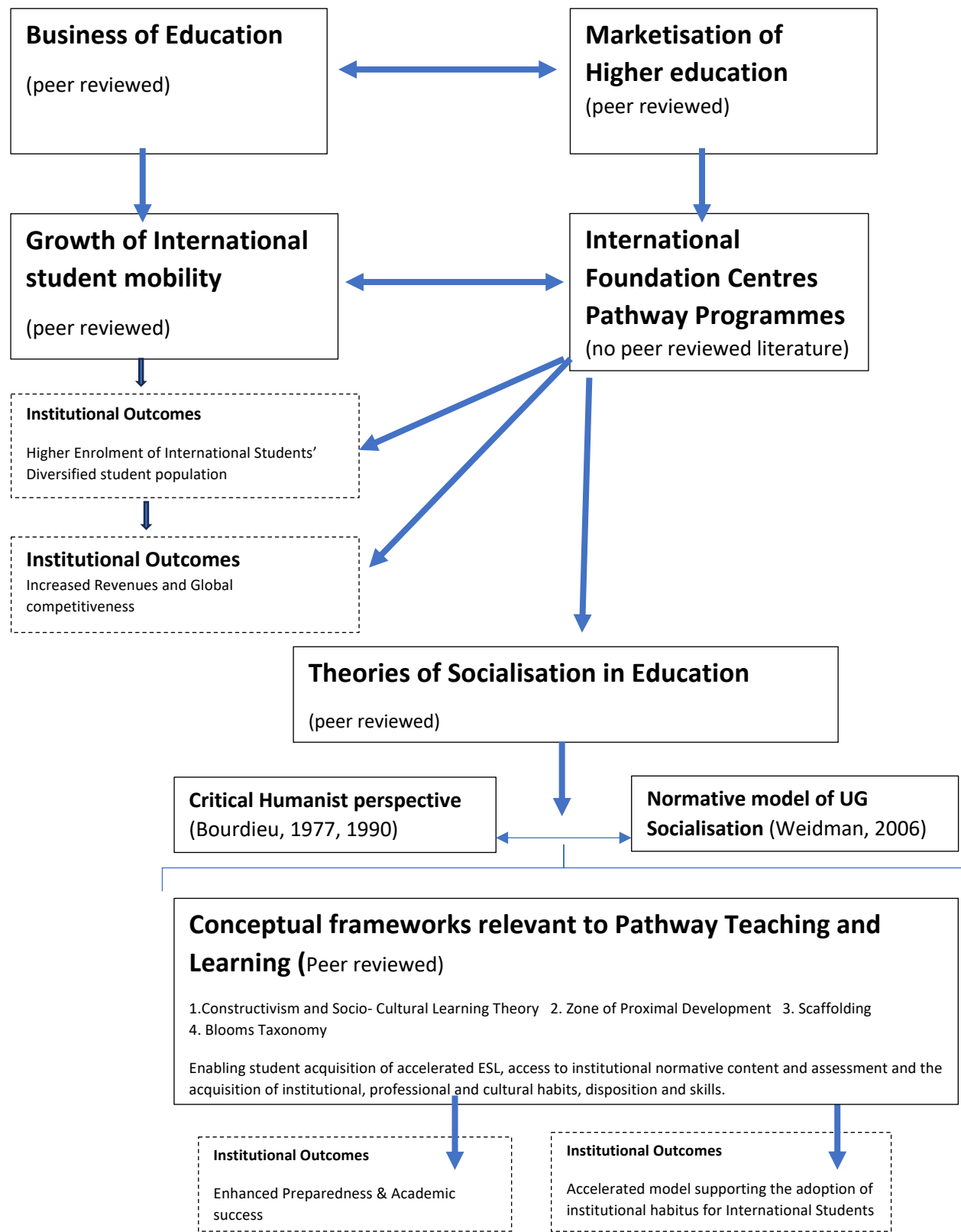
For international students, Pathways courses are an educational platform that accelerates a process of adaptation and acquisition of institutional habitus within a short period. It can be said to repurpose the original 'Cultural Capital' of international students. Indeed, Diane Reay argues that: "cultural capital exists .in institutionalised forms such as educational qualifications" (Reay, 2004: 74). Concerning the efficiency segment of the question. Efficiency lies at the heart of the Business of Education. The organisation's business imperative will heavily influence socialisation within the International Foundation Centre (IFC)'. The expectation is consistent with the theory (Brown, 2022) that teachers will conclude that the IFC operates a cost-based and efficiency-focused approach to operations in the findings and discussion chapters. The research will show that teachers are considered production staff supplying teaching services who invest additional unpaid hours to facilitate socialisation processes in and out of class efficiently. The IFC reflects conceptualisations of socialisation in higher education (Weidman, 2006) and the importance of their role in shaping institutional habitus, as highlighted by Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

3.6 The evolution and integration of concepts from Literature Reviews part 1 and 2

The "Socialisation of Education" concepts and related teaching and learning theory discussed in this chapter build on the discussion of the "Business of Education" and "Marketisation of higher education" concepts considered in Literature Review 1. Socialisation within higher education requires an understanding of the existing culture, symbols or instrumental activities for both students and staff implicitly 'charged' with its development. However, the literature shows that within most organisations the process and practice is mostly left to the employees to make sense of it whilst attempting to provide a very responsive and high-quality pedagogic experience for students (and for shareholders of commercial organisations like the IFC in this study) and this may mean that socialisation processes are

uneven, sometimes haphazard, and only partly effective. Accordingly, there is a need to better understand them and this thesis contributes to the literature in this regard. Together the Literature Chapters 1 and 2 constitute the conceptual development of the study, a visual representation of what has been taken from the literature before the primary data collection stage is tested by the study participants in their Focus groups. This is set out in Figure 3 on the next page.

Figure 3 Summary of Key Concepts Integrating Literature Review 1 and Literature Review 2



CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter explains the purpose of the study before considering the methodological approach that informs it. The Literature review within the previous chapter has sought to influence and impact the development of the methodology, including the philosophy of the study, design decisions, and ultimately, the ethical decisions inherent in the study, which aimed to address some of the complex issues within an insider-study such as this (Creswell, 2009; Silverman, 2021).

4.1 Research Aims and Research Questions

This study had three purposes:

- To examine staff narratives of their experience of socialising international students for UK HE in International Foundation Centres (IFCs) settings in the North of England.
- To analyse how the concept of Socialisation is understood and shaped by the organisational concept of progression in International Foundation Centres in UK HE
- To investigate how Socialisation in Higher education theory intersects with transition, institutional habitus, and cultural capital.

In turn, the study intended to explore four key research questions.

- How do IFC staff narrate the Socialisation of international students in Higher education in theory and practice?
- How are IFC staff beliefs and practices concerning Socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management?
- How do IFCs foster Socialisation effectively, efficiently, and above all, educationally?
- How are attendance and progression as concepts framed about learner socialisation policies and practices?

4.2 Research Design Context

In Western Higher education, international students are expected to adapt to the challenges of a new country and its university institutions by engaging in processes and activities related to Socialisation (Weidman, 2006; Altbach, 2018; Arkoudis et al, 2023). Socialisation is recognised as the successful acquisition by students of the necessary academic and cultural knowledge, language, and critical skills and dispositions needed to achieve institutional, scholarly, and professional transitions (Maxwell, 2017; Crick, 2008). The necessity of some degree of Socialisation is undisputed for both domestic and international students (Briggs, 2012). However, the underlying structural and systemic purposes of these activities are contested in the literature (Bourdieu, 1977; Willis, 2017).

International Foundation Centres (IFC) Pathways courses socialise international students for Russell Group Universities, principally through combined intensive language, subject, and study skills teaching. IFCs publicly assert values such as global citizenship, diversity, inclusion, transformation, and international collaboration in their corporate missions (see, for example, the websites of LSE, 2024; UCL, 2024; Durham, 2024).

These values are consistent with their broader support for Socialisation. Professionals employed by IFCs, such as managers, academics, or teachers, are expected to attest to behaviours, motivations, intent, and practices consistent with the maintenance of Socialisation (Seale, 2004). International Foundation Centres and their employees organise their work to conform to specified forms of social relations that maintain the processes of Socialisation and intensify relational pedagogy beyond the operational standards of their partner University. Research shows that staff may believe such an implicit process is too time-consuming. Others may feel that it is optional, as students are already capable of learning on their own or believe that students choose to reject engaged support and withdraw from immersion-based subject learning (Andrade, 2006; Choudaha et al, 2013). Hence, paradoxically, IFC staff may, despite their intensive socialisation focus, contribute to persistent institutional and cultural barriers hindering student success (Ploner, 2018; HEPI, 2022).

These discrepancies in how institutions and their staff see the purposes of student adjustment in IFCs raise important methodological issues concerning fidelity and validity. The research design needs to be able to capture any inconsistencies between the objective aspects of what is being researched and the subjective experiences and perceptions of the participants (Crotty, 1998), which are particularly salient given the corporate need for economic sensitivity over data, and the pedagogic need for balancing student support needs with the pressures of commercial gain especially where there are power relationships (Cox, 2004). In other words, the research design should capture the differences between what is happening and what the participants believe is happening.

A second matter concerns the affective dimension of researching a problematic, power-laden, and culturally complex topic (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Nisbett & Miyamoto, 2005). This study is a narrative design, and any narrative inquiry requires the researcher to attend to the broader emotional and affective dimensions of a teaching and learning environment as: 'the stories also highlight the emotional and affective dimensions of multicultural teaching and learning, including the challenges and rewards of working with diverse students and the need for teachers to be aware of their own biases and assumptions' (Phillion, 2002:297). International Foundation Centres are commercial entities vested in protecting against reputational and privacy risks. It is essential to be aware of potential bias and conflicts of interest when accessing internal corporate information sources and how any analysis of these might affect trusting relationships (Birch & Miller, 2002). IFCs are not subject to the same regulations as universities, and their level of transparency and accountability differ.

Crucially, I, as the researcher, have personal relationships with the Centre managers as his employers and with his research subjects and how any analysis of these might affect trusting relationships (Birch & Miller, 2002). The negative associations of being thought disloyal to my employer, the conflicts of interest that might arise, or worrying about how the research findings might impact colleagues have the potential to elicit strong personal emotions of worry, anger, or disillusionment. Consenting to research in this study may be a question of ethics but concerning 'lived ethical' consequences for the participants in this study, in common with other areas where questions and research may raise issues

that are possibly unexpected and challenging, sensitivities to the participants require a significant level of vigilance (Miller & Bell, 2020). University Pathway teachers are generally highly motivated with pride in their accumulated experience, professionalism, and aptitude for relational pedagogy. (Jones et al, 2020). Any challenging findings or interactions with the research process might undermine their self-belief and trigger negative emotions, which must be managed sensitively and carefully.

A complex and rapidly shifting context informed the design and development of this study. The rapid international institutional expansion of Britain's research-intensive public universities as they seek to compete globally (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2009; McGettigan, 2013; Etzkowitz, 2003) and increase their proportion of international student enrolment from non-EU countries (DfE, 2021; HESA, 2022; UUK, 2022) is crucial to understanding the currency and salience of this study. To put this goal into effect, many Russell Group universities have entered commercial partnerships with multinational firms to establish specialist International Foundation Centres or IFCs (Findlay et al, 2017; HoL, 2017). IFCs, through their recruitment and Pathway programmes, have responded by extending the higher education market to international students who need to be qualified for direct University entry (British Council, 2023b). Generally, this is the only student group with the qualities of meeting a need explicitly, in this case, finance-driven, except perhaps the overt movement of social engineering enshrined in Access Provision and Widening Participation from the 1990s. However, the policy of socially and culturally engineering a clear economic and strategic change has had a significant impact on the approaches to teaching and learning and the expectations of staff, making the engagement, orientation, settlement, and ultimate achievement as successful and effective as possible. This process is multi-layered, of course, but the experience of front-line staff who must balance demands that often are in tension is under-researched. This thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of the experiences of these staff.

Two main theoretical frameworks stand behind this research: Theories of Socialisation in Higher education and Society and Theories of internationalisation and marketisation of learning business. The current literature on the Socialisation of international students in higher education pathways arguably

lacks theoretical input from teachers, as it is written to engage and address the concerns of administrators, policymakers, and education theorists and researchers (Arkounis, 2023) rather than those of the teachers who play a crucial role in the Socialisation of these students. The teacher's perspective, although present in the literature, is under-researched and, therefore, should be more noticed and present in this literature (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2015). There is limited theorisation, data analysis, or applied methodology on this recently developed part of the private higher education system in the UK and their teachers' experiences (Altbach et al, 2021; Critchley & Wyburd, 2021). The discourse on teachers and their role in the Socialisation of international students in the Russell group does not solely focus on the pedagogic need of this group of students but rather on meeting a variety of adaptation demands: subject and language teaching (Findlay et al, 2017; Pearson, 2020); supported transitions and developing academic literacy, (O'Neill et al, 2022; Briggs et al, 2012); promoting academic and mental well-being, (Baik et al, 2019) introducing intercultural competence, cross-cultural understanding and mediating acculturation and cultural brokerage (Lee & Kim, 2020; Tan, 2018). While students are recognised as being challenged by their new higher education environments, they are not institutionally passive, and as such, they are expected to have agency. As Weidman posits (Weidman, 2006), students bring their own experiences, beliefs, and values to Russell Group universities, and their higher education experience can either reinforce or challenge these pre-existing views, a view that some teachers in International Foundation Centres would agree with (Cosh, 2022).

IFCs, as commercial private sector partners to Russell Group Universities, primarily focus on successful non-EU international student progression to their nominated HE partner (Findlay et al., 2017). IFC's policies and practices aim to accelerate student socialisation over a short period (less than one year) so that students achieve the goal of progression. The IFC's contractual positioning is to provide a flexible, holistic service mix to a global customer base, as recommended above. Its purpose is to foster the acquisition of the required institutional levels of linguistic and academic standards, scholarly predispositions, and learning styles that satisfy Russell Group behavioural expectations for undergraduate and Masters' courses. This can be characterised as inculcating the institutional habitus, social capital, and cultural capital that overcomes the cultural and institutional barriers international

students face (Lin, 2013; Lee, 2021). IFC's planning assumptions for pre- and post-international recruitment are that student agency and intensive institutional support are necessary to promote equitable student outcomes. Students who have registered with an IFC in practice achieve some equality of outcome and some semblance of parity of entry standards with their direct entry peers.

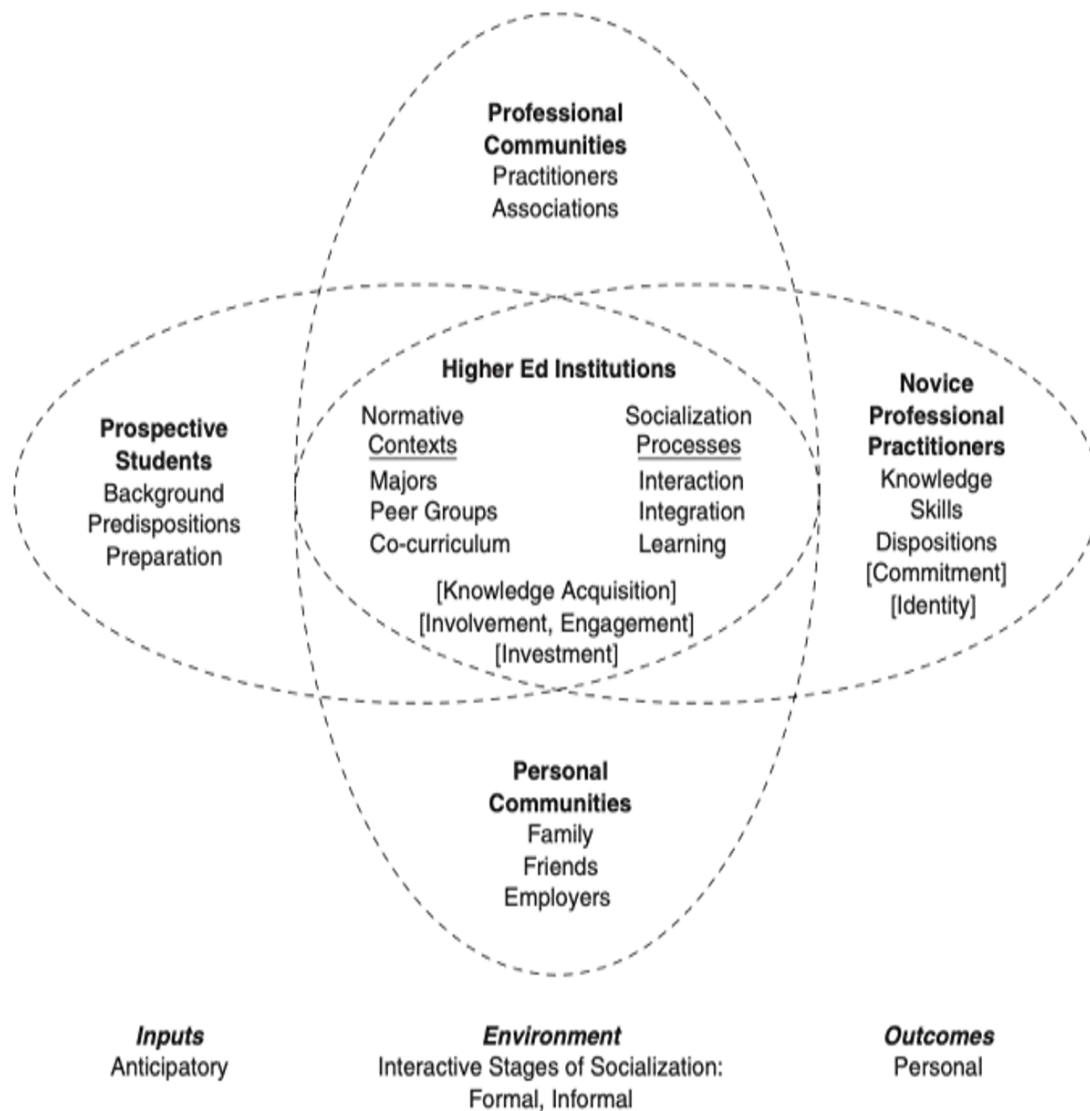
The literature identifies persistent institutional and cultural barriers hindering international students' success in UK higher education and stubbornly impervious to change (HEPI, 2022). IFC's commercial successes in the Russell group suggest they have proven their institutional capability to design holistic support structures attractive to non-EU international students (British Council, 2023). For this segment of international students, Pathways are accelerators of student capacity to adapt to their new environment within one year. This further differentiates them from direct entry, EU, non-EU, and British domestic students. Approximately half of the non-EU students in the UK come from China and India (HESA, 2023), a significant minority from North America and Africa, and the remainder come from the high growth developing economies of South Asia and Central Asia, such as Vietnam and Kazakhstan. They provide an increasing proportion of UK international student revenues (Cosh, 2023).

In the discourse on socialising international students, a critical intersectional dynamic emerges between a mainstream view of student socialisation as articulated by Weidman (Weidman, 2006) embodying an explicit institutional expectation of student agency and adaptation versus, as Humanist authorities argue, the necessity to acquire cultural capital, institutional habitus, and transition (Ball et al, 2002; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). If students are not solely responsible for their Socialisation and success, then institutions and broader societal factors must also play a significant role. There is a tension between the institutional expectation of student agency and the systemic barriers that can hinder students' success. Authors such as (Spencer-Oatey et al, 2017; McKay et al, 2018) have suggested that higher education institutions need a more holistic approach to student socialisation. A holistic approach recognises that various interconnected factors and diverse needs influence the success and Socialisation of international students. This approach would emphasise that universities should offer comprehensive support beyond academic success to consider and facilitate their overall

well-being, cultural adjustment, and social integration into the campus community. In practice, every IFC Pathway acts as a channel enabling non-international students to acquire the institutional habitus, cultural capital, and transition skills required for their specific degree or Masters' course. It provides a unique experience for non-EU international students in UK higher education.

Weidman's model of Socialisation (Figure 4 on the next page) assumes that student agency will adjust to institutional and cultural barriers. That transition through the input to outcomes stages develops through a normative context of conditioning from pursuing specialist degree subjects and curricula alongside peers. This is mediated by institutional socialisation processes of structured interaction, integration, and learning in the Higher education environment. An environment that is assumed to accommodate and adjust for the academic and learning variations present among international students, non-traditional students, and domestic students with ESL requirements.

Figure 4 Weidman (2006) Conceptualising the Socialisation of Students in Higher education.



The Weidman model of socialisation accommodates private sector participation in HE but does not explicitly consider International Foundation Centres to be private institutions with the capacity to accelerate the socialisation of a specific segment of international students. Accelerated socialisation differentiates non-EU international students registered on IFC Pathway programmes from their international student peers as they gain specific access advantages over direct entry students. Pathway programs provide tailor-made, knowledge-gap-filling opportunities for international students pursuing education degrees in the UK (Han et al, 2013; Wang, 2020). According to the research, mainland Chinese, the most populous student cohort, regard pathway programmes as a pre-study program that fill students' academic gaps towards their degree course and will facilitate their degree study in the future, providing foundation knowledge (Xu, 2017; Lee, 2013; Bodycott & Lai, 2012). Pathway courses are typically operated by IFCs, providing top-up academic qualifications to act as bridges to undergraduate and postgraduate study.

A Chinese high school diploma and some college diplomas are insufficient for direct entry to many UK undergraduate and Master courses, see Gaokao guidance (UCAS, 2024). Paid agents advise the families of students in China that to be admitted for entry to a UK undergraduate programme or Master course, non-EU international students need to complete an accredited pathway program with acceptable grades (Wang, 2020). Potential UK Masters applicants can access pre-Masters' courses using Pathways despite their College diploma not being accepted. Pathway students gain access to more flexible entry dates. In the UK, university students generally have only one enrolment period, from September to October. No UK universities have rolling admissions for domestic students. However, Pathways has two- and three-cohort starting times, enabling students to avoid a gap year and save time.

Consequently, a good pathway program for international students can save time and money and help them do better than first year direct-entry degree programs in English-speaking countries (Jones et al., 2020; Gale & Parker, 2014).

At the same time, the choice to pursue these intensive programs can also be seen as an accelerated process of habitus, channelling the dispositions and aspirations shaped by one's upbringing and social environment to equip students with the skills and attitudes to flexibly adapt to the dominant environment (Bourdieu, 1977). The transition from one cultural and educational system to another represents a significant change and challenges traditional norms, demonstrating the dynamic and evolving nature of these humanist neo-Bourdieuian concepts. Significantly in the discourse, it represents a noteworthy variation in the conventional narrative of Socialisation and a novel explanation for the acquisition of institutional habitus and cultural capital. The model at Figure 5 illustrates the IFC as an accelerator enabling the acquisition of Institutional Habitus and Cultural Capital by international students.

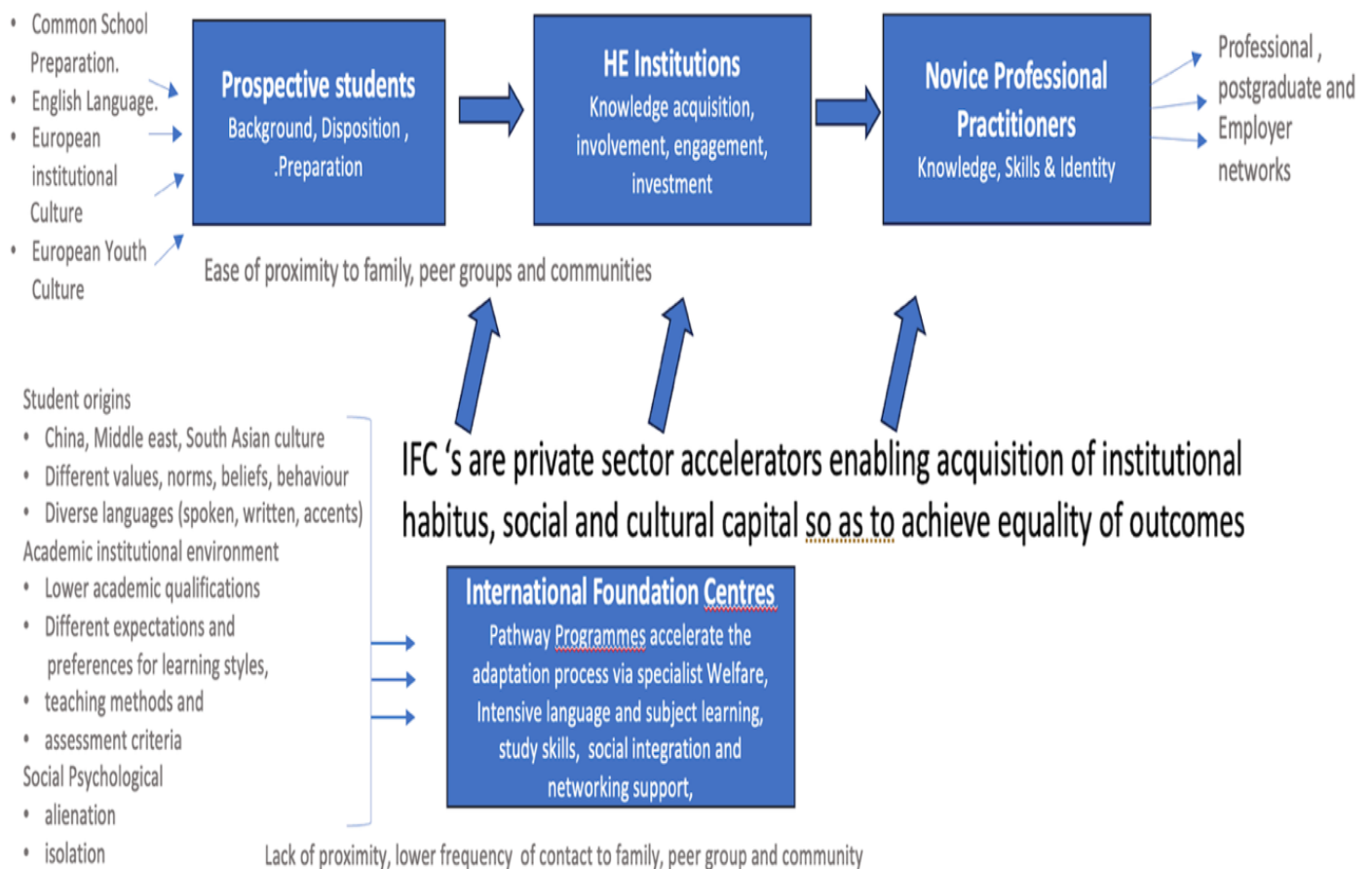
Figure 5

Socialisation of non-direct entry, non-EU international students in the UK.

Socialisation of non-direct entry non-eu international students in UK

Socialisation Processes /needs of direct entry domestic students and EU international students, with acknowledgment to Weidman (2006)

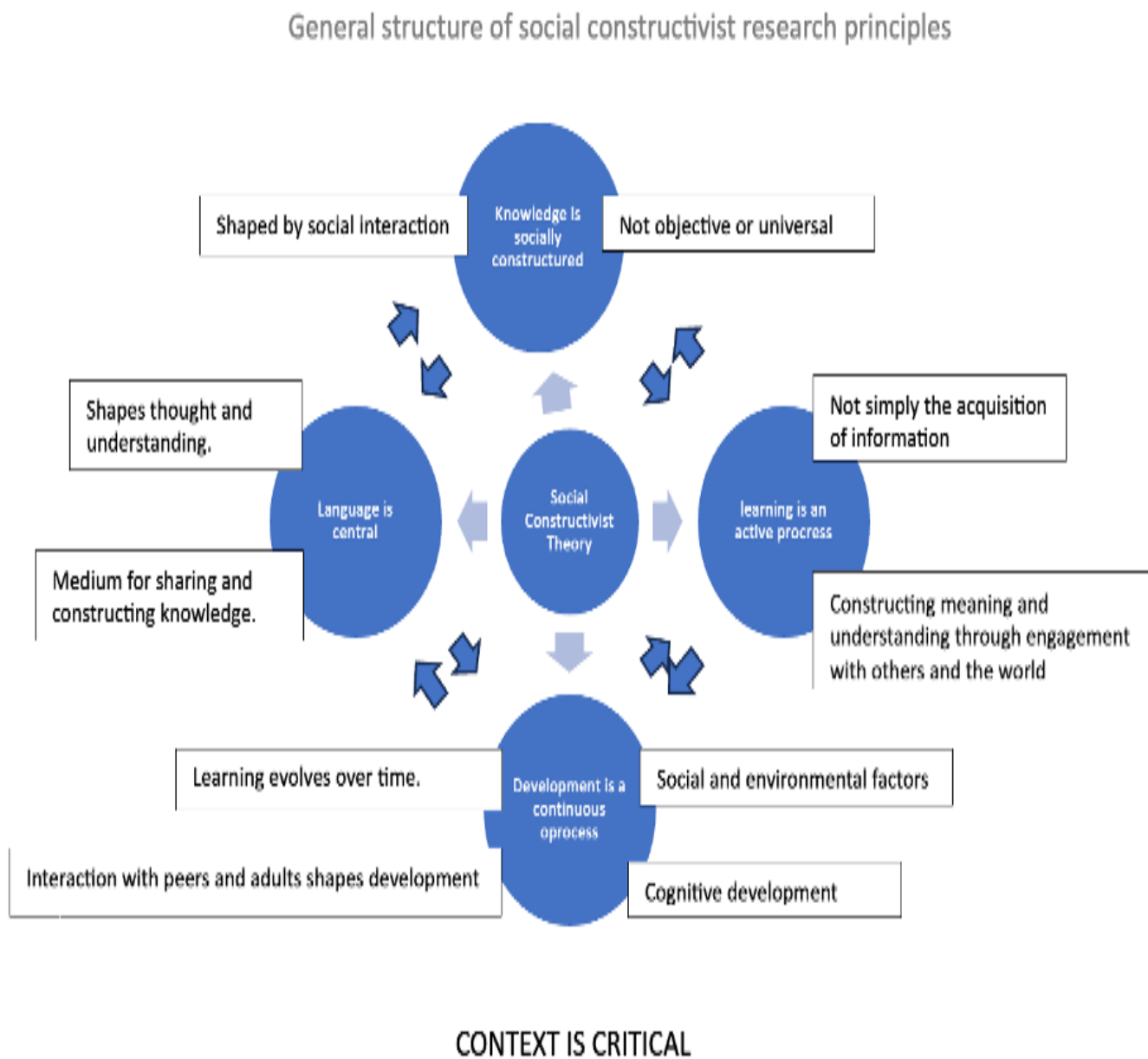
Informal and formal stages of mainstream socialisation in higher education



4.3 Rationale for Social Constructivist Research

This research takes a social constructivist approach in its ontology and epistemology that has implications for how this researcher understands reality and his knowledge of it. In other words, this approach shapes the worldview of this researcher. Ontologically, social constructivism theory posits that reality is socially constructed, meaning that what we consider "real" is shaped by the social and cultural context in which we live. In other words, no objective, universal reality exists independently of our perception and interpretation of it. Epistemologically, social constructivism emphasises individuals' active role in constructing knowledge and understanding. It suggests that knowledge is not simply a passive reflection of an objective reality but rather a dynamic, ongoing construction and negotiation process within social and cultural contexts. So, while social constructivism is often associated with epistemological concerns, it also has ontological implications. The theory suggests that reality is shaped by social and cultural factors rather than being a fixed, objective entity that exists independently of human perception and interpretation. Social constructivism is, therefore, a theory of human development that emphasises the importance of social interaction and cultural context in shaping individuals' understanding of the world, where individuals actively construct knowledge and understanding through their interactions with others and with the cultural and social contexts in which they live. In summary, this study aims to apply the common beliefs of the various branches of social constructivist theory: Knowledge is socially constructed. Knowledge is not objective or universal but is created and shaped by social interactions and cultural contexts. Learning is an active process: Learning is not simply the acquisition of information but an active process of constructing meaning and understanding through engagement with others and the world. Development is a continuous process: Development is not limited to specific stages or periods of life but is a continuous process throughout an individual's lifespan. Context is critical: Cultural, social norms, and historical circumstances shape individuals' experiences and understanding of the world. Language is central: Language plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' experiences and understanding of the world and in constructing and communicating knowledge. The model illustrating the social constructivist approach is set out at Figure 6 on the next page.

Figure 6 The Social Constructivist Approach



4.4 Research Design in Practice

The literature and this theoretical framework demonstrate that the experience of socialising international students in International Foundation Centres is a complex synthesis of values, beliefs, and actions. Experiences of Socialisation, as recounted by teachers, can lead to tangible connections between emotions, hopes, and fears and education's social, political, and economic contexts (Wanders et al, 2020). As such, they are complex subjects to Research. As Margaret Wetherell (Wetherell, 2012) has suggested, Research approaches that seek to understand the implications of emotions and beliefs on actions rather than define or explain them are needed. Research that adopts this approach needs to be conducted in its situated context, sensitive to the unique features of the setting and its perspectives, thereby making its findings imbued with meaning (Zaichkowsky, 1985). The researcher in this study was aware of and respected the different perspectives in this setting. This is critical when researching teachers' experience of socialising international students in pathway settings, as the meaning of Socialisation and the rationale and operating methods of International Foundation Centres are contested. Conducting this Research reveals a wealth of accumulated experience that forms the foundations of this Research. The use of qualitative methods of inquiry in authentic settings will enable a researcher to gain a deeper understanding of complex, sensitive, and challenging issues in social contexts. Considering the specific context when studying pathway teachers' experiences of socialising with international students in these centres is crucial. This means that the research design chosen for this study is a qualitative narrative research methodology. The collected teacher narratives focus on specific events that illustrate the challenges and opportunities of teaching and learning in a multicultural context (Phillion, 2002).

As a study of the experiences of socialisation processes in a pedagogical context, this study takes a subjectivist, social constructivist approach in its ontological and epistemological orientation (Berger & Luckman, 1966). In other words, this approach shapes the worldview of this researcher and their understanding of reality and knowledge of it. Ontologically, social constructivism theory posits that reality is socially constructed, meaning that what we consider "real" is shaped by the social and cultural context in which we live. In other words, no objective, universal reality exists independently of our

perception and interpretation. Epistemologically, social constructivism emphasizes individuals' active role in constructing knowledge and understanding. It suggests that knowledge is not simply a passive reflection of an objective reality but rather a dynamic, ongoing construction and negotiation process within social and cultural contexts (Crotty, 1998).

Speaking of how researchers make use of the narrative inquiry approach in a pedagogic context, Phillion contends that researchers can gain insights from these stories as they provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the complexities of multicultural teaching and learning and the practises and perspectives of those who work in diverse classrooms (Phillion, 2002). Teachers' personal stories of their experiences of socialising international students are insights into their conscious lives that reveal their values and impact on the students they teach (Lawy & Biesta, 2006). A teacher's narrative might reveal their conscious value of education - how they feel compelled to help international students succeed. Alternatively, reveal their unconscious value of achievement - the feelings of satisfaction when they see an international student succeed. A teacher might talk about how they feel connected to the international students they work with - this would reveal their unconscious value of community. As a participant observer-researcher and teacher of long-standing in educating international students in a Russell Group University environment, I used qualitative Research as the principal methodological base for this study. As Creswell opines,

"Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem." (Creswell & Poth, 2018:42).

The participants' perspectives and experiences are essential to the research process, enabling me as the researcher to understand the problem or issue comprehensively from multiple viewpoints.

Qualitative Research aims to gain insight into the context in which the participants are addressing the problem or issue, as highlighted by (Creswell, 2018).

Qualitative Research has four design components: The Relationship between the researcher and the researched, The Site of the Research, Participant selection, Data collection, and Analysis (Maxwell, 2013). The researcher is the instrument of the work that needs to adopt a strategic approach to the research tasks. The researcher must have developed relationships and built trust with research participants if they are to ensure the quality of the experiences they can collect from the data. This study had a natural process of contact and familiarisation with the participants. These mainly were long-standing working relationships of varying professionalism and identity, as a team member, a union member, or an indirect work colleague who shared the International Foundation Centre location.

The setting selected has to offer the most potential for candid responses to interview questions. As the narrative data was collected during the COVID emergency, no geographical face-to-face contact was convenient or permitted. The teachers were all experienced at delivering lessons online using MS Teams or Zoom – The IFC's central communication systems during this period. It was not difficult to engage the participants during the early evenings as they worked from home and finished their work sessions at 4 PM or 5 PM.

There is a need for Purposeful Sampling, narrowing the lens of the inquiry to focus on a realistic and reasonable population of participants. (Patton, 2015). This population of participants must be directly tied to the purpose of the Research. As part of this participant selection, there is a conscious variation in the types and backgrounds of teachers searched for to avoid one-sided representation. Different levels of programme and professional experience were sought (Hennessy et al., 2018).

For several reasons, a qualitative research design is suitable for investigating the Socialisation of international students in International Foundation Centres in Russell Group universities. Qualitative Research allows for a deep and nuanced understanding of the socialisation process, which can be complex and multifaceted. (Flick, 2020). It provides the opportunity to explore in-depth the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of international students and the factors that shape their socialisation. (Smith et al, 2018).

Qualitative Research explores the social and cultural contexts in which international students are situated, including the norms, values, and practices of the host institution and broader society. (Lincoln & Guba, 2019). This can help identify how cultural differences and power dynamics influence socialisation, (Wood & Jones, 2017). A qualitative research design allows flexibility and responsiveness to the evolving nature of the research topic, enabling the researcher to adapt to emerging findings and refine research questions and methods as necessary, (Rossman, 2016).

A qualitative research design is well-suited to investigating the Socialisation of international students, as it explores research participants' subjective experiences and perspectives (Silverman, 2021). Teacher-aggregated narratives generate themes that potentially align, providing insight into the lived experiences of international students as they navigate the social and cultural context of International Foundation Centres and their partner Russell Group universities, (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

4.5 Narrative Methodology

This study aimed to explore teachers' narratives in International Foundation Centres on their Socialisation of international students seeking entry to Russell Group Universities. The first step in designing this qualitative study was to determine its purpose, which would guide decisions about its design, measurement, analysis, and reporting. According to (Creswell & Poth, 2018), this highlights the need for qualitative researchers to be clear about the research purpose and question to be able to design an appropriate study. They state that the research purpose:

"Helps to define the research design and interpret the findings." (Merriam, 2009:14)

It emphasises the importance of a clear research purpose guiding all aspects of the study, from data collection to analysis and interpretation. She notes that a well-defined research purpose helps ensure that the study is coherent and focused and addresses a significant research question. Finally, (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2011) argue that the purpose of the Research is essential to the quality and rigour of qualitative Research and that it helps to establish the researcher's credibility and authority in the field.

According to (Gravetter et al, 2021). Here are five different types of Research that each has specific purposes and desired outcomes, including basic research (to discover truth and provide knowledge), applied Research (to address a human or societal issue), summative evaluation (to evaluate the effectiveness of a program or intervention), formative evaluation (to improve a program or intervention), and action research (to solve an identified problem This study was categorized as applied research, although it also had attributes of basic research. The research traditions adopted were narrative research and social constructivism, which focus on exploring individuals' lives and the constructed realities of those experiences.

An essential aspect of the narrative inquiry research design is for the study's data collection approach to be methodologically consistent. The data to be collected must explore the experiences of teachers who work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. (Phillion, 2002) suggests that the study design must include interviews, observations, and documents, enabling the researcher to construct narratives of the participant teachers' experiences. Each narrative must focus on specific events or series of events that illustrate the challenges and opportunities of teaching and learning in a multicultural context.

Narrative methodology conceptualises meaning making as individuals' active role in constructing knowledge and understanding through telling and retelling stories of socialising international students.

It:

"Provides a helpful way of understanding how individual teachers make sense of their experiences, particularly about cultural contexts and social structures (Phillion, 2018: 20).

Working closely with the research participants, I collected appropriate narrative data such as experiential stories and re-storying. The data was subject to aggregation, producing a thematic analysis. The analysis identified patterns and themes in their experiences (Elliott et al, 1999); Koro-Ljungberg et al, 2009). This involved engaging in the process of interpretation and sense-making, drawing on the personal experiences of pathway teachers, and recognising that their institutional context and personal biographies shape it.

Engagement with this narrative research methodology varied from the most interpretative to the critical or existential perspectives. This study is contextualised in the field of applied research in higher education and adopts a narrative analysis and orientation that is interpretative and can be characterised as practice-based (QAA, 2023; Clandinin, 2007) but one that also adopts a critical lens. In this tradition, the socialisation process is often shaped by power relations, such as those between academics and international students and academics and their employing institutions. Practice-based research is a collaborative research approach involving practitioners and researchers working together to generate new knowledge and insights that could be applied to improve practice. Halse argues that stories are not simply a way of representing reality but also a way of constructing reality. The consciousness of both the researcher and the researched is essential in this study. The researcher and the researched are active participants in the research process, and their perspectives are essential to understanding the research topic. The researcher is both an observer and a participant in the research process, as Halse has observed. The researcher's experiences and perspectives shape how they interpret the research stories.

A narrative interpretative methodology was chosen for another reason. It gives teachers who socialise international students a voice in describing a profoundly meaningful concept and episode in their professional lives. By sharing their stories of Socialisation, teachers can gain a sense of personal validation and empowerment. They can take the opportunity to share the stressfulness of the reality of the IFC Pathway's intensive relational pedagogy and pastoral care, supporting ever-increasing numbers of students who struggle academically and linguistically and experience the culture shock of adjusting

to life in the UK. The stories of managing these ever-increasing challenges are frequently undisclosed or concealed by the participants in their work lives. As the collective interpretative process evolves, it establishes the validity of their personal experiences and reality. It can amount to naming the professional practice of Socialisation in an IFC context as problematic without admitting to its consequences lest it be misunderstood and misinterpreted. Overall, this methodology is a good fit for research in this specific segment of the higher education sector as it means that pathway teachers can share their stories in their own words and have their voices heard.

Interpretative narrative analysis generally has a particular strength that focuses on the salience of language in providing a rich and nuanced understanding of the human experience.

"How we tell our stories is not simply a matter of style. It is also a matter of substance. The language we use to tell our stories reflects our values, beliefs, and understanding of the world. It also reflects our relationships with others. By paying attention to the language of our stories, we can gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us." (Bruner, 1990: 125).

In this study, I collected and interpreted the colour, tone, and substance that Pathway and language teachers employ to describe the challenges of their experience of professional practice working with international students (the pedagogic and adjustment successes and failures, the cultural, linguistic, and pastoral episodes). By doing so, researchers can evaluate the personal and professional consequences of such challenges.

Interpretative narrative analyses, such as those in this study, allow for flexibility in the scope and lens of the enquiry, reviewing the stories to consider both the life histories of the participants and the different societal factors that might determine the primary influences on teachers' experience of socialisation international students. In one study, the researcher might focus more on the teachers' life histories (Woods, 1985). In another, the researcher might focus more on the economic, political, and cultural contexts that influenced the narratives of the teacher participants of the study (Webb, 2018). In a case

such as this study, the researcher would consider where, when, and how a combination of these factors shapes the participants' stories, allowing the researcher to gain a more complete understanding of the participants' experiences.

Researchers play a unique role in the interpretation of participants' narratives. They are a vital instrument in the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018), strategically selecting participants' narratives and coordinating a range of research activities. In this context, the researcher, in making these choices, must adopt a reflexive stance, which in itself:

"Requires constant reflection and Analysis of the researcher's own perspectives, biases and values, and how these may influence their interpretation of the data (Phillion, 2018: 25)

The researcher socially engages with participants, listens to them, and facilitates sharing stories. They are sensitive to power dynamics and other contextual factors that impact the research process (Dundon et al, 2017) and actively co-produce knowledge (Cook-Sather, 2017).

Addressing how experienced teachers understand the Socialisation of international students in higher education pathways to the Russell group of research-based universities in the UK has never been more critical, nationally and internationally. Higher education in the United Kingdom and its rival institutions in Europe, North America, and Asia have increasingly competed with the support of private-sector multinationals to capture a growing share of the international student market. Research has examined this through economic, social, and political lens. This study's findings can assist HE institutions and their corporate partners in developing policies and practices that promote greater integration for international students and initiate parity of esteem in access programmes for domestic students.

4.6 Positionality, Practice in Theory, and me as the Researcher

When I originally began my doctoral study some time ago, I had attempted to distance myself sufficiently from a particular educational setting (e.g. foundation study higher education) to become as

critical as possible about all of the things that were happening around me and that had considerably influenced my thinking over the last decade. However, I discovered that not only was such an approach was going to be structurally very difficult. First, I would have limited access to documents and details concerning the major and pressing issues that were developing more and more since Brexit, including IFC and university finances and the policies of recruitment and how they were impacting student and staff recruitment and deployment. However, I discovered that in my attempts to distance myself from the minutiae of operational decisions and processes, such an approach was becoming convoluted because I was trying so hard to be a ‘critical researcher’ that to a significant degree, I was misunderstanding what that meant in practice (Banegas & Consoli, 2024). As such, I was, I felt, undermining my own claims to being a researcher and finally, therefore, denying the very things that made my research original and current and practice-set (Edwards, 2021) – that is, being a practitioner AND a researcher in a very under-researched and original setting – international foundation institutions.

As a result, in looking back across the past several years of my methodological journey, my research design and thoughts about it demonstrate a consistent evolution. I have reflected deeply on the topic of researcher objectivity and ultimately moved towards narrative, and the adoption of specific methods of research practice as part of this. This has been an immensely difficult and complex process for me, and one that has demanding and to a great degree, intellectually a process of constant reflection, revisiting and renewal (Lowe et al, 2021). During this period, I have got to know myself perhaps for the first time, as a researching practitioner, and in so doing, I have gained appreciation for a research approach which has knitted together motivation, action, disposition, fieldwork, and eventual dissemination of the research, and in so doing, was perhaps able to get closer to answering the question ‘For what and whom is my research?’ (Ortega, 2005), for the first time.

In very many ways, my study and its design are mirror images of themselves, that is, narrating the experiences of practitioners, but this arising out of my design need to narrate my own difficulties and compromises as they shaped the design of the study. I think and assert that because of these dual premises, that my design and the subtlety of the practitioners’ narratives’ is more nuanced and more

reflective of the difficulties that they were balancing, as a result, and as Phillion (2018) so clearly articulates in her narrative studies.

I now give a brief accounting of how my methodology has evolved since I began this thesis and how it is linked with my evolving positionality as a researcher. When I wrote and submitted my first research proposal, I had wanted to place my experience as a senior manager, and a more recent academic within a university, coupled with my complex feelings about the place of business within educational institutions into sharp perspective. The complexity and moral questions of commercial partnerships between business and education, as a medium for inclusion, and widening participation I knew, would make this research very sensitive and ethically complex. But what made my research very difficult to manage in practice, was the very quality that made the research so urgent, important and current – that I both wanted to expose and exploit the novel setting, but I sought to project this new research focus upon an established and traditional institution. I discovered that not only was this ethically complex, but also to a large degree, conceptually incoherent.

The realisation of this took a long time however, although I knew in the end that I must compromise my aims as a researcher and respond to the practical difficulties of the topic and the context, with a more workable, yet ethically sound and conceptually valid structure. This too, at first, proved elusive. I resisted for a long time, the use of narrative as my design, on the basis that my ethical principles did not want to position my participants as either victims of this supposedly commercial and at times arguably harsh business environment, or of my exposure of them, or finally, of using them to further my aims of novelty and originality. However, after a great deal of thought and critical reflection, during which time I reasoned that it was better to let their narratives be exposed to the light and to critical scrutiny, this too, made me ultimately a more sensitive researcher in the final analysis. Precisely by adopting narratives, I gave space and time for my participants to really and authentically tell their own stories, and to weave into these, fears, concerns and compromises about what they and the institution were doing. Amidst all of this, and my feelings (that were becoming clearer in relation to my intentions and their impacts) I realised that I had not fully explored the potential conflict of the topic in terms of its pedagogic impact

on both students and staff relations and this led to fascinating questioning of assumptions about the motivations of both students and staff within IFCs.

This came to light when I was writing a paper on entrepreneurialism and IFC students (and which was subsequently published) and corresponded with practitioners experiencing similar ideological conundrums as I had experienced, particularly when they were asked to identify the nexus between their programmes and social justice and responsiveness on the one hand and business interests and commercial gains on the other. Over the course of the evolution of the research design for this study, and most significantly within this discussion of my positionality, and its impact on my practice, and on the theory that I hoped to generate, I have weighed the benefits of aligning intention, fieldwork, and eventual visibility and scrutiny of my research. I began to realise that narrative suited all of the purposes of my study: it could deal with the question of how ‘research ethics’ could be balanced with ‘everyday ethics’ (Mockler, 2014); it could deal with the emergence of questions of cross-cultural interpretations of research (Dhillon & Thomas, 2019) and perhaps most of all, it could feature the concept of ‘care’ quite centrally – because above all, my research features the stories of these professionals with whom I work, who I respect as professionals, and who I care about (Noddings, 2012). Finally, I have discovered that carefully and ethically constructed research may take many forms, and that for my research to address the questions that it does, I would need to fully embrace the subjective, complex, and vulnerable position of addressing my positionality clearly and honestly.

4.7 Role of the Researcher in Practice

At its most basic, Social Constructivism is a theoretical perspective in qualitative research that emphasises the importance of social interaction and the role of language in shaping human understanding. In the context of higher education research, the social constructivist researcher who employs narrative inquiry methods must adopt a specific range of roles and tasks consistent with this approach. The researcher's primary role is as a listener and facilitator, with the researchers prioritising listening to participants' stories. To do this, the researcher must,

"Create a safe and welcoming environment that encourages participants to share their stories and experiences and to listen with openness and empathy" (Phillion, 2018: 24).

In this instance, being sensitive to power dynamics and other contextual factors may impact the research process (Anderson, 2013). To consider these factors, long-established colleagues were recruited as the primary research participants. Their data was collected in familiar institutional locations and settings so that focus group members could express their thoughts and feelings openly without restraint.

Critically, for this study, the researcher was able to engage with how teachers contextualise these experiences in the unconventional institutional setting of their employer. In this respect, the participants and the researcher were 'insiders' (Mercer, 2007) who knew about the power structures and the complex tensions in the setting whilst also determined to act with truth and integrity in researching a hitherto under-researched topic. This international foundation centre is independent of but commercially partnered with Russell Group University. In this environment, teachers' understanding, reflections, and insights were shaped to some extent by International Foundation Centres' business policies and metrics, particularly key goals such as progression and attendance.

The research subjects (IFC Centre teachers) operate in a multicultural context that affects the researcher's role. Teachers are engaged with socialising international students from diverse Asian ethnicities, languages, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds. It has been argued that,

"Narrative inquiry provides a useful way of understanding how individuals make sense of their experiences, particularly about cultural contexts and social structures." (Phillion, 2018: 20).

This, in turn, has inferences for the researcher's practice as it implies that:

"Cultural humility is essential to narrative inquiry in multicultural contexts, as it requires the researcher to recognise and respect the diversity of experiences and perspectives."

(Phillion, 2018: 22).

Phillion develops an expanded analytical role for the researcher. In her 2002 article "Classroom Stories of Multicultural Teaching and Learning," The author contends that a researcher can gain insights from these stories, as they provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the complexities of multicultural teaching and learning and the practices and perspectives of those who work in diverse classrooms. The additional implications for the researcher's role when practising narrative inquiry in the field include Co-constructing knowledge: A social constructivist researcher plays an active role in the research process (Horner, 2016; Cook-Sather et al, 2014). In Narrative Inquiry, the researcher is a crucial instrument, according to Cresswell & Poth (2018). This involves adopting a reflexive stance, which:

"Requires constant reflection and analysis of the researcher's perspectives, biases, and values, and how these may influence their interpretations of the data" (Phillion, 2018:25).

The researcher's strategic role is building trusting relationships and working closely with research participants to collect appropriate narrative data, such as experiential stories and re-storying. The data is analysed to identify patterns and themes. (Elliott et al, 1999; Koro-Ljungberg et al, 2009). Both assert that this involves engaging in interpretation and sense-making, drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives and methodologies to make sense of the data). A further role for the researcher is to disseminate their research findings in ways that are accessible and meaningful to a range of stakeholders, including participants, other researchers, and policymakers. They best achieve this by being transparent about research methods and data and ensuring that research findings are relevant and valuable, Mercer (2006; Moravcsik, 2019). When investigating the narrative experience of teachers socialising international students in Russell Group universities, social constructivist researchers may draw on these roles and tasks to explore a range of research questions. For example, they may seek to understand how teachers and international students communicate and negotiate cultural differences,

how social and cultural contexts shape the socialisation process, and how power dynamics impact the experiences of different stakeholders. To adopt a social constructivist approach to this research, I, being the researcher, was prepared to engage actively with research participants, adopting a reflexive stance and seeking to co-construct knowledge and meaning throughout the research process.

I analysed data in a way sensitive to the social and cultural contexts in which it is collected, drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives and methodologies to make sense of the data. Finally, they should seek to disseminate their research findings in ways that are accessible and meaningful to a range of stakeholders, engaging in ongoing dialogue with participants and other stakeholders to ensure that the research has a meaningful impact. A further role for the researcher is to disseminate their research findings in ways that are accessible and meaningful to a range of stakeholders, including participants, other researchers, and policymakers. They best achieve this by being transparent about research methods and data and ensuring that research findings are relevant and valuable, (Mercer, 2006; Moravcsik, 2019).

When investigating the narrative experience of teachers socialising international students in Russell Group universities, social constructivist researchers may draw on these roles and tasks to explore a range of research questions. For example, they may seek to understand how teachers and international students communicate and negotiate cultural differences, how social and cultural contexts shape the socialisation process, and how power dynamics impact the experiences of different stakeholders to adopt a social constructivist approach to this research, the researcher should be prepared to engage actively with research participants, adopting a reflexive stance and seeking to co-construct knowledge and meaning throughout the research process. They should also be prepared to analyse data in a way that is sensitive to the social and cultural contexts in which it is collected, drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives and methodologies to make sense of the data. Finally, they should seek to disseminate their research findings in ways that are accessible and meaningful to a range of stakeholders, engaging in ongoing dialogue with participants and other stakeholders to ensure that the research has a meaningful impact.

4.8 Data Collection

There are two key professional considerations for the researcher throughout their narrative research cycle. The first is reflexivity, according to Creswell:

"Reflexivity and the role of the researcher in shaping the research process are important issues for qualitative researchers to consider. Researchers need to acknowledge their own values, biases, and assumptions in the study, and they should explain how their perspectives could affect the study outcomes." (Creswell, 2013: 204)

Authors such as Finlay, Kvale & Brinkmann, and Lincoln & Guba emphasise the need to cultivate self-awareness of their position and its impact on the study. (Finlay, 2002; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) They emphasise communication and reflection, in that 'Reflexivity' is an essential aspect of qualitative research, and researchers must be transparent about their own biases, assumptions, and values; this can be achieved through a process of ongoing self-reflection and dialogue with other researchers.

The second consideration is Reactivity - the researcher has an influence on the study's participants. Patton (2015) states that:

"Reactivity includes considering and reporting how your presence as an observer or evaluator may have affected what you observed - there are four primary ways in which the presence of an outside observer or the fact that an evaluation is taking place can affect and possibly distort the finding of a study. Reactions...to the presence of the field worker. Changes (in the researchers) during the data collection or analysis. The predispositions, selective perceptions or biases you might bring to the inquiry and Researcher Incompetence." (Patton, 2015: 704).

Participants had the confidence to meet on several occasions so that I could collect narratives via video, transcribe them and store them electronically, getting ethical agreement to analyse and re-storify these narratives. Trust was encouraged through open questions throughout the data collection process – in focus groups, using prompts to widen conversations and the review of documents and materials. Participants must trust the researcher if narrative analysis is to function effectively, and in sum, I feel that I maximised my ability to construct trust, due to professional associative relationships within this academic institution built up over 10 years.

4.9 Selection of the Sites and Participants

According to Maxwell (2013), a qualitative study's design consists of four parts: data collection, data analysis, and the relationship between the researcher and the subjects of the study. To effectively gather participant narrative data, researchers must ensure that these relationships with research participants are in place. The research methods must include choices about where to conduct the research and who to include. The term "purposeful sampling" refers to the process where the researcher concentrates on a population of research participants who are realistically and reasonably attainable and directly related to the study's goal. Teachers and other staff members working with international students in this study were among the pool of potential participants.

This qualitative study was conducted within an International Foundation Centre at Russell Group University in North England. It has a large population of approximately 1000 non-EU international students, predominantly from Asian countries; approximately half are mainland Chinese nationals. This setting offered the most potential for candid responses to the interview questions and authentic narratives. I, as the researcher, have worked in the Centre for the past 12 years and developed productive and trusting professional and personal relationships with colleagues across programmes and in the administration. Participant selection included adopting an approach termed 'Purposeful Sampling' by (Patton, 2015) that narrowed the lens of the enquiry to focus on a realistic and reasonable population of participants. The selection was based on the following criteria: Length of Pathway teaching experience in the IFC, a mix of seniority levels of teachers, and range of teaching experience in

different Pathway courses represented - Foundation, International Year one, and Pre-masters. Some UCU union members were included. Teachers also had to be willing and able to consent to university research requirements. The data gathering was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the government regulations affecting the Centre and its working arrangements. This limited staff face-to-face contact. Over the period, staff were engaged via focus groups using the online MS Teams, platform and their discussions and responses to researcher prompts were video recorded and transcribed. In all, this study was designed to explore and examine staff narratives of their socialising experience with international students for UK HE in International Foundation Centres settings in the North of England. The study findings should assist HE institutions in developing policies and practices that promote greater integration for international students and initiate parity of esteem in access programmes for domestic students.

4.9.1 *Summary of Data Collection*

The Research Questions and Qualitative Data Collection Methods are summarised in the table at Figure 7. It aligns the relationship between the study's research questions, data collection methods, and timings. This study collected a range of qualitative data for analysis, principally focused on narrative data, collecting focus group responses, video recording and narrative transcription. The processes of data collection presented in this thesis, occurred primarily over the 2-3 years prior to submission, the details of which are summarised at Figure 7. The timing periods for data collection, coding and processing that creating new data records varied, depending on the data sources targeted and methods employed. During the study, quantitative data on international students was collected from HEFCE and its successor body, the Higher education Statistical Agency, HESA. The re-worked statistical data released by HESA in 2023 for the period 2018 -19 to 2021-22 has provided valuable contextual background for this study on the growth of international student recruitment in the Russell Group. This data has been triangulated with work by the British Council, the Higher education Policy Institute (HEPI) and Universities UK (UUK).

Figure 7		
Research Questions	Data Collection Methods	Time Frame of study
1. How do IFC staff narrate the socialisation of international students in Higher education in theory and in practice?	Introductory participant screening Personal Communications (12 staff) Teams' communications for FG Mtgs 1 – 4 Focus Group Video – Mtg 1 Focus Group Video – Mtg 2 Focus Group Video – Mtg 3 Focus Group Video – Mtg 4 Narrative Transcriptions – Mtg 1,2,3 &4	12/20 12/20 1-2/2020 15/1/21 - 10 01/2/21 26/2/21 11/3/21 12/3/21
2. How are IFC staff beliefs and practices in relation to socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management?	Personal Communication Focus Group Videos Mtgs 1-4 Narrative Transcription Analysis Salient IFC Corporate Policy Documents Other salient textual material	01/2/21 26/2/21 11/3/21 12/3/21 2021/2022 2021/2022 2021/2022
3. How do IFCs foster socialisation effectively, efficiently, and above all, educationally?	Narrative Transcription Analysis Salient IFC Corporate Policy Documents Other salient textual material	2021-22 2016-22 2016-23
4. How are attendance and progression as concepts framed in relation to learner socialisation policies and practices?	Personal Communication Salient IFC Corporate Policy Documents National HE Database documents Other salient textual material	2016-2018 202-2022 2022-2023 2016-2023

4.9.2 *Focus Group - Primary Collection Method*

This social constructivist qualitative research study used focus groups as the primary data collection method as a preferred alternative to individual interviews. Focus groups are used as a principal data collection method in this research and education setting. (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Coffey et al, 1996; Hammersley, 2000).

As a platform for data collection, they have specific advantages: not least an opportunity for participant interaction and dialogue, which can help generate more nuanced and complex understandings of the phenomenon studied (Baumfield & Webster, 2012). Focus groups can generate rich data regarding the range of perspectives and experiences captured within a single session and are also an efficient use of researcher and participant time (Houghton et al, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2019) argue that focus groups can help researchers identify shared themes and patterns across different participants' narratives and provide opportunities for collective meaning-making. (Murphy & Dingwall, 2003) highlight the potential of focus groups to generate data on the subjective experiences and perspectives of participants shedding light on socio-cultural contexts. One pair of authorities (Kreuger & Casey, 2014) identifies four types of focus groups – homogeneous, heterogeneous, sequential/ iterative, and online-virtual focus groups. This study adopted two types of focus groups; the first is homogeneous focus groups, whose participants share similar characteristics (employed by International Foundation Centres as teachers or staff socialising international students). Moreover, online or virtual focus groups use online platforms and video conferencing tools to overcome geographical barriers and COVID restrictions to allow remote participation. Although both focus groups with the same participants met several times, they cannot be categorised as sequential or iterative as there was no intent to explore changes in attitudes or experiences over time.

I initially recruited a group of ten teachers for the study's two focus groups; however, one of the teachers withdrew. The remaining nine were organised in groups of 5 and four, respectively. Due to COVID-19, each group had to meet online, and it was video recorded using MS Teams and MS Stream.

Each group met twice over one month. In the days before the commencement of the focus groups I discussed the research with each participant individually so that they had an opportunity to ask questions. The teachers involved in the research agreed to a participant consent form (Appendix D). When each group met online, they were asked on camera to consent; before both groups' initial meetings, each participant was emailed some joining information. It consisted of a hand-out with the research questions for the study, a brief explanation of the theoretical basis of socialisation in education and 13 conversation prompts aligned to the research questions for the meeting ahead. (Appendix E). It was explained to the groups that there was an open-ended interview protocol to allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions and draw out the details of the participants' stories. This method assisted me in gathering rich data recorded online as film and transcribed. Each transcript was coded to each participant's contribution to identify specific narratives and common themes. These recordings and transcripts are only available to a private group on MS Stream available to me. A thematic analysis of the transcripts was generated. Each participant was consulted and asked to verify the accuracy of the comments in their transcript. They were individually asked by email to consent to selected quotations, which could be attributed in an anonymised form. They all did so, a record of which is available in pseudonymised format.

The following risks and disadvantages of the focus group method were considered and discounted as not present. Social desirability bias: Focus groups can be subject to social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses, they feel are expected or acceptable within the group context (Kreuger & Casey, 2014). Group dynamics: Group dynamics can influence focus groups, where dominant participants may influence the conversation or silence others (Farnsworth & Boon, 2010). Limited generalisability: Focus groups may not represent the most significant population being studied, and findings may not be generalisable to other contexts (Patton, 2015). Limited depth: Focus groups may allow for a different level of depth and detail than other qualitative research methods, such as individual interviews. The risks of a breach of confidentiality and digital security are limited to the researcher, who saved the video files and electronic text file records in an encrypted portable hard drive and delete the versions currently on the cloud.

4.9.3 Documents – record cultural practises, enabling context and comparison.

There are several reasons why documents can be helpful in narrative research. According to Silverman,

"Documents are an important source of data in many qualitative research studies, not only as an end in themselves but also as a way of shedding light on other aspects of the study."

(Silverman, 2010:27)

Moreover, as Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou have it:

"Documents offer a record of experiences, beliefs, and practices that can be used to analyse change over time, compare accounts, and provide context for other forms of data. As such, they are valuable sources of information that can complement and enhance other data collection methods, including interviews and observations" (Andrews et al, 2013:80)

Documents can provide a way to triangulate data and verify the accuracy of other sources (Flick, 2018).

Second, documents can provide a unique perspective on events and experiences that may not be captured in other forms of data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Finally, documents can provide a way to track changes over time, such as language use, beliefs, or practices (Reissman, 2008).

Andrews et al, 2013 (ibid), describe several categories of documents that can be used in narrative research. These categories include public documents, which institutions produce, governments intended for public consumption. Examples include official reports, policy documents, and public speeches. Personal documents: These are documents that are produced by individuals and are intended for personal use or private communication. Examples include diaries, letters, and personal narratives. Artifacts: These are physical objects that can be used to understand the social and cultural context of the people being studied. Examples include photographs and artwork. Virtual documents:

These are digital documents that are produced and circulated online, such as social media posts and blogs.

In this study, International Foundation Centre documentation mapping student 'Attainment', 'Transition', and 'Progression processes' and materials discussing 'Attendance' protocols and 'Induction' policies were analysed as part of data sources and decision-making practices. These policies directly impacted the professional practice of teachers' pedagogy and pastoral care and their role as Personal Tutors. The analysis of these framework policy documents clarified the extent to which these institutions have unique policies and practices, particularly in relation to attendance, academic induction, and placemaking for international students at the IFC that distinguish them from their Russell Group partner's approach to supporting international students.

In addition to Centre policies, there were internal Centre documents, anonymised student data, teacher and student timetables, anonymised student registers, etc, collected as data sources. These supported the process landscape, informing staff practice in monitoring student progression and attendance. In addition, documents from HESA, UUK, and other Higher education databases were collected to inform a comparative analysis of international student recruitment and financial dependency in the Russell Group. The journal prompts used a coding method (Miles et al, 2013) to analyse and look for connections to the interviews or patterns within the interviews and documents. Analysing the journals, documents, and focus group data helped to re-story the data and answered several research questions. Figures 8 and 9 on the next pages shows how the research questions address the study's three main research purposes and how the data collected was used to address these and therefore answer the research questions.

4.10 Focus Group Research and being in Insider-Researcher: risks, limitations, affordances and disadvantages

Qualitative research is diverse and complex, with different underpinning assumptions, and different motivations and needs as they relate not only to researcher positionality, but also to the complex and nuanced contexts in which the researcher finds themselves (Clarke & Gray, 2017). Focus groups are a key part of educational and social research and are frequently used in narrative participant clarification and preferential research when particular topics are being expanded upon, or when issues that appear to be common to participants emerge from individual research interviews (Green & Thorogood, 2017). However, in my research, focus groups played a critical role in the facilitation of the research, as an adaptation to both the requirement to socially distance, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and also, the need to respond to the time limitations that participants in this research had, both in relation to being present in the institution, and also bearing in mind the fact that some were on partial contracts so had competing occupation demands elsewhere (Otto & Haase, 2022).

Whilst these possibilities of focus groups were critical in my research, there were risks and limitations that I had to consider that might have had a significant impact upon my data, and these were entwined with my positioning as an ‘insider researcher’ (Smyth & Holian, 2008). A major ethical challenge of being an insider researcher using focus groups was the potential for implicit or perceived coercion during the groups. The difficult and emotive impact of the pandemic had created a situation of possible power imbalances in workload, future contracts, subjects and pathways offered, and not least, prospects. Given my extensive teaching load and attendant responsibilities, it could be perceived to an extent that I was in a position where there was a power imbalance and where perceived and implicit coercion could be considered a possibility, however much I reflected constantly in-action on my own behaviour and positioning. Member checking through repeated episodes gave me the opportunity to revisit my behaviour, and my sensitivity as a researcher and a colleague.

The first risk concerned the matter of verifiability and integrity of the participants' shared content. The complex and somewhat delicately financially balanced nature of much of the work of IFCs meant that participants were both keen to share their stories of experience and to seek common ground with other participants, whilst at the same time, balancing these with careful views and necessarily curated stories so that whatever they said would not cause alarm to others or alert them to differences for example in contracts or working practices (Sikes & Potts, 2008). What participants share in an interview may be influenced by how the researcher is perceived and their relationships with the researcher outside of the research context (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Certainly, it is the case that participants might be willing and even comfortable to discuss issues with someone who 'understands', yet this must be balanced with questions of feeling judged, feeling as if their shared knowledge is not necessarily in safe hands, and in the case of IFCs, being concerned about the impact on their ongoing relationships (Chavez, 2008; Mercer, 2007). So, whilst focus groups are a critical and flexible and responsive mode of eliciting information especially in such insider research, they are complex in their weaving in and out of power, knowledge, disclosure, like mindedness and trust.

4.11 The complex ethics and professional issues of the context of IFCs

Considerations of research ethics is fundamental in research and is governed principally by concerns in four main areas: fairness and justice, design of the research questions, the research design and not least, methods and tools, including forms of data analysis, checking, responsiveness and integrity building (Clarke & Gray, 2017). Standing behind all the research behaviours and practices of the research are issues of respect for persons, covering (Chavez, 2008):

- Autonomy
- Informed consent
- Anonymity
- Voluntary nature
- 3rd party involvement and interest

- Compensation
- Member checking
- Access to results
- Dissemination rights
- Accountability

All research contexts require that researchers ensure that participants and research processes are not hampered by unnecessary requirements or processes and that design of data gathering is such that it is conducted with integrity and clarity whilst ensuring the most streamlined and appropriate methods. In some contexts, this is not simply good and expected practice, it is critical practice for the following reasons. First, some research contexts are inherently unstable, either through geographical location, political status, economic or financial instability or transient nature (Otto & Haase, 2022).

IFCs are structures that span two types of instability: political and financial. It was thus a crucial consideration in this research that I designed the research so that it was of rapid and direct benefit to the community under research and could be applied quickly to maximise the possibility of sustainability of the institution and of its staff. The second consideration of visible ethics is one of ensuring minimal duplication of previous research. In this context, there was scarce previous research in this exact domain, so it was unlikely to duplicate most aspects of it, but therein lay another related concern: carrying out research simply because there was a methodological and conceptual gap. In some cases, it is enough to validate research on the basis that there are gaps in current knowledge, but in complex ethical cases, this, I would argue, is not enough.

The difficulties of financing IFCs, the precipitous nature of many of the funding regimes, the transient nature of many staff contracts all were major considerations in me balancing out the requirement for new knowledge and seeking understanding of processes where there was relatively little before, but at the same time, ensuring this was good research, and worthwhile and useful knowledge and had a sensitivity and understanding of its impact and wider significance (Grove et al, 2006; Wu & Liu, 2014).

Several issues were therefore paramount in balancing out these factors: there were practical and sensitive time and access related matters to consider; there were ethical dilemmas of insider research (covered earlier); and there were cooperation considerations, balancing out the time requirements of my research, with participants many other competing demands, and in some cases, the inevitable possibility of entering into research-participant transactions if my research impacted upon their own research studies (Mercer, 2007), which several of my colleagues had already embarked upon. Amongst all these was the question of how I, as a researcher, handled the dilemmas.

What was perhaps most significant of all for me, in this research, was that although I had worked within the institution for several years, and got to know my colleagues very well, there were many ways in which I was entering unfamiliar terrain. I often felt myself gazing across a familiar landscape but with very unfamiliar eyes, seeing policies, practices and principles enacted differently, as if for the first time I had ever really considered their basis or imagined their longer-term impact on both students and staff.

When this happened – as it did quite frequently within the research – I remained safely fixated upon the matters of ethics and ethical conduct which shielded me from the most difficult questions that arose about this different unfamiliarity. Effectively, I was heading into ethical complexities pertaining to economic and political hegemony, and although my previous (non-academic) work experiences may have laid the foundation for this, my prior academic experiences had not sufficiently prepared me.

In my earlier discussion of how long it took me to arrive at my design, and how many iterations I took to ensure that my positionality and my ethics and my design were all aligned, this was not a simple task, but equally it was not as onerously complex as it could otherwise have been due to the systematic consideration of all of the issues I have outlined here.

Figure 8 The Study's Research Purposes

Representation of how the Research Questions address the Study's Three Major Purposes.

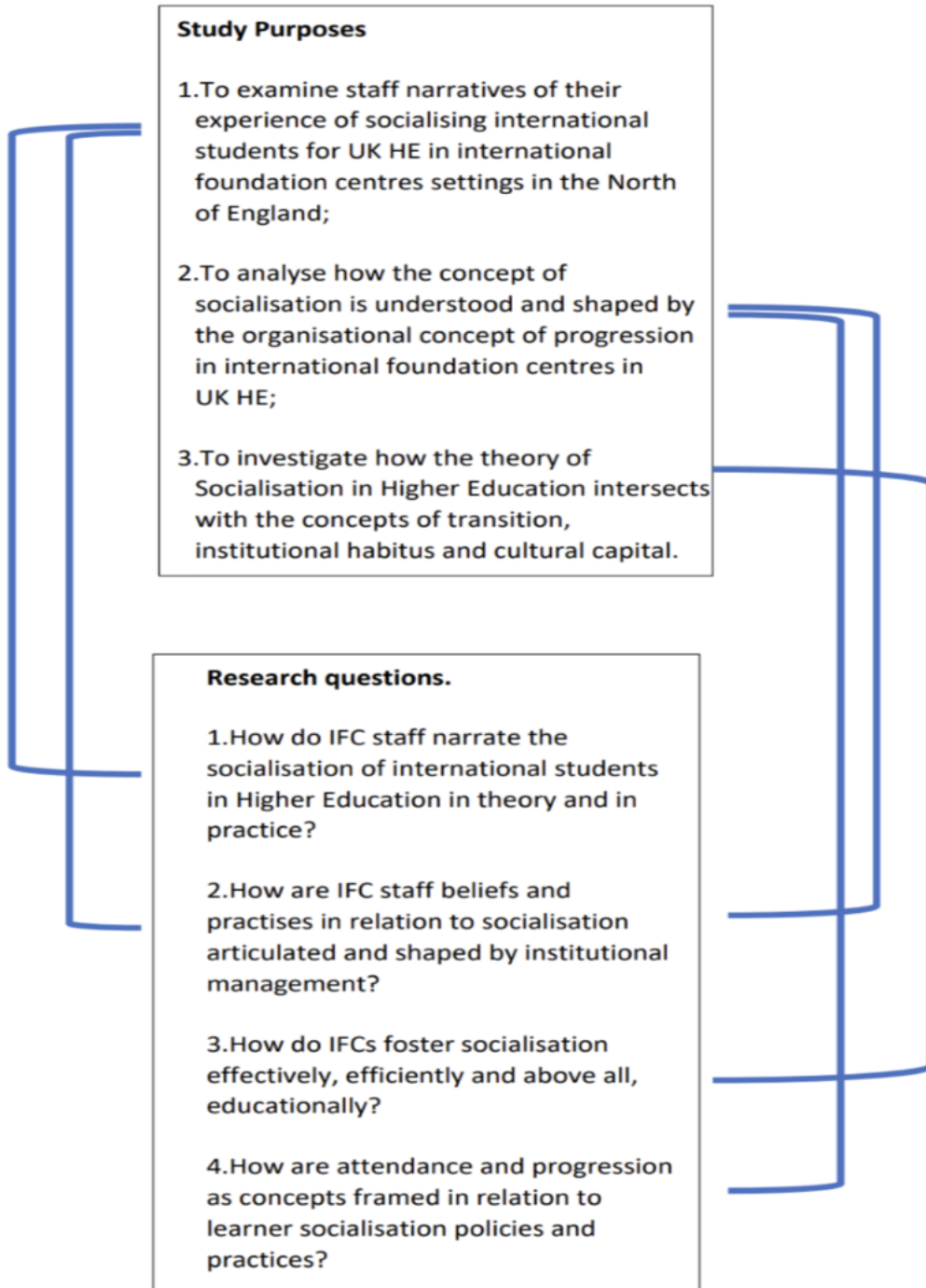
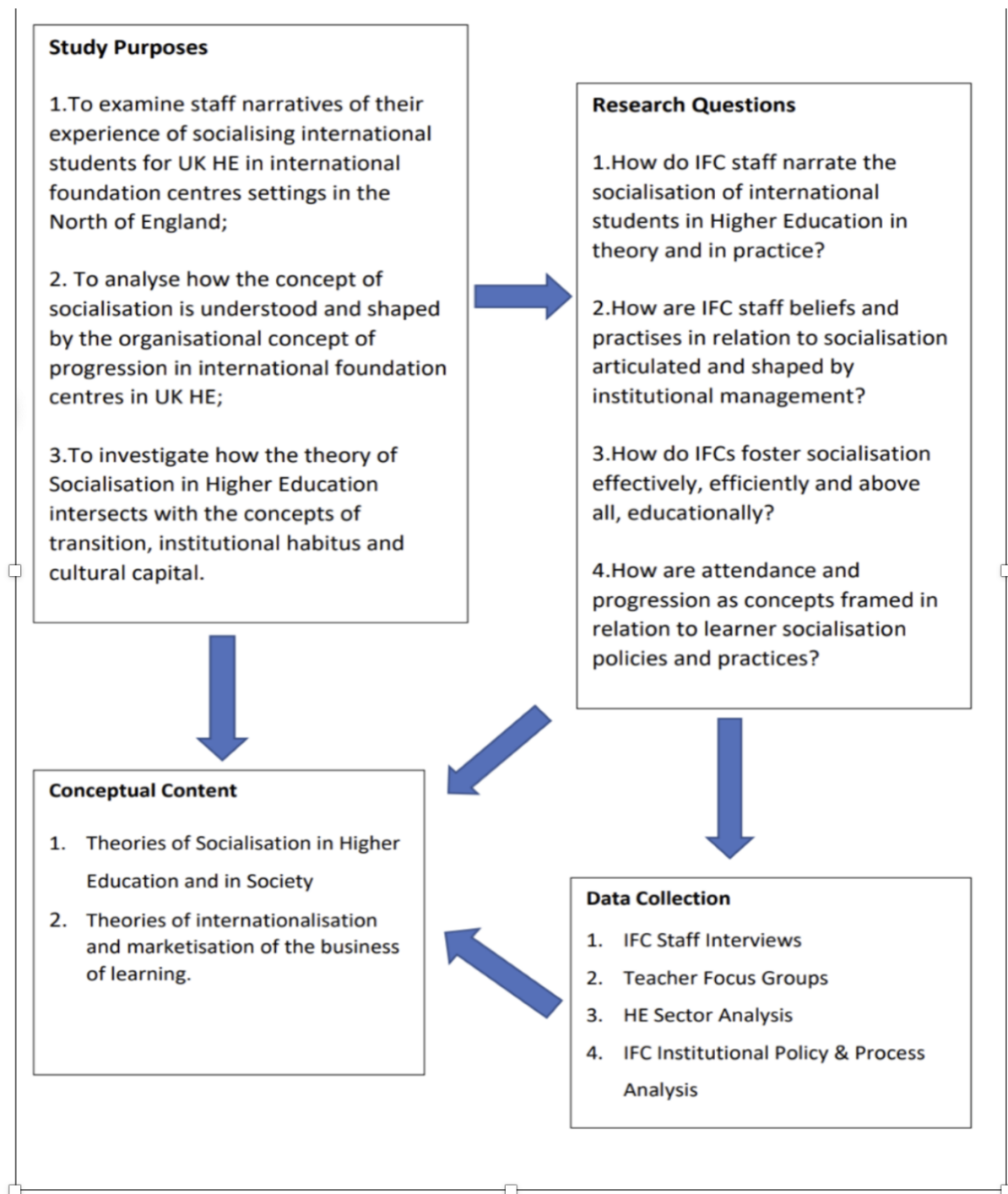


Figure 9 Purposes, Questions and Data Collection



4.12.1 *Narrative Analysis - data collection and analysis methods*

Narrative research is a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis that provides detailed descriptions and explanations of people's lived experiences in their specific social and political contexts. Individual's stories are told from their own unique beliefs and perceptions. Consequently, data collected through narrative research should be treated carefully and correctly. To achieve this, (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Reissman, 2008) argue that narrative researchers should be transparent and rigorous in their data collection and analysis methods to ensure the reliability and validity of their findings. The steps of narrative analysis typically involve familiarisation, reading and taking notes, coding text, documenting the stories, classifying significant moments, and synthesising the findings of the analysis into a coherent and meaningful narrative. By following specific recognised techniques, researchers can ensure that they accurately capture and analyse the complexity of lived experiences as described by those who have lived them.

The approach to qualitative data analysis adopted in this study used the analysis protocol of (Miles et al, 2013). There are three cycles of analysis that make up their analysis protocol. The first cycle involves coding the interviews and documents, which involves breaking the data down into smaller, more manageable segments using descriptive codes. This process is often referred to as "chunking" the data. The second cycle involves determining interpretive codes, which provide a deeper understanding of the data and allow the researcher to identify more complex patterns and themes. The third and final cycle involves determining pattern codes, which connect the data sources and reveal common themes and patterns across the data. This cycle helps to identify the larger narrative and can provide insights into the experiences and perspectives of the participants.

This study now considers the main established approaches to narrative analysis.

The first is the Socio-linguistic approach, that emphasizes the role of language in constructing meaning. This approach recognises that the language used in a narrative is central to understanding the narrative's meaning, and that analysing the linguistic features of a narrative can provide insights into its underlying structures and processes. One of the main proponents of this approach was (Labov, 1997) who developed a multi-part analysis of narrative structure, consisting of abstract, orientation clauses, complicating action clauses, evaluation, result or resolution, coda. To achieve more depth of analysis, the clauses in the narrative can be classified to establish their range and impact. Researchers can identify patterns and themes in the narrative and gain insights into the speaker's perspective on the events being narrated. Some of the main criticisms of this approach discuss its limitations in capturing the complexity of narrative practices in different contexts, as well as the potential for the approach to reify power dynamics. The other approach is Socio-Cultural and focuses on the social and cultural contexts in which narratives are produced and understood. This approach recognises that narratives are shaped by the social and cultural environments in which they are produced, and that understanding these contexts is critical to understanding the meaning of the narrative, as Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou argue:

"Socio-cultural approaches to narrative research have highlighted the importance of situating stories within the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which they are produced and consumed and have drawn attention to the complex power relations that shape the production and interpretation of narratives." (Andrews et al, 2013:9)

It offers insights into the political and historical context of the storytellers' lives. It is deliberate in not breaking up each narrative account to maintain the complete context.

The practical steps involved in this narrative protocol include determining the time period during which the narrative was produced, examining the narrative in detail, including the language used, the

characters and their relationships, and the plot. It also involves considering the broader social, cultural, and political context in which the narrative was produced. It identifies and analyses the cultural and political norms and values that are reflected in the narrative, being aware of the researcher's own cultural background, biases, and assumptions, and how these may influence their interpretation of the narrative. It also involves being open to multiple interpretations of the narrative, and considering how different perspectives and voices might shape the analysis. Grbich states that:

"The socio-cultural approach allows the contextual constructions and interpretations of the actor and the researcher to emerge" (Grbich, 2013:227)

I used the socio-cultural approach to data analysis as it enabled me to collect a rich array of narrative data from participants over a relatively short period of time. The ten participants' transcribed video-recorded responses were collected in their virtual focus group settings. These included responses to follow-up open-ended questions. These were analysed alongside the overarching contextual institutional documentation collected providing the data for their narrative experiences to be restored.

"Narrative research recognises that human experience is fundamentally social, and that the stories we tell are shaped by and shaping the social world around us" (Connelly, Clandinin, 2006:61).

4.12.2 Data Management

The data collected for this study has been captured and stored digitally. The contextual documentation collected (files, reports, spreadsheets, screen shots, scanned photos, and online images) are stored on a dual authentication password protected computer hard drive. The video data used to capture the focus group interviews is hosted on university systems that are cloud base platforms. These systems also have dual authentication access. The video files are configured as private spaces accessible only to me as the researcher. The video software used in recording the focus group conversations and responses to follow-up questions enabled transcriptions of participant conversations, separating them

out as individual participant records. Mediating each focus group gave this researcher the opportunity to be more engaged in these conversations. When the study is concluded, the data files on the cloud were deleted. I have downloaded and will store copies of all the files in an encrypted format on a 3 Tb portable hard drive. These will be kept for seven years. A hard copy of the document including video transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of this researcher.

4.12.3 *Crystallisation as Data Analysis Method*

The participants' stories were effectively fashioned using crystallisation. Crystallisation is a data analysis technique that involves a process of exploring data that is grounded in the researcher's observations and reflections. Sambrook & Stewart highlight that the researcher's reflexive influence is an essential aspect of crystallisation analysis. (Sambrook & Stewart, 2010) They noted that the researcher's position and perspective can shape the data interpretation and that the process requires active engagement with the researcher's pre-existing assumptions. Kim and Mueller update an expanded version of the 'five principles of Crystallisation' by Laura Ellingson, (in Kim & Mueller, 2021).

They suggest the following - Recursive and iterative development of theoretical insights: this means that the researcher keeps going back to the data and refining their understanding of it, in a process that is repeated multiple times until they arrive at theoretical insights that are well-grounded in the data.

Multiple forms of data: This principle refers to the idea that researchers should use different types of data, such as written, visual, and audio materials, to gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research topic. This process was adopted during the study using numerous screenings of video excerpts, transcript readings, and subsequent discussions with participants.

Diverse analytical approaches were adopted during the study with the researcher using a variety of analytical approaches, including content analysis, discourse analysis, and narrative analysis, to explore the data and generate theoretical insights. Key to this was thematic aggregation applied against the three main theoretical frameworks employed in the study. The central role of the reflexivity of the researcher is acknowledged in this study. The researcher's insights, experiences, and judgments shaped the research process in the research design and data collection. His theoretical insights were

mediated by the theoretical frameworks he chose. Knowledge is not one discoverable truth, but multiple truths that are situated and fractured: This principle means that there are often different perspectives or versions of reality, and that knowledge is not fixed but can change depending on the context in which it is constructed.

"Crystallisation is a useful technique for maintaining data integrity while uncovering deeper insights." (Huang, & Yuan, (2019))

4.13 Limitations, Validity, Reliability & Ethical Considerations

4.13.1 Limitations

The limitations of the study design were evident in several key areas. First, the inability to recruit the preferred number of participants, 20 and settling for 10 participants was a notable limitation. In practice 9, narrators reduced the diversity of perspectives and potentially limited the scope of data interpretation. In turn, it might have affected the richness and accuracy of the aggregated thematic analysis. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a change in the format of the narrative data collection with the participants. The shift to an online and unstable MS Teams video platform was a less than satisfactory medium to conduct focus groups. The digital medium prevented realistic face-to-face interactions, limiting the depth of engagement and interpersonal connectivity that could have been established in an in-person setting, thereby affecting the quality of data collected. Another limitation was the pressured environment and time constraints on the design and implementation of data collection and analysis. The participants were all experienced teachers required to deliver their lessons online to a globally distributed set of virtual classrooms, which was pedagogically difficult while working from home. Lockdown-associated restrictions forced researcher and researched to make compromises recruiting fewer groups to conduct less in-depth focus group discussions. The planned one-to-one questionnaire data collection was cancelled. The limitations imposed by the study design were significant, but they did not appear to affect how participants perceived the institutions being studied; this is conceivable because participant discussions referred to the pre-COVID period, and their

contextual experience extended back many years. The focus group process was conducted neutrally, but the shift to remote work environments may have increased criticality among participants, influencing their responses and experiences.

In conclusion, the limitations of the study design were primarily driven by participant availability and the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. While data collection and the study's overall comprehensiveness were affected. In practice, data collection was easier to collate, code and analyse. On balance, data quality may have been compromised by fewer collected and interpreted experiences.

As a former international consultant in Education reform, a senior economic development manager engaged with private sector growth, and a subject module leader in an International Foundation Centre (IFC) at Russell Group University. This researcher is aware of the bias brought to the study. An expatriate Scot of part-Latin heritage, educated in Glasgow through the Scottish primary school system (public, good quality, and free) and an excellent fee-paying Catholic (Jesuit) secondary school (multi-national in outlook with mobile alumni). This researcher graduated from three Scottish Universities with one undergraduate and two Masters' degrees. For two of the three, he was educated for free by the taxpayer. Now teaching relatively privileged international students aiming to enter first- and second-year undergraduate study and pre-masters' entry to an IFC partner, Russell Group University, and doing so at a lower tariff than their UK counterparts. This researcher is passionate about the efficacy and societal necessity of a supply of universal education at all levels. This educator believes in cultivating a moral sense and ethical conviction to practise. Working internationally and collaboratively, a professional career validated these beliefs. However, they were set in other contexts, which might be constructed differently in this researcher's current social and geographical circumstances.

Because narrative research is focused on understanding individuals' experiences and perspectives, it is particularly susceptible to the biases and subjectivities of the researcher. According to Connelly and Clandinin:

"Narrative research is inherently interpretive and, therefore, involves the subjectivities of both the participant and the researcher. The researcher's perspectives, values, and beliefs, as well as the social and cultural contexts in which they are embedded, can influence how they interpret and represent participants' stories" (Connelly, Clandinin, 2006:44).

Patton also acknowledged the issue as:

"Narrative researchers are seeking to understand and interpret the meanings and experiences of participants, and the interpretation of meaning is inevitably influenced by the researcher's perspective, assumptions, and preconceptions." (Patton, 2002:453).

As researchers influence every area of the study from design to execution, their:

"Own experiences, assumptions, and values ...can affect data collection, analysis, and interpretation" (Creswell, 2013:185)

My stance as the researcher, is that my experiences directly influence my perspectives on education, and as such, I am a strong supporter and advocate for higher education reform. However, I also believe in pursuing excellence and has social justice concerns. The intensive, higher-quality foundation degree services that international students in IFC pay for through high fees should be available universally. Services should be designed so that domestic access students from non-traditional student backgrounds are admitted to these non-direct entry pathway courses on a low-cost basis. I have direct experience instituting reform programmes in national education systems overseas and supporting private sector growth in the UK and internationally. As such, I am not antithetical to international student participation or hostile to commercial partnerships in Higher education. I believe such partnerships should benefit more than a few cloistered institutions and a relatively small number of higher-income students. There should be parity of esteem and access to this system for all. Socio-economically disadvantaged and 'non-traditional' students should have 'Access' to this level of class

size and quality of engagement. Similarly, international students should be encouraged to work in the UK, lending their talents to the economy after graduation.

To address research vulnerabilities around their beliefs, socio-cultural narrative researchers in this study took steps to minimize the impact of potential biases and limit their influence. The following measures theorised by (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; and Charmaz, 2006) were used to neutralise these threats. They are summarised as engaging in reflexivity and self-awareness. This involves being transparent about their own perspectives and actively seeking out and considering alternative viewpoints.

"Reflexivity involves the researcher acknowledging the ways in which they are shaping the data and analysis and being aware of their own positionality and how this may affect the research process". (Braun & Clarke, 2019:16)

Using multiple data collection methods, such as interviews, observation, and document analysis, can help triangulate findings and reduce the potential impact of biases. According to Denzin & Lincoln:

"Triangulation is the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to ensure that the results are as valid and reliable as possible". (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:4).

Building rapport and trust with participants can help reduce the potential for participant reactivity and lead to more honest and accurate responses. As Charmaz notes:

"A researcher's ability to build rapport and trust with participants is crucial for eliciting their narratives and understanding their experiences" (Charmaz, 2006:117).

3.9 My biases were identified before the study, enabling this researcher to prepare strategies to limit the influence of these threats. Research practice in this study included compliance with the above guidance and careful monitoring of threats so that no valid threats emerged in the study.

4.13.2 Validity and Reliability

Before the commencement of this study, it was vitally important that the researcher considered and had a clear understanding of validity. Validity in qualitative narrative research does not equate to truth in an objective sense, but rather:

“Validity is not about establishing 'truth' or 'reality', but rather it is about establishing the credibility or believability of the research findings within the context of the research question, the data, and the interpretive frameworks used” (Braun & Clarke, 2013:219).

Moreover, this qualitative researcher assumed that there are multiple subjective realities and interpretations of events, and therefore the researcher's role is to provide a rich and detailed description of the phenomenon being studied, as well as to offer a clear and transparent account of the research process.

“Validity in qualitative research is primarily concerned with establishing the degree to which the researcher's interpretation of the data accurately represents the perspectives and experiences of the participants being studied” (Guest et al, 2013: 83).

In qualitative narrative research, reliability is often defined as the consistency and dependability of the research findings, or the extent to which the research process can be replicated and produce consistent results. There are different features of reliability that this study needed to consider, including dependability, confirmability, and consistency.

According to Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules:

"Dependability refers to the stability and consistency of the research findings over time and across different researchers or settings. It is achieved by documenting and auditing the research process and decisions...ensuring that the methods are consistent and transparent."

(Nowell et al (2017:245))

To confirm if the findings of the qualitative study were consistent, credible, and plausible, confirmability was traced back to the data and the participants' experiences. It was achieved through reflexivity, transparency, and peer debriefing. The study participants were approached to engaged in member checking'. Supplied with contextual settings and an extensive selection of quotations attributed to each participant. Teachers provided confirmatory emails to secure veracity of findings and an audit trail for each narrative. These were triangulated with other teachers' narratives to enhance "the trustworthiness of the findings" (Polit & Beck, 2022:361): The final contribution to establishing the foundation of reliability in this study is Consistency:

"Consistency is a crucial aspect of reliability in qualitative research, ensuring that the research process and findings are consistent and replicable across different contexts and researchers"

(Guest et al, 2013: 81).

For many qualitative researchers, consistency may be problematic because of temporality; the research is always influenced by the time and place (Stenbacka, 2001). The temporal context of this study proves this observation. Data collection was obligated by the shift to pandemic lockdown measures in England. The study participants, all teachers, pedagogic, and socialisation practise were materially, socially, and psychologically affected by the closure of the IFC centre and abandonment of traditional classroom arrangements to online. So, to expect the same results is contrary to a key aspect of qualitative research. Patton (2015) noted that reliability is a natural consequence of validity. So according to the logic of Patton, if you have a valid study then the study can be considered reliable.

Other potential threats to the validity of the study are Reactivity and Respondent Validation:

"Reactivity is a threat to the validity of narrative research because it refers to the potential for the act of observant-on or participation to alter the behaviour or responses of the participants. This can result in biased or incomplete data that do not accurately represent the participants' true experiences or perspectives." (Lichtman, 2013:146).

The overwhelming narrative contributions were from interactions between participants in follow-up conversations. I, as the researcher prompted but limited interposing, the transcripts demonstrate this. He was also well known to participants which limiting observer reactivity.

The other key threat is Respondent Validation. In this case,

"Respondent validation is a threat to the validity of narrative research because it involves the reliance on participants' own assessments or interpretations of their experiences, which may be biased or inaccurate. This can result in a distorted or incomplete picture of the phenomena being studied and undermine the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings"
(Reissman, 2008:38)

Like researcher bias, it is impossible to eliminate researcher influence (Maxwell, 2013). Standard techniques this narrative researcher employed to safeguard himself from threats of reactivity and respondent validation were to turn a necessity into a virtue during COVID-19 by limiting his face-to-face presence during data collection, which reduced the potential for participants to alter their behaviour (Patton, 2015) or responses due to the researcher's presence (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was made possible by using video recordings for online focus groups rather than the planned classroom-based face-to-face interactions. A further safeguard for Reactivity was to use multiple data sources: Researchers can triangulate data to cross-check and validate the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, for instance, multiple methods of data collection were used (e.g. focus groups, observations, document analysis), collecting data at different times and in different settings.

According to (Maxwell, 2013), reactivity refers to the researcher's influence on the individuals or setting being studied. Despite being impossible to eliminate this influence, it can be useful if understood correctly. Reactivity is associated with the observer's role, while reflexivity is linked to the researcher's role as interviewer, which significantly impacts research validity. (Maxwell (2013) suggests that comprehending this influence and its effect on the study's validity is more sensible than attempting to eliminate it. There was less threat in this study as I as the researcher had long-standing trusting and professional relationships with the participants in a familiar setting - online meetings using MS Teams. Quantitative research allows for the advance design of threat control measures, but qualitative research lacks this opportunity.

As Maxwell explains (Maxwell, 2013:123),

“Qualitative researchers rarely have access to previously planned comparisons, sampling strategies, or statistical manipulations that "control for" potential threats to validity”.

Therefore, most validity threats must be ruled out after the research has started. As Patton, 2015 notes, the credibility of qualitative methods depends on the fieldworker's skill, competence, and rigour, as well as any distractions in their life, (Patton, 2015). With this recognition, this study was implemented with constant reflection by this researcher on the possibility that these validity threats might occur.

4.14 Ethical Considerations

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) advises that:

“Educational researchers should operate within an ethic of respect for any persons – including themselves – involved in or touched by the research they are undertaking” (BERA, 2018).

The ethics of ‘Insider research’ in Higher education are well documented in the literature (Trowler, 2011; Macfarlane, 2009; Mercer, 2007; Brannick & Coughlan, 2007; Toy-Cronin (2018) discussing concerns

and risks directly associated with insider positionality such as transparency and reflexivity, informed Consent, Confidentiality and Anonymity and Data Security.

The Russell Group of Universities are subject to the UK Government's "Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees" (GAfREC). This study received its ethical approval from Newcastle University on 16/10/17 ref - 665 /2017, a copy is available at Appendix F. The ethical regulations of the University of Newcastle distinguish between social science research and health and clinical research and guide the ethical conduct of both types of research. Specifically, the University of Newcastle's Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants sets out the following primary obligations of departments where research is organised for both types of research: for social science research, the University of Newcastle's Ethics Policy specifies the following requirements for researchers:

Researchers must obtain informed consent from participants before collecting any data. The video filming included the researcher formally recording participants of this duty. The participants were supplied with a Participant information sheet (Appendix E), so they understood the purpose and nature of the research. I informed the participants on video that their privacy and confidentiality would be protected by using anonymisation techniques and that they could withdraw at any time. The data was stored securely, and any web-based materials were to be destroyed upon completion of the research. I asked participants to give written consent by email to using the narrative data collected from each participant, providing a personalised document for each participant explicitly stating the quotations used and their contextualisation by the researcher. Participants also agreed via a university template informed consent form (Appendix D). The researcher has sought to limit the risks to participants via their insider responses by assigning pseudonyms. I obtained ethical approval from the appropriate ethics committee before beginning any research involving human participants.

The University of Newcastle's ethical regulations for research emphasises the importance of protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. As identified earlier, this research project sought and obtained the approval of the University ethics committee before proceeding with the research. As indicated previously, I protected the privacy of every participant. Videos and other digital documents

were taken off the internet or intranet and stored securely in a 3 TB hard drive. The names and details of research participants were anonymised to protect their confidentiality.

4.14 Conclusion

Conducting this Research revealed a wealth of accumulated experience that forms the foundations of this Research. The use of qualitative methods of inquiry in authentic settings has enabled me as the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the complex, sensitive, and challenging social context for teacher-educators as they socialise international students. This means that the research design chosen for this study is a qualitative narrative research methodology. The collected teacher narratives focus on specific events that illustrate the challenges and opportunities of teaching and learning in a multicultural context.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presents the findings of an investigation into staff narratives of the experience of socialising international students for UK Higher education in International Foundation Centres (IFC) settings in the North of England. Four research questions focused on essential aspects of this topic that needed to be solved.

1. How do IFC staff narrate the socialisation of international students in Higher education in theory and in practice?
2. How are IFC staff beliefs and practises in relation to socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management?
3. How do IFCs foster socialisation effectively, efficiently and above all, educationally?
4. How are Attendance and Progression as concepts framed in relation to learner socialisation policies and practices?

For this study, ten teachers employed on Pathway programmes by an International Foundation Centre (IFC) in Northern England participated in a series of focus group interviews over 2021. Stories of their engagement with the students at the IFC, the Centre's management and their university partners form the narrative evidence base for this study.

The narrative data collected from the participants was analysed, coded, and aggregated into a series of six themes as follows:

- T1. Socialisation as a specialist service,
- T2. The effect of working online in lockdown,
- T3. Employer policies and instructions influencing staff socialisation practice,
- T4. The Influence of the Business Imperative,
- T5. Attendance and Progression are contested metrics and unclear concepts,
- T6. The Salience of the Personal Tutor.

The themes have been organised logically, following a narrative structure. It was organised initially as a chronological framework, but then COVID-19 occurred and emphasised themes differently. It no longer made sense timewise since it disrupted the themes significantly. Therefore, it was decided to maintain a thematic structure and let the narratives emerge naturally.

5.1.1 Summary of Narrative Findings

The findings in each theme are as follows:

T1. Socialisation as a specialist service

From teachers' narratives, three main ideas emerge about how IFC staff think about socialising international students. It is essential for student preparation, the skills and approaches teachers need to use to socialise effectively, and the institutional theory underpinning the practice of socialisation. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic ceased campus activity, shifting to home-based online teaching of globally distributed classes. The next theme highlighted the changes in Socialisation as a result.

T2. The effect of working online in lockdown

The catastrophic national backdrop and systemic disruption in the Centre's operational environment caused by COVID-19 influenced study participants. They were uniformly negative concerning the impact of online delivery on socialisation and pedagogy. Remote working was no substitute for classroom practice. Online students could hide in plain sight, registered but unwilling to participate on camera. Remote working needs specialist training, content, and equipment to engage in practical pastoral support and peer learning. The previous model of Socialisation, its standards and outcomes could have been better.

T3. Employer policies and instructions influencing staff socialisation practice

The IFC's policy priorities and intent set the formal parameters for teachers' focus, objectives, and professional practice. Teachers held different perspectives and were more critical of their employer's

degree of influence on their professional practice. They were generally willing to maintain a separate professional identity that resists it. Evidence from these teacher's responses suggests that the level of detailed instruction is inextricably linked to the company's interests. These are to optimise its business processes, limit its risks and logically achieve its commercial goals.

T4. The Influence of the Business Imperative

The operational culture and ethos of the partner institutions in the IFC shape their students' socialisation and education. Their respective missions and business models will strongly influence it. In the case of the IFC, the overarching motivation sits within its business imperative to recruit, accommodate and educate the optimum numbers of international students sufficient to generate revenues for both partners effectively and efficiently. The University's business goals are achieved by admitting increasing numbers of premium fee-paying students progressing from the IFC due to attaining the standards set by the University. The evidence for this is a matter of open record.

T5. Attendance and Progression are contested metrics and unclear concepts

To fulfil their IFC partnership transaction, the partners require IFC students to complete individual pathway transitions to their destination university course. Crucial to this process is that international students comply with the legal obligations of immigration law and study visa regulations. Consequently, the concepts of 'Attendance' and 'Progression' are key corporate metrics signalling success in the process of transition and milestones towards successful socialisation of student behaviour. Satisfactory 'Attendance' ensures legal compliance.

'Progression' status signals attainment, deemed to have satisfied the university-approved qualifications for entry so that they can gain admittance to their undergraduate or Masters' course. Most teachers disputed Attendance as having any educational significance in the form used in the IFC; for most, it represents a corporate data point as part of a business process and a missed opportunity. Progression was contested educationally as an absolute entry standard. Teachers recognised its importance as a threshold stage in the transition to university. However, references were made to intermittent varying of

admittance standards by university authorities when students fell short of IFC grade thresholds. The proposition was advanced that the University was required to recruit student volumes to balance its revenues.

T6. The Salience of the Personal Tutor

Personal Tutors (PTs) were found to play a ubiquitous role in the International Foundation Centre in the socialisation of international students. They develop student integration, acting as guides in pastoral and academic support. They police student attendance. They assist in the re-orientation of international students faced with profound change. They make contact at an early stage. IFC teachers' capacity to help international students succeed is constrained by limited PT timetabling, teaching, and other demands.

The PT network in staff teaching teams is used to understand the problems facing their students. The PT role is generally positioned by IFC staff as a trusted interlocutor, networking IFC student and university support services and contacts for socialisation purposes. Teachers agreed that there are multiple positive aspects of Personal Tutor (PT) practice and potential in the IFC.

5.2 Introduction

This study investigated staff narratives of their experience of socialising international students for UK Higher education in International Foundation Centres settings in the North of England. Three purposes defined this study.

A narrative summary frames the findings from the participants in this study. An exemplar quote precedes each participant's biographical story, and this quote is intended to represent each participant's unique beliefs and experiences of being a teacher in an International Foundation Centre, socialising with international students. Each individual narrative is presented in its entirety in the appendix. The specific aspects of socialisation focused on by each narrator as thumbnail sketches and the themes present are summarised in Figure 10.

The experience of socialising international students for UK HE in International Foundation Centres is a descriptive analysis of each participant's fundamental beliefs and practices. It addresses the research questions tied to the first and second purposes of the study and the relevant linked research questions. These are present in Figures 11 and 12 respectively below. The role of each participant as a narrator and in socialisation are set out in Figure 13.

5.2.1 Participant socialisation - teacher contexts.

Figure 10: Participant Socialisation Thumbnails

	Teacher	Socialisation Comments
1.	James Farrell	"(Peers) will find each other. It is birds of a feather...you try and create mixed groups for projects ...or whatever in the classroom.... But it is like a gravitational force that just keeps dragging them back together (to gender and culturally specific groups. As the professional in the room...Let me rearrange you into something you do not really want to...see as the social way that you should be learning. ... But I think that that is the right thing to do... socially ...(to) encourage them (to be less conformist) and uncover their own ideas and see.... things from a distinct perspective"
1.		Lecturer and Module Leader in Management & Organisation. Aged 60. 12 years with Northern English IFC. Former private sector Industrial Engineer. Pater Familias of a large adult family sporting at the national level. Prefers to call students by their original language family names. He runs voluntary additional classes in innovation. Strong family links to Ireland. Active contributor discussing IFC corporate matters at team and whole centre staff events.
2.	Florence Smyth	"We're expecting self-constructed learning...in a higher educational context. But we must show them because they do not come from constructivist cultures in terms of their educational systems. The responsibility for their learning...is shared...it is more like 60-40...you know.... their responsibility.... to frame their learning ...in the context that they find themselves in....it is a voyage of discovery.... guided discovery
2.		Lectures in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Module Leader in Academic and Professional Development. She tutors the highest-level English language speakers. This teacher is an RP speaker in her 40s-50s and has worked for 13 years at IFC. A former university language centre tutor who was transferred to IFC at its inception. Two school-age children. A third recently went to Oxbridge. The family lives in a city suburb.
3.	Kate Spencer	Socialisation in education (involves)...lots of patience, meeting them (int'l students) halfway, lots of compromise. I greatly admire how they cope and how brave and adaptable they are. Socialisation is one of the best parts of the teaching experience.
3.		Module leader in Quantitative Methods. Former statistician in the private sector. Incredibly supportive of students in assessment and pastoral care terms. With IFC for 15 years. Has a school-age child. Lives in city suburb

4.	Jill Greer	"I think to go back to what ...the others were saying.... yes, we do look after them... our programmes are intensive pathway programmes. (as teachers) ...we all have that in common. So ...students may have up to 25 hours a week (of timetabled tuition and engagement), and somewhere, their agents, sponsors or parents have made it clear that the focus is their education. And then they must consider that they do not get Wednesday afternoons off to do activities and integrate. They are. I would not, I do not want to say, imprisoned by their studies."
4.		Deputy IFC Programme Manager and lecturer in EAP who has worked in language centres overseas. One high school and one primary school-aged child. Aged in 50s. Transferred from the University Language Centre and worked for IFC for 13 years since its inception. Incredibly supportive of the staff team. Concerned with managing cohort-wide student processes, including coordinating evaluation and maintenance of student progression. Married to a senior manager in IFC. Lives in City suburb.
5.	Julie Dwight	"I think the IFC is very lucky in the people that work for us...looking at my colleagues ...we do give up our lunch breaks ...our breaks and our free time to help the individual... we want our students to succeed.... we are aware of that extra language - culture barriers and all that kind of thing. It is deeply frustrating that our organisation does not recognise that...(in) a teacher role." EAP and Creative Arts Tutor who works across IFC programmes. Aged in 40s. PhD candidate. American family connections. Activist in local cultural / LGBTQ organisations. Politically committed. She is married to a musician and lives in the inner city.
6.	Margaret Downey	"With one group... I talked to them about challenging...theories and things that were written....as they were going into year 2...Do you accept everything that is on the television? A lot of them say yes. I am going.... why is it all true? Right, I am trying to get you to evaluate. Because you have got to look at both sides. I say - I accept that some cultures... you are told this, and this is the norm..... In terms of academic practice, I am expecting you to start to question and query and say Why? What? You know, where does that come from? Where is the evidence? Where is the proof? Moreover, for some, that is quite difficult. That comes from beliefs, values, backgrounds, families, education...that entirety that may have made up their previous socialisation. This is what we want in Sem 1, right? We keep them ticking over until Sem 2 - Reality Check! Module leader in Marketing. With IFC for five years. Ex-senior manager in FE (Further Education), a standards verifier for an exam board, and a manager in Civil service working on a national enquiry. Active exam board marker. This participant lives in a NE village. Aged 40-50s and carer for her father. Also, a Blackbelt in Kickboxing.

7.	Ian Makepeace	(Socialisation is)...." essential, but I try to do it in a slightly critical way to recognise that the university has certain rules that people expect you to abide by...At the same time, it is a game that you're learning how to play.....And therefore, you need to also think critically about whether those rules are good and what kind of outcomes they actually have".
		Module Leader and Tutor in Sociology. PhD. In his 30s. With the IFC for five years, working on IFC pre-Masters' programmes. Local Union organiser. Politically active. He left IFC employment after participating in the focus groups.
8.	Alice Green	We tend to pigeonhole students into their cultural backgrounds, as every staff room does. For me, it's all about the personality of the student....You know, we've got students who might be, uh, reasonably low-level English, but their energy is bouncing off the walls ...they will be the ones that ...insist on talking to people and will join the basketball team...but... they've come from particular countries ...Cultures which, simply ...do not allow them to stand out and be individual. Which is what they must do, if they are going to survive...they need to see what they can do as individuals here.
		Module Leader in English for Academic Purposes. Transferred from University language centre to IFC at its inception. Working in IFC for 16 years Age 50s. Lives locally. Married to non-UK national, an academic working at York University. In-house advocate of ambitious standards in language practice. Lives in the inner city.
9.	Caroline Steep	"I think that the main thing that the (IFC) wants is for the students to achieve and progress to university. The socialisation aspect is secondary but still seen as important. The company sees progression as more important than socialisation.... but to be fair...our students would put it lower down than we would."
		Module leader in Accounting and Maths. Age 50's. With IFC for twelve years. Married with adult children working in creative industries in London. Lives locally. Lead in engaging students in the development of cultural habitus. For eight years ran an in-house theatrical society unpaid – directing and fund- raising multiple production per year linking IFC staff and a majority cast of International Students. A passionate anti-BREXIT campaigner against UK separation from the EU, also politically active. Left the IFC in 2023
10	Deepak Singh	"My... beliefs (on socialisation of international students) are driven or stems from my experience...before becoming a professional....I had the experience of being (a student) in the Business School with a lot of international students....The differences in the way in which students would interact between...domestic students..versus international students...was quite a striking difference...I think that really did play quite a large role in (my thinking) for me as a professional. Now working with international students (I) really appreciate the importance of integration more than anything.

		Tutor in Marketing who worked at the IFC for three years on undergraduate entry courses. He has now left to run online business programmes. Aged thirty he is a recent postgraduate student from IFCs destination business school. He occupied a distinctive relative position as an advocate of the need for better social integration efforts by universities to reduce barriers to collaborative group work.
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5.2.2 Research Purpose 1 & 2 and links to related Research Questions

Figure 11 Research Purposes & Questions and links to Narrative Themes

Research Purposes	Purpose 1: To examine staff narratives of their experience of socialising international students for UK HE in International Foundation Centres settings in the North of England.	Purpose 2: To analyse how the concept of socialisation is understood and shaped by the organisational concept of progression in International Foundation Centres in UK HE.
Research Questions	1. How do IFC staff narrate the socialisation of international students in Higher education in theory and in practice? 2. How are IFC staff beliefs and practises in relation to socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management?	1. How are IFC staff beliefs and practises in relation to socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management? 2. How are attendance and progression as concepts framed in relation to learner socialisation policies and practices?
Narrative sections in Findings	Narrating the subject – Emphasis on specific aspects	Narrating the subject – Emphasis on specific aspects
Themes	Quotations and used themes from actors' stories.	Quotations and used themes from actors' stories.

Figure 12 Research Purpose 3 and Link to Related Research Questions

Participant	Purpose 3 was to investigate how the theory of Socialisation in Higher education intersects with the concepts of transition, institutional habitus, and cultural capital.
Research Questions	Q1: How do IFCs foster socialisation effectively, efficiently, and above all, educationally?
Narrative sections in Findings	Narrating the subject – Emphasis on specific aspects
Themes	Quotations and themes in actor's stories

5.2.3 Key Potential Roles of Participants

Figure 13 Key Potential Roles of Participants: As facilitator, catalyst, analyst, interpreter, provocateur, motivator, guide, nurturer, interlocutor, or activist.

Name	Role in Institution	Role in Socialisation
James Farrell	Module Leader, Teacher and PT, Business Module.	Catalyst, motivator, analyst, and provocateur.
Ian Makepeace	Module Leader, Teacher and PT Humanities Module.	Guide, catalyst, interlocutor, and provocateur.
Florence Smyth	Module leader, PT and EAP teacher	Guide, nurturer and motivator.
Julie Dwight	EAP Teacher. PT and Culture Tutor	Guide, interpreter and provocateur.
Alice Green,	Module leader, Teacher and PT. EAP Modules.	Interlocutor, guide, and nurturer.
Caroline Streep	Maths & Acting Module Leader	Guide, catalyst and nurturer.
Kate Spencer	Module Leader, PT and in Quantitative Methods.	Guide, nurturer and motivator.
Margaret Downey	Module Leader, PT and Teacher in Marketing.	Guide, nurturer and motivator.
Jill Greer	EAP teacher, Assistant Programme Manager	Guide, motivator and analyst.
Deepak Singh	Tutor in M&O and Marketing	Interlocutor and interpreter.

5.3 Emphasis on Specific Aspects of the Narration on Socialisation

The selected themes (T1 to T6) illustrate the main influences on Socialisation in the IFC.

The themes have been organised logically, following a narrative structure. This has been done because it was initially organised as a chronological framework, but then COVID-19 occurred and forced a different emphasis on themes. It no longer made sense timewise since it disrupted the themes significantly. Therefore, it was decided to remain with a thematic structure and let the narratives emerge. These are illustrated at Figure 14 in the sections T1 to T6.

Figure 14 Emphasis on Specific Aspects of Narration

Nos.	Theme
T1	Socialisation as a specialist service
T2	The effect of working online in lockdown
T3	Employer's policies and instructions influencing staff socialisation practise
T4	The Influence of the Business Imperative
T5	Attendance and Progression as contested metrics
T6	The Salience of the Personal Tutor
T1. Socialisation as a specialist IFC service	Socialisation includes preparing International Students for tertiary education with a focus on English, study skills and University culture. The IFC model supporting student socialisation in Higher education is intensive. Our programmes are intensive pathway programmes into university entry. Students have up to 25 hours a week (of timetabled tuition & engagement). From home someone has made it clear that their focus is their education. They don't get Wednesday afternoons off to do activities and integrate. I think that the main thing that the (IFC) want is for the students to achieve and progress to university. I feel that that the socialisation aspect is secondary although still seen as important. I have lots of admiration for how (students) cope and how brave /adaptable they are. Socialisation is one of the best parts of the teaching experience.

	Teachers aim to prepare them for continuing study and the start of their career. They need to be prepared to question, continually learn, and evolve. As teachers we must be prepared for non-acceptance. Includes socialisation into formal sessions in an informal way that adds value. Tiring & rewarding "Our job" is to inculcate values of mutual respect, patience, sharing, to be challenging and critical but not make assumptions. Guiding them to become more independent and imaginative. Modelling preferred behaviour Reduce their feelings of being "outside." Becoming part of a larger learning community, so that they share a common goal. Exposure to a range of influences and opportunities to engage with and be part of the environment and the groups within it. Behaviours and their interpretation of them. Almost like the etiquette of higher education. How you present it so it's acceptable for your peers. Teachers' role ends up having to be reasonably disciplining rather than socialising. What is the thing that (higher management) are on top of more than anything else - completing your register? Measure & prove attendance. Socialisation work involves defining a kind of ideal student performance and using our professional skills to try to shape expectations and behaviours. Part of IFC socialisation is get students to see that that experience of being a student is more than just getting the required grades. Because when you get to university, you are expected to have necessary skills to function there. It is rewarding and educational. I'm learning more about their culture and their ideas. An enjoyable experience, there's an expectation of our job from our work to do it. Not entirely sure the IFC knows what... they want us to do. Students should be able to express themselves academically not informally. Not second guess teachers. Students can challenge teachers. There isn't a right or/wrong answer. Justify your view. We expect Evidence based learning. I was about to say maybe we set false expectations about their future at the university. I think the IFC is very lucky in the people that work for us. I'm looking at my colleagues who give up our lunch breaks and our breaks and our free time to help individuals.... it's because we want our students to succeed. There is a clear distinction in the socialisation posture and intensity of preparation level between the IFC and the University as applied to their teaching of international students. I think we do it far better than the University ...you get almost unfettered access to your tutors and to all the support that we give them.....academic and pastoral... unlimited access to the staff room and breakout areas...can't really escape them unless you leave the building.
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	Returning student who have progressed to the Business school say “Oh my God we didn't know we had it quite so good at IFC. Because....if we needed to speak to X, Y or Z, we could easily”.
T2. The effects of working online in lockdown on socialisation	Students' online interactions miss the holistic overview from wider range of influences and experiences. Not getting wider professional, academic, and personal sides to the site on campus Learning is a slower process; they're still doing it, but it is taking them longer. Students have said it is a different culture, to do this kind of participation and previously just had the information given. Difficult to diagnose if students don't understand. Cannot move people between groups as in classroom management. We cannot engage as effectively. Online lessons can be recorded – but they are too shy to engage and lack confidence. I notice when I was teaching online, though, there was no sense that they had to participate and just getting someone to switch the camera on...even when they were in little groups....so, they were content for it to come to them, but they are not prepared to participate. No informal contact at start or end of lesson, going down the stairs or to lunch. Missed opportunities for scaffolding. Miss group work in class, massively about Peer learning. Advise them to organise their own online study groups. See own school age children in the house using gadgets linking friends in lockdown. Same for off campus students if in same time zone (in Asia) set up study groups for assignments. Use of WeChat observed by teachers. Coach them to use their own appropriate examples so they will remember more easily. Or putting it in their own words. Give them the time to find their own words. These traditional teaching methods can get lost online. Their particularly relevant to international students. The IFC support system included after-hours access and group and peer learning online delivery severely disrupted the process which works best in a classroom setting. That are too shy to engage. (they avoided participation) ...when it could be recorded. Or when anybody could see them. I found it so heartbreaking. In Lockdown....lending or giving support to teachers in a personal Tutee role... this remote way of working might make that ...more difficult, but I don't think it's impossible.

	Who has the overview that would help us as PT's have that insight so we can approach students in timely sensitive way and keep that relationship building.... as opposed to: No questions please. See you next semester.
T3. Employers Policies and managers instructions influenced staff socialisation Practise.	The Student Experience team organising integrating events for the students... Personal tutors are encouraged to share emails with students on opportunities for socialisation. Clear distinction consistently made between employer and teachers' motivations for socialisation. (improving education performance versus commodifying students key to revenue). Practise is influenced by the personality of the teacher and what their motivation is. For some people motivation is not massively connected to policies and paperwork. Those things don't motivate me. I think that I am more influenced by things like the activities offered by e.g. student experience than by policy documents. (Caroline runs a highly active student /staff drama/music society supported by INTO) Organisational rules you must follow like doing your register, but If the IFC said do this in class I probably wouldn't. I might still do it, but it would come from somewhere else. Part of the reason we encourage socialisation is because we want students to develop a commitment to the programme (...others nod in agreement). Most classes have some sort of group task or pair activity - there is that social commitment again. So that's why the business is trying to provide social activities – I know Caroline is key in this area. Separate to that the business is trying to encourage them (to be social). We (teachers) get emails and are encouraged to share them and encourage students to go over them. And then we've got the personal Tutor Rule which is a policy you know. We're encouraged to discuss not just academic things. To understand how their fitting in. The purpose is (delegated to tutors) that somebody is talking to them about something else than their course topics. Are you cooking for yourself or are you eating on your own or do you share a meal. Are you getting out. You might encourage them to do that – its socialisation too. Its policy led, but then it's what the personal tutors then do. So, there is a limit to the role, (there is a policing rule enforcement part) but I mean that's an element nobody particularly relishes anyway. From Brighton, the CEO and from K the most important aspect for ZZZ is getting the students, the students want to be here. They want the

experience. I don't know whether that's connected to the fact they get most of their revenue from the accommodation block. and therefore, they need to get the students here.

The discordance between staff classroom practise and company influences on staff.

Following policy is less important than trying to ensure that students get the best experience during their time here....

Then there is a major difference I suspect between what all of us sat in this focus group are trying to achieve when we go into a classroom versus what we think the IFC is doing.

To do the pastoral stuff to take some time for their mental health. and then that comes back to all the invisible Labour that we do by talking to students in the corridor, by having extra meetings with them online, by answering all emails, you know at times when we shouldn't.

We've all just had to do the prevent training. I wonder if people, see that as a form of socialisation, or not. I don't know if it's sort of a form of socialisation or recognising when socialisation isn't working? How? I'm not sure how everyone else feels.

Well, there is that (legal obligation) but there. But then we could say the same is true about tutorials that they're just, we can just go in and say right. Anyone have any questions? No, right next, you know, um, but we do not.

I think it's also a reasonable that our role ends up having to be reasonably disciplining rather than socialising. Because from a higher management level... the thing that they are on top of more than anything else is – is have you completed the register?

Everything about it feels very disciplining of my main interactions with the students outside of academic stuff. You must come to the classes; you've been late this number of times. Have you joined any clubs, or have you done anything?

Staff expected to help achieve progression.

I mean a letter from K isn't really a policy. It's not like a policy document you get, but he's encouraging you to participate in a process of engagement. Does that make it a policy? - not quite an instruction...kind of. If you've got the time, can you do this?

Around personal tutoring...an inherent part of our teaching role. Last 3-5 years become more formalised recording student tutor interactions.

A clearer line of referral than before definitely much more process on the boundaries for us as personal tutors – a bit clearer. A step in the right direction as far as policy and tutor's role in lives of students,

Know that it is a formal relationship - we make it as informal and therefore a socially manageable for students as possible,

	Nobody at programme management level is monitoring attendance or engagement or running those reports. I don't get any emails coming directly to me to follow up this pattern as his personal tutor. I don't have the authority. I've been told just earlier this week. I'm not permitted to process /use attendance data.
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T4. The influence of the Business imperative

The revenues of both institutions depend on the recruitment of international students and their successful progression to their chosen university destination thus generating revenues for each.

Teacher goodwill is exploited to lower costs. They work unpaid additional hours such as breaks/evenings. to deliver non-classroom-based interactions and activities that make socialisation work effectively.

Clear distinction consistently made between employer and teachers' motivations for socialisation. (improving education performance versus commodifying students key to revenue).

The corporate performance review system does not incentivise nor recognise exceptional socialisation practice by teachers (such as the Theatre director (leadership), nor mass volunteer activity that socialises.

Such activity relies on teacher goodwill. The IFC recognises business sales (recruitment) but not corporate values such as socialisation in practice.

The business is registered as a private college and subject to external inspection.

The driver for the focus on attendance reporting was external inspection and compliance checks for immigration purposes. External driver imposed on the IFC in a preset framework.

The reason the IFC has so many students from one country is because they are easy to recruit.

Many agreed with the observation that Progression is more than staff enabling students to satisfy the entry requirement to their intended course as set out in their IFC contract.

It should be: "progression to the point where they will be able to cope with the next stage.

The main commercial imperative is attracting and moving "bags of money", value role of agents over teachers, structural discipline to ensure efficiency focus, regulating time effort intensity, systems geared to monitoring progression to forecast numbers.

To do the pastoral stuff to take some time for their mental health. and then that comes back to all the invisible Labour that we do by talking to students in the corridor, by having extra meetings with them online, by answering emails, you know at times when we shouldn't.

The siloed IFC structure reinforces managerial influence on the priorities for socialisation, emphasising retention, progression, and reputation.

As a union organiser in the IFC I would say there is an interesting dynamic. Staff not as connected as we perhaps could be.

Siloed between programmes Who is benefiting from that? Cause I don't feel like it's us.

Education is a business – Teachers are categorised as responsible for paid production of teaching services.

Does not recognise the extraordinary voluntary and unpaid efforts of some teachers in socialisation activities.

Anecdotally, Marketing in the IFC is valued more than Teachers. Marketing makes the money – it identifies and recruits candidates (the sale). Teachers spend the money (or after-sales).

I find it particularly exasperating when the university can sort of wash their hands of IFC students yet ...have set these relationships up.

They've agreed the level that they will accept students.

T5. Attendance and Progression as contested and unclear metrics

In the IFC, progression is that you progress because you have achieved whatever mark is required in your modules to gain entry to your destination course at the University.

Progression to year 2 is very important for our students as they have started their undergraduate journey as year 1 students.

Attainment is a critical business measure, attendance is less so for the IFC, its only there for visa requirements. Progression means attainment.

Poor attendance would affect socialisation with their classmates.

Staff talk to students who haven't progressed, their identity sort of falls apart. Non progression has probably protected them from a horrific year ahead. If they can't manage and cope in this, that is terrible.

A 65- progression mark threshold for English signifies students can cope but not that there good.

The IFC state approx. 90% of our students.... progress. Teachers know that doesn't necessarily mean they've coped or can cope at Business School.

Progression and Attendance are part of the general policy environment of the IFC at Centre wide staff meetings and emails to staff from Managers.

Attendance is more than physical presence. It's being there in spirit not just being there.

Progression is very much about getting (students) to the point where staff can safely say yes you can go to the next stage (University), and you will be OK you'll manage to do that.

Irrational and disconnected focus on attendance numbers over real education outcomes. An anecdote of the winner of a best attendance award prize at the IFC transcript (results) day who was not informed that they were not progressing to the University.

Late attendance. I remember a series of Centre meetings discussing whether to let students into a room after 10 minutes and what classified as formal absence. An absolute waste of my life as a teacher.

If the progression rate is high enough without the figures needing to be manipulated. There is more freedom for teachers to make ethical decisions about whether a student can cope.

Progression - But there have been many circumstances where (IFC teachers) ...have failed students who have then walked down to (the University's student Reception Centre) and said I've got these grades.

They're not actually good enough for any of the requirements on any course in this entire university. Nonetheless, the University says ... here's a place, yet his transcript grades on the day would disqualify him from progressing to his university choice.

	Nobody at programme management level is monitoring attendance or engagement...running (diagnostic) reports...notifying teachers that X student is behaving in a particular pattern. Asking teachers to follow up. The proper focus of teachers should be on transferable skills applicable in academic and business career. I use progression minimum scores to make students appreciate that they can function but are not good. It should be: "progression to the point where they will be able to cope with the next stage." IFC classroom registers are not set up to enable teachers to use attendance data for diagnostic purposes. The data is confidential used by managers in the IFC for disciplinary and compliance matters. If I don't feel they could cope, their progression worries me. I'd rather that they were doing something they could cope with rather than just moving on to the next stage. It's sort of presented like it's a generous gift, allowing you on the course where you're going to flourish - You're not going to thrive. You're going to be stressed and unhappy...65 is minimum. Not a magic number so you can now write a dissertation. We're accepting people without the tools to cope at university. The IELTS grades students needed in the past was much higher than it is now. For PG work it was least a 7. It still feels that's exactly the minimum students should come in with, so as not to cling on by their damn fingertips. We've got students in classes for whom we are desperately worried, knowing we're doing them a disservice...pushing them through. Previously a senior manager in FE, Margaret used systems that actively monitor attendance to flag problems if students missed specific days. It was a support mechanism. In the IFC, data may not trigger attendance warnings despite distinct patterns. What's being missed...utterly bizarre. Attendance is being present, taking part in the lesson. Not about registers - being engaged and prepared. Many students are non-responders – present in class but unprepared not willing to learn. Attendance registers/stats are data for external metrics relating to immigration compliance as an education provider and business objectives. Not used to inform teaching or pastoral care. (Flagged attendance) ...is when your students hit 80% (absence) or something. As opposed to missing a class and finding out why. It reinforces presenteeism. Bums on seats. All IFC cares about is data. Literally all attendance is just admin. Not about pedagogy, not about pastoral.... not about helping the student.
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T6. The Salience of the Personal Tutor

There are mixed messages sent from the IFC about Personal Tutors - (we're) told it especially important but limited time allocation for it given the substantial number of tutees (16) important.

We have these procedures. But where is the time put aside for it? I find that odd.

When I say to them, have you joined any clubs, or have you done anything? They just look at me like -, when would I do any of this stuff?

The time aspect of the IFC is insane. They do so many (tuition) hours that ...they are dying a lot of the time.

We say -look at all these fun things you can do. It is like, well, we haven't got the energy to do it either. Why would they?

You know we are quite diverse ourselves with significant amounts of experience in dealing with pastoral teaching, learning and assessment.

We will just go this is right for us this is right for our students, and you'll get the feedback from the students... that relationship relaxes that little bit.

If the IFC said this is what we would like to see in your (practise) I wouldn't. I might still do it, but it would come from somewhere else is what I am trying to say.

Some IFC teachers recognise that their students start from a disadvantaged position linguistically, but also because of their ethnic, racial backgrounds.

They can find it difficult surrounded by middle-class white people far more confident in those settings, so tailor advice to address that imbalance.

The scheduled allocation of time for Personal Tutor - 1 hour per week for 10-16 students, is inadequate to meet socialisation needs of students and demands on Personal Tutors for meetings.

Figure 15 Alignment of Themes and Research Questions

Research Question 1.	Research Question 2.	Research Question 3.	Research Question 4.
1.How do IFC staff narrate the socialisation of international students in Higher education in theory and in practice?	2. How are IFC staff beliefs and practises in relation to socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management?	3. How do IFCs foster socialisation effectively, efficiently and above all, educationally?	4. How are attendance and progression as concepts framed in relation to learner socialisation policies and practices?
Theme Socialisation as specialist IFC service.	Theme Employers Policies and managers instructions and influence on staff socialisation practices.	Theme The influence of the Business Imperative.	Theme 'Attendance' and 'Progression' are contested metrics and unclear concepts.
Theme The effects of working online during Lockdown on Socialisation.	Theme The influence of the Business Imperative.	Theme Socialisation as specialist IFC service.	Theme The Salience of the Personal Tutor.

4.3.1 IFC Teaching professionals' experience of Socialisation

This section makes some preliminary observation concerning the participants in the study, their backgrounds and collective attitudes to Socialisation and student engagement. It frames the study findings based on the analysis of the narratives.

For this study, ten teachers employed on Pathway programmes by an International Foundation Centre (IFC) in Northern England agreed to participate in focus group meetings over 2021. Emerging from Covid lockdown restrictions, the groups were assembled online so that the individual and collective stories of their experiences socialising international students at the Centre could be collected via video and audio transcripts. The participants whose perspectives and opinions (from which this narrative was synthesised) were allocated the pseudonyms of JF, FS, MD, DS, IM, JD, KS, CS, JG, and AG. At the time of the interviews, they practised as teachers working from their homes living in the north of England. Their diverse professional specialisms and origins include business, humanities, maths, and language specialists. They were recruited to the Centre from university postgraduate research, further education and industry management, the international language school system and transfers from restructuring the university's language centre. They are experienced educators and predominantly white, middle-class women aged 45-65.

Stories of their engagement with the students at the IFC, the centre management and their university partners form this study's focal point and evidence base. They can be distinguished from their teaching colleagues at the university by their collective focus on a pedagogy that strives to be both educationally effective and inclusive and socialising in its multicultural context. Their primary purpose is to ensure students attain the grades necessary for their chosen University course progression. A commitment that is expressed clearly and powerfully in the opening narratives. During the initial stages of focus group discussions, a consensus emerged among most teachers in the group on the broader purpose of socialisation in pathways courses in International Foundation Centres. Sentiments crystallised in the narrative excerpts below:

One narrative illustrates a process of adaptation augmenting international students' original 'cultural capital'. It uses the medium of intensive IFC courses to channel and accelerate students' adoption of the 'institutional habitus of the University. Florence Smyth stated that:

"Socialisation includes preparing International Students for tertiary education with a focus on English, study skills and University culture. The IFC model supporting student socialisation to UK Higher education is intensive.

A complementary context for the narratives of socialisation in the study is the IFC's emerging position in the internationalisation of UK Higher education institutions. It plays a gateway role for international students. Jill Greer said for example,

"Our programmes are intensive pathways for university entry. Students have up to 25 hours a week (of timetabled tuition and engagement). From home, someone has made it clear that their focus is their education... they don't get Wednesday afternoons off to do activities and integrate."

The IFC is a niche operator in the "Business of Education" servicing University recruitment of international students. It has clear commercial objectives and a reputational incentive to ensure students successfully attain the grades necessary to 'progress' to their chosen higher education course. Caroline Streep, a foundation maths, and accounting teacher, went on to suggest of their IFC employer:

"I think that the main thing that the (IFC) want is for the students to achieve and progress to university. I feel that the socialisation aspect is secondary although still seen as important."

Their employer, an International Foundation Centre (IFC), is the institutional context for this study. It is a commercial partnership between an international education company (ZZZ) and a public civic university in northern England. The IFC is recent in origin, operating since 2009 in the region. It is one of the first

joint ventures by a Russell Group university and an international investor in Higher education pathways. The IFC has grown in recent years, pre-COVID, to become a gateway entry point for thousands of international students, predominantly from Asia, seeking access to the University's undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses. There is a range of Pathway courses that provide a variety of points of entry for students seeking to access first and second-year undergraduate and first-year Masters' programmes within the fields of Business, Science, Architecture, and the Arts. Students on these courses enrol in one of two cohorts each academic year.

The findings of this study are the results of a narrative analysis of the stories collected from teachers narrating their experiences of socialising international students. The teachers frequently returned to specific aspects of socialisation in their narration. The six recurring themes (in Fig 4E): Socialisation as an IFC service, the effects of online working on socialisation, the influence of the IFC business imperative, 'Attendance' and 'Progression' as contested and unclear concepts, the influence of Employers policies and instructions on socialisation practise and finally the salience of the Personal Tutor.

These narratives' themes were set within institutionally framed patterns and processes where the COVID pandemic and Lockdowns are a significant temporal feature of this data but are a short-run episode (when the IFC went online and stopped admitting students on campus). However, most of the themes are unrelated to covid. They are longitudinal in scope about the influence of business processes, customer demand and attitudes and higher education-related structural features that have extended over the ten-to-twelve-year life of the Centre. Covid has exacerbated the trends, and distorted processes already present in the narrative.

5.4 Interpretation of the Narrative's Thematic findings

The following section considers the aggregated narrations of participants collated at 4.3. Those narratives were grouped into themes to signal the influence teachers considered each theme to have on the socialisation of international students in the IFC. In this section the narrative data in each of those themes is interpreted, reinterpreted and re-storied to arrive at a narrative analysis that considers a range of contextual factors including the participants personal context, and perspectives as expressed in their detailed narrative. The extent to which these views are triangulated by others, suggests that the narrative contribution has veracity, authenticity and validity and a potential explanation arriving at causality.

Theme 1 - Socialisation is a specialist service by the teachers in the IFC.

The participants of this study all taught IFC Pathway programmes (9 –12-month courses), preparing international students who have not yet qualified for direct entry into their chosen undergraduate and postgraduate Masters' degrees at a Northern University. Pathways offers a more ambitious scale of pedagogic and socialisation challenges than that facing international students enrolled on the pre-sessional (PS), Sessional (S) and Academic English (AE).

Programmes (the other central provision of the IFC). EA, S, and PS programmes are oriented to supply concurrent intensive English language support for direct entry students in the current academic year. They are students who have already progressed to their destination course enrolled in the university.

On the other hand, pathways teacher's experience of international students requires them to engage in an intensive and extended process of tuition and socialisation support with two cohorts of international students, the cohorts operating in parallel. Students have yet to qualify to enter their chosen University course; progression is uncertain.

From teachers' narratives, three main ideas emerge about how IFC staff think about socialising international students. It is essential for student preparation, the skills and approaches teachers need to use to socialise effectively, and the institutional theory underpinning the practice of socialisation.

The participants agreed that teachers in International Foundation Centres must socialise international students. This is because, according to Julie Dwight, a younger activist teacher among the participants,

“It not about some indoctrination.....but to be able to express yourself academically rather than informally...rather than just trying to second guess what we might want you to say.... you know, there isn't a right and wrong answer is the thing. I'm always saying to the students, but you know, you can challenge me as much as you like, but you must.... come back with some evidence behind it. I think that that is what we're expecting...evidence-based learning.

Julie drew on her own experience as a Masters' student at the university before qualifying as a teacher. She went on to observe that for international students, communicating academically is particularly important in university seminars.

“They are expected to behave in a certain way” (...participate not be silent).

Teachers expanded on their specialisms in socialising students into higher education. For most it was about preparing students to engage with an unfamiliar student habitus and institutional culture of a UK university

“Part of IFC socialisation is get students to see that that experience of being a student is more than just getting the required grades. Because when you get to university, you're expected to have the necessary skills to function there, like learning to work together and think critically.”

Alice Green, a highly experienced English teacher, and personal tutor, describes the teacher's role as preparing students to culturally adapt to the institution they are transitioning to:

we need to basically arm the students against.... not hostility...but ... meeting a kind of... exclusive atmosphere in the university ...my question to that student is, what have you done about that or what are you doing about it?

Julie expressed this more systemically as an informal set of rules to adhere to. That is

"Almost like the etiquette of higher education. How you present it so it's acceptable for your peers."

Referring to the need for students to adopt a critical perspective and deploy those skills in their work.

Margaret quoted her instruction to students in a classroom setting:

"I am trying to get you to evaluate. Because you have got to look at both sides... I accept that in some cultures...you are told this...and this is the norm. In terms of academic practice, I am expecting you to start to question and query and say Why? What? you know, where does that come from? Where is the evidence? Where's the proof?"

A compassionate, nurturing teacher, proactive personal tutor, and champion of high academic standards...Florence talked about the broader affective purpose of socialization:

"To reduce their feelings of being outside...Becoming part of a larger learning community" ... so that they share a common goal. Gain exposure to a range of influences and opportunities to engage with and be part of the environment and the groups within it, (by understanding) behaviours and their interpretation of them".

Kate and Jill concurred, emphasising the broader necessity of teachers' duty of care in socialization,

“Socialisation in education (involves)...lots of patience, meeting them (international students) halfway, lots of compromise; I have lots of admiration for how they cope and how brave and adaptable they are. Socialisation is one of the best parts of the teaching experience.”

For Jill who teaches English but also has other team responsibilities confirmed from her broader perspective,

“I think to go back to what ...the others were saying.... yes, we do look after them.”

The second group of ideas teachers had on this theme was that there were overlapping, and complementary skills, roles and approaches teachers needed to adopt when socialising with international students. There was general agreement that the teacher's job is to inculcate values (among the students). Kate Spencer, a nurturing and motivating teacher, expressed as those:

“Of mutual respect, patience, sharing, to be challenging and critical but not to assume.”

The ‘guiding’ role of the teacher was highlighted by many teachers in the group as key in a socialisation context: Florence was representative as she said,

“We have to show them, because they're not coming from cultures that are constructivist in nature...that it is their responsibility...to frame their learning...in the context that they find themselves in....it's a voyage of discovery...guided discovery.”

Guidance was a common professional stance or behaviour expressed by teachers in the narrative. It can be interpreted as an institutional orientation. Kate stated its goal was:

"Guiding them to become more independent and imaginative".

Alice put it in its multicultural context. Students must acknowledge the differences that act as institutional barriers and engage with the IFC's assistance in acculturation.

"they've come from particular countries...cultures which, simply ...do not allow them to stand out and be individual. Which is what they must do, if they are going to survive, they need to see what they can do as individuals here".

A more nuanced position that at first glance can be seen as standing in opposition to the 'guiding' mission articulated is Ian (whose analytical provocateur stance and union organiser experience) leads him to opine:

"The teacher's role ends up having to be reasonably disciplining rather than socialising. "What is the thing that (higher management) are on top of more than anything else - completing your register?" (measuring - evidencing student attendance).

There is an alternative interpretation of the teacher 's role in the class registration process that is more benign and less critical. By focusing on and encouraging prompt attendance, teachers can act as guides, freely scaffolding students towards institutional expectations and learning frameworks that teachers believe will lead to more opportunities for students to learn and a further step towards progression. Support for this view comes from some of the teachers' testimonies.

Caroline is a creative dramatist and musical arranger, a hugely enthusiastic volunteer who has engaged large numbers of international students each year for over a decade while teaching maths and accounting at the IFC. She took the view that:

“Among Pathway students desperate to enter the first year of a UK undergraduate course (the foundation year), regulating attendance was not a problem for these students and the class register was just part of the job.”

A wider interpretative lens examining these responses would note that there is a general attitudinal disposition to take active pride in their role as teachers, for whom, to paraphrase Kate:

“Socialisation is one of the best parts of the job to include socialisation into formal sessions in an informal way that adds value.... tiring & rewarding”

Florence reiterated the positivity of the collective sentiments articulated by most of the teachers that:

“In centre there is a real commitment to providing international students with a positive overall experience.”

Alternatively, as Alice puts it, somewhat more phlegmatically, expressing an opinion consistent with her committed but realist teacher's persona:

“it's rewarding and well frustrating...it's just really interesting.”

In response to why the breadth and scope of socialisation in the IFC is so much greater relative to the university. Florence said that:

“I don't know...because they're all paying customers? We're overcompensating to provide this bridge... we're really supporting them in their studies.

Granting IFC students' regular access to the teacher's one-to-one contact is a typical example of the professional behaviour associated with the supportive pedagogy and integrated socialisation

perspective of Pathway teachers. One returning student who had progressed to Business School told Florence, his teacher who had developed a mentor-like relationship with:

“Oh my God, we didn't know we had it quite so good at IFC. Because...if we needed to speak to any teacher...at the centre, we could easily”.

The third area of focus of this theme concerns teachers' observations of the institutional practice of the IFC relative to the university in socialising international students. It was observed frequently that there was no comparison between the IFC and the University in the Socialisation process when it came to supporting the acquisition of “institutional habitus” by students.

Florence is passionate and unequivocal in her view on the institutional differences between the partners, her belief rooted in her experience of having been employed previously in the University language centre:

“There is a clear distinction in the socialisation posture and intensity of preparation level between the IFC and the University as applied to their teaching of international students”.

This is also reflected in the “professional habitus” of IFC teachers whose common approach to students' needs and the granting of frequent and common access by staff to students best illustrates their determination and motivation to socialise. Julie expressed this as:

“I think the IFC is very lucky in the people that work for us. I'm looking at my colleagues who give up our lunch breaks and our breaks and our free time to help individuals.... it's because we want our students to succeed.”

Florence explained in glowing and sometimes guarded terms the lengths to which her IFC colleagues made time available to engage in support for students' learning and socialisation efforts...

“We do it far better than the University...you get almost unfettered access to your tutors and to all of the support that we give them...academic and pastoral...unlimited access to the staff room and breakout areas...we can't really escape them unless you leave the building”.

Ian, from his labour union stance, pointedly criticised what he perceived as an exploitative situation in the IFC that left staff:

“To do the pastoral stuff, to actually take some time for their mental health....and that comes back to all the invisible labour that we do...by talking to them in the corridor, and having extra meetings with them online, by answering all emails, that you know at times when we probably shouldn't”.

‘Cultural capital’ is embedded in the Pathways’ course content, language, academic and non-curricular activities of the IFC. Teachers explicitly recognise that part of their socialising role is to impart this hard and soft knowledge to students. Supporting the ‘transition’ from an international student recruit in the IFC to a new identity as a bona fide University student and future professional. These collective commentaries explicitly acknowledge that in IFC pathways, to paraphrase:

“Teachers aim to prepare them (international students) for continuing study and the start of their career.”

Key to that preparation is stimulating student criticality and personal and professional development.

Margaret summarised the focal points for this as:

“They need to be prepared to question, continually learn and evolve.”

James aspired explicitly to build international students' capacity as future scholars:

“Students who progress will have something in their rucksacks to make them better learners”.

Some teachers are more questioning and critical in their observations on the processes and effects of IFC institutional deployments in preparing international students to transition to a future academic and professional career. The adaptation to a transitional role is a crucial feature of ‘the process of socialisation’, as Ian suggests:

“It is essential for international students, enabling them to adapt to UK institutional cultures and behaviours. It offsets some inequalities they will encounter in their gamed interactions and relationships with university students, staff, systems, and processes.”

Jill concludes that the positive outcomes of successful academic and pastoral adaptation resulting in progression to their chosen course are not always as clear-cut as the students and the IFC might hope:

”we're offering this opportunity to (students to) guide their socialisation and then they get there, and they find that it's work, it's not working for them, it's even working against them”.

The narratives in this first theme framed the socialisation of international students within a series of longitudinal, institutionalised patterns and processes. This socialisation model within the IFC was disrupted by large-scale Government Interventions instituted to counter the spread of the Global Pandemic. In the UK and Asian countries (from which the IFC’s international students originate), these had far-reaching consequences for global mobility, economic adjustment by employers, and a profound effect on teachers working in Pathway courses socialising international students in the UK.

Florence reminded one focus group of the extended status quo within the IFC that existed in embedded socialisation, social learning, and constructivist processes pre-pandemic:

“We provided (integrated) pastoral support and subject and specialist language teachers to enable international students to be socialised (in a classroom setting) to acquire the relevant academic skills, classroom group and peer working skills and language competencies to construct their own learning.”

The cessation of campus activity, the wholesale shift to working from home and teaching globally distributed classes online as well as confined to their dormitories, led to the following changes in socialisation as these teachers describe:

Theme 2 – The effects of working online during lockdown on socialisation

In this theme, the narrative explaining the effect on teacher practise of online working and its impact on student socialisation, is set more explicitly and distinctively in a chronological context than in the other themes. This is because the temporary pedagogic modal shift to online that occurred, can be characterised as a temporal singularity. It was a transitory event catalysing disruptions in the lives of teachers and their students that surfaced for a discrete period and was the focus of their recollection over that period. This seismic event was already receding from the operational landscape of teaching, learning and research at the university and the IFC when these collections of teachers' stories were being concluded.

Over the period 2019 to 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated a modal shift in pedagogy to online teaching and learning across developed education systems. China introduced draconian zero-covid lockdown policies in January 2020 that extended to April 2022, which greatly limited student mobility and association. The UK introduced a series of lockdowns starting in March 2020, with the third ending in 2021. Mainland Chinese students comprise the most significant proportion of non-EU international students in British Universities (UUK, 2023).

As a teacher in a similar IFC team over this period, the context, institutionally, was turbulent. A decade-long established pattern of pedagogy and collaborative relationships with teaching colleagues and

students was destabilised in months. The first cohort of IFC students for the academic year were admitted to IFC classrooms in September 2019 and taught and socialised conventionally. As was the norm at the IFC, an entire second cohort of international students was recruited in 2019 to be taught in parallel with the September campus-based students, starting their courses in January 2020. These students arrived and commenced as planned. The UK government decided in March 2020 to suspend all conventional academic activities on UK Higher education campuses, including those of the Russell Group, by extending the nationwide government-mandated lockdowns to universities.

For the IFC teachers at the centre of this study, their experience of pedagogy and socialisation changed. Students on campus were confined to dormitories, while overseas students registered online were confined to their homes. All existing timetables, including personal tutor sessions, migrated online. IFC Staff were told to work from home. Corporately, it was announced that there were to be no interruptions to IFC timetables. From the end of March to the end of May 2020, IFC teachers adopted three unfamiliar systems, Bongo-learn, MS Teams and Zoom, to communicate with students, colleagues, and managers. Teaching, assessment methods and socialisation activities were adapted online. Home broadband and hardware were upgraded and installed. Staff were exhorted to independently develop their online presence with students, creating parallel asynchronous online learning materials and recording all lectures and additional video commentaries. The aim was to have a complete suite of online course materials available in semester 2, 2020 and available for a new academic year cohort commencing in September 2020. This scale of change was the context in which the teachers experienced the socialisation of international students in an online setting.

Given the calamitous national context and systemic disruption in the centre's operational environment, it is unsurprising that all the teachers who participated in the research were uniformly negative concerning the impact of online delivery on socialisation and pedagogy.

The group of teachers whose experiences are narrated here had never taught for any substantive period online prior to the COVID-19 lockdowns. Teacher comments emphasise the profound changes in their

social learning context and organisational culture. Nearly all teachers expressed the challenge to their pedagogical methods and expertise; Julie paraphrased their views concisely:

"Online...they (students) can log on, switch off their screens and listen...or not respond to questions".

In effect, students could hide in plain sight and not be accountable, opting out of the social learning and socialisation process. The cessation of face-to-face pedagogy and physical classroom interaction for extended periods directly affected the rate of individual learning and adjustment due to more inefficient peer learning and group work on online Pathway courses. Kate spoke about the temporal impact of these changes on students and how teachers experienced them:

"I think that now (with socialisation online) ... it's a slower process, I think they're still doing it (learning in social groups), but it's taking them longer. I did have one student, the first time, who said to me that it is a different culture, having to do this kind of participation...Not just having the information given (to them) and to actually do that, but it's slower. I think we can move quicker when they're with us".

Another institutional instrument of socialisation used by teachers, which was less effective as student engagement had changed online, was the Peer Tutor. Florence considered the effects on the quality of her Personal Tutor links.

"I've been running my personal tutorials for both cohorts almost without exception they're saying... it's got nothing to do with mental health...the bigger picture... or looking ahead... It is very, very here and now. When's the deadline – what do I need to know? The quality of the socialisation process was gone, it was now transactional not developmental.

Florence believed it was possible for the IFC to assist teachers to overcome these difficulties and strengthen the role of the PT - not something that their employer chose to invest in.

"In Lockdown....lending or giving support to teachers in a personal Tutee role... this remote way of working might make that ...more difficult, but I don't think it's impossible" or "Who has the overview that would help us as Personal Tutors have that insight, so we can approach students in a timely sensitive way and keep that relationship building"... "as opposed to: No questions please, (Personal Tutees) we'll see you next semester".

During the period of exclusive online study, international students needed help to construct a holistic overview of their new context. The IFC's rapid deployment of adaptive pedagogical capacity was narrowly focused on overseas audiences. Students were widely distributed on a continental scale. Isolated under strictly enforced lockdowns in their home countries with minimal access to mobility, UK news, foreign media, and peer inputs. The socialisation process of students is compromised because, as Margaret explained:

"The holistic experience that perhaps currently they are not getting ...come from a wider range of influences and experiences".

In a normal (non-pandemic context), new international students are forced to engage with a series of unfamiliar environments in their new host country, new experiences that are key to socialisation. UK culture, food, people, language, campus, their IFC modules and managed flats. The new IFC building on campus was a nexus of socialisation, rooting students in their unfamiliar environment. It enabled students to intensively learn, associate, eat, socialise, and communicate in a secure urban setting with their peers and teachers. The new modern building with its striking architecture and colourful furniture that Alice remembers well...

"It has literally been designed with the students in mind as somewhere for them to be together...on campus."

During national lockdowns, most Centre activities were suspended for 18 months. IFC's online services and the isolation bubbles in student flats for the IFC remaining students, was a poor substitute for previous level of engagement with up to 1000 students onsite.

During national lockdowns, most Centre activities were suspended for 18 months. IFC's online services and the isolation bubbles in student flats for the IFC remaining students were a poor substitute for the previous level of engagement with up to 1000 students on site.

According to teachers, the withdrawal of onsite teaching and learning and socialisation activities led to an associated loss of physical and sensory stimulation and social interaction. This is because the replacement medium of online working platforms imposed their own limitations and restrictions. The digital video interfaces adopted by the IFC used Teams & Zoom platform features (screen sharing, photo and document gallery views and chat functions, private room features were introduced later for group work). These platforms filtered and mediated the IFC's pedagogical and socialisation activities. Julie explained the pedagogic quandary facing teachers:

"It is difficult to diagnose if a student does not understand... we cannot move people between groups as we would in normal classroom management."

Classroom management interventions and opportunities for one-to-one communication were limited, as Margaret summarised the overall position for most teachers in the group:

"We cannot engage as effectively."

teachers had less capacity to activate changes in students, confronted with challenging cultural change, the boundaries of the online were restrictive, according to Caroline:

"The switch to recordings means that students generally do not watch or listen to the lectures - this has caused students...to rely on seminars for relevant subject content."

New international students traditionally were embarrassed and lacked the confidence to speak in face-to-face classroom interaction. The collective focus of the video audience on one student's face on screen accentuates the embarrassment quotient of the situation for many students.

"Online lessons can be recorded – but they are too shy to engage and lack the confidence to speak" and "I noticed when I was teaching online, though, there was no sense that they had to participate and just getting someone to switch the camera on was just impossible...even when they were in little groups. They were content for information to come (to them), but they are not prepared to participate" (in the process). I found it so heart breaking," said Julie.

Teachers emphasised that their intensive learning strategies for socialisation into a new culture and pedagogical approach depended on the frequent scaffolding of ideas, the encouragement of peer learning and group engagement. Many teachers, such as Margaret, lamented the missed opportunities for scaffolding:

"There was no informal contact at the start or the end of the lesson, going down the stairs or to lunch."

Florence stressed the importance of the loss of the social learning context and need to find a substitute format:

"They miss group work in class, which is massively about peer learning. I advise them to organise their own online study groups."

Drawing on parallels in her own life, Florence noted how UK students faced the same problems online in the loss of peer contact.

"I see my own school-age children in the house using gadgets linking to friends in lockdown during an online class".

Other teachers echoed Florence's observation about the loss of peer contact as a common barrier to learning in online classes. Margaret followed on, stressed the necessity for students to be able to communicate with each other, offering peer support:

"...we do the same for off-campus students... if they are in the same time zone (in Asia), we try to get them to set up study groups for assignments."

In this context, many teachers observed and encouraged the use of the Chinese messaging and browser App WeChat. According to the focus groups, a key area for improvement of online approaches to socialising students is that traditional teaching methods can get lost online, and these are particularly relevant to international students. As Julie remembered:

"We want to get them to find and use their own appropriate examples, so they will remember more easily." Alternatively, to put it in their own words. "Give them the time to find their own words."

But there is just much less time in an online class. In the conventional classroom-based approach. Kate recalls that:

"Support in the centre usually included after-hours access and group and peer learning. Online severely disrupted this process, which works best in a classroom setting."

Socialisation has taken a significant retrogressive step during the online period. It interrupted and limited scaffolding, ongoing pastoral care, progression monitoring, weekly study clinics and personal tutor support. Teachers delivered intensive tuition for between 100 and 160 students per academic year. Each Pathway student received an average of two hundred and forty hours per academic year of subject seminars and ninety-six hours of language learning.

Theme 3 - Employer Policies and managers instructions influence staff socialisation practice.

This narrative theme informs the research question: "How are IFC staff beliefs and practices in relation to socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management?". The International Foundation Centre is the direct employer and line manager for all the teachers who participated in this study. The IFC's policy priorities and intent notionally set the formal parameters for teachers' focus, objectives, and professional practice. Teachers' narrative expressions of their experience of employer policy and its implications for their practice were bifurcated by different perspectives about the degree of influence their employer wielded on their professional practice. I have summarised the collective position...

"... there is a major difference, I suspect, between what all of us sat in this focus group are trying to achieve when we go into a classroom versus what we think the IFC is doing."

One variation, dismissing the seminal influence of IFC policy on teachers' professional practice, was articulated by Alice.

"I think practice is influenced by the personality of the teacher, what their motivation is"

Caroline reiterated this point further by stating that for:

"Some people's motivation is not massively connected to policies and paperwork. Those things do not motivate me. I am more influenced by things like the activities offered by student experience (an extracurricular activities team) than by policy documents." (Caroline ran a voluntary student and staff drama and music society operating from the IFC for many years).

Ian, building on this sentiment, went on to say that:

"There is a clear distinction consistently made between employer and teachers' motivations for socialisation...For teachers, it's improving individual education performance versus commodifying students so that they progress, which is a key source of revenue".

Caroline was more nuanced about their employer's influence.

"There are organisational rules you must follow, like doing your register, but If the IFC said do this in class... I probably wouldn't - I might still do it, but it would come from somewhere else."

It would be mistaken to conceptualise most policy influence on teacher practice as instructions referenced to policy or direct managerial orders. It was also acknowledged that policy instruction can be articulated in less formal forms.

"The (IFC) Student Experience team organise integrating events for the students".

The role of these staff is non-pedagogic and explicitly focused on socialisation for international students - regional tours, games nights, social events, and football tickets. Teachers sometimes get involved in these activities, and in conversation, it was agreed that:

"Teachers and personal tutors are encouraged to share (corporate) emails promoting opportunities for socialisation" (Kate).

For example, Julie uses charity fundraising events in the Centre, the student experience team's work, and subject enrichment events to show that this encouragement is an indirect, non-obligatory approach most of the time.

"I mean, a letter from K (the centre director) is not a policy. It is not like a policy document you get, but he encourages you to engage. Does that make it a policy? It's not quite an instruction...kind of...If you've got the time, can you do this "?

James Farrell said,

"Separate from the business of trying to encourage them (to be social). We (teachers) get emails and are encouraged to share them and encourage students to go over them".

One thread of teacher narration that James focused on was the causality of the social aspects of teaching and learning and how this underpinned the work of the IFC...

"Part of the reason why we encourage socialisation is because we want students to develop a commitment to the programme."

Others nodded in agreement... (understanding it strengthened student retention and progression to their destination university course). James expanded on his theme:

"Most classes have some sort of group task or pair activity... there is that social commitment again....so that's why the business is trying to provide social activities – I know Caroline is key in this area."

Florence emphasised the same point:

"Having that bit of peer support for their learning and doing it in a way that is social is, I think, absolutely vital."

Margaret stressed its importance to students when they are online:

"Just do it and work together. If you're in the same time zone – link up.... it's peer support for learning."

A key student socialisation policy that is promoted by both the IFC and its partner University is the Personal Tutor function. This topic will be developed in more depth as a separate narrative theme. All Teachers are instructed to adopt a Personal Tutor role alongside their teaching, working with 10-20 personal tutees that they meet twice to three times a year.

"The personal Tutor Role...a policy...to understand how they're fitting in ...a role with... bureaucracy around it, talking...about something...other than their course" (James).

One teacher said,

"There's no set behaviour; it's policy-led, but then it's what the personal tutors then do... (Kate)"

Margaret developed this point:

"We know that it is a formal relationship – but most of us do it informally because we're human beings, and I think IFC staff, you know, irrespective of guidance procedures and processes, we're, you know, we're quite diverse ourselves with significant amounts of experience in dealing with pastoral teaching learning assessment. We'll just go this is right for us... this is right for our

students, and you'll get the feedback from the students and that relationship relaxes that little bit".

The IFC's core Business imperatives influence a secondary narrative theme related to employer policies and instructions – its principal business models, drivers, and settings. The IFC in the study is a joint venture franchise between a public University and an equity finance-funded international corporation. Its investments and services are driven by an overt set of commercial imperatives wrapped around "the business of education".

During Covid but also at the start of every academic semester. There is a policy focus with an explicit locational component, encouraging students to be present living on campus. This is strongly influenced by the need of the IFC to generate revenue from fee income from room lettings. Alice noted that,

"From the company HQ (in Brighton) to the CEO and to K (the Centre Director) ...the most important aspect for the IFC is...getting the students...the students want to be here. They want the experience. I don't know whether that's connected to the fact they get most of their revenue from the accommodation block. And therefore, need the students here."

A feature of the first week of term is as Margaret recounts that:

"The IFC websites and social media accounts have videos and photos of celebrations and events with teachers and students in the new campus building."

Teachers were generally positive about students' views of their new Centre.

"The students are lucky to have a base where they can cross the road and be in the centre of town" (Alice).

Many teachers use their time off to promote the Centre before the start of the academic year. Julie explained that:

"The weekend before induction week, teachers volunteer with the Student Experience team to show Parents and students the accommodation blocks before the semester starts."

As a business whose end users are international students, the IFC is subject to external policy frameworks from the Office for Students and the Home Office that regulate its operations. This licenses its operations and the immigration and visa conditions that students are subject to. The staged warning for absence policy is in place to ensure the IFC is compliant with its legal immigration requirements as an approved college, monitoring the visa /attendance status of its students. It is proactively coordinated by IFC student progress staff and individual programme managers. Different percentage levels of absence trigger higher levels of scrutiny, warning letters and contact with senior staff.

Margaret, a teacher with an FE managerial background, said that:

"The business is registered as a private college and subject to external inspection".

The driver for the focus on attendance reporting policy, was external inspection and compliance checks for immigration purposes.

"External drivers imposed on the IFC in a pre-set framework."

Another teacher emphasised the mission-critical aspect of the IFC, focusing on absence and attendance. Making the point sharply, Jill said:

"Well, it's our risk of losing our trusted status, isn't it? because we're dealing with international students - so the business has its interest in making sure that that we keep our eyes on attendance."

Ian stated that,

"Everything about it feels very disciplining of my main interactions with the students outside of academic stuff. You must come to the classes; you've been late this number of times. Have you joined any clubs, or have you done anything? "

Teachers expressed discordance about the company's influence on staff's classroom practice. Kate was of the view that:

"Following policy is less important than ensuring that students get the best experience during their time here".

Ian expressed concerns that:

"To do the pastoral stuff...takes ...from our mental health ...all the invisible Labour that we do, talking to students...answering...emails, you know at times when we shouldn't."

Julie posed the question:

"We've all just had to do the prevent training... is it ... recognising when socialisation isn't working?"

In this theme, it can be observed from teachers experience that they are conscious of the parameters of IFC policy and understand why the company is seeking to affect teachers practise on socialisation.

Teachers are more critical of policy instruction and generally willing to maintain a separate professional identity that resists it. Evidence from these teachers' responses suggests that the level of detailed instruction is inextricably linked to the company's interest in optimising its business processes, limiting its risks, and logically achieving its commercial goals. The next theme develops these ideas further.

Theme 4 - The influence of the Business Imperative

This narrative theme arose earlier in this chapter when considering the research question - How are IFC staff beliefs and practices in relation to socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management? In this section, the teacher narratives provide evidence that helps to inform the research question, "How do IFCs foster socialisation effectively, efficiently and above all, educationally?"

The University and its private sector partner in the International Foundation Centre (IFC) are differentiated from each other by their institutional ownership and control and their motivation for undertaking education and socialisation. In both, the operational culture and ethos of the partner institutions shape student socialisation and education and will be strongly influenced by their respective missions and business models. To paraphrase the views of teachers when asked what the overarching motivation of the IFC was. It sits within its:

"Business imperative... to generate revenues for both partners effectively and efficiently".

The evidence for this is a matter of open record. Teachers in this study are employed by ZZZ LLP (a Limited Liability Partnership). The institutional parent company and private investor in the partnership is a UK-US multinational education corporation (see note 1). The International Foundation Centre is a long-term joint venture between the two partners, the University and ZZZ. The IFC's core business objective is as a Pathway provider – to recruit, accommodate and educate international students so that they satisfy the entry requirements of their destination University undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The primary business objective of the university partner is to secure a planned increased flow of international students from the IFC that formally satisfies its institutional requirements so that IFC

students can then progress, gaining entry to their destination courses. The University partner's course fees are over 100% higher for international students than for those paid by domestic students. Accommodation fees charged to international students joining the IFC pathway courses are a significant component of the partnership's revenues.

The teacher narratives collated within the focus groups were clear-eyed about the business imperative within the IFC. Jill contextualised the partner's stance, in a statement agreed by the participant teachers:

"The business models of both institutions depend on the recruitment of international students and their successful progression to their chosen university destination, thus generating revenues for each".

All the teachers made a similar point about the instrumental nature of the IFC as it affects their professional experience. This is best summarised by Margaret's notion that for the IFC:

"Higher education is viewed as a business ... and.... teachers are categorised as responsible for paid production of teaching services".

However, production is not a sufficient definition of teacher educational performance in the IFC. For a business to be successful, it must be demand driven ... according to James:

"The reason the IFC has so many students from one country, is because they are easy to recruit".

Teachers are expected to flex and adapt their methods to substantially deliver the capacity necessary to support the student numbers recruited to the IFC, year by year. The key to this approach is socialisation. Conditioning students to be receptive to new pedagogical forms, able to transition to new teaching and learning methods and develop institutional habitus. Julie observed that among IFC management.

"They do not recognise some teachers' extraordinary voluntary and unpaid efforts in socialisation activities".

This was developed more pointedly by Florence, who exposed a conceptually important feature of the IFC's business-informed approach to socialisation, which is goodwill:

"Teacher goodwill is exploited to the extent that these costs are not included in socialisation as they work unpaid additional hours such as breaks/evenings, to deliver non-classroom-based interactions and activities that make socialisation work effectively".

Ian underscores teachers' motivations for their active socialisation efforts while at the same time being extremely critical of the IFC's business approach overall.

"There's a distinction between what the students are being sold and what is being marketed to them versus what we then want to deliver, OK? And I think probably, as teachers, we take a more humanistic attitude to this. We are trying to create critical human beings who are able to engage in their society, whereas what the IFC is trying to do is to get bags of money to go from our centre to the university and to give us positive feedback to attract new bags of money".

Nobody in the conversation contested Ian or advanced the proposition that the main motive was anything other than revenue generation. Julie confirmed an anecdote circulating in the centre.

"Marketing in the IFC is valued more than Teachers. Marketing makes the money (it identifies and recruits candidates, the sale). Teachers spend the money (or after-sales)".

An overarching element of the business imperative in the IFC is successful commercial revenue generation. For both partners to fulfil their partnership transaction, students are required to complete

their IFC pathway to transition to their destination university course. Crucial to this process of transition is that international students comply with certain legal obligations of immigration law and conditions of their study visa status so they can remain in the UK legally. Consequently, as James observes, the concepts of:

"Progression and attendance are regularly part of the general policy environment of the IFC, that are discussed at centre-wide staff meetings and in emails to staff from managers."

The organisation-wide focus on these concepts emphasises its importance to their employer. Generally, most teachers in the study concurred that their employer's emphasis on the business processes of attendance and progression is not educational. According to Ian:

"A not so well-hidden curriculum is going on, which I think the students do recognise and identify at times. And we (teachers) are being socialised too with these metrics that the students recognise that their role, their job here is to pass the course...If they fail to do that, they have failed both from the IFC's perspective and their personal perspective."

Florence and many other teachers believe that educationally and in Socialisation terms, the IFC plays a supportive role in the student journey, despite all the criticism of the shortcomings arising from its business structure and objectives because:

"I do think... that in centre there is a real commitment to providing international students with a positive overall experience".

Jill supplemented Florence's observation with more detail that,

"Teachers, Student Welfare, Student Experience, Student Progress, Accommodation, all the different departments are working with the student's interest at heart (prompt: to complete the course?), I suppose so, yes".

This means that for most teachers, 'Progression' is more than enabling students to satisfy the entry requirement to their intended destination; it is imbued with concern for their welfare.

Kate summarised this view well that it is:

"Progression to the point where they will be able to cope with the next stage."

In contrast to the preceding humanistic sentiments, teachers' professional performance is subject to annual business metrics by their employers. The corporate performance review system (PMPD) does not incentivise nor recognise exceptional socialisation practices by teachers.

"We were told if you want to do it... it is up to you... we do not think you should sacrifice your breaks... give up your free time".

Caroline, the Maths teacher, made an extraordinary voluntary effort and commitment over an extended period (up to 10 years) mobilising and engaging 20-40 students annually in creative theatrical and musical English language productions... Jill expressed the commonly held view among the teachers that this extraordinary service...

"Was not recognised by the evaluation system as a leadership quality or exceptional performance".

The system does not acknowledge the mass activity of teachers in unpaid socialisation efforts that rely on teacher goodwill and additional hours. As Julie, a huge supporter of student productions, remembers regretfully,

"It was not allowed to be a thing that you could put on your PMPD (performance appraisal). It wasn't allowed to be a thing that was part of your job."

The IFC framework evaluating staff performance needs to recognise corporate values such as socialisation in practice. The business imperative of the university in recruiting premium fee-paying students via the intensive pathways of the IFC partnership often clashes with the feedback of its own domestic students and university staff. Many IFC teachers had heard anecdotal criticism of the capacity and performance of IFC students in seminars once they joined their UG or PG courses. Julie opined on this phenomenon:

"I find it particularly exasperating when the university can wash their hands of IFC students...yet...they have set these relationships up. They've agreed on the annual level at which they will accept students." (Julie)

A compounding activity in the partnership was, as Alice recalls,

"You know the universities ...will be lowering IELTS entry scores... they will do anything to get international students into their courses, and it's going to be horrendous... I know it from other universities as well."

An interesting aspect of the IFC partnership arrangements noted by the study participants was how their narratives exposed the discomfort of university staff and the frank hostility evoked by the presence of an explicitly commercial business model in the university. IFC staff talked of the casual denigration from the staff of their erstwhile "partner." Alice told the story of how IFC teaching staff are regularly enrolled

on the university Masters' courses and doctoral studies. A student on a course asked if they should talk to the IFC about how they use management systems for education. The Masters tutor responded,

"They are a private company. What do they know about education?" "I was really shocked because I thought - it's stuffed full of people who are passionate teachers. And not just the people with PhDs but people who... just really have a passion for teaching. And I was staggered at the response, actually."

To paraphrase James,

"University staff do not recognise their students are customers, or that international students have additional needs or that their employer is dependent on them for revenue. Since the inception of fee-paying, universities have been commercial service providers. University staff, by and large, disrespect IFC staff as not academic. They are unwilling to cooperate with them despite attempts to do this by IFC staff. This limits the capacity of the university to socialise its future intake of international students. They disrespect IFCs commercial identity and see its services as "stained with pound notes".

Note 1 The main private sector partner and investor in the joint venture partnership with the university in this study is the international education corporation "ZZZ University Partnerships". At time of writing, it had 26 university partners spread primarily between the UK and the US with some in Australia. The company is not stock exchange listed. It is a privately owned limited company whose main shareholders are its founders and a US Private Equity firm. One of the private equity firms' investing has a specialism including founder transitions.

Theme 5 - Attendance and Progression are contested and unclear concepts

This study's fifth narrative theme finding is that Attendance and Progression are contested and unclear concepts (among teachers in IFCs). These findings inform the fourth research question, which is: "How are 'Attendance' and 'Progression' as concepts framed in relation to learner socialisation policies and practices?"

In the focus groups from which this narrative theme emerges, the teachers participating had their definite if differing opinions of what the terms Attendance and Progression meant and the significance to be attached to them. Attendance in an IFC context can be defined as a recognised and registered physical presence in a class. It is frequently associated with educational effectiveness and a subject of inquiry in OFSTED inspections of Schools and Colleges. The IFC is registered as a college for international students with the Office for Students and immigration purposes with the Home Office. It is required to have student registration, Attendance, and monitoring systems compliant with UK statutory regulations. The IFC operates an electronic hourly student attendance registration system that teachers manually administer. This provides the data for a staged warning, percentage level of absence system administered by non-teaching IFC staff who write to students and teaching managers (described in a previous theme) who interview the students and agree on their next steps.

According to the IFC, Attendance is a contractual obligation that students enter when joining an IFC Pathway course. They state it is something that the University scrutinises when considering and determining borderline admissions. The policy identifies students with attendance problems so corrective action can be taken. It deters student absences and ensures student compliance with their UK student visa status conditions, not endangering their residency in the UK. This system in and of itself needs to be formally couched in socialisation terms. It set satisfactory Attendance at over 85%. It functions to collect data, triggering a disciplinary deterrence system. However, it deters absence and seeks to maximise student contact hours with the intensive timetable.

The teachers had various opinions about the concept's definition, the adequacy of data collection, access and analysis and its use for pedagogic and pastoral diagnostic purposes. Broadly supportive of its purpose was Caroline, who agreed:

"That concepts of Progression and Attendance are necessary to the overall successful functioning of the centre. It is why we exist as an organisation. We want all the other lovely things as well. So that students have the chance to work with us and get on to whatever they want. They can only do that if their Attendance is good and so on."

From a different perspective, James also saw Attendance as a positive contribution to Socialisation.

"Attendance affected group work (and the broader Socialisation of students)."

In a group learning context:

"Poor attendance would affect socialisation with their classmates."

However, he was more nuanced in his interpretation of what constitutes 'good' Attendance by individuals. James was clear that:

"Good" Attendance is being present and taking part in the lesson. It's about something other than registers - it's being engaged and prepared. Many students are non-responders – present in class but unprepared, not willing to learn".

Kate agreed:

"Attendance is more than physical presence. It's being there in spirit, not just being there."

When discussing the concept of 'Attendance,' the teachers were uniformly critical of their experience working with attendance registers and the narrow use that the company puts to the data generated. The focus group participants saw many opportunities to harness data collection and analysis for Socialisation and pedagogic purposes. Margaret, previously a senior manager in FE, recollected that:

"(we) used systems that actively monitor Attendance to flag problems if students missed specific days. It was a support mechanism...In the IFC, data may not trigger attendance warnings despite distinct patterns. What is being missed? It is utterly bizarre".

Other Staff were clear that opportunities to identify and intervene in barriers to pedagogic and pastoral progress should have been noticed.

"Attendance register stats are data for external metrics relating to immigration compliance as an education provider and business objectives. They're not used to inform teaching or pastoral care".

Florence extended this to observe that managerially:

"Nobody at programme management level (teachers and Personal tutor line managers) is monitoring Attendance... Attendance or engagement...our managers... don't monitor... don't think to run those reports. I do not get any emails coming directly to me from either of them to say, I've just noticed that you know, this student is. blah blah"

And

"As a Personal Tutor (a key socialisation role in the IFC) I don't have the authority. I've been told just earlier this week. I'm not permitted to process or use attendance data."

As we saw, limitations on the collection and use of attendance data tainted the system's efficacy in the minds of many teachers. It was perceived as a missed opportunity. Its current use is deemed irrelevant to pedagogy and Socialisation.

Others objected to the reduction of Attendance to a crude metric disconnected from education and student welfare outcomes. There was evidence of the concept being in disrepute with many study participants. According to Julie,

"(flagged Attendance) ...is when students hit 80% or something. As opposed to missing a class and finding out why. It reinforces presenteeism. Bums on seats. All IFC cares about is data."

Alice endorsed this sentiment.

"Literally all Attendance is just admin. Not about pedagogy, not about pastoral...not about helping the student."

Ian argues that the IFC has an,

"Irrational and disconnected focus on attendance numbers over real education outcomes"

In support of this claim, he told a story of how he and other teachers were shocked when the winner of a best attendance award prize at the IFC transcript (results) day, was not informed in advance that they were not progressing to the University. He then supplemented this to highlight the IFC's intermittent focus on:

"Lateness" or Late Attendance – "I remember a series of Centre meetings discussing whether or not to let students into a room after 10 minutes and what classified as formal absence. An absolute waste of my life as a teacher".

The other concept raised by study participants in this theme was 'Progression' universally used by the partners as an important business metric within the International Foundation Centre. Teachers recognised its institutional significance and high profile with their managers in the IFC. The concept of Progression, as defined by their employer and as understood by the teachers, is the successful completion of their primary educational task and, underpinning this goal, the attainment of the Centres commercial objective:

As Caroline explained,

"To ensure that students enrolled on a specific Pathway course are able to enter their chosen University course in the following academic year."

There is a planned average level Progression rate of approximately 80-90% of the IFC's annual cohort of students each year, satisfying the threshold 'progression grades' specified by the partner university for the next academic year. The partners expect student preparation to result in academically qualified students. IFC teachers might embed institutional habitus professionally and socialise students for post-IFC learning, as evidenced in themes T1-T6. However, there needs to be evidence that the partnership recognises this requirement institutionally. The converse of Progression is that a reduction in the progression rate has potentially severe financial consequences for the University and reputational risk for the IFC and the smooth functioning of their partnership. This scenario did not occur during data collection for this study (up to 2021-22) and sits outside its scope.

All the study participants agreed they had attended centre-wide staff meetings where Pathway annual progression rates were celebrated. Managers would email Staff in Pathway team meetings and in end-of-year thank-you emails. Caroline (a Foundation teacher supporting students to first year UG entry) was clear.

"In the IFC, progression is that you progress because you have achieved whatever mark is required in your modules to gain entry to your destination course at the University".

Jill, a teacher on a different Pathway, augmented this with:

"Progression to year two (of their undergraduate degree) is very important for our students, as they have started their undergraduate journey enrolled as a year one student in the IFC".

James was unequivocal about the significance of Progression in the transition of international students.

"Attainment is a critical business measure; Attendance is less so for the IFC; it's only there for visa requirements. Progression means attainment."

Expanding on this, he said:

"We don't really hear about Progression. We hear about attainment and achievement; we're using different words. (It's a bit like working for an American Company and they use a different term to mean what and how they're measuring our success). Progression doesn't happen if they don't attain. They must obtain 55% (in their subjects and 65% in English) or there's none of that Progression, so it's in attainment. It is a measure of performance. The achievement measure is did they actually learn anything when they were here?"

The personal, social, and psychological significance of non-attainment leading to a failure to progress was profound, as Alice witnessed,

"Staff talk to students who have not progressed, and their identity sort of falls apart. What the student does not realise is that non-progression has probably protected them from a horrific year ahead. If they can't manage and cope in this."

The bargain that the IFC offers its students is that they will gain UK university entry if they attain the progression grades agreed with the University for their subjects and English language (generally five subjects and four language subskills). In the study data, teachers were much more sanguine about their students' prospects. Their nuanced commentary exposes a gulf between the Socialisation that students receive at the IFC and how they expect them to be supported by the University.

IFC teachers continually emphasised the tentative staged nature of their student's success.

Alice recalls warning students that:

"A 65-progression mark threshold for English signifies students can cope but not that they are good - I use progression minimum scores to make students appreciate that they can function but are not good."

Kate thinks that IFC completion denotes a transitional first step,

"It should be progression to the point where they will be able to cope with the next stage".

For Florence, this tentative situation is compounded by international students being admitted to the IFC with such low language capabilities that it stores up future problems.

"The IELTS grades students needed in the past were much higher than they are now. For Postgraduate work, it was at least a 7. It still feels that's exactly the minimum students should come in with so as not to cling on by their damn fingertips. We've got students in classes for whom we are desperately worried, knowing we're doing them a disservice...pushing them through."

Julie worried that when,

"The IFC states approximately 80-90% of our students...progress. Teachers know that doesn't necessarily mean that they've coped or can cope at university".

Margaret's interpretation of student progression was that:

"It is very much about getting (students) to the point where staff can safely say yes, you can go to the next stage (University), and you will be OK. You will manage to do that."

Florence was less optimistic:

"If I don't feel that they could cope, then their progression actually worries me. I'd rather that they were doing something they could cope with rather than just moving on to the next stage".

Related to this point, Ian was uncontested when he argued that,

"If the progression rate is high enough, without the figures needing to be manipulated (that is, the University lowering the threshold to increase student numbers). There is more freedom for teachers to actually make ethical decisions about whether a student can cope or not."

He also asserted that there have been many circumstances where (IFC teachers),

"...have failed students who have then walked down to (the University's Student Reception Centre) and said I've got these grades. They're not actually good enough for any of the requirements on any course in this entire University. Nonetheless, the University says ... here's a place, yet his transcript grades on the day would disqualify him from progressing to his university choice."

Summing up, Jill offered an alternative perspective:

"Looking at it in the round - rather than a focus on progression ...the proper focus for teachers should be on transferable skills applicable in an academic and business career".

Julie made the point more trenchantly,

(Progression)..." It's presented (by the IFC and the University) like it's a generous gift, allowing you on the course where you're going to flourish... You're not going to thrive. You're going to be stressed and unhappy...65 is minimum. Not a magic number, so you can now write a dissertation. We are accepting people without the tools to cope at University."

Theme 6 - The Salience of the Personal Tutor

In this theme, the study found that Personal Tutors played a ubiquitous role in the International Foundation Centre in the socialisation of international students. The third narrative theme considered how their IFC employer instructs teachers to support student integration and police their students' attendance. Indeed, the challenges of re-orientating international students faced with profound change require that contact is made in the first four to five weeks of the course between the student and their Personal Tutor. In a previous theme it was observed that IFC teachers default cultural posture is to help international students to succeed. However, this is constrained by limited PT timetabling, teaching, and other demands. Most teachers actively use the Personal Tutor network in their teaching team to understand their students' problems. The Personal Tutor role is generally developed and positioned by IFC staff as a trusted interlocutor, that networks IFC student and university support services and contacts for socialisation purposes.

Teachers generally agreed that there are a variety of positive aspects of Personal Tutor (PT) practise and its potential at the IFC. The first development was organisational changes that made support for socialisation more systematic. Florence, a very experienced PT, provided the insight that:

"Around personal tutoring... it's an inherent part of our teaching role. In the last 3-5 years, it has become more formalised with the rollout of proprietary university systems that permit the IFC to become an early adopter ...recording student-tutor interactions" and "a clearer line of referral than before, much more process on the boundaries for us as personal tutors – a bit clearer actually. A step in the right direction as far as.... tutor's role in the lives of students".

Independent of the systems and procedures wrapped around it, Margaret is confident about teachers' capacity to engage as a PT:

"You know we're quite diverse ourselves with significant amounts of experience in dealing with pastoral teaching, learning and assessment.... we'll go... this is right for us... this is right for our students, and you'll get the feedback from students...and then that relationship relaxes that little bit."

Jill had a more nuanced but still positive view of their role in socialisation:

"We are all going to have an example...where... you've created a very strong personal tutorial bond...that has actually helped...I can think of a couple of kids who ...have relished that...support. Does that help their socialisation process? because they associate their personal tutor experience with positive socialisation."

James was similarly nuanced but positive about their contribution:

"The Personal Tutor policy is part of socialisation too, although it is obligatory and has associated bureaucracy."

Teachers went on to place various contextual qualifiers and limitations on the practise of Personal Tutors in socialisation. Kate muses:

"I think there's a bit of a mixed message...from...the IFC...The IFC says, we all know it's really important, you know, hugely important, and yet there is no time put aside for it. I mean, personal tutors get an hour on the timetable... an hour for 16 tutees? ... So, we know it's important and we have this set up and we have these procedures, but where's the time put aside for it? and I find that odd".

In that conversation, Julie added that:

"I think...even the hour was hard fought...it didn't used to be there...somehow that magical lesson preparation time marking time... register time...everything fitted...that. So, I think...possibly that's why... there's a...structured approach."

Teachers coldly judged the formal absence monitoring role of the Personal Tutor as established by the IFC as a policing one and did not associate it with socialisation:

Jill, speaking for many of the others, acknowledged this negative aspect of being a PT.

"So, there is a limit to the role (disciplinary enforcement), but I mean, that's an element nobody particularly relishes anyway".

Another teacher said:

"Personal Tutors (at the IFC) ...can be asked (instructed) by managers to find out the reasons for the reported absence of a student".

Personal tutors have a pastoral and academic focus in the IFC, but an additional aspect is their role in the staged disciplinary policy for student absence. Ian was critical of the teacher's work as a personal tutor:

"Your role ends up having to be reasonably disciplining rather than socialising. Because from higher management levels...the thing that they are on top of more than anything else is...have you completed the register?"

He also disagreed with the explicit socialisation mission of the personal tutor when student timetables are so crowded:

"When I say to them, have you joined any clubs, or have you done anything? They just look at me like...when would I do any of this stuff? The time aspect of the IFC is insane. They do so many (tuition) hours that ... they're dying a lot of the time. We say -look at all these fun things you can do. It is like, well, we haven't got the energy to do it either. Why would they?"

A further aspect of PT support was where an IFC teachers recognised that their students start from a disadvantaged position linguistically but also because of their ethnic and racial backgrounds. Ian embraced this as default scenario for many international students that obliges the PT to adopt a proactive supportive response:

"They can find it difficult surrounded by middle-class white people far more confident in those settings, so I tailor advice to address that imbalance".

To paraphrase Kate and Alice, who expressed themselves in very similar wording:

"We try to prepare them ... for what they will encounter.... when they go to the university."

Julie agreed reminding the group of the overarching context for the IFC, its teachers and students:

"The university has specific expectations about student behaviour that... they need to comply with."

5.5 Summary Findings and Questions for the Discussion

One of the main findings from this aggregated narrative of teachers' experiences highlights the critical institutional feature of IFC: their specialised socialisation model. IFC teachers and support staff think differently from university staff about introducing their first-year students to university life. They emphasise student preparation, practising the staff skills necessary to socialise and effectively engage with the habitus of higher education. These differences raise questions for the University about institutional and educational organisation gaps between the partners in their socialisation efforts.

On the other hand, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how fragile this finely tuned engagement and face-to-face contact was in the IFC. The equilibrium of 10 years was disrupted quickly as delivery modes shifted from campus to online learning. The institutional vulnerabilities in the socialisation process exposed by COVID-19 and revealed in this study need to be addressed if the IFC is to regain its success.

Notably, the research found that working online in lockdown delivering IFC courses was a uniformly negative experience for the teachers, pedagogically and in terms of socialisation and its affective aspects. This raises questions exploring the impact of teachers' sense of loss of agency and the potential diluting of their expected professional standards of practice as experienced teachers.

This raises further questions for the discussion about institutional capacity and leadership. Do IFC partners recognise that previous standards and outcomes of socialisation and pedagogy were affected, and should recovery of the previous socialisation model be attempted?

Researching the extent of employer's influence on staff socialisation practise, a key finding is how robustly teachers maintain a separate independent professional identity that resists it. A question worth exploring in the discussion is the extent to which detailed instructions found to be inextricably linked to the company's commercial interests and business processes are educational.

Teachers are clear-eyed that the IFC's overarching motivation is its business imperative. To recruit, accommodate and educate to a standard, the optimum numbers of international students. These numbers generate current-year revenues for the IFC's sustainability and, through Progression, planned volumes of university premium fee-paying students for the next academic year. A key question for the discussion is whether the partnership standards set for student attainment and Progression are educational, commercial or both.

Attendance and Progression were contested metrics and need to be clarified concepts.

In their narratives, teachers disputed Attendance as having any educational significance in the form used in the IFC. Progression was contested educationally as an absolute entry standard but recognised as an essential threshold stage for students transitioning to university. Many teachers posed the question that flows from this: Are student entry standards apposite and immutable in the IFC relationship? Do they represent a corporate data point as part of a business process and a missed opportunity? The context is that there were instances of intermittent varying admittance standards by the university authorities when students fell short of IFC grade thresholds. A further question, which is impossible to answer from this evidence, is, does the University balance revenues ahead of entry standards?

The sixth finding was that the Personal Tutor (PT) pre-COVID played a salient and ubiquitous role in the IFC's socialisation process. They guided pastoral and academic support and other positive functions teachers recognise other than policing student attendance. A key question raised by the narrative evidence was that if they are so crucial, why are PT resources so constrained by timetabling, teaching, and other demands? If they can diagnose and anticipate problems that impede the potential Progression of some students, why are they not better supported by the IFC partnership?

To conclude the findings stage of this study, the narrative evidence collected of teachers' experiences socialising with international students has been presented. Several thematic focal points have emerged in coding and analysing the convergence of the narrative data; the discussion of the six themes aligned with the four research questions around which this study was organised. The findings presented in this chapter have prompted further questions for the Discussion phase of the study to engage with.

The Discussion chapter will mainly address some critical aspects of the study's theoretical framework. It will test and ensure whether the theory used was an appropriate fit with the research done; it will ask whether the theoretical scope and scale of the research developed was sufficient to fit the topic; were the research questions, specific concepts and theoretical principles selected, appropriate to meet the objectives of the study? Can the theory be used with the research questions to give a good account of the research topic? Finally, does the theoretical framework underpin the discussion, conclusions, implications, and recommendations based on the data analysis?

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Russell Group, international student recruitment and commercial partnerships

The primary theoretical framework for this study is that of 'the business of education' in higher education institutions. As a topic within this concept, the 'marketisation of higher education' has gained significant currency in recent years. This framework focuses on the market-oriented reforms in higher education, including the introduction of tuition fees, competition between institutions, and the increasing emphasis on student choice as universities and colleges face various challenges related to funding, tuition fees, student debt, market competition, and the increasing commercialisation of education.

The setting for this study is an English university in the Russell Group, the UK's research-intensive institution, which is often regarded as the most prestigious and associated with competitive entry (Britton et al., 2021). These Universities have responded to the marketisation of higher education by adopting business-oriented practices associated with corporate management, focused on managing their institutions more efficiently and effectively and related to the topic of this thesis, more globally competitively (Musselin, 2018). They recognised the importance of marketing strategies to promote their programmes to attract prospective students domestically and internationally and increase funding. Many Russell Group institutions, like the one in this study, have extended their international commercial partnerships beyond research, exchange programmes and overseas campuses to maximise the recruitment of international students who will be prepared for UK domestic university entry and who contribute an increasingly large share of the universities' tuition fee income and access to working capital (HEPI, 2021; 2023).

The adoption of the business of education reflects the universities' response and navigation of the changing higher education landscape in the UK. As government funding models shift and competition increases, Russell Group institutions have adjusted their strategies to remain competitive. Despite

adopting business-oriented practices, Russell Group universities continue to prioritise their core academic and research missions and strive to maintain their reputation for research excellence while addressing the financial aspects of higher education.

The study findings in this thesis and consequent discussion reflect the dynamics within Russell Group universities which are emblematic of the broader challenges presented by marketisation in the UK's higher education sector. Institutions must strike a delicate balance between financial sustainability and preserving the academic values and traditions that define them. Such a complex response underscores the difficulties of marketisation and the multifaceted nature of the UK's higher education sector.

An established feature but under-researched corpus of the Marketisation discourse is the trend of partnerships between individual universities and International Foundation Centres (IFCs), commonly known as Pathway providers (Appendices A & J).

These partnerships intersect several critical elements within the broader theoretical framework of marketisation that shape the evolving landscape of higher education in market-oriented systems (Marginson, 2006). These include commercialising education services, where higher education is treated as a commodity and institutions seek to generate revenue from their educational offerings. Competition among educational institutions is a driving force in market-oriented systems. These partnerships create competition for international students, as they can choose pathway providers and universities to attend. Choice: In market-oriented systems, students are seen as consumers with the power to choose their education. Partnerships offer students a broader array of options, allowing them to choose the educational pathway that aligns with their goals and preferences. Quality Assurance is another critical intersection: ensuring the quality of education is crucial in market-oriented systems. Russell Group universities maintain quality standards for pathway programs to protect their reputation and attract international students seeking a high-quality education.

Financial considerations at the heart of partnerships

Financial and marketing considerations sit at the heart of these partnerships and their intersection with the Marketisation of Higher education. (UUK, 2022), (HESA, 2023). Tuition fees and revenue generation play a significant role in these partnerships. International student mobility and preferences for the UK are increasing see Fig 14 below (UUK, 2023) as the Scottish, English, and Welsh universities continue to grow as competitive locations for international higher education. As revenues from international student fees rise, then so does potential UK institutional financial stability in the face of capped domestic fees, high inflation and lower government grant support. The Russell Group's fee income continues to be among the principal institutional beneficiaries of this growth, Appendix B (Cosh, 2023). However, many HE institutions have also seen a significant increase in international students. Figure 16 - Top domiciles of international students in the UK by growth rate, 2021-22 and 2018-22.

Figure 16 International Student growth rates

Growth Rates of top five domiciles for international students in UK 2021-22 and percentage changes since 2018-19

(Abstract from Top 20 domiciles of International students in the UK 2021-22 and percentage change since 2018-19 - Source: UUK (2023) International Facts and Figures, Fig 6).

Rank	Domicile	2021–22	Growth rate over one year, from 2020–21 to 2021–22	Growth rate over three years, from 2018–19 to 2021–22
1	China	149,500	+5.7%	+24.2%
2	India	118,850	+49.0%	+345.5%
3	Nigeria	43,610	+108.4%	+310.1%
4	United States	22,150	+19.9%	+10.5%
5	Pakistan	20,440	+76.0%	+232.4%

There have been extraordinary growth rates in international student recruitment by British universities as set out in the figure above, Figure 16. The UUK reanalysed HESA data over the three years from 2018-

19m to 2021-22, by UUK in 2023 (UUK, 2023). These exponential growth rates over the three-year period, beg two questions. They raise concerns around the institutional risk policies universities operate under and the extent to which Russell Group universities recruitment practices work consistently in an ethical context. These problems will be developed further later in this section. At this point it is important to provide more financial context on the recruitment of international students.

The reliance of the Russell Group on international student fee income

Official higher education data showing Russell Group's institutional income sources was recently released (HESA, 2023). This study conducted a quantitative analysis of a sample of this data (17 institutions), and its results show the extent to which Russell Group institutions rely on international student fee income from mainland China and India. A summary version of this work is available below in Figure 15 (Cosh, 2023). The full results of the sample analysis of 17 institutions are available in the Appendices in Appendix K. An excerpt of that data is provided below in Figure 17.

Figure 17 Sample of International Students by R.G. University, numbers and income as % of

Total Income

		PG	UG	Total	PRC+IND	Total univ Students	as % total students	Fees (000) Non EU	Total Fees (tuition)	Non EU as % Fees	Total Income	% of total Income
GLASGOW	PRC	7750	955	8705	9690	42980	23	281611	359960	78	929358	30
	INDIA	800	185	985								
IMPERIAL	PRC	1640	1805	3445	3865	21470	18	262794	384375	68	1163193	23
	INDIA	270	150	420								
LEEDS	PRC	3410	1440	4850	5715	37190	15	253891	476799	53	1149251	22
	INDIA	595	270	865								
YORK	PRC	2370	805	3175	3455	23420	15	102355	252799	40	472167	22
	INDIA	220	60	280								
MANCHESTER	PRC	4480	3905	8385	9330	46410	20	374082	638205	59	1217127	31
	INDIA	475	470	945								
LSE	PRC	1300	735	2035	2540	12975	20	147889	235210	63	441373	34
	INDIA	395	110	505								
NCL	PRC	1415	895	2310	2665	27280	10	107172	281176	38	558606	19
	INDIA	255	100	355								
EDINBURGH	PRC	3835	40	3875	4350	41250	11	325848	476274	68	1297443	25
	INDIA	400	75	475								
HESA Data accessed at 11-12-23												

The sample data analysis provides evidence to conclude that fee income from non-EU students in England was an average of 25% of total institutional income, varying from a low of 19% to a high of 34%. The numbers are even more dramatic when considering the percentage of Russell group fee income that international student fees represent. The proportions in the individual institutions range from approximately 37 to 68 percent. The table in Appendix K presents the full range of international student data for the sample of 17 universities.

These results suggest that many of the UK's universities, including its principal research universities, have developed a significant degree of dependence for a considerable proportion of their revenue generation and total income from a relatively narrow source of international funders. They rely heavily

on recruiting international students from the countries identified in Figure 16: China, India, Pakistan, and Nigeria. Indeed, formative feedback at the time of writing (2024) suggests a shift in participation by Nigerian postgraduate applications due to the recent immigration and visa restrictions placed on family members accompanying PG students to the UK. This example and other future geo-political changes can pose risks and challenges for UK research-led universities. There is a system-wide recognition that there is an overreliance on international student tuition fees to cross-subsidise the income gap that Universities have been experiencing. This has been caused by the fall in the value of domestic student fees due to inflation, and real term rises in university costs, eroding the purchasing power of per capita fees. The UK government has maintained its cap on domestic students' fees since 2018, making universities more financially vulnerable and less sustainable in the medium term.

Regulatory concerns about financial systemic risk to UK HE.

With UK HE so reliant on so few countries for income, a recent House of Lords committee reported that:

“This dependency comes with risks and there is a worrying complacency that this premium from international student fees can be banked for the long-term despite an increasingly competitive international environment and the risk that geopolitical shifts could cause changes in student numbers” House of Lords, (2023: 4).

The current financial incentive for institutional risks to be incurred by pursuing further sources of revenue from these sources remains. This is due to the continued imbalance in Universities' short to medium-term financial sustainability. The Russell Group in written evidence to the same committee argued that they subsidise the teaching of domestic students by £1,750 per student per year as tuition fees no longer cover the costs of teaching.

“This is projected to increase to £4,000 by 2024–25, which (they argue) is the equivalent to 43% of the current standard tuition fee” House of Lords, (2023: 24).

The committee in its findings went on to criticise the university regulator for their complacency in not giving due regard to the scale of these challenges:

“We were surprised by the OfS (Office for Students) Chair’s assertion that the sector’s finances are “in good shape”. This is not an assessment that we or most of our witnesses share” House of Lords (2023: 29).

The National Audit Office has also found that the Universities faced systemic medium -and long-term risks (NAO, 2022). The overall trend direction is that universities, like those in this study, will continue to recruit an increasing number of international students as they shadow wider education policy. The Office for Students forecasts that postgraduate student numbers will increase by 130.00 FTE between 2022 and 2025, with 60% being non-EU international students (OfS, 2023).

Recruiting more international students to Higher education is central to the government's 'international education strategy' to expand education exports (DfE & DfIT, 2021). The wider critical discussion about universities' pursuit of the recruitment of students on higher fees as a means of growing fee income raises the question of institutional ethics. Universities work in an ethical context. Ethical decisions are being made about recruiting an increasing volume of international students (currently 20% of the student population in 2021-22). The intention is to offset the losses from the inadequate financing of domestic student places (75% of the UK student population). Drawing on these findings, it needs to be clarified that universities are considering ethical considerations.

Tensions surrounding Recruitment of International Student to Russell Group Universities

The figures discussed in the institutional income and growth tables reveal two tensions surrounding the recruitment of international students in Russell Group universities. The first reason, clearly revealed by the figures, is that the motive for recruiting these students is unambiguously financial. Institutions recruit them for their monetary value and are a form of cross-subsidy. This was recognised as fact in contributions from HE Sector witnesses, including the OfS, government ministers and university officials

to a recent Parliamentary committee that scrutinised the contribution of international students to higher education sustainability (HoL, 2023).

The findings among the study participants on this were less clear, as their perspectives on whether the IFC and their linked university were motivated by financial considerations were nuanced. Teachers were clear eyed and agreed that their pathway employer had business goals and that their employment depended on the continued creation of a pipeline of students to the university.

IFC “business objectives...are ... to generate revenues for both partners effectively and efficiently” (Jill) and “the reason the IFC has so many students from one country, is because they are easy to recruit” (James). An outlier in its expressive style, was Ian who claimed, “ what the company is trying to do is to get bags of money to go from our centre to the university and (for students) to give us positive feedback to attract new bags of money” (Ian). No teacher dissented from the remarks of their colleagues.

These comments assist us to fill in the gaps when so little research has been done on International Pathway providers in the UK and their joint ventures and contractual arrangements with Russell Group universities.

The second tension relates to the facts that the students, recruited and socialised by the International Foundation Centres are not eligible for immediate entry to their destination university course. They represent a pipeline of future fee-paying students who will confer an economic benefit to the institution and to the wider community the university is situated in. The greatest impact of the large volumes and higher value fees of these students is that they keep institutions and specific departments financially sustainable, maximising the job security of teachers and researchers. The HE regulator, the Office for Students in response to questions on the sustainability of the sector, set out its own concerns on using fees to cross subsidise higher education and universities like the Russell Group. The OfS warned that:

“Many large research-intensive providers recruit significant numbers of overseas students, particularly from China, and often on one-year postgraduate taught Masters’ courses...(with). large staff and pension costs.... they could be exposed to a recruitment shock and changes in pension contributions. They often have large estates that can be costly to maintain and develop and may face significant investment needs, (OfS 2023c:9)

The Benefits of International students to their Destination University and locality

As HEPI (2023): p XII, table 1, shows the non-EU cohort paid 20.2bn in fee income to universities. The financial viability of many university courses particularly masters’ courses is dependent on international students. UKCISA specialises in international students and has observed that prospective students are interested in premasters’ courses that facilitate international student for postgraduate entry. Postgraduates can switch to a ‘work’ visa when they complete their course, practising professionally for a period of two years, (UKCISA, 2023).

Figure 18 Comparison of Benefits of EU & non-EU International students to the UK Economy
2021-22

Table 1 Total benefits associated with the 2021/22 cohort, by domicile and type of benefit

Type of benefit	EU	Non-EU	Total
Fee income	£2.4bn	£20.2bn	£22.6bn
Non-fee income	£1.8bn	£16.7bn	£18.6bn
Visitor income	£0.1bn	£0.6bn	£0.7bn
Total	£4.3bn	£37.6bn	£41.9bn

Note: Values are rounded to the nearest £0.1 billion. All estimates are presented in 2021/22 prices and discounted to reflect net present values. Totals may not sum due to rounding. **Source: London Economics’ analysis**

A further significant economic impact of international students is their spending in the wider geographical community where their accommodation and University are situated. According to recent econometric work from London Economics on the cost-benefit to the UK of international students (HEPI, 2023).

“The economic benefits have risen from £31.3bn to £41.9bn (34%) since 2018/19, driven predominantly by the substantial increase in the size of the non-EU student cohort (which outweighs the decline in the number of EU students in the cohort).”

(HEPI, 2023: XV)

It can also be noted from this data that non-EU students make significantly more significant contributions to the UK than EU international students. Their economic research also shows that constituencies with significant populations of international students, such as those in Glasgow, Nottingham, London, Newcastle and Sheffield, derive significant net benefits of £58m per constituency where private expenditure by students exceeded the expenditure by public services. (HEPI, 2023:14, Table 4).

The placement of international students should result from a successful outcome in the competitive global debate about the relative quality of higher education institutions, their research and pedagogy. Academic commentators (Knight, 2012) have repeatedly warned that:

“Institutions must ask how an increased emphasis on the ‘buying and selling’ of education across borders will affect the nature and priority given to academic, social and cultural rationales of non-profit international education activities” (Knight, 2012:29).

The notion that the large flows of non-EU international students into UK universities result from a balanced public discourse by the students in their home countries on the relative merits of a British institution over another international rival needs to be revised. There are many factors influencing the

sustained growth in non-EU international student recruitment. The principal context from the supply side is the sector funding environment. UK Governments have frozen (capped) the domestic student fees levied (set since 2018). By doing so, they have limited the revenue to be derived from expanding domestic student places and allowed inflation to progressively reduce the value of these fees for 75% of students in the system. Universities cannot adjust for any increase in the real costs of HE in the short term. As the Russell Group has stated and other universities,

“...cannot make these efficiencies at scale, year on year to reduce the deficit, without impacting on the quality of research, teaching and learning” (Russell Group written evidence to Industry Cttee of the House of Lords, 2023: 11.3-11.4).

6.2 The Shaping of the Landscape of Higher Education

The international marketisation of UK higher education has progressed over 25 years as governments have encouraged Universities to consider market solutions in higher education, such as treating students as customers (Tomlinson, 2015). The economic focus of higher education is orientated towards the supply of exports as set out in the UK’s International Education Strategy, DfE & DfTI (2023). Institutionally, universities recover the costs of their higher education provision by reallocating university places to students who pay high market fees (House of Lords, 2023). The global reputational advantage conferred by the institutional rankings of UK universities in the top 100 in the International Education Ranking, such as QS and THE, are critical in influencing student demand (ICEF, 2017). Russell Group institutions were placed 4th in the top 10 and 17th in the top 100 for 2024 (QS, 2023).

Market intermediaries such as agents and International Foundation Centres use their networks to identify, aggregate, and acquire a pipeline of students that can be channelled to specific university courses. Agents are unregulated in the UK higher education market. They work closely with individual international offices in the UK and university commercial partners such as IFCs (BUILA, 2021), (and ICEF, 2023) Two-thirds of Asian students use Agents to support their choice of university, and student agents receive commission. Many HE providers pay commission on the placement of a student.

The competitiveness of the UK approach to recruiting international students is strengthened by the design of the official immigration system and migrant regulations. It maintains a flexible cross-border legal framework that facilitates the supply of international students to UK universities. The 'student', 'graduate' and linked 'work' visas enable students to reside, work and stay on after graduation. This acts both as a pull factor for international students and sets behaviour boundaries (UKCISA, 2019/20) According to study participants, a key responsibility their employer places on IFC teachers is to complete hourly registers to ensure international students' compliance with the UK's immigration regulations to not jeopardise the IFC status as an international college under immigration law.

"The IFC focus is on students' full attendance in class and does not in itself have an educational purpose. They are only interested in the data"

Moreover, for some teachers:

"The pastoral role of the personal tutor is not about socialising international students but about being used to police attendance ".

For an international education website that regularly surveys the industry and international students:

"Employability is now a strong driver of international student decision-making. When asked to rank the importance of employment opportunities at a prospective study destination, agents rated this factor 7.49/10." ICEF (2023)

As one teacher noted,

"Pathways programmes have focused more recently on employability topics in course design."

Publicised in corporate social media publicity, this will also potentially enhance demand for the services of the IFCs from students without entry qualifications.

An agent in international education is "a person or organisation that recruits international students and refers them to education providers. The provider does not employ them, but as private entities are contracted to deliver services to potential students and the provider"
BUILA (2021).

The structural architecture ordering the debate on university quality is based on the world rankings organisations such as QS and THE, both based in London. Using reputational and internationalisation indices and English, they tend to strengthen the position of UK institutions in the world universities' rankings. Education rankings are criticised for these flaws, Altbach (2010). However, rankings are read and used by international students and their agents, particularly in Asia. So, finance, finance-influenced admissions can affect reputational strength.

An ongoing challenge for Russell Group Universities will be, in this context, how to diversify recruitment to achieve further institutional risk mitigation. Overemphasis on recruiting students from specific countries may lead to a lack of diversity on campuses, limiting cross-cultural interactions and perspectives. It can also create an imbalanced student body, potentially affecting the quality of education and campus culture. A danger that the teachers in the IFC were all too aware of:

"we're offering this opportunity to (students to) guide their socialisation, and then they get there, and they find that it's work, it's not working for them, it's even working against them". (Jill)

One study participant, Julie, observed that for international students, communicating academically is particularly important in university seminars.

"They are expected to behave in a certain way" (...participate not to be silent)".

In their desire to secure premium fee revenues, some universities and their intermediaries, including agents, may compromise academic integrity to attract international students, including those with lower English language proficiency. This could lead to reputational issues relating to international students' participatory behaviours. Among IFC teachers, there was the belief and recounting of anecdotal evidence that entry thresholds for students at undergraduate and postgraduate level were lowered on a case-by-case basis for students who did not qualify to progress to the university course.

"A student without a progression score went to the reception centre, slapped down their transcript and was accepted for a master course they had not qualified for" (Ian)

This depended on whether a department had secured its revenue level before the start of the next academic year.

"If they have met their target there is more scope for ethical behaviour" (Ian).

There is an analogous widespread practise present in universities during the annual UCAS 'clearing' where UG applications without the set entry requirements for university courses can be accepted on lower qualifications to 'clear' vacancies. Ironically an economics definition of the term "clearing" is that what is produced in a market, will be sold at a price in the market.

Government policies can influence the extent and nature of these partnerships (De Wit & Altbach, 2021), (British Council, 2023). The UK government actively regulates student immigration and labour market status and promotes higher education as an overseas export (UK DfE, 2021). It promotes such collaborations to drive international student and enrolment support the growth of their higher education sectors. Over the last 10-15 years, access and equity issues have been increasingly raised in the context of marketisation (Bowl et al., 2018). While these partnerships expand access to higher education for international students, concerns may arise about whether they are equitable and accessible to all, including those from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds. Advance HE

(2023) identified less favourable student outcomes differentiated by ethnicity and gender. Equity considerations are important within market-oriented systems to ensure that higher education provides structural social mobility, economic development, and ethical responsibility. The intention is to limit the concentration of educational opportunities among the few and promote a more just and inclusive society.

In summary, these elements collectively shape the landscape of higher education within market-oriented systems, where universities and pathway providers strategically navigate commercialisation, competition, quality assurance, financial considerations, branding, globalisation, government policies, and access and equity issues to meet the demands of an increasingly global and competitive education market.

The rise of IFCs aligns with the marketisation trend of diversifying service providers in higher education. These providers specialise in services that target the needs of international students. Pathway programmes often include orientation and socialisation components to help students adapt to a new educational and cultural environment. They usually include language preparation and academic support appropriate to their destination course.

To illustrate the diversity of IFC provision prevalent in the partnerships they currently operate among the Russell Group of universities, two examples are provided below. The commercial partner operators of these IFCs are Study Group and Kaplan. They are two of the five companies alongside Navitas, IUP (INTO) and NC-UK that dominate the UK market, offering IFC partnerships among Russell Group Universities. These examples use current operational data from the academic year 2023/24 and official financial data from 2021-22 (HESA, 2023).

The IFC at Glasgow University is marketed as Glasgow International College (GIC, 2023) and has a well-established partnership that has been operating since 2007 with the American International Education Corporation, Kaplan (Kaplan, 2023). The International College is Jointly branded. The partners provide

course pathways to Glasgow University at preparatory foundation, undergraduate, and pre-Masters' levels. They recruit international students to eleven academic disciplines ranging from art and design to science, Law, engineering, hospitality and tourism. International College students who complete their pathway qualify for credits, enabling them to access other partner UK universities in the Kaplan Network and credits to US high schools and Universities. At approximately 30%, the proportion of Glasgow University's income derived from international students is the average level for a Russell Group University (Cosh, 2023) (HESA, 2023).

Cardiff University (Cardiff University, 2023) is a relatively new 'International Study Centre' or IFC. The University signed a study centre partnership with Study Group (Study Group, 2023), opening in 2020. This has been extended to 2027. Study Group is a multinational international education company headquartered in London that, according to its website, has fifteen UK partners. It also has partnerships with Australian and US universities. In Cardiff, the IFC operates an accelerated foundation course of 22 weeks and online preparation courses. These sit alongside the standard IFC offering of foundation courses for year one entry, international year one for year two entry and pre-master courses. For a Russell Group University, Cardiff has a relatively low proportion of its income derived from international students at approximately 18% (Cosh, 2023), (HESA, 2023)

Most IFCs from this study (Cosh, 2023b) are jointly branded with their university partner. This differentiates a pathway programme from competitors and offers a clear pathway to a specific Russell Group university. This is particularly important for international students who need to satisfy the University's standard entry requirements, thus enabling the University to capture a broader segment of the potential market. The partners compete fiercely with other universities to attract international students (Marginson, 2006). This aligns with the competitive aspect of marketisation, where universities aim to increase their international student enrolments to boost revenue and global rankings (Naidoo, 2016). As was indicated previously, these partnerships are generally financially driven, as private pathway providers either contribute revenue to universities in exchange for access to students or enrol students on profit-making Pathways courses and associated supporting accommodation that

transitions to pre-agreed place at their destination university course. This revenue can help universities address funding challenges and invest in their academic courses and research costs. IFCs facilitate access to a broader international talent pool. Pathway providers offer students more options for how they can access higher education. This aligns with the concept of students as consumers in the marketised higher education landscape. Governments and higher education regulators often oversee partnerships with private sector providers to ensure that they meet immigration requirements and quality and accreditation standards.

In summary, these partnerships illustrate how market-oriented practices extend beyond traditional educational boundaries and can lead to a commodification of education that impacts the traditional academic mission.

6.3 Discussion of Findings in Relation to the Literature

In the next section, the study will present each theme and support it with relevant literature and analysis.

T1. Socialisation as a specialist service

The principal thematic finding of this study concerns the emphasis teachers place in the process of 'Socialisation, the importance they assign to it, their capacity to engage with it and their pride in the expertise they deploy to socialise international students in International Foundation Centres successfully. The study captures and fuses teachers' authentic voices from the narrative data collected in interviews and panels. The initial responses by teachers when the term 'Socialisation' is posed to them in group settings are synthesised and reordered below: The teacher's voice here is supported by the literature.

'Socialisation' is one of the best parts of the teaching experience, lots of patience...and compromise, have lots of admiration for how they cope and how brave and adaptable they are"
(Kate).

When the study participants signal their empathy and obligation to interact with students to achieve positive outcomes, this is reflected in systemic reviews of the education evidence (Aldrup et al, 2022). Teachers espouse social constructivist concepts when they advance the view that teachers need to work with students to 'co-construct' their knowledge.

"The responsibility for their learning...is shared...it is more like 60-40...you know.... their responsibility... to frame their learning...in the context that they find themselves in....it is a voyage of discovery.... guided discovery" (Florence)

and teachers' scaffold' their progress (Vygotsky, 1978). Bruner influenced by Vygotsky and others, supposed that,

"The intervention of a tutor may involve ... a kind of 'scaffolding' process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts", (Wood et al, 1976:90).

The notion that teachers manage students learning by introducing group work, structured interaction with peers and organising their knowledge and thought are critical features of constructivism (Bruner, 1960), (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). James, as an IFC teacher, thought that,

"As the professional in the room...Let me rearrange you (the students) into something you do not really want to...the social way that you should be learning" (James).

The emphasis James places on group work and class activities is, according to Topping,

"a useful (way) to conceive cooperative /collaborative learning as mutual peer interactions It is also useful to identify principles that help teachers to structure scenarios in order to favour students' engagement and constructive social interactions" (Topping, 2017:4).

These quotations partially cast Socialisation as the student adaptation process to the prevalent institutional culture. In mainstream scenarios such as Weideman (2006) and Andrade (2006), students adapt their behaviours and attitudes to what is expected of them as individuals in mainstream academic settings.

'Adaptation' will enable them to transition successfully to their university course and profession. This is a crucial aspect of the socialisation model adopted by the study participants. Teachers in IFCs expected international students, with their varied culturally defined identities and dispositions, to engage in a process of transformative change to varying degrees if they were to succeed.

"Many come from cultures which, simply ...do not allow them to stand out and be individual, but if they are going to survive, they need to see what they can do as individuals here" (Alice).

As Andrade puts it:

" Underlying many of the problems experienced by international students is a lack of language proficiency and cultural knowledge", (Andrade, 2006:143). "International students have greater and different adjustment challenges than domestic students...related to difficulties with English language and culture" (Andrade, 2006:148).

The mainstream literature represented by Weidman and Andrade broadly supports international student integration and adaptation stimulated by the institutional environment and the various

communities that intersect it. These mainstream outcomes of Socialisation are necessary, as one teacher puts it:

"Being a student is more than just getting the required grades. Because when you get to university, you're expected to have the necessary skills to function there like speaking in seminars, learning to work together and thinking critically" (Julie).

A more critical perspective underlying teachers' and universities' promotion of adaptation and the socialisation process suggests a close fit with the acquisition of 'institutional habitus' (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Where schools and universities function as part of a dominant system of class relations reproducing societal inequalities, these institutions influence their students' dispositions, behaviours and educational trajectories.

As global institutions Universities reproduce the existing unequal system of social relations. Bourdieu describes habitus as...

"A power of adaptation. It constantly performs an adaptation to the outside world which only occasionally takes the form of radical conversion" (Bourdieu, 1993:78).

Habitus is part of a socialisation process where the culture of a particular social group is integrated into a person's individual dispositions and beliefs. Habitus is,

"Society written into the body, into the biological individual" (Bourdieu, 1990:63).

The socialisation process is not seamless as many teachers observed. According to Reay, it is the case that:

"Individuals are differentially positioned in relation to the institutional habitus of their school or college according to the extent to which influences of family and peer group are congruent or discordant with those of the institution" (Reay et al, 1991:2)

Although globalisation has introduced some degree of homogeneity in culture and attitude, international students existing 'cultural capital' is increasingly repurposed to enable students to 'transition' to fit the dominant academic arrangements in their higher education institution of choice (Volet & Jones, 2012). As one teacher stated,

"For some, that is quite difficult. That comes from beliefs, values, backgrounds, families, and education, which may have made up their previous Socialisation. (Margaret).

Setting Socialisation in a broader conceptual context is necessary before discussing IFC teachers' experiences in more detail. The Concept of Socialisation in higher education is well-established in the literature. (Schein, 1968), (Bourdieu, 1977), (Tinto, 2006), (Briggs et al, 2012), (Li, 2016), (Falcone, 2017) and (Weidman, 2006). Several authorities have developed highly influential models of Socialisation applied to higher education, notably Weidman (2006) and Bourdieu's (1976), whose 'habitus' approximates Socialisation. A defining characteristic of their models is the institutional locus of these processes: for Bourdieu, the elite schools of France – a proxy for higher education, and Weidman, the elite and public universities of the United States. Three distinguishing features of the type of educational institution and context for Socialisation used in this study set it apart from Weidman's mainstream formulation of Socialisation and Bourdieu's critical humanist approach to habitus and, more broadly, institutional habitus.

First, the institutional model and context for this study are novel. No academic research from either the mainstream or humanist perspectives focuses on this niche of the higher education sector in the United Kingdom when investigating the Socialisation of students seeking to enter Higher education. The organisational locus of this research is International Foundation Centres (IFCs), colloquially known as

International Colleges or Pathway Programmes. Indeed, a UNESCO report on higher education pathways in the UK (Brennan, 2021) failed to identify the IFC Pathways sector, which is the context of this study. This is an oversight too often made by scholars examining international students in UK higher education. The UK government's International Education Strategies in 2019 and 2021 acknowledged and endorsed the Pathways sector as part of their education exports drive, albeit in a lukewarm manner:

"UK pathway providers help international students to improve their English language or study skills before attending a UK university. They also offer foundation courses, often leading to direct degree-level entry upon completion. Pathway providers can increase access to UK higher education and assist with transitioning to higher education". (DfE & DIT, 2021: 2.1)

Generally owned by private multinational corporations, these for-profit institutions focus on partnering with the UK's leading public research universities in the Russell Group. A ministerial foreword to the same official strategy document stated that:

"Our universities have done an excellent job in providing extraordinary pastoral support for those international students we host in this country, enhancing this country's reputation "(Ibid).

The UK Government's compliment omitted to recognise that crucial university partner organisations doing this valuable pastoral work are a distinctive feature of the tertiary education sector. This may be because:

"Government policies and universities' perceptions of them (pathways) have not always been favourable" (British Council, 2023b: p4).

Despite the popularity of internationalisation and international students in higher education research, University International Foundation Centres and their pathway programmes should be explicitly identified in the discourse.

"Internationalisation and international student and staff mobility were a strong feature, often in comparative studies, REF2021, Citation2022, p. 160." cited in (Brooks, 2023).

IFCs are neither Universities nor FE colleges in themselves, although through joint branding, their identity is associated with and takes on some of the gloss of UK higher education. Operating as businesses from Russell Group campuses, IFCs generate private revenues by preparing international students who are unqualified for but motivated to attend their partner's university degree courses.

Anecdotally,

"Marketing in the IFC is valued more than Teachers. Marketing makes money – it identifies and recruits candidates (the sale). Teachers spend the money (or after-sales)" (Julie).

The IFC's operational framework has a business culture. It allocates staff, finance and capital resources using private sector management criteria and commercial objectives. Some teachers say its systems and procedures focus on efficiency and revenue generation.

"Education in the IFC is a business. Teachers are categorised as responsible for paid production of teaching services, but it (the company) does not recognise the extraordinary voluntary and unpaid efforts of some teachers in socialisation activities" (Margaret).

The IFC does not develop policies modelled on public universities nor recognise trade unions. Its revenues depend on the cash nexus emanating from its global direct market recruitment operations in countries of origin of international students leveraged by IFC institutional networks of agents who are often not university recruiters.

"The business model of both institutions depends on the recruitment of international students and their successful progression to their chosen university destination, thus generating revenues for each" (Jill).

Despite this apparent institutional 'marriage of convenience', the partnership relationship between the universities and their IFC operators is more nuanced. The aspects of their collaboration are manifest in the perspectives held by the staff of the two organisations. A reflection of their respective cultures and identities as narrated by the participants of this study. This topic is developed in more detail in section T4 of this discussion, 'the influence of the IFC business imperative'. In any respect, this study has yet to identify a higher research footprint around the sector in the UK, demonstrating its absence in the discourse and its novel approach to student development and the acquisition of Cultural Capital and Institutional Habitus.

In response, partnerships between Russell Group Universities and IFC Pathway Providers to prepare this kind of student have become a growing feature of the recruitment landscape in the UK. Key British state institutions concerned with international students, language, and culture have observed this increase in global demand from international students being met by IFC and Pathway Providers.

"Private pathway providers are a key stakeholder in the ecosystem, providing global reach, market, intelligence and agility in product development which is often not achievable by UK universities.... This expansion of portfolio (by Pathway providers) has further seen the overlap between the activities of a pathway provider and the activities of an international office or team at a university, with the possibility of universities looking to outsource part, or all, of their international student recruitment to private pathway providers. (British Council, 2023b:16)

The challenges to IFCs and Universities of these non-direct entry, non-EU domiciled international students are varied and many. To be accepted to an IFC pathway course, the IFC must precisely assess each candidate's cultural, language, knowledge and credential deficits. The IFC needs to secure a

commitment from the screened students and their sponsors that they have the funds to gain access to their IFC Pathway course. The fees for tuition, accommodation and other expenses are higher than those for a domestic student. The IFC's challenge is to globally source and then deliver a student onto their campus site, then socialise and educate numerous students who will constitute a pipeline of quality assured students for the University's next academic year:

"To prepare them for continuing study and the start of their career. That they need to be prepared to question, continually learn and evolve. And be prepared for non-acceptance" (Kate).

Annually, the University relies on the achievement of the programmed number of Pathway students who have achieved the requisite grades to be acceptable to university standards. The level of progression considered adequate is agreed upon between the University and IFC.

The UK universities already recruit UK-domiciled students from non-traditional student backgrounds who only partially satisfy direct entry qualifications. They use a variety of pathway routes and Access courses (Brennan, 2021) without the involvement of IFCs. These UK students do not receive the systematic socialisation support available in IFC-based pathways despite increased Access efforts in recruitment:

'Looking at access to Russell Group universities, young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are also under-represented in these institutions. While the proportion increased from 19% to 21% between 1997 and 2014, their share compared to other institutions actually decreased, from 38% below the rest of the sector to 45% below' (Sutton Trust, 2023:11).

For international students to progress and be accepted to their chosen university course, as prequalified entrants, they must satisfy the IFC language and subject grades endorsed by the University. They are also required to complete the intensive University preparation process that the IFC specialises

in. The socialisation processes and organisational infrastructure that are the subject of this study are highly developed in the IFC compared to their partner University, as one long-established teacher who has worked for both partners observes:

"There is a clear distinction in the socialisation posture and intensity of preparation level between the IFC and the University as applied to their teaching of international students"
(Florence).

Jill teaches English but has other responsibilities from a wider perspective.

"I think to go back to what ...the others were saying.... yes, we do look after them"

Humanist researchers (Marginson, 2018) and (Reay, 2018) have criticised how HE and HE access courses engage with non-traditional student groups such as working-class white boys or direct entry international students. HE systems do not supply the cultural capital and the necessary institutional habitus for the successful transition of these groups (Byrd, 2019). This literature must consider the IFC Pathway course context discussed in this study or its non-direct entry students.

The third feature not discussed by either mainstream or humanist commentators in the literature on international students and their socialisation concerns these partnerships' institutional capacity to flex the timing and stages of entry to the start of an academic year by introducing additional overlapping cohorts starting in September and January stages of preparation for entry available only to international students aiming to join a degree course at a Russell Group university from their home country. The IFC's preparatory pedagogic and socialisation activity aims to produce a pipeline of international students who, over nine months, are marshalled, socialised and educated to an agreed set of university standards. A further sub-process is to repurpose the Cultural capital that international students bring to accommodate the dominant assumptions and dispositions of the higher education system. Along the way, they will have complied with visa regulations and gained pre-approved entry to their chosen

Russell Group University course. These IFC pathway courses encompass a range of modes of entry to their university degree course. There are foundation (pre-first year) UG courses, Year One, a pre-second year entry to UG courses and pre-M (masters) preparatory courses. These modes of entry and organisation of pedagogy and assessment in multiple short courses differ from the admission processes and pedagogy prevalent for direct entry students to UK higher education institutions in the Russell Group.

The process of acceptance to a pathway is complicated by the willingness of international students, their families and their agents to make multiple applications and confirm multiple acceptances to different Russell Group University-linked IFC Pathways courses. They delay joining a course until induction and sacrifice multiple financial deposits to different Pathway providers to secure the Pathway course to their preferred destination University (British Council, 2023).

T2. The effects of working online during lockdown on socialisation

This section expands on teachers' narratives explaining the effect of their practice of online working and its impact on student socialisation. It considers theoretical contributions that both challenge and support the evidence presented. Further contextual analysis is presented to identify other relevant factors. The discussion here starts by taking an explicitly chronological context. This is because the COVID-19 pandemic forced a global shift to online learning in education. This temporary pedagogic modal shift can be categorised as a temporal singularity. It was a transitory event that destabilised established socialisation and pedagogic processes and practices for much of this study's narrative data collection.

They followed China's stringent zero-COVID lockdown policies (enforced from January 2020 - April 2022). Individual mobility and social interactions in the country were severely limited. Similarly, the UK implemented a series of national lockdowns starting in March 2020, with the third concluding in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and the consequent disruption of UK Higher education have been well documented (HoC, 2022), (ONS, 2021), (HESA, 2023b). They significantly affected the Russell

Group of Universities, their staff and students. The data for institutional partners of Russell Group universities, such as International Foundation Centres, should be present in this research literature and official records. For the academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21 (Barber, 2021), the delivery model across the UK's national university system changed primarily to online. As institutional partners of the Russell Group, IFC Pathway courses were early adopters of online pedagogy.

Technology-mediated learning is central to the discourse in online pedagogy concerning the methods and practices of teaching and learning conducted over the internet. Laurillard advances the proposition that there are universal pedagogic principles that underpin learning with online technologies, postulating that:

“Pedagogical principles focus on different elements of the learning process, and have been characterized successively (and include among others)... ‘socio-cultural’ learning, deriving from Vygotsky and focusing on the importance of discussion as an aspect of learning, making use of communications technologies (Vygotsky, 1962; Wertsch, 1985) and —collaborative learning, deriving from both Piaget and Vygotsky to combine the social and construction elements of the learning process, making use of integrated technologies capable of supporting both (Laurillard 2008: 3)

Unlike the Universities, IFC staff had multiple parallel new cohorts of international students to teach and socialise alongside their recruitment of Pathways cohorts for the 20/21 academic year. In 20/21 UK Universities and IFC Pathways, tuition was to be exclusively online. Covid restrictions in the UK were lifted in academic year 21/22.

In 2021/22, after lockdowns ceased in the UK, there was significant growth in demand for many UK IFC Pathways from non-EU students. This was also the case for direct entry PG students to UK universities. The recovery reflected the latent demand from pandemic deferrals and mobility difficulties in 2019-2021.

“First year postgraduate taught numbers continued to rise, showing a 10% increase compared to the previous academic year. This increase comprises a 45% increase in non-European Union domiciled students, and a 7% decrease from UK students”, (HESA, 23C: Fig 1, p1)

It was noted earlier in this chapter that international students pay very high fees. Universities rely on international students for 25% of fee revenues (HESA, 2023). The considerable growth in international student numbers (PG) and the return to face-to-face teaching significantly impacted course sustainability.

A parliamentary committee report in June 2022, discussing Higher education in 2021-22, found that UK universities were less affected financially during the Pandemic because:

“In the short term, the higher education sector survived the COVID-19 pandemic because of the resilience of individual providers, financial assistance made available by government, no interruption to income from overseas students as had been feared, and the fact that large-scale tuition-fee refunds were not required”, (HoC 2022: p3).

During Lockdowns, many IFCs did face financial challenges, but it was not because pathway courses failed to run or because enrollment numbers fell precipitously. IFC recruitment for many courses often remained relatively stable as students were eventually directed to their courses converted to online equivalent. Online tuition enabled Pathway students to maintain all preparatory time on their planned journey to a Russell Group University degree. It accommodated the UK and international lockdowns that prevented students from joining courses on campus. The significant loss of revenues for IFCs arose from untenanted student accommodation administered by the IFC, which it depended on for commercial income but on which charges could not be levied. One teacher recounted management narrative during the period 2020 and 2021:

“The most important aspect for the IFC is getting the students ... (here, managers say) ...the students want to be here ...they want the experience” ...there's been quite a lot of resistance to even going forward to have online programmes as well as the campus. The package. From the IFC point of view...(is) offering the students. (to)...come and have the United Kingdom experience...I don't know whether that's connected to the fact that they get most of their revenue...from the accommodation block...and therefore ...need to get the students here”
(Alice)

Another teacher compared the IFCs revenue generation position with that of their partner university

“It's not like the (IFC) is doing something that the University does not do...making money from accommodation and tuition fees “(Florence).

Many international students registered on IFC pathway courses left the UK before the two lockdowns were declared. International student's experience of commencing to learn or resuming learning online has many dimensions. There were difficulties related to travel restrictions, time zone differences for online classes, visa uncertainties, and isolation due to lockdowns. There is considerable evidence that international students' traditional learning and socialisation processes were disrupted (ONS, 2021).

The mix of study and tuition settings for IFC students engaged in online learning over the two academic years, till lockdowns ended in academic year 21/22, was extraordinarily diverse (Cosh, 2023c). Some were settled in IFC accommodation on campus, private flats, and student hotels in the UK. Most were back in their homes in various Asian countries, principally India and China. For an unlucky but significant minority, they were stranded in airport hotels on routes to their homes in foreign countries and quarantine hostels on the edge of their home cities for extended periods.

IFC students are primarily from India and China. Various aspects of their home countries' infrastructure, culture and gender roles affected online learning performance during the 2020 and 2021 lockdown

periods. In one case, Chinese researcher's appraisal of technology-mediated learning during the pandemic considered:

“In 2021, 84% of international students reported that the pandemic had negatively impacted their academic experience, compared to 81% of UK-domiciled students”. (Frampton et al, 2023:3)

The mix of study and tuition settings for IFC students engaged in online learning over the two years in their overseas domiciles in the PRC and South Asia respectively found it:

“Noteworthy that online education during the pandemic also brought about several issues. Network congestion, poor hardware quality, inadequate teacher-student interactions, and other problems that compromised the quality and effectiveness of online teaching (Wang et al, 2020: section2).

“We find that male students were negatively affected mainly by poor internet connectivity issues, mobile data issues, power cuts, noisy families.... Alongside these negatives, female students reported further issues such as having very simple devices, having more household responsibilities, not being able to meet classmates, having to take care of siblings,” (Mathrania et al, 2021:637).

IFC courses that depended on Laboratory and fieldwork as an integral part of the collective learning experiences and context were often unable to operate during the Pandemic. Staff in these courses were furloughed (that is, mandatory time off work on reduced pay) by the IFC and University (Cosh, 2023b). The frequency and emphasis with which teachers recounted stories prompted by the change to ‘online working’ in their experience of socialising international students signals how fundamental the modal shift in pedagogy and socialisation was to their identity as professional teachers. And how profound the

changes in their social learning context and organisational culture were. The challenge to their pedagogical methods, values and accumulated expertise created by the online environment was stark. Sir Michael Barbour, a former Chair of the OfS, reviewed digital teaching and learning in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that:

“Only 21 per cent of teachers said they were ‘very confident’ that they had the skills to design and deliver digital teaching and learning.....over a third of teachers (36 per cent) reported having no access to technical support while teaching digitally, compared with under a quarter of students...and 23 per cent of teachers felt they lacked the right technology, compared with 15 per cent of students” (Barbour, 2020:pp5-6).

Only two teachers among the ten study participants whose narratives of their experience are being surveyed here had ever taught for any substantive period online before the COVID-19 lockdowns. The views of most teachers were paraphrased concisely by Julie:

“Online...they (students) can log on, switch off their screens and listen...or not respond to questions”.

In effect students could choose to hide in plain sight and not be accountable, opting out of the social learning and socialisation process. In a normal classroom there many opportunities for management interventions and one-to-one communication, but here both were very limited. Margaret summarised the overall position.

“We cannot engage as effectively” (Margaret)

Most of these teachers had decades of professional practice, adopted a consistent methodological approach, and cultivated a collaborative on-campus culture at the IFC. However, the rapid shift to online delivery, initiated by government regulation of the sector, forced them to work from home for an

extended period spanning two academic years in 2019/20 and 20/21. It created various pedagogic, socialisation and organisational challenges for teachers attempting to deliver the engaging standard education they were so proud to provide.

“Staff need support too. Our polling found that 47 per cent of teachers had no experience of digital teaching and learning at the beginning of lockdown in March 2020. While staff grew more confident as the pandemic progressed, we often heard that their digital skill level could be a barrier to successful teaching. (Barbour, 2020:12)”

IFC teachers lost the team-based support ecosystem rooted in their campus-based staffrooms and buildings. Working from home, they lacked face-to-face contact with staff and students compared with past practice. The changes occurred at short notice, adapting to working with a globally distributed population of students attending online classes from multiple time zones. Teachers universally expressed negative views about the limitations and impact of online delivery on their ability to support international students' socialisation and pedagogy. The narratives reveal that teachers in the study have a Sociocultural epistemology underpinning their pedagogy. It draws on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory.

“Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)” (Vygotsky, 1978: p57)

Vygotsky's work centres on the notion that learning and knowledge construction are inherently social and cultural processes. It underscores the significance of social interaction, where students learn optimally through meaningful engagement with teachers, peers, and experts. Through these interactions, knowledge is co-constructed via dialogue, collaboration, and shared experiences, shaping students' knowledge acquisition and understanding within this educational framework.

Teachers thinking chimed strongly with social constructivism:

"We're expecting self-constructed learning, aren't we? in a higher educational context...for many... (the IFC Pathway course) it's their first experience of a constructivist academic culture."
(Florence).

Teachers in the study referenced three concepts habitually applied in their professional practice: 'Scaffolding', 'Group Work' and 'Peer learning'. They are interconnected within Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, emphasising the importance of social interactions, cultural tools, and collaboration in cognitive development. These methods were integrated into IFC pathway classrooms pre-covid and have resumed post-covid. They were observed to be highly effective in facilitating socialisation and academic adaptation. Teachers used scaffolding to provide tailored support for individuals, while group work and peer learning created opportunities for international students to interact, learn from their peers, co-construct their knowledge, and develop a sense of belonging in their new educational environment. This integrated approach aligns with Vygotsky's principles and is believed to enhance the socialisation process for international students on pathway courses.

'Scaffolding' is a metaphor to describe "a process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts"
(Wood et al, 1976:90)

In their writings, the support by a 'knowledgeable other' is tailored to the learner's current level of competence, gradually decreasing as the learner becomes more proficient. Scaffolding is an essential aspect of Vygotsky's theory, as it highlights the role of social interactions and a teacher's assistance in cognitive development (Van de Pol, 2010). It is also a crucial part of the tool kit used frequently by the study teachers.

Teachers emphasised that their intensive learning strategies for socialisation into a new culture and pedagogical approach depended on the frequent scaffolding of ideas, the encouragement of peer learning and group engagement. With the shift to online learning and the absence of individual informal

face-to-face communication, many teachers, such as Margaret, lamented the missed opportunities for 'scaffolding' to reinforce a solution or help students identify and solve a problem:

"There was no informal contact at the start or the end of the lesson, going down the stairs or to lunch" (Margaret).

Despite the popular adoption of 'scaffolding' as a guided form learning by teachers in their pedagogic practice, some significant criticisms of scaffolding remain. Pea believes that excessive scaffolding hinders deep learning as students may not engage as thoroughly with their materials and independent evaluation of them. In a more general critique, he stated that:

"The concept of scaffolding has become so broad in its meanings in the field of educational research and the learning sciences that it has become unclear in its significance." (Pea, 2004: 423)

Notwithstanding these criticisms in the discourse, post covid social interactions remain opportunities for IFC teaching teams to provide the scaffolding support necessary for student cognitive growth and adaptation, helping international students navigate their new educational settings. Guidance remains a common professional stance and active pedagogic behavior expressed by teachers in the narrative. It can be interpreted as a continuing institutional orientation.

" Teachers want to break (them) down a bit, guiding them so they become more independent and more imaginative". (Kate)

An important socio-cultural tool employed by IFC teachers is 'Group Work'. It involves teachers organising collaborative activities where students work together in small groups to achieve shared goals or complete tasks. It encourages peer interaction and cooperative learning, allowing students to learn

from each other, discuss ideas, and solve problems collectively. Group work aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on social interactions as a means of cognitive development.

“Group work is a teaching strategy that deliberately creates a social setting for learning to enhance deep learning, however a group assignment in itself does not guarantee knowledge co-construction; it is through communication, interaction and collaboration that knowledge is co-constructed, “Oxford, 1997 cited in (Poort et al, 2020:2.1).

Group work was a long-standing, proven, and standard pedagogic approach in IFCs; the teacher-student and peer dynamics critical to the success of group work were changed by their migration online. Several criticisms emerge from this embedded in the social constructivist approach critical to Group work. Social constructivism emphasises the importance of the social context in which learning occurs and the frequency of social interactions. MS Teams and Zoom group working are highly artificial environments where communication is stilted as if on a stage. For a significant minority of teachers, their capacity to manage this environment is limited by inexperience and a lack of proficiency (Barber, 2021).

Supervision of group work and student performance was highly constrained by their limited ability to observe non-verbal cues and interactions, vital for assessing group dynamics and participation. Managing multiple break-out rooms is challenging, with students opting out and groups not continually visible in real-time or parallel. Students are situated out of contact in small groups; many operate off-grid using Chinese language and WeChat software that the teacher cannot see. Many IFC students needed more confidence to write English in public and did not use the Teams or Zoom chat box function. These scenarios demonstrate how artificially constructed this context is. It is the antithesis of real-world situations, making learning more abstract and less applicable. Teachers in this online context are significantly less able to provide individualised support and attention to each group. The critical theory states that staff have less capacity because of the limitations of time and active engagement to regulate the challenges faced by diverse, multicultural groups of students.

" Students, working in multicultural groups must deal with both challenges that are common for monocultural groups and challenges that are peculiar to multicultural groups, (Popov et al, 2012:303)

These challenges include free-riding, insufficient English language skills, and students needing to communicate appropriately. Culturally diverse group members may have different expectations about learning in groups and the behavioural motives of others. This may result in misunderstandings and conflicts (Popov et al, 2012).

The cessation of face-to-face pedagogy and physical classroom interaction for extended periods directly affected the rate of individual learning and adjustment due to more inefficient peer learning and group work on online Pathway courses (Barbour, 2021:120 & 123).

Online learning often lacks the in-person social interaction between students and instructors, leading to feelings of isolation and disengagement, limiting motivation to participate actively (Barbour, 2021:124). Limited feedback online clarifying concepts and addressing questions not always provided on the spot may be delayed, potentially slowing down the learning process. Students need reliable access to internet connections or appropriate devices for online learning, so technical issues, such as connectivity problems or software glitches, disrupt the learning experience. (Barbour, 2021) Self-Discipline and Time Management Some students need help to stay organized and motivated in a remote learning environment, which reduces productivity.

Online delivery of IFC courses to globally distributed audiences of international students during the pandemic led to observed levels of lower student engagement compared to face-to-face classes. This was also reflected in research among domestic UK Students (Frampton et al., 2023). Students may be more inclined to multitask, engage with social media on their phones, or become distracted when learning from a computer, which can hinder their comprehension and retention of the material. As

observed earlier, online learning environments may need more interaction opportunities, which can limit the development of critical interpersonal and teamwork skills.

“I noticed when I was teaching online, though, there was no sense that they had to participate and just getting someone to switch the camera on was just impossible...even when they were in little groups. They were content for information to come (to them) but they are not prepared to participate” (in the process). I found it so heart breaking” (Julie).

The withdrawal of onsite teaching, learning, and socialisation activities led to an associated loss of physical and sensory stimulation and social interaction. This is because the replacement medium of online working platforms imposed their limitations and restrictions. The digital video interfaces adopted by the IFC used Teams & Zoom platform features (screen sharing, photo and document gallery views, chat functions, and private room features, which were introduced later for group work). These platforms filtered and mediated the IFC's pedagogical and socialisation activities. Julie explained the pedagogic quandary facing teachers:

“It is difficult to diagnose if a student does not understand... we cannot move people between groups as we would in normal classroom management”

In England, the scale of the changes in teaching from face-to-face to online was extraordinary. National statistical surveys of higher education students found that in universities.

“Classroom-based learning was at 63% in 2019 to 2020, fell to 4% in 2020 to 2021 and is now 41% in 2021 to 2022” (ONS, 2023).

In the IFC, the first semester and a considerable part of semester 2 in the 2019/20 academic year were classroom-based before the lockdown. These statistics are likely indicative of the level of campus in

the Centre. The numbers for 2020/21 were lower still. 100% of Pathway teaching was done online and delivered from home; those courses requiring fieldwork and laboratory work were suspended.

Peer learning, sometimes called peer teaching or peer tutoring, involves students helping and teaching each other. It can take various forms, such as peer feedback, peer mentoring, or peer-led discussions. Peer learning embodies Vygotsky's idea that peers can serve as valuable sources of knowledge and support for each other,

“The effects of peer interaction...” incorporates a view of the development process that stresses the joint attainment of meaning (Tudge, 1990:169)

For these engagement processes to emerge in the IFC setting, teachers relied on structured collective classroom association, physical face-to-face interaction, and the personal proximity of frequent institutional contact, eliciting multiple informal communication, prompts and stimulation to action. Teacher comments emphasise how profound the changes in their social learning context and organisational culture were by going online. Nearly all teachers starkly expressed a significant challenge to their pedagogical methods and expertise; Julie paraphrased their views concisely: “Online...they (students) can log on, switch off their screens and listen...or not respond to questions”. This widespread behavior was endemic in a substantial minority among the globally distributed cohort of students now enrolled on course modules taught and assessed exclusively online. Online teaching disconnected these students from peer contact, group work, and teacher observation. Their virtual absence limited structured guidance, communication and interaction between the class, individual students, and the teacher. Kate spoke about the temporal impact of these changes on students and how teachers experienced them:

“I think that now (with socialisation online) ... it's a slower process, I think they're still doing it (learning in social groups), but it's taking them longer.”

Florence, in these two passages, stressed the importance of the loss of the social learning context and the need to find a substitute format:

“They miss group work in class, which is massively about peer learning. I advise them to organise their own online study groups”.

“You know if you’re in the same time zone think about this. Do you know? Perhaps you can use your APD assignment groups or not but having that bit of that peer support for their learning and doing it in a way that is social is, I think absolutely vital. How many are doing it I don’t know!”

A key aspect of embedding and internalising socialisation effects with students is reinforcing teacher-classroom feedback. Personal tutors who sit outside the direct pedagogic relationship are critical to this. They are another institutional instrument of socialisation used by teachers whose effectiveness declined as student engagement changed in the switch to online. Florence reflected on the efficacy and quality of her Personal Tutor work,

“I’ve been running my personal tutorials for both cohorts almost without exception they’re saying...it’s got nothing to do with mental health...the bigger picture... or looking ahead...It’s very, very here and now. When’s the deadline – what do I need to know? The quality of the socialisation process was gone, it was now transactional not developmental.

Florence believed it was possible for the IFC to assist teachers to overcome these difficulties and strengthen the role of the PT - not something that their employer chose to invest in.

“ In Lockdown....lending or giving support to teachers in a personal Tutee role... this remote way of working might make that ...more difficult, but I don’t think it’s impossible” or “Who has the overview that would help us as Personal Tutors have that insight, so we can approach students

in a timely sensitive way and keep that relationship building” ... “as opposed to: No questions please, (Personal Tutees) we’ll see you next semester”.

One criticism of the teachers' adoption of socio-cultural approaches that rely on social interaction between the students and their instructor is that they may need to fully account for the cultural variability in the learning and development of students from diverse non-Western cultures. These students have different cultural norms, values, and ways of learning that do not align with the framework of collaboration envisioned by the teacher.

“An individual’s working intelligence is never ‘solo’. It cannot be understood without considering his or her reference books, notes, computer programs and data bases, or most important of all, the network of friends, colleagues, or mentors on whom one leans for help and advice.... Once one takes such views as seriously as they deserve, there are some interesting and not so obvious consequences.

The first is that there are probably a fair number of important domains supported by cultural tool kits and distributional networks. A second is that the domains are probably differentially integrated in different cultures” (Hutchins, 1996)

An international student's ability to participate in an online classroom versus the immersive aspect of a physical classroom run on Western lines limits the scope and scale of collective work, reducing social interaction. Alongside differential cultural contexts, additional language barriers due to limited language proficiency may hinder students' ability to engage in the kinds of social interactions and collaborative learning experiences their instructors promote (Phillion, 2002).

In considering the effects of online delivery on the socialisation of international students, the interruption and changes to the long-standing mode of engagement previously used by teachers had a significant impact. By placing a strong emphasis on the role of social interaction (peer, groups,

scaffolding) in cognitive and social development, especially in a classroom setting, some of that cohort in normal circumstances would find the pedagogic and socialisation process challenging or uncomfortable (Topping, 2017), (Slavin, 1996). Indeed, in the academic year 20/21, engaging with an international student population who have little or no classroom experience of group work, are introverted, or come from cultures with different views on individual learning will be significantly challenged by the approach.

“I did have one student, the first time actually, who said to me that it is a different culture, having to do this kind of participation...Not just having the information given (to them)” (Kate)

Classroom settings were replaced with online class interactions mediated through technological lenses of restricted functionality and scope and the limited specialist expertise of teachers; 8 out of 10 needed more online teaching experience. Socialisation has taken a significant retrogressive step during the online period. It interrupted and limited social interactions, ongoing pastoral care, progression monitoring, study clinics and personal tutor support. Despite these limitations, teachers continued to deliver online intensive tuition to two cohorts (240 subject hours and 96 language hours per cohort) of Pathway students each academic year over the pandemic period.

T3. The influence of Employer Policies and Instruction on socialisation practice.

institutional policies and instructions the IFC developed and promulgated have the potential to influence the socialisation practice of its workforce significantly. The analysis of this theme will apply various theoretical frameworks from the literature to gain insights into the influence on teacher's practice of socialisation, including institutional theories (Weidman's Socialisation Theory and Bourdieu's Theory of Institutional Habitus and Cultural Capital) and constructivist learning theory (Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory). Commenting on the effects of university policies to institute educational public-private partnerships:

"Joint ventures... at root involve... separating off part of an institution's existing activity. Such institutions in the UK have focused on peripheral activity, such as English language courses. With both partners taking a share of the revenues...at their heart of these matters is a push to make it easier for private equity to enter the sector" (McGettigan, 2013: 96).

A relatively small number of pathway provider companies have the dominant share of the IFC market allied to most Russell Group Universities. These are sizeable private equity-financed multinational companies like Navitas, Study Group, Kaplan, INTO, and Cambridge Education Group (House of Lords, 2017: Appendix A).

Although one IFC partner is a publicly funded UK research University, the entity is a market-driven, for-profit private company. Intense global competition and changes to direct entry admission policies by UK universities have led to further innovation in product development by IFCs that extend their offer to a broader segment of international students:

"In response to these changes, the pathway providers have introduced new pathway programmes to access years 1, 2 (for UG and PG level) ...with the possibility of universities looking to outsource part, or all, of their international student recruitment to private pathway providers" (British Council, 2023b).

The University has tiers of policy making within its institutional infrastructure and campus services. These are one step removed and functionally separate in most respects from the IFC operations and the work of its teachers, see Figure 19 below.

Policy Map – International Foundation Centre Partnership – Areas of Competence

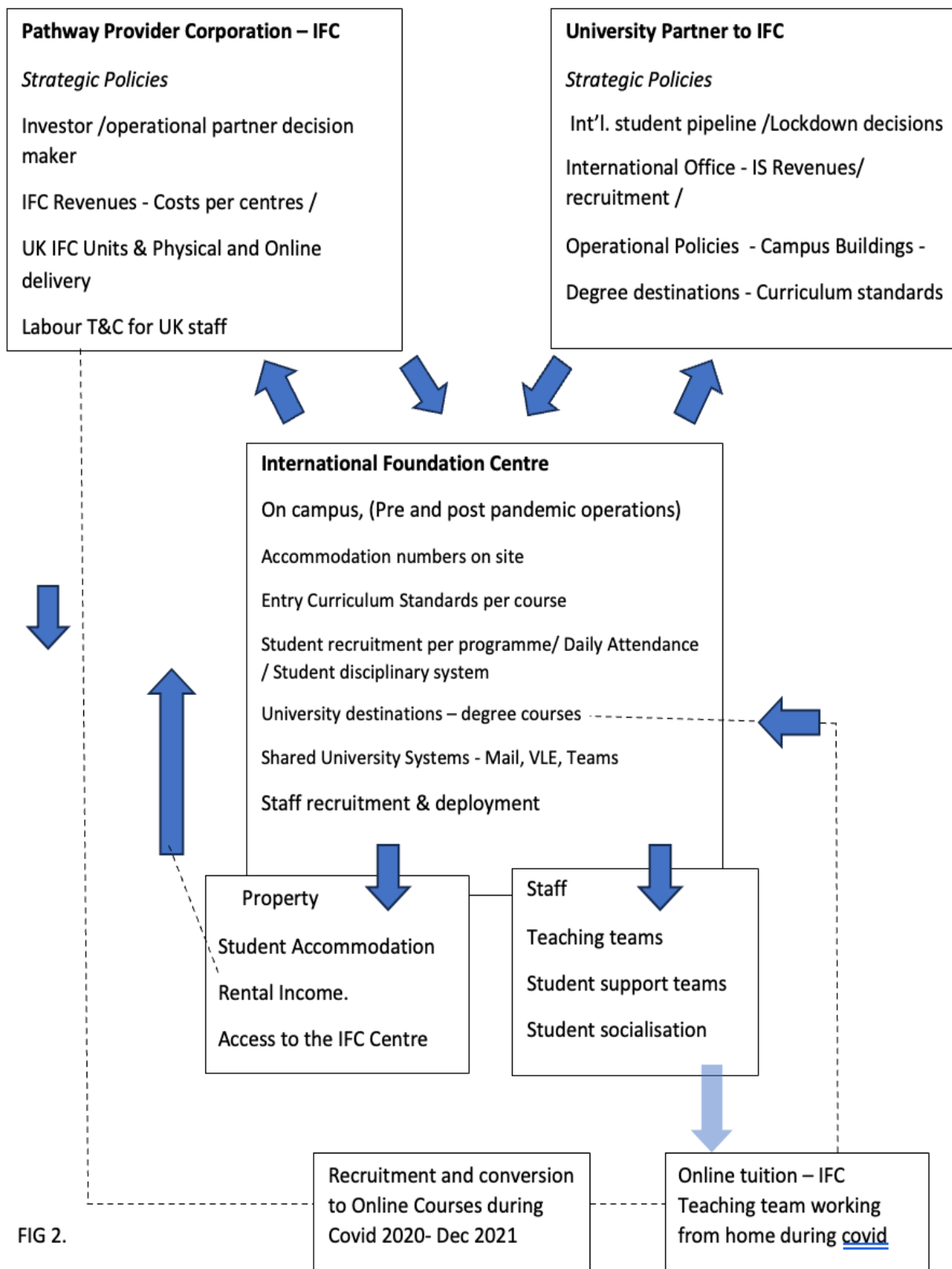


FIG 2.

Figure 19 Potential Policy Map for IFC Partnership

The two partners overlap in several policy domains: the interaction of their building and accommodation operations within the University estate and the setting of curriculum standards for the IFC to achieve so that, on attainment, they pre-qualify international students to gain direct entry to university degree courses and third the joint planning and recruitment of an annual pipeline of international students for subsequent enrolment in the University at undergraduate and Masters level. This third policy domain will be developed later in this analysis.

According to Weidman, the first of these domains, curriculum guidelines and curriculum design, involves a delicate balance between essential academic content and socialisation goals. The curriculum aligns with the University's institutional objectives, adheres to the University's objectives, and balances it with socialisation goals. The acquisition of socialisation outcomes, such as knowledge, skills, and disposition (formal and informal), are mediated through:

"The organisational structures and normative contexts of higher education institutions influence students through socialisation processes, namely, interpersonal interaction, social integration and learning that connect students with salient normative environments in higher education (academic curricula, depts. etc.). (Weidman, 2020:25).

IFC Pathway courses are expected to reflect Russell Group University's priorities. For example, if a university elevates the pastoral care role, with staff acting as personal tutors or its curriculum stresses critical thinking and research skills, the IFC pathway will adopt similar topics and methods to align with these expectations. Florence, an experienced IFC teacher and personal tutor in the study, welcomed the University's online academic and pastoral record system, now adopted by the IFC.

"Around personal tutoring...an inherent part of our teaching role. The last 3-5 years have become more formalised, recording student tutor interactions.... a clearer line of referral before definitely much more process on the boundaries for us as Personal Tutors – a bit clearer. A step in the right direction as far as policy and tutor's role in lives of students (Florence).

Both institutions share specific expectations and norms regarding student behaviour and academic performance. These are agreed in course committees with the University in the Chair. IFC course content is often modelled on the syllabus in the University's undergraduate first year. Teachers are informed by these norms and expectations when guiding international students in adapting to the university culture and academic standards. Weidman agrees with Homans definition that the term "norm" is namely:

"... an idea in the minds of members of a group ... that can be put in the form of a statement specifying what the members ... should do, ought to do, are expected to do, under given circumstances." (Weidman, 2020:13).

In their narratives, the Study teachers identified that a core policy objective for their employer (the IFC) was to generate revenues for the joint venture and, ultimately, for its university partner. In 2013, Weidman identified the increased demand from China for degrees from outside the country. He observed that for his own and other universities:

"...there is even more incentive to recruit Chinese students who can pay their own expenses, because of institutional budgetary pressures resulting from decreased public funding of higher education" (Tan & Weidman, 2013)

Teachers were clear-eyed about the business at the heart of the IFC. Jill contextualised the partners stance, in a statement agreed by the participant teachers:

"The business models of both institutions depend on the recruitment of international students and their successful progression to their chosen university destination, thus generating revenues for each".

In the development of his model of socialisation (Weidman, 2006), he identified that the external environment has influences outside of the control of the University (i.e. reductions in revenue support). This affects the higher educational institution's normative context and ability to support student socialisation. A further input to the model is the ability of the institution to influence the predisposition of prospective students (i.e. marketing increasing peer demand and family aspirations to apply for foreign universities).

Weidman's model conceives a significant influence of external environmental changes emanating from the government on the socialisation capacity of universities. Examining the evidence for this in the UK, two main policy drivers for the increase in UK universities entering partnerships with international pathway providers emerge. A recent Institute for Fiscal Studies report on student finance concisely frames the situation:

“The cap on tuition fees has been increased only once since 2012, meaning the real value of tuition fees for home students has fallen by around 20% over the last decade. Overall, per-student resources for teaching home students have declined by 16% since 2012.... (on the other hand) tuition fees that universities charge to international students are not subject to the same cap and are typically much higher. Some institutions have relied on increasing cross-subsidy from international student fees to make up for the real-terms fall in resources for teaching home students”, (IFC, 2023:1).

The business model works for both parties in an IFC Joint Venture because the annual fees charged to international students during their time at the IFC and their degree course at the university are more than double the value of the yearly fees levied to domestic students. Overall, this represents a large infusion of export income to the UK from its higher education sector (DfE and DTI, 2023). Revenue for many Russell Group universities from international students represented between 18 -34% of their total income in 2021-22 (Cosh, 2023a). Disproportionally, between 37% to 78% of student fee income (HESA, 2023d) over 2021-22. The competitive recruitment market for international students has evolved in the

last 15 years. Corporate Pathway providers have expanded their relationships with Russell Group universities, creating more IFC partnerships with Russell Group Universities (HoL, 2017). They are taking on more functions of University International Offices recruitment work as they are perceived to be able to sustain the growth in necessary institutional revenue (British Council, 2023b).

The effect of these commercial policy goals and the institutional policy environment driving them (fee caps, unequal fee rates, rising inflation, reductions in state support, more competition in HE) has been to focus attention on continued institutional growth for both partners. This takes the form of expanding the number of non-EU international students enrolled in the IFC to swell the pipeline of 'pre-qualified' students to the university. In turn, this further affects the IFC teachers in this study and the efficacy of their socialisation efforts. The effect of increased IFC class sizes, an institutional culture of cost control and measures instituted during the recovery from COVID-19 are discussed later in this section.

The partner's policies relating to the financial disbursements from the partnership and the terms governing their privately registered joint venture, profit distribution and apportionment of income are commercially confidential. This study assumes that there are purportedly two rounds of revenue generation by the IFC, as the graphic in Fig 2 of this section illustrates. The International Foundation Centre shares several policy domains with its pathway provider owner. The first round relates to the global recruitment of high-fee-paying individuals prepared to enter their prospective university degree courses in an intensive 9 months of specialist pedagogy and socialisation.

“Pathway Providers are Third-party organisations delivering foundation programmes for students who don’t qualify for year 1 undergraduate study in a UK HEI, or programmes such as “International Year One” that allow students to transfer into later years of the course. Some UK universities also recruit international students to their own internal foundation /pathway programmes”. (British Council, 2023b:16).

Most students enrolled in Pathway courses are encouraged to rent IFC accommodation managed by their IFC, which also provides a significant revenue stream. This accommodation is usually independent of the University halls of residence.

The second round of revenue generation relates to the recruitment policy overlap between the IFC and the university's international office. On successful completion of their IFC pathway courses, the prequalified IFC students' progress to their chosen University degree course three to four months later. The university will, on an individual IFC student's enrolment, benefit from a pipeline of between one, two or three years of high-value international student fees (Pathway courses for international students in an IFC, range from foundation level (1st yr UG entry) International Year 1 (2nd year UG entry) and Pre-masters 1st year PG entry) these lead to specific degree courses at the university). A prominent emergent theoretical feature of institutional revenue and profit maximisation is contingency. When addressing the global scope of these partnerships, profit and revenues are primary derivatives of commercial partnership models evoked in much of the literature on the Business of Education, specifically the Marketisation of Higher education (Marginson, 2006), (McGettigan, 2013).

These partnerships were explicitly developed to exploit commercial opportunities arising from the ongoing exponential growth of student mobility (the pandemic notwithstanding) released by sustained globalisation processes and internationalisation in higher education (Altbach & Knight, 2007). This growth in demand for Higher education in the third decade of the twenty-first century could consolidate around the integration of regional HE networks in Europe and Asia, among others (De Wit & Altbach, 2021). The Corporate Pathway provider argues that such market scenarios require agile commercial partners with global reach and market power. Large organisations with the capacity to flex product design and market intelligence networks are contingent on the market scenarios of rapidly changing demand and supply. UK universities are confident in this commercial model according to the degree of growth in such partnerships (British Council, 2023).

At the level of the study participants, IFC teachers, the discovery of the influence of business motives and drivers in a commercially structured joint venture company was not a surprising finding to emerge from an examination of the narratives from teachers. It is the composite features of the teacher's observation which together provide a sense of the strategic and operational policy landscape of the IFC that is driven by both sets of owners. Teachers remain passionate in their motivation to socialise actively and in their pedagogic efforts to support international students. At the same time, they can be highly critical of the IFC business approach overall: As Ian, an IFC teacher, opines,

“There's a distinction between what the students are being sold and what is being marketed to them versus what we then want to deliver, OK. And that I think probably as teachers we take a more humanistic attitude to this. We are trying to create critical human beings who can engage in their society, whereas what the IFC is trying to do is to get bags of money to go from our centre to the university and to give us positive feedback to attract new bags of money”

Another IFC teacher, Julie, commented on the distinctions in value creation that flow from the business environment in the IFC and its focus on revenue and recruitment, referring directly to the apparent and explicit lack of parity of esteem expressed anecdotally in the organization:

“Marketing in the IFC is valued more than Teachers. Marketing makes the money, (it identifies and recruits' candidates, the sale). Teachers spend the money (or after-sales)”

This resonates with the discourse on the alleged disparity of esteem and functional bifurcation between teachers and researchers in Russell Group universities and the university system (HEPI, 2023b). The second conceptual framework relevant to analysing the theme of employer policies and instructions that influence teachers' socialisation of international students is Pierre Bourdieu's Theories of Social and Cultural Reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu posits that social inequalities persist generationally and are reproduced through the transmission of 'Cultural Capital' and the acquisition of 'Institutional Habitus' (knowledge, attributes and dispositions) valued by the dominant parts of the

economic and social system (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Bourdieu argued that formal education systems, including schools and universities, are crucial in perpetuating socioeconomic inequalities. Schools and universities reinforce existing social hierarchies by emphasising certain forms of cultural capital over others. This perpetuates advantages for those who already possess it and disadvantages for those who do not. Bourdieu's conception of 'Cultural Capital' according to Edgerton and Roberts:

“Includes adaptive cultural and social competencies such as familiarity with relevant institutional contexts, processes, and expectations, possession of relevant intellectual and social skills (e.g. ‘cultural knowledge’ and ‘vocabulary’)” (Edgerton and Roberts, 2014)

This model of Cultural Capital can be argued to be embedded in the IFC Pathways' course content, language, academic and non-curricular activities. Teachers explicitly recognise that part of their socialising role is to impart this 'hard and soft' knowledge to students. Supporting the 'transition' from an international student recruit in the IFC to a new identity as a bona fide University student and future professional.

“Teachers aim to prepare them (international students) for continuing study and the start of their career.” (Alice)

IFC Pathway courses align their curriculum and practices with the 'Cultural Capital' valued by Russell Group universities. This cultural capital is embodied in the institutional policies that the IFC partners agree are the language proficiency standards and academic discourse. Regular communications to familiarise students with their prospective university's expectations are included. This is in parallel with an instrumental service design set in the IFC. Each IFC staff team has a functional role that provides their IFC Centre with the capacity to support the efficient and sustained socialisation of multiple cohorts of international students. Approximately 1000 non-EU international students per year undergo a repurposing of the original Cultural Capital that was a product of the students' home upbringing—reproducing a cohort of students with the Cultural Capital valued by their destination university.

The third conceptual framework that assisted the study in analysing the IFC's policies and instructions that might influence their teacher's socialisation practice is a constructivist learning theory, specifically Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978); it emphasises the interactive nature of the student-teacher relationship. Teachers shared a constructivist vision of their pedagogy and a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1962). It focused on developing learning, language and arguably the acquisition of institutional habitus (Byrd, 2016), (Reay et al., 2001). This model of pedagogy and socialisation is arguably at the core of the teaching and learning culture in the IFC. For business efficiency, cost-effectiveness and operational planning, the IFC's senior management set out their outline pedagogic and socialisation policy by publishing a structural framework, the course programme for the next academic calendar year. It specifies the number of subject topics pre-agreed with module leaders. The structural features of the programme also include frequent face-to-face contact hours in class and small-sized classes (under 20).

This outline structure facilitates the establishment of interactive relationships between the teaching team and their students. This study has found that teachers given this opportunity emphasise and value three learning methods derived from Vygotsky's approach that are particularly suited to teaching international students in multicultural classroom settings (Phillion, 2002). These methods help students to co-construct their knowledge guided by teachers, they are 'Scaffolding' (Woods et al, 1976); 'Group Work` (Poort et al, 2020), (Popov et al, 2012); and Peer Learning, (Topping et al, 2017).

These concepts are interconnected within Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasises the importance of social interactions, cultural tools, and collaboration in cognitive development. (Vygotsky, 1978). These concepts are operationalised by the intensive nature of the IFC's lesson programming around each course syllabus. Each academic year has two entire cohorts of approximately 75 and 60 students, respectively. The first cohort in this study started in October, and the second started in January. They operate in parallel, overlapping four months (Redacted calendar, 2022).

The IFC in this study typically programmes 24 weeks of tuition (240 sessions of subject classes and 96-hour sessions of language classes per pathway student. A typical annual cohort of 70 students is divided into groups of 15-20 students, approximately four groups. The Pathways programme design creates structural buttressing for the interactive focus of teaching and socialisation. Students are taught together in small groups throughout the year by the same subject teachers, building 'trusting relationships' (Walker & Gleaves, 2016). They see them twice weekly (Redacted weekly timetable, 2022). This maximises the opportunities for peer learning and group work. The total weekly contact hours for students with their teachers is approximately 20 hours per week. This is considerably more than an undergraduate student's typical contact hours in a Russell Group University first year.

International students personally know their teachers and their classmates. They build relationships and receive more formal and informal opportunities for interactive tuition. Teachers, as they join, are advised by their colleagues on the use of scaffolding (Woods et al., 1976), group learning (Poort et al., 2020), and peer learning (Topping et al., 2017) in their pedagogy. Teaching observations punctuate this. These methods have been proven to facilitate adequate socialisation and academic adaptation. Teachers can use scaffolding to provide individualised support, while group work and peer learning create opportunities for international students to interact, learn from their peers, and develop a sense of belonging in their new educational environment. This integrated approach aligns with Vygotsky's principles and can enhance the socialisation process for international students in a pathway.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is subject to criticism and challenges on several grounds. One criticism is that Vygotsky's theory may need to fully account for the cultural variability in learning and development as students from diverse non-Western cultures may have cultural norms, values, and ways of learning that may not align perfectly with Vygotsky's framework (Hofstede, 1980). Vygotsky strongly emphasises the role of social interaction in cognitive development. Students who are introverted or come from cultures with different views on individual learning may find the emphasis on group work and social interaction challenging or uncomfortable (Edwards & Ran, 2006), (Xie, 2010). Applying Vygotskian principles in the classroom can be complex and requires skilled teachers who can

effectively scaffold learning and facilitate peer interactions, hence the IFC's reliance on very experienced teachers, generally not hiring novices who do not have the necessary classroom skills. International students may face language barriers, developing their language proficiency that hinders their ability to engage in social interactions and collaborative learning experiences that Vygotsky's theory promotes (Carrol, 2005). To overcome this, the IFC has timetabled the frequency of intensive, interactive subject tuition and language tutoring.

From the discussion, an attempt has been made to demonstrate that the influence on teachers' socialisation practice is not based on specific instructions from their employer around classroom arrangements and pedagogy. Instead, the sociocultural learning model adopted and deployed by ICF teachers primarily depends on the efficient managerial and cost-effective structure and processes designed by ICF managers to deploy their resources and execute their partnership agreement with the university.

In reviewing the policy environment framing the strategy and operations of International Foundation Centres, it should be clear that different levels of the organisation have varying levels of capacity to influence teachers' practice of socialising with international students. Teachers' responses in these narratives illustrate the extent to which they assign importance to the parameters of IFC policy and their understanding of the company's motives for influencing teachers' practice.

"If the IFC said this is what we would like to see in your (practice), I wouldn't. I might still do it, but it would come from somewhere else is what I am trying to say" (Caroline)

It is apparent from the study that teachers apply differing levels of criticality and discrimination when evaluating policy instructions from their employer and their degree of compliance in carrying out the instruction. This demonstrates the relative independence of teachers' sense of professional identity and judgement. Evidence from these teacher's responses suggests that they distinguish between detailed instructions around socialisation directly relating to a student's welfare. They give these higher

weighting than those they interpret as inextricably linked to the company's interest in optimising its business processes, limiting its risks and achieving its commercial goals.

The structure and managerial culture of the IFC is distinct from that of the university, and instruction is a large part of the culture. It signals its business values and intent around the concepts of student 'attendance' and 'progression', identifying them regularly as success metrics and linking them to the sustainability and economic viability of the organisation. Corporate strategic change can be driven and implemented quickly within three to six months, with employees' instructions cascaded through centre-wide to team meetings. This momentum is reflected in an employee culture that tolerates staff changes and re-allocates working practices in pedagogic and administration duties when the IFC adapts to new environmental circumstances. COVID adaptation and recovery are prime examples of this. It also applies to scenarios such as managerial responses to financial pressures to suppress costs due to lower-than-forecast recruitment.

Consequently, as James observes:

"'Progression' and 'Attendance' are regularly part of the general policy environment of the IFC, which are discussed at centre-wide staff meetings and in emails to staff from managers."

As has been discussed earlier, an overarching element of the business mission of the IFC is successful commercial revenue generation. For both partners to fulfil their partnership transaction, this 'Business of Learning' requires students to complete their IFC pathway to transition to their destination university course. Crucial to this transition process is that international students in the IFC comply with certain legal obligations of immigration law and their study visa status conditions to remain in the UK legally. Attendance monitoring manages these risks. The 'Progression' rate is the other metric of business success in this context; it is the number of students who attain the University requirement in language and subject grades to 'progress' pre-qualified to their partner University course (British Council, 2023b).

The entire staff resources of the IFC centre in the study operating in teams are designed to mesh as a series of business processes, offering different levels of engagement with students to ensure a successful transition to university. The student experience team 'acculturated' students through play and leisure activities, increasing their familiarity and accommodation with the campus and the external regional environment. Student welfare intervenes to support students with various personal adjustment problems and life events that affect attendance, study, or commitment to the programme. Levels of absence are flagged by Student Progress, which monitors daily attendance registers completed by teachers. Staged absence warnings with staff interventions modify student absences. Teachers receive regular feedback from personal tutors and their colleagues. Student performance is traffic-lighted by teaching teams and personal tutors in regular team meetings. Those who must progress to the IFC partner university receive direct support in finding another university offer.

"Teachers, Student Welfare, Student Experience, Student Progress, Accommodation, all the different departments are working with the student's interest at heart (prompt: to complete the course?), I suppose so, yes". (Jill)

It was clear that the company's regular messaging on absence, completion of registers and request for interventions by personal tutors suggested that 'Attendance' was observably an institutional good. Most teachers in the study rejected any educational significance to 'Attendance'. Logging the class register was a business process requirement, just an institutional metric. It would be mistaken to conceptualise most policy influence on teacher practice as instructions referenced to policy or direct managerial orders. Given the socialisation process-driven environment of the IFC, much of which is voluntary.

"Teachers and personal tutors are encouraged to share (corporate) emails promoting opportunities for socialisation" (Kate).

There are always social activities in the Centre or organised elsewhere. Socialisation Policy can be articulated less formally. As observed earlier, the IFC Student Experience team organises integrating

events for the students. These staff are non-pedagogic and explicitly focused on international students' socialisation - regional tours, game nights, social events, football tickets, charity fund-raising events, and university national cultural club evenings.

Teachers sometimes get involved in these activities voluntarily. When Caroline was active, she organised the Centre's amateur dramatics and musical theatre company. It had a strong cast of teachers and students in each production. Julie and James point out that this encouragement is mostly an indirect, non-obligatory approach.

"A letter from K (the centre director) is not a policy. It is not like a policy document you get, but he encourages you to engage. Does that make it a policy? It is not quite an instruction...kind of...If you have got the time, can you do this "? And...

"Separate from the business of (teachers) trying to encourage them (to be social). We get emails and are encouraged to share them with students and go over them". (James Farrell)

The IFC has a significant influence on teachers' overall socialisation approach. However, that influence is subliminal rather than overt. It is channeled through the structure of the academic year, with its temporal and pedagogic architecture that shapes the cadence and scale of student-teacher interaction. It is found in the central administrative processes like attendance registers and traffic light monitoring of student performance. It is not generally an overt instruction by managers to do something to alter pedagogic or socialisation practice.

T4. The influence of the business imperative

According to the teachers in this study, the International Foundation Centre objectives are primarily driven by market principles permeated by a culture of process, efficiency and outcomes. The instrumental nature of the IFC, affects their professional experience and is best summarised by Margaret, that for the IFC:

“Higher education is viewed as a business ... and... teachers are categorised as responsible for paid production of teaching services”.

Standing behind this focus is a neo-classical way of thinking in higher education, often prevalent in the business of learning, it is characterised by an emphasis on market-driven principles and efficiency-oriented practices (Marginson, 2006). This approach draws inspiration from classical economics and aims to apply market forces to education (Rhoades and Slaughter, 2004). One of the primary features of neo-classical thinking is its strong focus on quantifiable metrics, such as attendance rates and test scores and rankings (Altbach, 2012), (Lynch, 2014) that are key indicators of educational success. The study participants narrated how ‘Attendance’ was a business process milestone, a requirement of teachers to log students in the class register, an institutional metric of measurement.

“Just data collection” (Julie)

According to another teacher (a former experienced manager), class registers could be used contextually for diagnostic purposes. She had formerly practiced using absence analysis to help form a holistic view of the student and their needs and to design support measures, its use was barred for IFC teachers (Margaret).

Under a market driven institutional perspective, education is often viewed as a commodity, (Knight, 2008). The goal is to maximise cost-effectiveness, standardisation, and measurable outcomes. (UUK, 2011), (De Witte & Lopez-Torres, 2015). While metrics like attendance rates and test scores provide easily quantifiable data, this approach can lead to a narrow, reductionist view of education, (Sayer, 2010) overlooking the broader and more holistic aspects of learning, such as resilience, critical thinking, creativity, and the development of well-rounded individuals. Critics argue that this exclusive focus on performance and quantifiable metrics may compromise the quality of education by neglecting the diverse needs and experiences of students, (Fitzmaurice, 2008).

“In the context of higher education, such issues emerge as a battle for the soul of the student, with learning outcomes such as resilience, persistence, and prevalence for example, frequently regarded as adjunct to the business of learning, and thus as ‘soft’ and optional but outcomes such as knowledge gained, or grades achieved, as ‘hard’ and thus more worthy” (Walker & Gleaves, 2016:)

The neo-classical approach to higher education often overlooks the essential goals of higher education teaching that are more nuanced and harder to quantify, emotional, social and cognitive growth, (Rogers, 1969). Or critical thinking, holistic development, resilience, (Walker-Gleaves, 2010) ethical and moral development (Fitzmaurice, 2008). Indeed Nodding, cited in (Walker-Gleaves, 2019) asserts that education’s main and indeed global educational aim is no longer to satisfy individual need or to improve the human experience, but to maintain a nation’s economic health.

To correct this imbalance, a humanistic approach, as applied to higher education, prioritises the holistic development of students and the nurturing of their individuality. This is rooted in the humanistic psychology and people-centred movement of the 20th century, (Rogers, 1969) and (Maslow, 1943) this educational philosophy places a strong emphasis on personal growth, self-actualisation and meeting the needs of learners. Students in this philosophical approach are not merely passive recipients of knowledge but active, self-directed individuals with unique needs, aspirations, and potential. A caring teaching approach aligns with the principles of humanistic education and plays a pivotal role in fostering a positive learning environment, especially among international students. This approach intersects with humanistic education because it values the individuality of each student, recognising their unique backgrounds, needs, and aspirations. A caring teaching approach reinforces this by showing respect and empathy towards each student's experiences and challenges as demonstrated by many of the teachers in the study.

“Socialisation in education (involves)...lots of patience, meeting them (international students) halfway, lots of compromise, I have lots of admiration for how they cope and how brave and adaptable they are. Socialisation is one of the best parts of the teaching experience” (Kate)

International students, in particular, may face cultural and language adjustments, and a caring approach helps them feel valued and understood as individuals. A caring teacher strives to build trusting relationships with their students. Trust is the foundation of effective learning, for international students far from support in their home countries. If they feel teachers care about their well-being, they may seek help when needed and engage more actively in learning:

“Relational teaching for these teachers rests on specific pedagogic theories allied to trust, openness and reciprocity that create environments for academic discomfort and critical thought” (Walker & Gleaves, 2016:69).

Emotional well-being, Individualised Learning, Cultural sensitivity are also components of the caring teacher approach. When students feel cared for and supported and their differences are understood, their motivation and engagement increases, creating an inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environment.

In the IFC Pathway course classroom, teachers evidenced concern about ‘Attendance’ and register maintenance as a data driven mandatory feature of a neo-classically structured business environment, it was ‘just data’ that for many was not perceived as educational. However, alongside this study finding, teachers generally espoused Vygotskian concepts of teaching and learning such as scaffolding, group work and peer learning as part of their socialisation and pedagogic toolkit. In practice, they were stating that learning arose from building socially interactive relationships between teachers, students and their peers. The teachers in the study validate and espouse Vygotsky’s socio-cultural model. Teachers want to build caring trusting relationships with student, they want them to benefit from the learning that

arises from the scaffolding interactions when engaged with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, which is:

"The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

What many of the teachers under-appreciated is that 'Attendance' is a fundamental precursor to developing quality teacher-student relationships that enhance knowledge, commitment, effort, and outcomes and indeed in the context of international students, cross cultural learning. There is an extensive literature debating the educational significance of attendance in higher education. Moores' work points to the multiple positive impacts of attendance and the necessity for universities to link attendance with their student engagement efforts:

"Student attendance at teaching sessions is still usually associated with better outcomes for students in terms of both retention and attainment and so it is an important aspect of student engagement for HEIs to consider" (Moores et al, 2022: 22).

It was observed earlier that the teacher's critical commentary on regulating student 'Attendance' is set in the institutional context of an IFC Pathway course, which prepares international students. Most international students enrolled in the IFC in this study, are in UK Pathways courses (British Council, 2023) they present at pre-direct entry level for undergraduate and pre-Masters' study. They are inexperienced in the dispositions and cultural capital, concomitant with the 'institutional habitus' of a student in UK higher education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). These students may well be less familiar with the necessity to adhere to a collective behaviour of regular class attendance and review of online video learning materials. Evidence from Nordman suggests that students who are commencing higher education courses for the first time would be amongst those who would benefit most from focused encouragement to attend:

“GPA and attendance at live lectures were the strongest predictors of achievement; however, recording use also had a positive role to play. This relationship is strongest for first and second years” (Nordmann, 2019: p1082)

In this discussion many IFC teachers have characterised the ‘Attendance’ monitoring process negatively. There are a significant minority of teachers, who articulate a qualified nuanced position on the businesses use of ‘Attendance’ indirectly supportive of its educational and socialisation purpose. James asserted that:

“Attendance affected group work” (absences undermining groupwork) and... “Poor attendance would affect socialisation with their classmates” ... “‘Good’ attendance is being present, taking part in the lesson...not about registers...it’s about being engaged and prepared...many students are non-responders ...present in class but unprepared, not willing to learn”

Much of the literature is unequivocally supportive, an extensive study concluded that levels of attendance were found to have a stronger relationship with future grades than other measure, making it a powerful diagnostic tool, which can identify the potential for improved performance at both the upper and lowest ends of the grade distribution:

Class attendance appears to be a better predictor of college grades than any other known predictor of college grades—including SAT scores, HSGPA, studying skills, and the amount of time spent studying.... Indeed, the relationship is so strong as to suggest that dramatic improvements in average grades (and failure rates) could be achieved by efforts to increase class attendance rates among college students (Crede et al, 2010:288-9)

Earlier in this discussion it was noted that Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory places a strong emphasis on the role of social interactions and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in the learning process

(Vygotsky, 1978). These interactions are particularly critical for international students enrolled in IFCs.

By engaging with peers, teachers, and the cultural context of their host country in a nine-month intensive process, international students can receive the necessary support to bridge the gap between their current abilities and the new knowledge and skills they must acquire (that crucially includes learning English for academic purposes, EAP) to successfully attain the qualifications necessary for university entry.

“Vygotsky also viewed language as a tool and as a psychological function; in the process of learning a second language, students are expected to create a new reality of their experience with the second language and the new social context” (Nieto & Zoller Booth, 2010:408)

In culturally diverse settings such as an IFC Pathway courses, the ZPD gains heightened significance as it represents the dynamic space where international students access guidance from teachers and peers to adapt to a different educational system and culture while enhancing their academic and cultural competence. The ZPD underscores the collaborative nature of learning and of scaffolding in fostering students' intellectual development (Wood et al, 1976). By offering appropriate support and challenge to learners for their optimal growth and development.

Caring and trusting relationships between teachers and international students are paramount in facilitating their learning within the ZPD. International students often face academic, linguistic, and cultural challenges when studying abroad. Caring Teachers who establish trusting relationships create a supportive atmosphere where students feel comfortable seeking help and taking risks in their learning (Walker-Gleaves, 2010). These relationships provide the necessary scaffolding to bridge the gap between students' existing abilities and the requirements of their academic programs helping them adapt to the UK education system and culture more effectively. In essence, the ZPD in this context underscores the importance of Teachers fostering caring, trusting relationships with international students to enhance their academic and personal development, making the transition to a new educational environment smoother and more successful.

The cross-cultural dimension of applying Vygotsky is highly applicable in diverse educational settings like a pathway provider for students entering a Russell Group university. These dimensions recognise that culture influences not only the way individuals learn but also the tools, symbols, and social practices that shape cognition. In this context, understanding and respecting the cultural backgrounds of international students is crucial:

“As with all students, second language learners have a greater chance to succeed academically when the instructor has a clear understanding of their ZPD. High cultural competence contributes to this. When instructors and inter-national students can generate a common language, more effective scaffolding will take place, improving the teaching and learning experience” (Nieto & Zoller Booth, 2010: p420)

Teachers can leverage students' cultural experiences and perspectives as valuable assets in the learning process, fostering a more inclusive and culturally sensitive classroom environment (Phillion, 2002). By acknowledging the cultural diversity present and adapting teaching methods to accommodate various cultural perspectives Vygotsky's theory can help create a more relational and effective educational experience for international students preparing for the academic challenges of a Russell Group university.

Attendance in a pathway provider setting is a foundational element for building the necessary rapport and trust across diverse cultural backgrounds of students. Attendance provides a consistent and tangible opportunity for students to engage in social interactions within the educational context. When students regularly attend classes, they have more chances to interact with their peers and teachers, encounter specialist curricula and support services bridging the academic and cultural gaps and building connections, enhancing their readiness for higher education. These interactions, rooted in the principle of social development in Vygotsky's theory, allow students to collaborate, share perspectives, and collectively construct knowledge. Over time, as students attend regularly, they develop a sense of

belonging and trust in the educational community, irrespective of their cultural backgrounds. This trust and rapport foster a supportive environment where students feel comfortable exploring their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and seeking assistance when needed, which is essential for their successful academic and socio-cultural adaptation in a pathway provider setting. Consistent attendance in a university pathway provider setting is instrumental in enabling teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the unique needs, backgrounds, and perspectives of their international students, ultimately fostering more effective cross-cultural learning experiences. When students attend classes regularly, Teachers have the opportunity to engage with them on a consistent basis, allowing them to learn about students' academic strengths, challenges, and personal aspirations. This knowledge is particularly crucial in a diverse cohort of international students, as it enables teachers to tailor their instruction and support to accommodate varying cultural backgrounds and educational experiences.

Implementing a caring teaching approach and using attendance as a metric for relationship building poses certain challenges. One challenge is that students' attendance patterns may not always accurately reflect their engagement or commitment to the learning process. Factors outside of the classroom, such as personal circumstances or health issues, can impact attendance. Relying solely on attendance metrics might inadvertently penalise students facing such challenges, potentially undermining the trust and rapport that Teachers aim to build. Moreover, in a diverse educational setting, cultural differences may influence students' perceptions of attendance and the teacher-student relationship.

Despite the extended commentary on the development of Vygotskian interactive learning relationships intersecting with a caring teaching approach to deliver a socio-cultural pedagogy for international students. It is observable that IFC as an institution has a centre-wide system that reports and quantifies student attendance, arguably its intent is for non-educational purposes. This is done in a desire to ensure the company meets their regulatory obligations dealing with international students, satisfying migration legislation and visa requirements. In doing so it minimises the risk in the company's business

environment of enforcement action and threats to their ability to act as an education provider for international students

“Well, it's our risk of losing our trusted status, isn't it? Because we're dealing with international students - so the business has its interest in making sure that that we keep our eyes on attendance.” (Jill).

This compliance regime is not educational. The IFC as a business requires to evidence their students' temporal classroom presence, in conformance with Home Office immigration, visa arrangements and OfS rules. It is an exercise in business risk mitigation in the light of previous regulatory inspections (ICIBI, 2021). The focus of the IFC on a compliance led, student disciplinary approach was the incorrect justification for the focus on attendance. However, by doing so, the literature suggests that it has minimised student absences and maximised the numbers attending class, potentially improving their grades (Crede et al, 2010) (Nordmann, 2019), (Moores et al, 2022), (Moores et al, 2019). In the vernacular (with apologies to Eric Morecambe & Andre Previn) the IFC was “playing all the right notes but not necessarily in the right order” (BBC TV, 1971). By being mistakenly correct, the outcome of more frequent attendance of students in class and in the IFC campus buildings maximised the opportunities for teachers to build trusting caring relationships with their students (Walker & Gleaves, 2016) leading to more empathetic teaching, deeper learning, greater cultural reciprocity, and the accelerated acquisition of institutional habitus.

T5. Attendance and Progression as contested Metrics

In International Foundation Centres (IFC), the concepts of ‘Attendance’ and ‘Progression’ play visible signalling roles for international students pursuing pathways courses with ambitions to enter Russell Group universities in the UK. These concepts extend beyond record-keeping to represent cultural artifacts, symbolic of education business processes and the quantitative boundaries of institutional habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). They also have broader implications for how students are integrated into learning communities in education institutions (Vygotsky, 1978), (Weidman, 2006). This section focuses

on two key aspects: firstly, the regulations and expectations that shape student behaviour within pathway providers and secondly, the connection between pastoral support and student engagement, which can be observed through attendance and progression data. Much less attention will be given to exploring the role of physical presence in the learning relationship between students and staff as this has been developed in some detail in the previous section.

A narrative finding of this study was that Attendance and Progression, their meaning and application are contested concepts among teachers in IFCs. These findings inform the fourth research question in this study that is:

“How are attendance and progression as concepts framed in relation to learner socialisation policies and practices?”

The concepts of 'Attendance' and 'Progression' in this study are conceived in gateway terms given the context of international students seeking entry into universities through IFC pathway programmes. The IFC actively regulates student behaviour and expectations by promoting an organisational culture (Tierney, 1997) of student compliance and teacher moderation around these policies. Attendance and progression policies, participation expectations and their inclusion in formal student codes of conduct. These learner policies have been aligned with a wide range of learning theories that are potentially relevant to the topic but cannot for reasons of space be discussed here, these include: Behaviourism, (Skinner), Social Learning Theory, (Bandura) and Cognitive Constructivism, (Piaget). In this study the analytical frameworks that have been selectively deployed throughout are: Social constructivism and Socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), Humanistic learning theory, (Rogers, 1969) and (Maslow, 1943), Caring teaching theory (Walker & Gleaves, 2016) and Socialisation theory, (Weidman, 2016). They serve as a series of overlapping analytical frameworks for considering Attendance and Progression in higher education pathway context.

They provide a more holistic perspective within which to evaluate the factors affecting student success, including social interactions, cultural context, intrinsic motivation, and supportive teaching practices. These theories acknowledge that attendance and progression policies and regulations, interconnect with various aspects of the student learning experience, making them valuable for evaluation in higher education contexts. Attendance policies are particularly significant as they monitor and shape student behaviour, directly influencing their readiness for university entry, while participation expectations in discussions and group work assess student engagement and academic progress. Attendance and Progression are 'normative' expectations formalised as part of the formal student code of conduct, (Weidman, 2006). Regulations and expectations support student preparation for an academic journey from Pathways by acquiring institutional habitus needed in university, (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Caroline an experienced teacher was broadly supportive of these concepts:

"That concepts of progression and attendance are necessary to the overall successful functioning of the centre. It's why we exist as an organisation isn't it actually? We want all the other lovely things as well. So that students have the opportunity to work with us and get on to whatever it is they want to do. They can only do that if their attendance is good and so on."
(Caroline).

Caroline's perspective on 'Attendance' suggests that she cares about students' overall development and well-being, not just their academic achievements, emphasising a holistic approach to education, which aligns with humanistic categories of pedagogic and socialisation theory. She links attendance to the broader goal of enabling international students to "get on to whatever it is they want to do." If a Bourdieusian lens it can observe that students can acquire the cultural capital and habitus associated with the perceptions, dispositions and skills expected of a British university student (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) In this context, attendance becomes one of the socio-cultural means that enables a pathway for students to reach their desired educational and career outcomes. Caroline indirectly connects attendance to Weidman's theory of Socialisation, emphasizing that students can only achieve their goals "if their attendance is good." This highlights the importance of consistent attendance in

creating the conditions necessary for students to effectively progress through the normative processes expected by university rules and regulations, (Vygotsky, 1978). Additionally, Caroline's mention of "all the other lovely things" reinforces her humanistic pedagogic and socialisation stance considering students' emotional and social needs. Kate is an experienced teacher and personal tutor who holds a nuanced interpretation of what constitutes 'good' attendance.

"Attendance is more than physical presence. It's being there in spirit not just being there."

Kate's perspective on attendance as active engagement aligns with key elements of humanist theory and psychology, particularly those advocated by Carl Rogers (Rogers, 1969) and Abraham Maslow (Maslow, 2013) and Caring Teaching Theory (Walker & Gleaves, 2016)." Rogers emphasized the importance of self-actualization and personal growth as fundamental human needs. Kate's perspective resonates with Rogers' belief that individuals have an innate drive for self-improvement and fulfillment:

"Rogers's ...proposed that the purpose of education was to foster "self-actualization" Self-actualizing people self-initiate, critically think, acquire knowledge, adapt flexibly, utilize all experience creatively, cooperate, and work in terms of their own socialized purposes." (Test and Cornelius-White, 2009)

This mirrors Kate's notion that students should actively participate, collaborate, and demonstrate genuine interest in their learning. Furthermore, Kate's emphasis on being "there in spirit" resonates with Rogers' belief in the significance of emotional connection and support in fostering learning. (Rogers, 1969) stressed the role of empathy and unconditional positive regard in facilitating personal growth and learning, aligning with Kate's perspective on creating an emotionally supportive educational environment. This also aligns with Caring Teaching Theory, which emphasises the emotional and relational aspects of teaching. Teachers who practice empathy are better able to recognise and respond to their students' emotional needs, creating a sense of trust and safety in the learning environment. (Walker & Gleaves, 2016). Lastly, Kate's holistic view of attendance, encompassing

cognitive, emotional, and relational dimensions, aligns well with the humanistic principle of holistic development. While both Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow emphasized holistic growth, Rogers' ideas about emotional well-being and self-worth particularly harmonises with Kate's perspective, illustrating the profound influence of humanistic thought on her understanding of attendance in education.

Alice's narrates 'attendance', as implemented by the IFC, as a quantitative metric. It challenges the mainstream view of attendance as more complex, educational, or diagnostic, informing levels of engagement. Her assertion about the IFC policy orientation on attendance, is that:

"Literally all attendance is just admin. Not about pedagogy, not about pastoral...not about helping the student"

This teacher observes that the official practice prevalent in the International Foundation Centre (IFC) is that attendance monitoring is primarily an administrative role, divorcing it from its intrinsic connection to the educational process. Within this context, the implications for the socialisation of international students within the IFC are grave. By relegating attendance to a purely administrative function, the institution potentially instils a distinct socialisation belief among its international student body. This paradigm implies that attendance bears no correlation to academic engagement or developmental progression, thereby shaping students' perceptions of the mere necessity of physical presence, rather than active engagement through group work and scaffolding (Poort et al, 1990) and (Woods et al, 1976).

When attendance becomes about policing students' presence and is detached from pedagogy, pastoral care, and student support, students may perceive a disconnection between institutional administrative obligations and its commitment to fostering their comprehensive development (Rogers, 1968).

In stark contrast, pedagogical theories such as humanistic psychology, caring teaching, socio-cultural and socialisation theory champion the holistic and interrelated dimensions of education. To disregard attendance, separating it off from the wider educational experience can wield considerable influence

over how international students engage with the education environment in the IFC. While various educational theories may accentuate alternative aspects of teaching and learning such as active engagement (Vygotsky, 1978), critical thinking, (Piaget, 1950) or student-centred (Maslow, 1943) or Caring Teaching approaches (Walker & Gleaves, 2016) attendance invariably retains its status as a pertinent factor for gauging and advancing student success.

Other staff were more nuanced about the institutional practices monitoring attendance. In university pathway courses, Personal Tutors often play a critical role in helping students integrate into the academic and social aspects of the institution. Integration and retention are key aspects of socialisation theory (Tierney, 1997). Florence and experienced Teacher and PT was clear that opportunities to identify and intervene in barriers to pedagogic and pastoral progress were being missed.

“As a Personal Tutor (a key socialisation role in the IFC) I don't have the authority. I've been told just earlier this week. I'm not permitted to process or use attendance data” (Florence)

In this context, attendance is not solely about tracking students' physical presence but also about fostering a sense of belonging and engagement (Poort et al, 2020) When students attend classes regularly, it signifies their commitment to the learning community and their readiness to engage with the educational process (Vygotsky, 1978). This attendance-related engagement is a relational aspect that is consistent with the principles of caring teaching and socialisation theory. (Walker & Gleaves, 2016). However, Florence highlights a limitation on her authority to process or use attendance data, which can hinder her ability to fulfill her socialisation role effectively. This limitation can be seen as a challenge to establishing a strong relational connection with students through attendance-related interaction. The contrast between administrative constraints and the relational goals of attendance data analysis illustrates how institutional policies at the IFC can hinder teachers' ability to fully implement pedagogic theories that emphasise a relational approach, (Vygotsky, 1978), (Walker & Gleaves, 2016). In this case, the administrative constraint creates a barrier to fully leveraging attendance data for nurturing student-

staff relationships. Florence's frustration with her limited authority regarding attendance data reflects the challenge of aligning institutional policies with the relational goals of pedagogic theories in the context of university pathway courses.

Socialisation theory, as proposed by Weidman, (Weidman, 2006) emphasises the importance of integration and retention (Tierney,1997), (Tinto, 1998) in the educational process. Florence aptly points out that integration and retention are key aspects of this theory. Her concern about missed opportunities to address barriers to pedagogic and pastoral progress aligns with the socialisation theory, emphasizing the significance of social interactions for effective learning. Furthermore, Florence's perspective resonates with caring teaching theory, drawing from Nodding (Nodding, 2003) it becomes a relational aspect that fosters a sense of care, belonging, and engagement among students. However, Florence's frustration with her limited authority to process attendance data, as expressed in her quote,

"I've been told just earlier this week. I'm not permitted to process or use attendance data,"

This excerpt reveals a clash with the concept of teacher agency within institutional frameworks (Weidman, 2006). These frameworks encompass policies and practices that guide educational institutions, and Florence's predicament highlights the challenges teachers face when administrative constraints hinder their ability to fully implement pedagogic theories emphasizing a relational approach.

Thus, Florence's viewpoint, as articulated through her quotes, underscores the complex interplay between educational theory, institutional policies, and teacher agency within the context of university pathway courses, illuminating the multifaceted nature of attendance as a pedagogical and relational tool.

The concept of “Progression” is an important milestone in the relationship between the teachers in the IFC and their employer and indirectly, to their Destination University partner. It is understood by the teachers as the successful completion of their primary educational task in transitioning students from the IFC to the university. Underpinning this goal is the attainment of the Centres commercial objective in securing a pipeline of qualified students for university entry.

Developing the concept, Caroline, a teacher explained:

“I think that the main thing that the (IFC) want is for the students to achieve and progress to university. I feel that the socialisation aspect is secondary although still seen as important.”

The pathway course is designed to bridge the gap between a student's current academic level and the requirements for entry into their desired university course, (Woods et al, 1976). The primary goal is to ensure that students can smoothly transition from their pathway to their chosen university course (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Teachers are focused on meeting the educational needs and aspirations of individual students, helping them achieve their goals, and ensuring their success in pursuing higher education. The concept signifies that students are guided academically but are also prepared holistically for the challenges and expectations of university-level education - academic knowledge, skills, confidence, and adaptability – this is aligned with the principles of humanistic psychology. It relates to the importance of teachers supporting students to integrate successfully into the university environment, (Tinto, 1998), that is a mainstream element of institutional Socialisation theory, (Weidman, 2006). IFC Partnership and employer-employees relationship are strengthened, when the employer's objectives are fulfilled, feeding students into the university's degree programs. Teachers and staff understand their role in achieving this objective, as it contributes to the overall success and sustainability of the educational centre. Progression signifies that teachers have successfully moved students forward in their academic journey. An International Year One Pathway staff member Jill observed:

“Progression to year 2 (of their undergraduate degree) is very important for our students, as they have started their undergraduate journey enrolled as a year 1 student in the IFC”.

Progression is student-centred, emphasising the institutional significance of ensuring that students advance to their second year. It indicates that to teachers, academic and personal growth of students is a priority, reflecting humanistic priorities of supporting individual development and self-actualisation, (Rogers, 1968). Pathway courses are not seen as separate from the university by the IFC and its teachers. They are an integral part of the students' overall educational journey, as with caring teaching, teachers are committed to nurturing students throughout their educational trajectory (Walker & Gleaves, 2016). They are encouraged to view themselves as part of the broader university environment, which resonates with the principles of socialisation theory.

‘Progression’ is at the heart of a ‘transactional’ relationship that teachers observe between their employer and their university. The transaction ensures that the preferential access, joint branding etc. is conditional.

“To ensure that students enrolled on a specific pathway course are able to enter their chosen University course in the following academic year.”

For the partners, the “progression rate” signifies the litmus test of the relationship. It quantifies the extent to which the IFC has fully achieved its specific institutional and commercial objectives. By ‘Progressing’ students to the planned entry year for their university course, it is perfectly aligned with these objectives and is the key performance indicator for the partnership. The partners can evaluate the extent to which IFC pathways serve as an effective bridge to the university's degree courses. It measures how efficient their relationship is at creating a pipeline of students, crucial to an educational partnership continued financial sustainability (Marginson, 2006).

Teachers were equivocal about the criterion standards set by the university and their partners in the IFC. Progression was contested educationally as an absolute entry standard but recognised as an important threshold stage for students transitioning to university. For Kate it is:

“Progression to the point where they will be able to cope with the next stage”

The quotation carries several relational implications in the IFC context. It evokes a student-centred approach to progression, implying that the primary goal of teachers and pathway courses is to ensure students are adequately prepared for the challenges in the next stage of their education. An approach placing students' needs and abilities at the forefront of the educational process. It suggests that teachers are concerned not only with advancing students academically but also with their emotional and psychological well-being. Preparing students to "cope with the next stage" implies that teachers are providing the necessary support and guidance to help students navigate potential difficulties. This is aligned with the caring teaching approach, which emphasizes empathy and support for students. It highlights the importance of the student-teacher relationship, the integration of students into the academic community, and the alignment of educational goals with institutional objectives. These relational implications reflect the core principles of pedagogic theories like humanistic psychology, caring teaching, and socialisation theory. A question that flows from this is one posed by many teachers: are student entry standards apposite and immutable in the IFC relationship?

“You know the universities ...will be lowering IELTS entry scores... they'll do anything to get international students into their courses and it's going to be horrendous... I know it from other universities as well”.

The teacher's statement reflects a concern for the welfare of international students. The implication is that some universities may prioritize attracting international students for financial reasons over ensuring that these students are adequately prepared for their academic journey. This concern aligns with the caring teaching approach, which emphasizes the well-being and success of students. It

implies a concern about potential compromises in academic integrity and educational quality. Lowering entry scores for international students could raise questions about whether universities are maintaining rigorous academic standards. The reference to knowing about similar practices from other universities implies a level of communication and awareness among Teachers across institutions. This could signify a network or community of Teachers who share information and insights about the evolving dynamics in higher education, including admission policies. It also highlights the tension between universities' objectives to attract international students for revenue and their responsibility to provide quality education. It questions the relationship between balancing financial sustainability and educational integrity, a topic of discussion between staff, employers, and partners. This phenomenon is not reflected in the literature despite teachers' observations.

When students do not progress as expected, it can lead to feelings of disappointment, frustration, and a sense of failure. IFC teachers have focussed international student's attention and motivation on their eventual attainment and progression. A process that has an intensive 9 months of pedagogy. A socialised definition of student expectations.

"Staff talk to students who have not progressed and their identity sort of falls apart. What the student does not realise is that non-progression has probably protected them from a horrific year ahead. If they can't manage and cope in this" (Alice).

On being informed of non-progression. Students may start questioning their academic abilities. This can have relational implications as students may require emotional support and guidance to rebuild their self-identity. Staff talking to students who have not progressed indicates a point of interaction between students and Teachers. This interaction requires delicate feedback and support in a way that is constructive and sensitive to the students' emotions. It highlights the importance of a supportive and empathetic relationship between teachers and students during challenging times. When students' identities "fall apart," it may require emotional support from Teachers to help them navigate this

challenging period. Teachers may need to provide guidance on alternative pathways, academic assistance, or counselling to help students cope with the emotional impact of non-progression.

T6. The salience of the Personal Tutor

During the data collection process with the study participants, experienced teachers, focus group conversations circled around the different aspects of socialising international students in the IFC. One role appeared to emerge, interacting across the various domains of socialisation with little prompting, that of the Personal Tutor. Personal Tutors are frequently linked to socialisation in teachers' narratives of practice, this is rooted in occupational experience. Irrespective of language or subject specialism, all the Pathway teachers in the study, were obliged to act as Personal Tutors alongside their pedagogy.

The role and function of Personal Tutors is under-researched in the literature (Braine and Parnell, 2011), although occupational classifications of the personal (Academic) Tutor role are standard texts in student study guides on most Russell Group university web pages (Manchester, 2023), (Leeds, 2023).

Most higher education institutional definitions are terse summations, cursory descriptions using key words: Member of academic staff; academic guidance; pastoral support; to a student; during course of study, (Advance HE, 2023b). A more developed definition is found in tertiary sector education.

“Personal tutoring provides focused one-to-one time for learners that creates a sense of value and well-being as an individual and as a member of the learning community, personal tutoring enables learners to explore their aspirations, plan their individual learning experience, reflect on their progress, identify barriers to learning and explore potential areas for support...effective tutoring contributes to improved retention, achievement and successful progression” (Wooton, 2013: p6).

Researching the Role of Personal Tutors (PTs) in this study, shed light on the ubiquity of PTs within the Russell Group, emphasising their pivotal role in the socialisation process of international students. Exploring the institutionalised nature of PT roles within IFC pathway providers and their university partners, it becomes evident how PT's - teachers, are intricately positioned within these educational

structures. Teacher narratives underlined the paramount importance of institutional recognition of the role and the implementation of systemic approaches supporting the deployment of PT's. Florence an experienced teacher and PT in the IFC in the study, framed the evolution of the PT role in the IFC as:

"Personal tutoring...it's an inherent part of our teaching role. In the last 3-5 years it has become more formalised with the rollout of proprietary university systems that permit the IFC to become an early adopter ...recording student-tutor interactions,"

The IFC obliged Personal Tutors to use the University's virtual Learning environment and journaling software, to update student records of PT meetings, including them in student online portfolios. This was a significant shift in the partnership's institutional integration. This change aligns with Weidman's socialisation theory, exemplifying how PTs in IFC Pathways have evolved to embrace a more structured 'normative' role that directly impacts international students' socialisation experiences. As boundaries and processes have become clearer, they have positively impacted on their engagement with students. Furthermore, this shift resonates with Bourdieu's concept of habitus and cultural capital, marking the increased agency of PTs in sustaining transformations in institutional habitus as they become more integrated formally in inter-partnership responsibilities.

Figure 20 The Stakeholder relationships with Pathway course Personal Tutors



Note: The PT relationship with student stakeholders is relatively short terminating formally after 9 months of engagement on the Pathway course. There is a handover to an equivalent University PT.

The PT's socialisation function of international students in the IFC, sits at the intersection between its colleagues' pedagogical relationships with students, inputs to managerial information flows monitoring student performance, supporting IFC welfare and progression teams' colleagues remove barriers to learning and reinforcing attendance compliance and wider socialisation efforts. Figure 20 illustrates the primary network of stakeholders that each PT on a Pathway course would engage with.

An overview of the socialisation of International Students in IFC Pathway courses mediated by PT – teachers can be analysed by applying relevant theory, in this case: Weidman's socialisation theory; Bourdieu's habitus and cultural capital; and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and socio-cultural engagement theory, where the ZPD learning gap is modified by Dann's work on relational feedback and Goldstein's, on the affective nature of the co-construction of knowledge. The combined application of these theoretical approaches can reveal insights into the complex process of socialisation. The Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) while an immensely valuable conceptual lens, is an insufficient framework to analyse the inter-relational dynamics that combine the ZPD, the work of the personal tutor, and the nature of socialisation. In this context, Dann's theorisation of the process of feedback and its interactional space in classrooms (Dann, 2019) alongside Goldstein's research merging caring and the co-construction of knowledge, (Goldstein, 1999) potentially gives scholars a better understanding of Socialisation in IFCs'. The process is one, where international students navigate the unfamiliar terrain of British universities, with personal tutors (PTs) acting as essential scaffolds, (Woods et al, 1976) and the inter-relational functioning of the ZPD is revealed in this context.

Personal tutors are teachers from diverse backgrounds and experiences who exercise their independent judgement to adapt their approach to what is suitable for individual students, in a manner of tailoring their socialisation approach:

"You know we're quite diverse ourselves with significant amounts of experience in dealing with pastoral teaching, learning, and assessment.... we'll just go... this is right for us... this is right for our students, and you'll get the feedback from students...and then that relationship relaxes that little bit." (Margaret).

The teacher's views examined through the lens of Noddings' work on caring relationships appears to constitute a "caring encounter" in the teaching-learning process (Noddings, 1984) as it aligns with the principles of the 'ethic of care'. It highlights the tutors' diverse experience and capacity, to adapt to what

is suitable for both themselves and meet the unique needs of their students. The willingness to feedback emphasises an openness to understanding and responding to the students' perspectives. It reinforces the idea of an effective approach to teaching. Stressing the importance of tailoring teaching approaches to individual students while fostering a conducive learning environment. Goldstein commented on Noddings' use of the term 'caring' in teaching relationships:

"She is describing not an attribute or personality trait but a moral relation. Caring is not something you are but, rather, something you engage in, something you do..... Caring, then, is simultaneously a choice, a responsibility, and an obligation, involving both affect and volition. (Goldstein, 1999: 656)

PTs create supportive relationships, akin to Vygotsky's envisioning, where students can improve and develop competencies beyond their current capabilities. Dann extends Vygotsky's socio-cultural perspective by conceptualising the sharing of feedback in classrooms and one to one as:

"a complex situated process requiring mediated dynamic interaction, where feedback is appropriated as a cultural artefact by its participants...demanding a greater sense of pupils' roles in feedback and the importance of teachers (and PT's) enabling pupils to see themselves in new ways. As future learners". (Dann, 2019: 352).

Additionally, by arguing that, Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital and habitus are activated as PTs assist students to bridge the cultural gap between their original and new environments. By imparting cultural capital and facilitating adjustments in habitus, PTs empower students to navigate the academic and social dimensions of university life successfully. Weidman's socialisation theory underscores the importance of PTs in helping students adapt to the university culture effectively.

"Peers and faculty are shown to be much stronger predictors of adjustment and integration relative to parents". (Weidman & DeAngelo, 2020:4)

PTs are one of the agents of transformative socialisation, situated in the IFC through which students acquire the attitudes, behaviours, and knowledge essential for participation in the university community. PTs are influenced by socio-cultural theory, caring teaching theory and socialisation theory precepts that embed learning in relational interactions with local culture, academic community, and their peers. By encouraging dialogue with students to participate in various cultural and academic activities, PTs can facilitate their integration into the pre-university and university communities. This underscores the importance of creating an environment where students actively engage with their surroundings and peers, constructing their own knowledge and contributing to their own socialisation. A shift is required in understanding how Vygotsky's theories play a central role in Personal Tutors (PTs) contributions to the socialisation of international students. The ZPD concept needs expanded to incorporate relational notions of student feedback such that:

“There needs to be a better understanding of that shared space (when feedback occurs) in which pupils` can be supported to understand their next steps in learning...feedback is explored through ...the roles of others, language and identity” (Dann, 2019:353)

This is instrumental in appreciating how PTs can enter a dialogic space with students beyond the conventional scaffolding conventions associated with the ZPD (Woods et al, 1976). This new modal shift also emphasises the significance of personalised guidance and support within the PT-student relationship, aligning with the observation that strong personal tutorial bonds positively impact socialisation (Walker & Gleaves, 2016). As Jill a PT opines:

“We're all going to have an example...where...you've created a very strong personal tutorial bond...that has actually helped...I can think of a couple of kids who...have relished that...support”

This teacher's narrative of her experience can be conceived according to Goldstein as situated within the discourse on the ethics of care, specifically Nodding's notion of a 'caring encounter' where the description of caring and concepts such as the zone of proximal development and scaffolding can demonstrate:

"That the interpersonal character of the co-construction of knowledge, closely resembles a caring encounter" moreover that Vygotsky and Nodding "share essential understandings of the contours of the relationship between teacher and learner, (Goldstein, 1999:648).

This quote illustrates how PTs exemplify provide the necessary support within a student's ZPD, enhancing their socialisation experience. This integration of theory underscores the importance of tailored guidance and mentorship in facilitating international students' adaptation to the university culture, supporting their engagement with it, and associating their PT experience with positive socialisation. In Pathways, second language learning is a critical component of the curriculum, the ZPD can be seen as the range of linguistic tasks to be internalised by the student. Teachers and researchers have found the ZPD concept is useful for designing instructional strategies and interventions to support language learners, (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008) especially in the early stages of language acquisition, such as those that apply in Pathway language courses, English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

"Learners actively engage in the imitative process as they undertake to learn a first or a second language. It also appears that learners are active in determining which aspects of the language to focus on, paying attention to those properties of the language that are within their ZPD"
(Lantolf, 2003:366)

PT's play a critical role in mentoring and mediating international students in their Pathway courses journey. On the one hand, interacting with their professional peers and tutees to relay concerns and requirements for additional support. Secondly to guide and prompt students towards, recognising a level of potential learning that sits within their ZPD.

Bourdieu's lens of the dynamic relationship between habitus and cultural capital in an educational setting (Bourdieu, 1977) is employed to identify the role Personal Tutors (PTs) play in supporting international students on Pathways courses and their influence on students' educational success.

Employing this framework, Harker observes that:

"Habitus is the way a culture is embodied in the individual. The relationship to schooling is established when it is understood that some habituses, constitute cultural capital as far as the school is concerned and are reinforced with success, while others do not" (Harker, 1984:118).

Bourdieu's work suggests that the acquisition of cultural capital is not an automatic process. Education plays a crucial role in the transmission of cultural capital, and educational institutions are instrumental in reproducing social hierarchies. Harker's point is to underscore the significance of habitus and cultural capital in education. It serves as a foundation to emphasise how education, including the support provided by PTs, can either reproduce or mitigate social hierarchies. Personal Tutors (PTs) it is asserted here, are instrumental in bridging the cultural gap for international students pursuing pathway courses in foreign countries. PTs can provide invaluable support by helping international students adapt to their new academic environment and local culture, offering guidance on academic expectations, study skills, and social integration to ease the transition process. Moreover, PTs significantly influence the acquisition of cultural capital among international students. By recognizing and addressing the cultural disparities that may exist, PTs can help level the playing field.

(Socialisation is) ... "essential but I try to do it in a slightly critical way so as to recognise that the university does have certain rules that people expect you to abide by...At the same time it is a game that you (the student) are learning how to play." (Ian - PT)

PTs can empower international students with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the educational system effectively, bridging the gap in cultural capital and increasing chances of success.

“They’ve come from countries...Cultures which, simply ...do not allow them to stand out and be individual. Which is what they must do, if they are going to survive, they need to see what they can do as individuals here.” (Alice P-T)

In mentoring them, PTs contribute to breaking down barriers that might otherwise perpetuate social hierarchies within the educational landscape. In essence, Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and cultural capital, as emphasised by Harker, underline the pivotal role that PTs can play in facilitating a more equitable and inclusive educational experience for international students pursuing pathway courses. In seeming counterpoint to Bourdieu, Dann in re-evaluating the research evidence around learning gaps...

... Points to a need to understand the learning gap differently. It is not so much about a knowledge gap but a relational space in which knowledge, culture, language, and experience, (identity) all interact and intersect both between and within individuals. If feedback is to have any role in this space it must surely recognise and be interwoven into such relationships, (Dann, 2019: 362).

Any discussion of the role of Personal tutors in Higher education pathways must engage theoretically and substantively with Weidman's influential model of student socialisation in higher education, Weidman (2006). Weidman's model became a mainstream explanation for student socialisation in the literature. It identifies that there are significant potential institutional normative influences that shape students' experiences of adjustment to their academic environment. At the heart of these internal normative socialisation processes lies the active engagement and support provided by university faculty staff to adjust their individual culture, behaviours and goals. This assumption in the theory applies not only to university staff but also for Personal Tutors (PTs) in Pathway courses.

The critical narrative comments below are representative of the study's participants (all Personal Tutors), that their role is insufficiently resourced. They expose disconnects between the acknowledged

importance of student socialisation in the theory and the institutional practises of the IFC that allocate limited time for personal tutorials.

“I think there's a bit of a mixed message...from...the IFC...The IFC says, we all know it's really important, you know, hugely important and yet there's no time put aside for it. I mean personal tutors get an hour on the timetable... an hour for 16 tutees? So, we know it's important and we have this set up and we have these procedures, but where's the time put aside for it? And I find that odd.” (Kate)

This evidence of a lack of policy congruence when aligned with Weidman's socialisation theory, highlights a disconnect between policy and practise. It emphasises the challenges faced by PTs due to insufficient time allocated for socialisation, which, in turn, hinders their ability to effectively fulfil their role in guiding, caring and supporting students in their academic journey.

The temporal example given, signals a wider set of structural challenges within the Personal Tutor environment in Pathway courses. There is a divide between the adoption of policy by the IFC and its execution. In all educational institutions there is always a gap to be bridged between recognising the importance of student socialisation and allocating adequate resources to make it a reality. Personal Tutors (PTs) employed by International Foundation Centres (IFC) encounter continuous challenges and opportunities in seeking to play a pivotal role in students' socialisation experiences. In addition to the limited timetable, a related temporal challenge is the constrained interaction period during the nine-month pathway programme. This temporal constraint poses a significant challenge, especially given that the relationship often does not continue once students transition to the university.

Furthermore, the role of PTs extends beyond academic guidance and support, PTs can find themselves part of the team monitoring attendance and tasked with engaging in disciplinary procedures. Usually at the behest of managers who instruct them to investigate the reasons behind student absences. This shift towards a potentially disciplinary role, can undermines student- PT trust and overshadow their

intended socialisation role, creating a conflict between the two aspects of their responsibilities. PT's - teachers were concerned:

"Your role ends up having to be reasonably disciplining rather than socialising. Because from higher management levels...the thing that they are on top of more than anything else is...have you completed the register?" exemplifies this tension, highlighting the influence of higher management priorities. (Ian)

Nonetheless, PTs exhibit personal agency and adaptability, tailoring their support to meet the unique needs of international students. To underline the proactive role of PTs in addressing the challenges faced by students. PTs must actively work to bridge any gap and address the unique needs of international students.

"They can find it difficult surrounded by middle-class white people far more confident in those settings, so I tailor advice to address that imbalance" (Ian)

In conclusion, the role of Personal Tutors (PTs) in International Foundation Centres (IFC) is a salient one carried out at the intersection between the responsibilities of the IFC various teams and functions (Grey and Osborne, 2017). The PT works within the context of a complex interplay of challenges, limitations, and opportunities. The role can involve reconciling institutional policies and priorities with the well-being of and advocacy for students. There is a tension between acting to advance institutional compliance, participate in attendance warnings and expedite the socialisation and support of students. This underlines the ethical considerations faced by both the PT and their employer, the IFC. The PT example relating to completing attendance registers and participation in staged attendance warnings potentially raised ethical concerns about institutional priorities (UKAT, 2023). When institutional emphasis leans towards compliance and discipline over socialisation and student well-being, it can be perceived as neglecting its duty to provide comprehensive support to students, potentially leading to

ethical dilemmas. PTs, on the other hand, hold a responsibility to advocate for their students' best interests, often encountering ethical challenges when these priorities diverge from institutional ones.

Balancing these aspects, while maintaining cultural sensitivity within the context of the IFC and PT roles is essential for ensuring a holistic and ethically sound approach to supporting students. (Wooton, 2013). This complex dynamic underline the importance of aligning institutional policies with the well-being of students and the proactive role of PTs to address the needs and challenges faced by international students within the university setting.

6.4 Answering the Research Questions

The research findings and discussion of the data enable the study to formulate answers to the research questions, as follows:

1. How do IFC staff narrate the socialisation of international students in Higher education in theory and in practice?

The idea behind question one was to elicit the weight that staff placed in their narratives on theory and practice. It sought to identify the extent to which teachers' testimonies reflected the bodies of theory discussed. The research attempts to document and understand teachers' insights as practitioners, on the institutional processes framing the practice of socialisation.

2. How are IFC staff beliefs and practises in relation to socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management?

Question Two sought to ascertain the degree of overt acknowledged influence their employers had on teachers' practice and belief systems, as it pertained to the socialisation of international students and the related elements of pedagogy in the IFC.

3. How do IFCs foster socialisation effectively, efficiently and above all, educationally?

This question seeks to understand what sits behind the model of socialisation deployed in the IFC. To do so, it applies the analytical lenses of the principal bodies of theory of Socialisation in Higher education employed in this study. The functionalist student development model (Weidman, 2006) and the critical humanist model (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) enable the study to interrogate and disaggregate the influences of the IFCs institutional structures and processes on the different dimensions of Socialisation.

4. How are attendance and progression as concepts framed in relation to learner socialisation policies and practices?

These concepts are focused on influencing student behaviour but are deemed institutionally important administrative processes embedded in the IFC and teacher's practice. This question sought clarification on whether the concepts serve educational or administrative purposes.

Research Question1: How do IFC staff narrate the socialisation of international students in Higher education in theory and in practice?

IFC teachers narrated the socialisation of international students in higher education clearly, laying equal emphasis on theory and practice. Teachers agreed that the socialisation of international students enrolled in the IFC's included a process of development of the skills and dispositions necessary to adapt to the dominant academic and social culture prevalent in their partner university. (Bourdieu, 1978), (Weidman, 2006). In the teachers' own words, socialisation into university life was:

"Not just about grades" instilling the "necessary skills to work together and to think critically."

Adapting to an "exclusive atmosphere," absorbing: "the etiquette of higher education", acceptable to your peers."

Study participants emphasised the differences in the practice of the socialisation of international students regarding the introduction of first-year students to university life. The IFC staff in a Pathway course and the staff of their partner Russell Group university had different priorities.

“There is a clear distinction in the socialisation posture and intensity of preparation level between the IFC and the University as applied to their teaching of international students”.

IFC staff articulated that socialisation within a Pathway included a focus on student preparation in the introductory knowledge and skills such as English as a second language; foundation subjects that introduced various academic disciplines; engagement of student in study skills; and classroom learning methods such as group work, peer learning and critical thinking skills. This was a coordinated process of tuition, assessment and coaching over an extended period, specifically designed with formative and summative stages of development, to ensure students understood the challenges of transitioning within the higher education environment. Teachers in the study were collectively focused on reducing international students' feelings of being “outside.” The intent of their socialisation efforts is that they,

“Become part of a larger learning community, so that they share a common goal. Exposure to a range of influences and opportunities to engage with and be part of the environment and the groups within it”.

This articulation of their teacher experience of socialising international students, intersects with Weidman’s observations that the internally generated policies and practises in higher education institutions like universities and International Foundation Centres are instrumental in shaping their operational environments. They create the normative dispositions both academic and professional, formal, and informal, that international students and staff encounter in Higher education. By doing so, they directly and indirectly influence how teachers perceive and approach the task of guiding and integrating these students on their academic journeys: This is succinctly illustrated by Weidman, who argues that:

"The organisational structures and normative contexts of higher education institutions... connect students with salient normative environments in higher education (academic curricula, departments, etc)." (Weidman, 2020:25)

IFC teachers narrated that traditional socialisation practice was disrupted because of the cessation of classroom teaching and the shift to full online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers were concerned about large classes, flawed software, student disengagement, reduced socialisation, unsatisfactory peer learning and group work online. The traditional model did not function. Teachers complained that:

"Online...they (students) can log on, switch off their screens and listen. ...or not respond to questions", "hide in plain sight".

This intersects with the literature on learning technologies, in that if traditional classroom frameworks and disciplines are not systemically applied in the learning technology context the results are not necessarily functional. As one authority on technology enhanced learning observed,

"We must explore traditional methods in their new context, which also means embedding our study of learning through technology within an understanding of the existing classroom"
(Laurillard, 2009:7)

The study participants were clear-eyed about articulating the theory that stands behind the IFC university partnership business model of which socialisation services were a necessary adjunct. They recognised that generating profits and revenues were the primary motivation behind the IFC pathway partnership. A 'Cash Nexus' represented in the literature on the 'Business of Education' and specifically the 'Marketisation of Higher education', (Marginson, 2006), (McGettigan, 2013). Bourdieu's thesis of habitus, a relative expression of socialisation, when applied in the context of this study, frames the

IFC's intent as to enculturate, socialise and professionalise international students so that they internalise the dispositions, values and skills necessary for success in higher education. In teachers' narratives, they want students to succeed and 'cope'.

If this study sets aside the ideological perspective of Bourdieu, in terms of systemic reproduction of inequality. The IFCs highly engineered process of socialisation, can be said to accelerate Bourdieu's conceptualisation of institutional habitus and cultural capital reconciling teachers' narratives of socialisation with this critical literature. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

Research Question 2: How are IFC staff beliefs and practises in relation to socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management?

International Foundation Centres (IFCs) serve as a growing pathway for international students seeking entry into Russell Group universities (British Council, 2023b). The beliefs and practices of higher education staff in relation to socialisation, play an important role in shaping the social and cultural adjustment and academic experiences of these students (Tinto, 1998), (Tierney, 1997) and (Puckett, 2020). To understand, if and how institutional management influenced IFC staff beliefs and practises, relating to socialisation, two well established, critical, theoretical frameworks were drawn on to evaluate the narrative data evidenced in this study. John Weidman's model of the socialisation process in higher education (Weidman, 2006), (Weidman, 2020) is applied to UK International Foundation Centre. It exposes an array of normative influences immanent in the internal institutional policies of university pathway providers. These include Mission, Curriculum, and Assessment to Student Support. Bourdieu's Theory of Institutional Habitus (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) and Cultural Capital, (Bourdieu, 1977) will test the influence of the overall socialisation approach of staff employed by the IFC. The temporal and pedagogic institutional architecture of the academic year is structural and sheds a subliminal influence over pathway course implementation. In turn that shapes the cadence and form of staff-student interaction. IFC business objectives are a form of institutional cultural capital, influencing staff behaviour on student progression and attendance.

The alignment of staff with institutional goals is a critical aspect of the Higher education Environment according to Weidman. In this case, the management of University Pathway providers set Centre wide normative standards of engagement with students for IFC staff to maintain in ‘providing a bridge to university entry’. Staff as experienced teachers in this environment are socialised and influenced by these goals. It is their sustained engagement with students and the quality of these interactions that make a difference in the socialisation process. As Weidman states:

"The impact of student-faculty interaction in both studies lend credence to Weidman's (1984, 1989) claim that primary social relationships have strong socializing influences and that it is not just frequency of student-faculty interaction but also the intensity and quality of these relationships that make a difference" (Weidman et al., 2014:4).

The theory consolidates the distinctive, representative insider findings from teacher's narratives that echo Weidman's focus on quality.... "Following policy is less important than trying to ensure that students get the best experience during their time here" ...teachers held the belief that the breadth and scope of socialisation in the IFC is so much greater, relative to the university. Florence said..." I don't know...because they're all paying customers? We're overcompensating to provide this bridge... we're really supporting them in their studies." Recounting one ex-IFC, now university students feedback,

"Oh my God we didn't know we had it quite so good at IFC, because ...if we needed to speak to any teacher...at the centre, we could easily".

In the IFC, socialisation culture is well understood to involve going the extra mile, to paraphrase two teachers:

"To do the pastoral stuff, to actually take some time for their mental health....and that comes back to all the invisible (unpaid) Labour that we do." ...I'm looking at my colleagues who give up our lunch breaks and ...free time to help individuals.

It is not solely the effects of strategic and operational decision making that influences teachers' practice in IFCs. Staff are bound by the institutional expectations of management. These expectations encompass teaching methods, student support, adherence to institutional policies, and performance metrics. Weidman & De Angelo affirm that:

"Along with college peers, faculty have proven to be primary agents of socialisation in work using the Weidman model" (Weidman & De Angelo, 2020:5).

Teachers do identify to some extent with their employers' goals. To paraphrase one participant,

"Part of the reason why we encourage socialisation, is because we want students to develop a commitment to the programme. And "there's no set behaviour, its policy led, but then it's what the personal tutors then do..."

Institutional management in this conception set the overarching culture, values, and norms that drive staff behavior. Ultimately, policies and expectations contribute to shaping the priorities of teachers, such as compliance with 'Attendance' processes, irrespective of individual teachers' perceptions of their educational significance. Weidman did theorise that students and staff had the 'Agency' as individuals to potentially change structures and practise however it is not apparent in this data, (Weidman, 2020).

In considering the second major framework. Bourdieu concept of institutional habitus refers to the deeply ingrained dispositions and practices that individuals acquire through their immersion in specific institutional contexts, (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Institutional habitus can also be viewed as social actors, seeking to reproduce their own status in the educational field (Byrd, 2019). In the IFCs, this might refer to the course duration and patterns of pedagogic activity (assessment periods), as well as the central administrative processes, such as attendance registers and performance monitoring. These

reflect the IFC's institutional habitus and as part of this, the integral 'professional habitus,' of teachers contributing to their institutional functioning.

Pierre Bourdieu's offer a lens through which we can examine how the structural design of the university pathway academic year (two cohorts of students, starting 3 months apart, spread over nine months in near parallel) is designed to maximise the volume of prepared students for their entry to degree courses in next academic year. The dual teaching model and the pace and intensity of the pedagogy shapes teacher habits and influences their staff-student interactions. Teacher's narratives illustrate a process of adaptation, of augmenting the original 'cultural capital' of international students. It uses the medium of intensive IFC courses to channel and accelerate students' adoption of the 'institutional habitus of the University.

"Socialisation includes preparing International Students for tertiary education with a focus on English, study skills and University culture. The IFC model supporting student socialisation to UK Higher education is intensive'.

Evidence from teachers' responses suggests that levels of detailed instruction is inextricably linked to the company's interests. Teachers are clear eyed, these are to optimise its business processes, limit its risks and logically, to achieving its commercial goals. They must promote "Attendance", prevent Lateness and through repeated visualisation of progression as success, model the purpose of socialisation.

In summary, Bourdieu's framework sheds light on how the institutional architecture of the university pathway program, with its 9-month academic year divided into two semesters, molds teacher institutional habitus. This habitus, in turn, influences the tempo and style of staff-student interactions, perpetuating norms and expectations that find their origins in broader societal structures and inequalities. Understanding this dynamic helps us grasp how institutional structures deeply influence educational practices and interactions. It can be concluded that the IFC has great influence on the

overall socialisation approach of teachers, however that influence is subliminal rather than overt. It is channeled through the structure of the academic year, with its temporal and pedagogic architecture that shapes the cadence and scale of student-teacher interaction. It is found in the central administrative processes like attendance registers and traffic light monitoring of student performance. It is not generally an overt instruction by managers to do something to alter pedagogic or socialisation practise.

Research Question 3: How do IFCs foster socialisation effectively, efficiently and above all, educationally?

How IFCs foster socialisation, draws on theories of Socialisation in Higher education (Weidman, 2006) its intersection with concepts of transition, (Davey, 2009) and institutional habitus, (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) and cultural capital (Edgerton and Roberts, 2014). Socialisation is effectively fostered by the International Foundation Centre in this study. The IFC has designed, resourced, and developed an integrated service that aligns a range of teaching, pastoral care, accommodation, and administrative support teams to focus on their customers - students. Their unifying objective is to equip students with the skills, dispositions, and knowledge, valued by their destination university, to ensure that they progress to their chosen university. This is broadly supported by two elements of the literature. The first is Weidman's, mainstream theory of the 'socialisation of undergraduate students in higher education'. It postulates that institutions like universities channel their institutional resources, via specific contexts, and processes that lead to educational and professional transition:

"Connects students with salient normative environments in higher education" (Weidman, 2020:25)

The IFC model of socialisation can also be argued to be effective using a neo-Bourdiesian framework. For international students, Pathways courses are an educational platform that accelerates a process of adaptation and acquisition of institutional habitus within a short period of time. It can be said to repurpose the original *Cultural Capital* of international students. Indeed, Diane Reay argues that:

” Cultural capital exists in the institutionalised state ...existing in institutionalised forms such as educational qualifications” (Reay,2004 :74).

And in another work, suggests that:

“Middle class students...use...foreign education to enhance their occupational prospects... where a distinction is drawn between ‘foreign’ and ‘local’ cultural capital... (extending)... Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital to take account of education in different social and geographical contexts, especially in the conversion of cultural capital for economic and social advantage,” (Brown et al, 2013).

Moving on to address efficiency in socialisation. According to staff narratives, the influence of the IFC ‘business imperative’ is pervasive throughout the organisation. It drives an efficiency approach to operations. The IFC has a commercial focus espousing cost-based and efficiency structured approaches, that mediate its involvement in ‘Markets in Education’ (Brown, 2022). This is immanent in the processes and systems used to develop, plan, and administer the Pathway programmes that are the context for socialisation. To paraphrase some teachers in the study:

“Teachers are production staff in the IFC ... they work unpaid additional hours such as breaks...to deliver in and out of class, scaffolding interactions, and activities, that make socialisation work efficiently”.

IFC Processes and systems are designed to produce more efficient outcomes. For instance, the concepts ‘Attendance’ and ‘Progression’ are key institutional metrics in the IFC that structure students and teacher expectations. In they reduce student absence rates (Moore et al, 2019), maximise retention (Tierney, 1997) rates and the potential numbers available for progression to university. In so doing, they minimised the commercial risks to the partnership by maintaining continuity in the planned

numbers and future revenues to be available to the partners. By maximising student aggregate presence, IFC managers limited the potential exposure to regulatory risks such as inspection and enforcement action by Government agencies, such as the visa authorities.

Educationally, International Foundation Centres, employ experienced and motivated Pathway teaching teams who esteem and identify with the necessity of socialisation. Staff have internalised the objectives of driving student's attitudinal, cognitive, and cultural change. These reference and intersect with mainstream conceptualisations in the literature, (Weidman, 2006) - that institutional normative contexts and socialisation processes are central to the Higher education experience.

“Instructors have the most significant influences on the attitudes and values of students...as students have some affiliation...with an academic department ... as it tends to be the unit through which degree requirements are specified and approved” (Weidman, 2015:20)

The teachers' focus on learners, also illustrates Bourdieu's insight that a key educational role is the capacity to develop the institutional habitus of students (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). This approach permeates their Pathway courses pedagogy, which is designed to intensively support the development of subject knowledge, language, and skills for academic purposes. Tuition consists of 24 weeks of timetabled classes. There are two to three classes per week per subject, with five academic subjects, plus a parallel language programme with approximately similar hours to a subject, (Appendix 3 - Pathway Student Guide, redacted), (Appendix 4 – Academic calendar, redacted) and (Appendix 5 – Weekly Pathway Timetable, redacted). Each subject receives several formative and a summative assessment, each semester. The pedagogic approach involves shifting students from the individual memorisation routines common in China for instance, (Edwards and Ran, 2006) to a cognitive development model based on peer learning and group construction of meaning (Vygotsky, 1978). This approach was less effective when it was interrupted by the limitations of online working during the academic years affected by Covid-19 (Barbour, 2021) and (ONS,2023). Educationally, students are assisted to be receptive to new pedagogical forms, able to transition to new teaching and learning

methods, absorb new language skills and practise the academic competences required in Higher education.

Research Question 4: How are attendance and progression as concepts framed in relation to learner socialisation policies and practices?

Teachers narrated that in the International Foundation Centre, (IFC) in this study, ‘Attendance’ and ‘Progression’ were formally framed as institutional process metrics. ‘Attendance’ was constructed as a quantitative measure of an individual students registered presence in class, an officially recognised signal of student compliance with institutional expectations. In the case of ‘Progression’, it was a measure of student attainment, signifying a successful transition from their IFC Pathway programme to acceptance on their destination university degree course, having satisfied the pre-agreed threshold for admittance.

‘Attendance’ and ‘Progression’ were found to be contested metrics, unclear and inconsistent concepts in relation to learner socialisation policy and practise in this study. In the collated narrative, most teachers disputed that ‘Attendance’ had any educational significance in relation to learners in the form in which it was conceptualised and applied in the International Foundation Centre.

“IFC classroom registers are not set up to enable teachers to use attendance data for diagnostic purposes. The data is confidential used by managers in the IFC for disciplinary and compliance matters.”

Most teachers in the study discussed opportunities to improve assigned formality within the attendance data collected to analyse trends, patterns and for individual diagnostic use. They felt the data processed should be applied for socialisation and pedagogic purposes, as might occur in another school, college, or university. However, the narrative evidence suggests attendance data was not framed to inform socialisation or pedagogy.

“It was just data for the business...not used to inform pastoral or teaching”

Rather, it was framed within a narrow institutional disciplinary focus, to modify student behaviors. Managers used attendance data to enforce student compliance with institutional rules on classroom presence. Students receive written warnings and mandatory meetings; these events are triggered by data based on percentage level of absence. The explicit purpose is to inform students of the consequences, to deter absence and thereby limit exposure to regulatory risks from visa authority enforcement action. There is extensive literature in higher education, linking attendance with attainment (Crede et al, 2010; Moores et al, 2019; Nordmann, 2019).

“Student attendance at teaching sessions is still usually associated with better outcomes for students in terms of both retention and attainment and so it is an important aspect of student engagement for HEIs to consider” (Moores et al, 2019:381)

It can be concluded that the IFC’s intent and enforcement stance on attendance policy and practise are a partial fit with this literature. There is some evidence, that mandating presence, does generally work to improve attendance, (Gump, (2004) in Moores et al, 2019), this is particularly effective for first year students. A secondary aspect of the policy that is a fit with the literature is informing students of their learning responsibilities and educating them on the importance of attendance. This was found to contribute to boost attendance and reduce absence in higher education (Moores et al, 2019).

Progression or the successful transition to the designated entry year of their university degree course was contested educationally by the study participants. They were concerned about its validity as an entry standard to the University, despite the policy and grading standards being agreed by the IFC partnership. In socialisation policy terms, teachers recognised that ‘Progression’ is an important formal threshold stage, for students transitioning to university. But they were circumspect in their comments.

“Progression is just attainment (of the required grades); however, it depends on what they have in their backpack, what they do with it, (knowledge and skills) as future learners that matters”.

They were tentative about the pathway courses, socialisation impact in practice. This accords with mainstream conceptualisations of socialisation in higher education in the literature (Weidman, 2006). A pathway’s impact could be construed as the pre-entry stage, identified by Weidman in his construct as the initial stage where “prospective students, predispositions and preparation” are formed. This is before they enter the longitudinal socialisation process, proper, that is aligned with the university’s degree courses. Pathways can also be interpreted as composite element of the support services that exert ongoing formative, normative influences on socialisation. A significant context for their views on Socialisation and Education were the permitted minimum English language entry grades that were acknowledged as inadequate by the study’s teachers.

“Still feels that's exactly the minimum, students should come in with...so as not to cling on by their damn fingertips.”

Teachers were equivocal about the implicit standards embedded in the pathway courses. The study narratives were explicit that ‘Progression’ indicated to them in most cases,

“That student had the potential to cope, to adjust to the next stage “

They hoped in effect that student who had progressed would be able to adapt successfully over time to the academic working style and environment of a university degree course. Some teachers felt that the focus should not be on progression, but on the transferable skills applicable in an academic and business career. A further concern articulated by teachers were the immutability of entry standards linked to ‘Progression’. Very high international student fees assigned extraordinary future monetary value on every future international student. A commoditization effect recognised in the sectors evidence to government, (HoL, 2023) and (HoC, 2022). This held the prospect of potential significant

incentives by Partner University to vary entry standards, if there was a shortfall of applicants. In some ways, not that different from the flexibility in entry requirements shown during UCAS undergraduate ‘clearing’ in HE in the UK. The study identified numerous narratives of personal anecdotes in this regard.

” Universities ...will be dropping IELTS entry scores, they'll do anything to get international students in, and it's going to be horrendous, but I know it from other universities as well.”

In conclusion both ‘Attendance’ and ‘Progression’ as formal concepts were found to be framed inconsistently in relation to learner socialisation policies and practices. Neither, conceptually accorded with teachers' narratives of their experience of the realities of practise. Teachers’ reservations were grounded in nurturing commitment to students that went beyond ‘Progression’ to considering their prospects, illustrating their ‘caring teaching” philosophy (Walker & Gleaves, 2016).

6.5 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

This study has several limitations. The study was planned as a narrative analysis of the experiences of ten pathway teachers from an IFC, telling stories of their personal experiences of socialising international students.

The first limitation was the constraint placed on the number of interviews, and the scope of the interviews, bearing in mind the pressures on staff from new ways of working, and the limits of time that staff had in relation to shifting to new modes of curriculum delivery. This narrowed the scope of the evidence collected. The planned data collection period coincided with Covid-19 lockdown regulations in England. The centre where teachers worked was closed. No other location on campus or elsewhere were legally available for face- to-face interview, the method chosen was an online focus group. One teacher dropped out during this adjustment process. The shift to online focus group work restricted the richness of the data collected from individuals and face to face group work. Participants may be less willing to share information due to group dynamics. Limited time constrained questioning. A future

study should conduct individual interviews better able to ask nuanced follow up questions, assess non-verbal cues and be free of peer group influence that might limit the scope of discussion (Gubrium et al, 2014)

The second limitation affects the veracity of some evidence available from teacher narratives. (Riessman, 2008) There was just under 5 hours from four focus group interviews, involving the 9 participant teachers recorded in gallery view. This produced considerable narrative data in the form of MS 'Teams' video film footage, and extensive verbal transcripts that were coded for precise and specific participant responses. During the four sets of focus group verbal interactions, respondents were asked to use the 'Teams' chat function online to supplement verbal evidence with further written phrased responses and qualifying remarks. The Teams platform was often unstable and crashed multiple times, leading to loss of some interview data. Furthermore, when downloaded, the integrity of some written Teams chat, (digital data) was corrupted through the forum that was used. This meant that some potentially valuable, contextual narrative information was lost to the study. In future studies, researchers should ensure further back-up mechanisms for Chat written records are established to ensure there is complete preservation of the whole record.

The third limitation of the study was the omission of some data sources relating to the functioning of the International Foundation Centre (website pages, policy documentation and internal communications). Complying with the university campus lockdown and working from home regulations, over an extended period, I had limited access to intranet and stable communications with internal systems. This constrained the ability to access certain data sources. Despite approval from managers and being granted ethical approval and technically, having accessibility, some of the data was not readily available or accessible due to technical issues, data storage problems and other logistical challenges. The organisation workflow was re-organised on return after lockdown, limiting the time available for data searches. Any future study should draw on either publicly available data or use FOI processes to access data if they are available. (Maxwell, 1992)

The fourth limitation identified relates to potential biases in the selection of thematic analysis. (Braun and Clarke, 2023) This researcher necessarily made subjective decisions in coding and identifying themes that can introduce bias into the analysis. Different researchers might have identified different themes or interpreted the same data differently. To address this limitation, a future study might use an inter-coder reliability check, where multiple researchers independently code and analyse the data, and then compare their findings to ensure consistency. By providing clear and transparent documentation of the coding process and decision-making can help mitigate this limitation.

The fifth limitation relates to the comprehensiveness and depth of the literature review. This review was conducted in an under-researched topic that has limited existing literature. With few studies available on the topic, there were limited sources to review. This can make it challenging to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature. The lack of diverse perspectives, methodologies, or theoretical frameworks in the existing literature can limit depth of analysis and the ability to draw nuanced conclusions. This potentially leads to bias in the review or overly generalised or definitive conclusions; to address this, the researcher should clearly state the limitations of the existing literature and acknowledge the gaps in knowledge (Hart, 2018).

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In this chapter, the conclusions and implications of this study are discussed. The discussion is framed by two interrelated bodies of research presented in the literature: Theories of Socialisation in Higher education and Society and Theories of Internationalisation and Marketisation of the Business of Education. Implications of the conclusions are offered for university academics, university administrators, teachers of all descriptions and within all contexts, and not least, future researchers.

This thesis explored how teachers in International Foundation Centres, for-profit partnership preparatory institutions, recruit and socialise international students for entry to their partner Russell Group universities. It observes that IFC teacher's professional identities and commitment were to the development of the lives of their students as critical, reflective human beings. The IFC-based socialisation processes revealed by the study could be argued to go beyond existing theories of student adaptation (Weidman, 2006) and, more critically, to introduce a novel explanation for the repurposing of a student's 'Cultural Capital' and an accelerated acquisition of institutional habitus, (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). The study narratives show that a necessary pre-condition for teacher socialisation and pedagogy was the parallel deployment by the International Foundation Centre of the organisational infrastructure of the 'Business of Education' - integrated global recruitment, coordinated business processes and systems to monitor and manage students and align teachers with support staff grouped around these systems.

The original contribution of this thesis lays in two overlapping areas: a contribution to knowledge, and a contribution to practice, specifically pertaining to the relationship between universities and IFCs, and in addition, with relevance to the dynamics of associated adjunct institutions that shape and are shaped by the university's ostensible mission and processes. In relation to the first, the contribution to knowledge, the thesis reveals that socialisation within this IFC does not go through a familiar or explicit process in the way that it is frequently represented in existing literature with relevance to higher education. Cultural norms, scholarship activities and working in the organisation is largely left at the

door of employees to both make sense of it for themselves and to act as an interpreter and conduit for learning for the student body.

The literature is replete with studies that demonstrate that many academics try to understand both professional and organisational life, by implicit understanding of the issues. By accessing informal knowledge by themselves and then translating this into individual pedagogic practices, such literature indicates that socialisation processes within universities are largely ineffective. Within the field of knowledge relating specifically to IFCs, this situation has another level of complexity and this thesis shows this very profoundly: the staff within this study must frame their understanding of socialisation through the lens of the business of education, and then, and only then, may they consciously re-purpose it so that they are able to cultivate a cultural habitus that aligns with their individual understandings and principles for socialisation. Accordingly, they balance, often competing, conflicting and complex world views, as they endeavour to navigate a frequently and increasingly, unstable economic and political environment.

In terms of the contribution to practice, the study offers an original insight into the narrative evidence from very experienced teachers with an average of 10 years of experience since the IFC study established its partnership on campus. To the author's knowledge, there are no current studies that focus on the socialisation of non-EU international students in England in this specific form of institutional public-private partnership in higher education. This study is significant because this form of public-private partnership, or joint venture, is now pervasive among Russell Group universities seeking to recruit international students. This study contributes new knowledge and original insights into a complex and significantly under-researched area of higher education. These are the institutional partnerships and attention on the non-direct entry segment of international students in higher education. It also provides insights into IFC teachers' beliefs on their practice in teaching and socialisation as a relationship.

The second original contribution that this study makes has broader systemic implications. The study provides empirical evidence of the financial dependency relationships that non-EU-international student fees play in the financial sustainability of individual Russell Group universities. As this study illustrates in the discussion, two parliamentary committees expressed serious concerns (HoL, 2023) and (HoC, 2022) regarding the Office for Students' lack of effective regulation of higher education institutions. They point to OfS' complacency, lack of willingness to intervene, and weakness of scrutiny into the financial resilience of Russell Group universities. International student fee revenues were found to cross-subsidise individual universities' operations and investments. Parliament flagged this as a serious systemic risk to the Higher education system. This dependency on revenues from a few foreign states' citizens may be subject to geo-political shifts. It may not be a reliable source of long-term sustainable support for higher education and individual institutions. Parliamentary records of these committee proceedings in 2022 and 2023 (ibid) provide extensive evidence and examples of concern.

Turning now to the research questions, answering the question, how do IFC staff narrate the Socialisation of international students in Higher education in theory and practice? It starts from the premise that there needs to be more evidence but considerable theory in this domain. As an experienced educator-practitioner and research' insider' in an International Foundation Centre (IFC) that is part of this study, peer-reviewed evidence is absent in the literature on teachers' views in the Pathway sector, as distinct from research featuring tenured and contract staff, or their narratives in Russell Group universities (Lomer & Mittelmier, 2023). The research findings of this study will confirm that teachers reach some degree of consensus on the question of Socialisation in theory and practice. The study's IFC teachers' perspectives on the Socialisation of international students are likely consistent in practice, given their extensive everyday institutional experiences. To view Socialisation as a process of development of the skills and dispositions necessary to adapt to the dominant academic and social culture prevalent in their partner university. It is anticipated that the study participants will frame their narratives and references to a greater or lesser degree to align with concepts drawn from the theoretical lenses discussed earlier (Bourdieu, 1977; Weidman, 2006).

Teachers are forecasted to be much more confident in articulating a theoretical perspective on socialisation in the findings and discussion of this study when it can be contextualised as a pedagogic and learning practice in the literature. Previous collegiate staff dialogues, cooperation and problem-solving over an extended period have established an awareness of the collaborative organisational culture prevalent among IFC Pathway teachers.

As the researcher anticipated teachers' explicit identification with and confirmation of the efficacy of Constructivist learning theory in theory and practice. Vygotskian 'socio-cultural' theory (Vygotsky, 1978) stresses the collaborative and interactive guidance nature of the ZPD and Bruner's social constructivist approach to 'scaffolding' and the co-construction of learning (Woods et al., 1976) and the "Group work" student engagement and peer learning approaches in classroom practice (Topping et al., 2017) and it may mention (Lave & Wenger, 1991) Communities of practice model of collaborative learning. These are all relevant conceptual approaches that teachers' narration of their experiences socialising with international students may identify as a fit with their practice.

For the question: "How are IFC staff beliefs and practices in relation to socialisation articulated and shaped by institutional management?", several related observations can be made. According to the literature, the beliefs and practices of higher education staff regarding socialisation play an essential role in shaping the social and cultural adjustment and academic experiences of these students (Tinto, 1998), (Tierney, 1997) and (Puckett, 2020). So, how IFC employers design IFC pathway programmes, structure staff relations and are clear about pedagogic and socialisation outcomes within them will directly impact students' socialisation.

It was observed earlier that IFC teachers' likely narration of their socialisation experiences would be in terms of espousing learning theories such as Social Constructivism rooted in pedagogic and socialisation practice. This theory values active learning, collaboration, and dialogue among learners and teachers. It is associated in the literature with Vygotsky, Bruner and Piaget, respectively (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976; Wadsworth, 1996). As well as Topping (group work, among others. (Topping,

2017). The IFC is part of learning and marketising higher education, where universities and their partners pursue efficiency, cost and risk reduction (Marginson, 2006; UUK, 2011). This culture intersects with classroom practices that socialise students in the IFC expectations.

Again, there needs to be literature on operations in private pathway providers in the Russell Group. This researcher observed that teachers must complete hourly attendance registers to ensure international students comply with UK immigration law. This safeguards the IFC's status as a college under immigration law. IFC managers focus on student attendance and disciplinary warnings to modify student behaviour. The findings and discussion chapters are expected to confirm that staff view IFC attendance-related instructions and data collection as non-educational. Pastoral care is a widely admired skill set in the IFC.

This researcher's observation is that managers use PTs to police attendance. Again, staff are likely to hold this in disrepute. Managers seek to raise the employability profile within assessment and in curriculum content; an industry website (ICEF, 2023) found that students and agents ranked these opportunities. Teachers are likely to affirm these changes to course design in future chapters.

The last issue regarding this question is the diversity of IFC provisions across the Russell Group. The five leading corporate Pathway providers of IFCs partnering with the Russell Group have different business cultures and approaches, as in any business. Varying management, staff behaviour and attitudes toward students can be observed between different universities. Websites differentiate the IFCs of two Russell Group Universities (Study Group, 2023) and (Kaplan, GIC).

This narrative study evidenced two significant differences in staff stance and perspective between the IFC and its partner university that suggest future further investigation and evaluation opportunities. First, there is a 'so what' question. Does it matter that there is a gulf in the preparedness, focus, and staff attitude to the socialisation of international students between the IFC and its partner university in the first year(s) stages of their undergraduate and Masters' degree courses? Of the two cohorts of

students (ex-IFC and direct entry students), does one confer more significant advantages on attainment, affective impact, degree outcomes and career destination? Longitudinal studies using qualitative, quantitative, and narrative survey data have significant potential.

Another difference identified in the narrative study was the cultural differences in the perspectives and beliefs held by university academics about IFC staff and students compared to their IFC counterparts. There are questions related to the IFC as an explicitly commercial organisation within the university. What flows from this are ethical and moral reservations and questions on the validity of the standing of international students entering the university through the costly IFC route.

Further questions are raised about the university's ethical stance as a partner in the IFC and the financial beneficiary of the partnership arrangement in tolerating these perspectives among its staff. The university lacks frank discourse about the ethical consequences of maintaining the "necessary evil" of using international student revenues to cross-subsidise internal universities' finances. As one study teacher put it, the university looks on with disdain at the IFC as "stained with pound notes", a perspective that could be interpreted as redolent of "the odour of sanctity".

Contextual investigation into current Higher education sector practises found that frameworks such as the 'Marketisation of Higher education' (Marginson, 2006) and (McGettigan, 2016) stood behind the institutional rationale for recruiting increasing international students to UK higher education. Extensive evidence on student fee income and recruitment (HESA, 2023) and (HoL, 2022) and increased levels of institutional partnership working between IFC and UK Universities (British Council, 2023b) demonstrate the ongoing need to generate revenue and profit generation, for institutional cross-subsidy not educational purpose. IFC partnerships' continued expansion in the UK demonstrates their effectiveness in providing an effective channel for the recruitment of a future pipeline of Russell Group students.

Legislators' conclusions on the financial dependency of the UK's higher education system in general can be reinforced by this study's financial analysis of the Russell Group. Individual, institutional fee

revenues for a sample of 17 Russell Group Universities were reviewed, compared and analysed to enable a determination of dependency to be arrived at. The financial analysis generated empirical and reliable evidence using current and revised HESA data. This study's results intersect with a discussion on the prospects for a higher education system whose institutions are subject to weak regulation and where many Russell Group members have accumulated high levels of institutional risk. They are revenue-dependent on international students, with limited capacity to generate domestic fee income and facing rising institutional costs.

There is a substantive opportunity for further work to build on this research and add to the literature on the marketisation of Higher education. They conduct a detailed forensic sensitivity analysis of the spending plans, revenues and debt projections for individual Russell Group Universities, signaling degrees of institutional financial dependency.

APPENDIX A House of Lords (2017) List of University Partnerships

Evidence to Lords Economic Affairs Committees' inquiry into the economics of Higher

education. Pathway Providers Written evidence (HFV0092) – Appendix A 13 November 2017

Study Group's university partners:

- Durham University
- Coventry University London
- University of Huddersfield
- Keele University
- Kingston University, London
- Lancaster University
- Leeds International Study Centre
- Liverpool John Moores University
- Royal Holloway, University of London
- The University of Sheffield
- University of Leicester
- University of Lincoln
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Surrey
- University of Sussex

Kaplan's university partners:

- Bournemouth University
- Nottingham Trent University
- The University of Nottingham
- University of Brighton
- University of Glasgow
- University of Liverpool
- University of the West of England, Bristol
- University of York

- University of Birmingham
- Aston University
- University of Westminster
- City University London
- Cranfield University

INTO's university partners:

- University of East Anglia
- University of Exeter
- Newcastle University
- The University of Manchester
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- Queen's University Belfast
- City University
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- University of Gloucestershire
- University of Stirling

Cambridge Education Group's university partners:

- Birbeck University
- Queen Mary University
- London South Bank University
- Goldsmiths University
- Royal Holloway
- The Courtauld
- University of Central Lancashire
- Royal Veterinary College
- University of Hull
- Falmouth University
- University of Reading

- Coventry University
- University of Sunderland
- Newbury College
- University of Southampton
- University of Arts London

Navitas' university partners:

- University of Portsmouth
- Edinburgh Napier University
- University of Hertfordshire
- Brunel University London
- Robert Gordon University Aberdeen
- Swansea University
- Anglia Ruskin University
- Birmingham City University
- Plymouth University
- University of Northampton

APPENDIX B Comparative Analysis of Russell Group and UK International Students, 2021-2

Total Number of International Students (IS)

HESA Data Release 2023. Period 2021-22

Incl subtotal for international students from Asia

Russell Grp	Asia IS	Total IS	Total Non-EU IS in UK	Total IS in UK	Total RG IS as % of total UK IS
Birmingham	6565	9555			
Leeds	7530	11125			
Cardiff	5100	7530			
Durham	4825	6755			
Liverpool	4695	6975			
Sheffield	8255	10960			
York	4285	5905			
Edinburgh	9770	18050			
Imperial	7055	11320			
Cambridge	3225	7205			
LSE	4275	8520			
Oxford	3125	9265			
Bristol	6400	8975			
Southamptn	6400	8635			
Warwick	7360	11065			
Newcastle	3845	6215			
Manchester	12640	18170			
Nottingham	5285	8285			
Glasgow	11725	17390			
KCL	9900	17155			
UCL	15795	24145			
QMUL	5045	8935			
QU Belfast	3035	5175			
Exeter	4970	8135			
	161105	255445	538,635	679970	38

Note: 'Total IS' heading refers to the total number of international students in the Russell Group.

APPENDIX C Review of Russell Group Universities, Pathway Provider Partners in 2024.

Nos	Russell Group University	Corporate Pathway Provider Partners
1	Birmingham	Kaplan
2	Leeds	Study Group
3	Cardiff	Study Group
4	Durham	Study Group
5	Liverpool	Kaplan
6	Sheffield	Study Group
7	York	Kaplan
8	Bristol	Kaplan
9	Southampton	Cambridge Education Group
10	Exeter	INTO
11	Newcastle	INTO
12	Manchester	INTO
13	Nottingham	Kaplan
14	Glasgow	Kaplan
15	QMUL	Kaplan
16	QU Belfast	INTO
17	Edinburgh	Internal Pathway
18	Imperial	Internal Pathway
19	Cambridge	Internal Pathway
20	Oxford	Internal Pathway
21	KCL	Internal Pathway
22	UCL	Internal Pathway
23	Warwick	Internal Pathway
24	LSE	Internal Pathway

Note: These Pathway Programme Providers each have many additional UK university partners that make up most of their portfolio of partnerships. It was not discoverable if some of these Russell Group universities had further commercial partners. The internal pathway indicator assigned to some universities relates to individual or institutional provision or whether they are members of the university consortium NCUK, which has replicated the commercial recruitment model of the Pathway providers. Some Russell Group universities in the NCUK consortium also have individual agreements with commercial Pathway provider partners.



APPENDIX

Newcastle University Participant consent form

Research Project: "To examine staff narratives of their experience of socialising international students for UK HE, in International Foundation Centres settings in the North of England."

University Ethical Approval received - 16th October 2017 / Ref: 665/2017

Lead Investigator: Thomas James Cosh

Supervisor: Prof. Caroline Walker-Gleaves

Name of Participant - Blank

Date - Blank

This consent form allows the participant to confirm that:

1. They have read the attached information sheet, had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions, and had their questions answered satisfactorily.
2. They understand their participation is voluntary, that they are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without any penalty, and that they understand what will happen to any data collected prior to their withdrawal.
3. They consent to their anonymised/pseudonymised research data in text form being stored and used for future research.
4. They understand all audio/ video data will be destroyed by the Lead investigator.
5. They understand their research data may be published as a journal article or report.
6. They consent to the processing of their personal information solely for the purposes of this research study.
7. They agree to take part in the research project.

The participants signature confirms they have read and consent to 1-7 above.

Signature – Blank

APPENDIX E

Participant Information Form

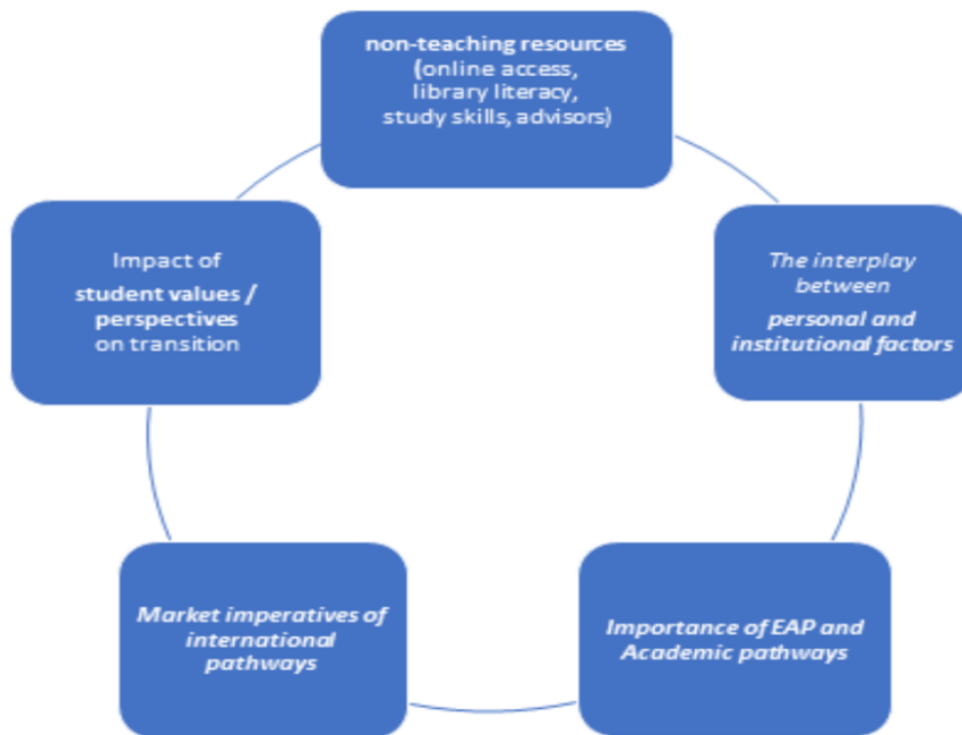
Briefing Note for Focus Group Participants (1/12/20)

- Researching the Socialisation of international students in Higher education
- Ethical permission for the study has been approved by Newcastle University

Background

- Socialisation, is the process through which individuals learn and acquire the behaviours and norms of the institution in which they are immersed
- International Foundation Centres (IFC) are institutional partnerships that prepare international students for UG and PG study in UK research intensive universities.
- Historically the research community's focus on socialisation of international students and the internationalisation of HE has paid insufficient attention to the role of IFC's.

Key Theory - Socialisation of International Students in Higher education



Page 2 of Participant Information Form to follow

Aims of Research

- To examine staff narratives of their experience of socialising international students for UK HE in International Foundation Centres settings in the North of England.

Focus Group Questions

1. Could you tap into the chat a few sentences describing your understanding of the job you do at the centre?
2. According to the literature, Socialisation of students in education is an important part of their learning. Do you agree with this from your own experience?
3. How would you personally define socialisation in education in general terms?
4. How would you describe socialisation as it relates to international students in UK Higher education?
5. More specifically, how would you describe your experience as a professional socialising international students? are there key words or phrases that come to mind? Please type these into the chat. Or say what you think.
6. In your own words describe what your employers is seeking to achieve in socialisation terms by recruiting international students for the university? Type a few key phrases into the chat. Or say what you think.
7. Have your employer's policies and instructions by managers influenced your practise and understanding of socialisation – can you give any examples?
8. How do you understand the concept of good attendance? and its relevance to your work? What key phrases come to mind? type them in the chat. Or say what you think.
9. How do you understand the concept of academic progression? and is it relevant to your work?

What key phrases come to mind? type them in the chat. Or say what you think.
10. In your professional view are the concepts of attendance and progression necessary to the overall successful functioning of the centre? Please type a few phrases in the chat or say what you think.
11. Have you read about these terms anywhere during your work at the Centre or in the University? (On websites, policy statements, advertising, webinars or Zoom calls?).
12. In your view are these concepts important to your employer or the University - Could you give any examples?

13. As a member of staff at the Centre what is the significance of the team you work with in your professional practise?

14. More on collaborative learning

APPENDIX F

University Ethical Approval

From: Policy & Information Team, Newcastle University <noreply@limesurvey.org>

Sent: 16 October 2017 13:16

To: Caroline Walker-Gleaves

Subject: Ethics Form Completed for Project: Conceptualising the retention of international students by Pathway organisations using distributed learning theory.

Ref: 665/2017

Thank you for submitting the ethical approval form for the project 'Conceptualising the retention of international students by Pathway organisations using distributed learning theory. ' (Lead Investigator: Thomas James Cosh). Expected to run from 16/11/2017 to 16/10/2021.

Based on your answers the University Ethics Committee grants its approval for your project to progress. Please be aware that if you make any significant changes to your project then you should complete this form again as further review may be required. If you have any queries please contact res.policy@ncl.ac.uk

Best wishes

Policy & Information Team, Newcastle University Research Office

res.policy@ncl.ac.uk

APPENDIX G

Pathway Student Guide extract (Redacted)

A typical student will have approximately 21 hours of contact hours, including 3 hours of seminars and study clinics for each of 5 academic subjects per week and an English for academic purposes programme that extends between 4 and 6 hours per week. This does not include the many asynchronous learning tasks. Quizzes, home study worksheets, and research tasks in each module. There are a minimum of two summative assessments and at least one formative assessment per subject. Plus, weekly homework tasks.

5. What you can expect from us

We will provide a structured learning programme. Our aim at INTO is to prepare you as fully as possible for the modes of teaching and learning that you can expect at the University.

You will be expected to **fully participate** in the following:

- Pre-recorded Lectures – you will take notes while listening to the lecturer.
- Seminars – you will participate by giving presentations or listening to presentations given by others and participate in any discussion that follows or complete group activities.
- Field work – you may be expected to carry out research away from the Centre and to follow this with written reports or presentations. This is done individually or in small groups. The aim of such work is to simulate research processes.
- Tutorials – you will meet Personal Tutors regularly to discuss your work, your progress and your needs.
- Self-study – you are expected to spend a lot of time working independently in order to carry out research, write assignments or work on the language areas you need to practise.
- Study clinics – For academic modules, you will be able to bring academic problems arising from your subjects to these clinics where staff will be able to help.

Academic assessment and support

- Assignments and coursework will be marked and returned within 20 working days of submission, with appropriate comments and feedback. If circumstances make this impractical, your teachers will explain this to you and give you a revised date by which they will be returned.

Student satisfaction procedures

- We want you to succeed and enjoy your time at INTO.
- Should a problem arise, we will try to solve it quickly and effectively or where appropriate, give you the information and advice to enable you to take action.

If you have a problem with the academic part of your course, you should first speak to your teacher, Personal Tutor, the Deputy Programme Manager or the Programme Manager.

6. What we expect from you

- Regular, punctual attendance at all timetabled sessions is required. You are unlikely to complete the course successfully if your attendance falls below 95%. **Poor or irregular attendance is usually the primary cause for student failure.**
- Complete assignments and submit all the copies required by your teacher on time and as instructed.
- Participate actively in class, by working individually or with other students on tasks set by the teacher or answering questions asked by the teacher. If you do not understand what the teacher is saying, we expect you to ask questions to help you understand.
- You should keep an electronic copy of all assignments together with any copies of sources you have used, all your plans and drafts of the assignments, all notes taken from sources used for the assignments, and all web links to online articles and documents used in the writing of the assignments. You may be asked to provide these in cases of plagiarism accusations.
- When you are not in class, you will complete tasks given to you by your teachers, or organise and carry out your own self-study. You will have a busy timetable but even so, it is not possible to cover everything that you need to know in class; you must work independently to develop your own knowledge and understanding of your subjects
- In your subject module guides, you will find a calendar, showing what is being taught in a particular week. Prior to those sessions, you may be expected to do some reading, research or work on other sources recommended by your teachers.

APPENDIX H

Academic Calendar (redacted)

Calendars vary but have an intensive weekly programme of learning with a minimum three hours of module teacher contact per week. English for Academic Purpose has significantly more per week.

Each module runs over 24 weeks.

Weekly Lecture & Seminar Timetables

Academic Year			
20	/20	/c	Sept
4	4	Sep	Welcome Week
5	5	Oct	S1 - W1
6	6	Oct	S1 - W2
7	7	Oct	S1 - W3
8	8	Oct	S1 - W4
9	9	Oct	S1 - W5
10	10	Nov	S1 - W6
11	11	Nov	S1 - W7
12	12	Nov	S1 - W8
13	13	Nov	S1 - W9
14	14	Dec	S1 - W10
15	15	Dec	S1 - W11
16	16	Dec	Vacation
17	17	Dec	Vacation
18	18	Jan	Vacation
19	19	Jan	S1 W12
20	20	Jan	Assessment
21	21	Jan	Assessment
22	22	Jan	S2 - W1
23	23	Feb	S2 - W2
24	24	Feb	S2 - W3
25	25	Feb	S2 - W4
26	26	Feb	S2 - W5
27	27	Mar	S2 - W6
28	28	Mar	S2 - W7
29	29	Mar	S2 - W8
30	30	Mar	Vacation
31	31	Apr	Vacation
32	32	Apr	S2 - W9
33	33	Apr	S2 - W10
34	34	Apr	S2 - W11
35	35	Apr	S2 - W12
36	36	May	Assessment
37	37	May	Assessment

* Please note that the content of the lectures and seminars may be subject to change. Notice of any change will be given where possible.

APPENDIX I

Pathway Course Weekly Timetable (redacted)

Weeks selected for print																			
	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	13:00	13:30	14:00	14:30	15:00	15:30	16:00		
Mon																			
Tue																			
Wed																			
Thu																			
Fri																			
Print Date :					Timetable for														

Characteristic Statement - Delivery Models for International Pathway Courses

Delivery models

Providers of IPCs use a range of different delivery models for the courses that are offered, which includes the following:

- Delivery through a higher education institution (HEI):
 - course design, delivery and quality oversight provided by the HEI's IPC delivery department in the UK or on the HEI's transnational campus; some delivery and services may also be provided by other academic departments within the HEI, depending on local arrangements
 - progression routes identified at the HEI and sometimes at other HEIs if students do not qualify for higher-level study at the host HEI
 - course based on the HEI campus or premises
 - contract between the HEI and the student
 - visas obtained through the HEI.
- Delivery through a private provider:
 - course design, delivery and quality oversight provided by the private provider
 - progression routes identified at HEIs by the private provider
 - course based on private provider's premises
 - contract between the private provider or college and the student
 - visas obtained through the private provider.
- Collaborative delivery through an HEI and one or more private provider or partner college:
 - course design and quality oversight provided collaboratively by the HEI and the private provider according to carefully negotiated responsibilities
 - progression routes identified at host HEI and also possibly through the private provider's or college's wider network of progression routes where necessary
 - course based on separate private provider's or college's premises or on an HEI campus
 - contract between the private provider or college and the student, or the HEI and the student, depending on agreed approach between organisations (not on a case-by-case basis)
 - visas obtained through the HEI or the private provider, based on the arrangement between organisations.

Source: QAA, Characteristics Statement, International Pathway courses, 2022

Document Abstract: Page 10.

Appendix K: Sample of 17 RG Universities by non-EU International Student Revenues 2021-22

Source HESA Data

RUSSELL GROUP UNIVERSITIES, 21-22, SAMPLE OF PG & UG STUDENTS FROM PRC & CN AS A % OF TOTAL INCOME

Source: HESA 21-22

		PG	UG	Total	PRC+IND	Total univ as % total	Fees (000)	Total Fees	Non EU	Total	% of total		
						Students	students	Non EU	(tuition)	as % Fees	Income	Income	
1	ABERDEEN	PRC	535	235	770	1160	16565	7	57296	88229	65	260909	22
		INDIA	365	25	390								
2	BIRM'HAM	PRC	2320	2225	4545	5255	37990	14	187561	408366	46	887940	21
		INDIA	345	365	710								
3	CARDIFF	PRC	2195	700	2895	3755	33985	11	113333	305837	37	634167	18
		INDIA	675	185	860								
4	DURHAM	PRC	1370	1615	2985	3390	22230	15	126986	261163	49	468543	27
		INDIA	250	155	405								
5	EDINBURGH	PRC	3835	40	3875	4350	41250	11	325848	476274	68	1297443	25
		INDIA	400	75	475								
6	GLASGOW	PRC	7750	955	8705	9690	42980	23	281611	359960	78	929358	30
		INDIA	800	185	985								
7	IMPERIAL	PRC	1640	1805	3445	3865	21470	18	262794	384375	68	1163193	23
		INDIA	270	150	420								
8	KCL	PRC	3975	2040	6015	6905	41490	17	326978	557703	59	1149251	28
		INDIA	440	450	890								
9	LEEDS	PRC	3410	1440	4850	5715	37190	15	253891	476799	53	1149251	22
		INDIA	595	270	865								
10	LIVERPOOL	PRC	455	2225	2680	3745	28680	13	114493	290481	39	614928	19
		INDIA	615	450	1065								
11	LSE	PRC	1300	735	2035	2540	12975	20	147889	235210	63	441373	34
		INDIA	395	110	505								
12	NCL	PRC	1415	895	2310	2665	27280	10	107172	286948	37	558606	19
		INDIA	255	100	355								
13	SHEFFIELD	PRC	3885	2125	6010	6460	30860	21	193230	349042	55	822397	23
		INDIA	295	155	450								
14	SOUTH'PTON	PRC	4120	855	4975	5330	23795	22	167817	300161	56	672831	25
		INDIA	285	70	355								
15	UCL	PRC	5225	4780	10005	10685	46830	23	501833	712196	70	1751779	29
		INDIA	380	300	680								
16	YORK	PRC	2370	805	3175	3455	23420	15	102355	241648	42	472167	22
		INDIA	220	60	280								
17	MANCHESTER	PRC	4480	3905	8385	9330	46410	20	374082	616086	61	1217127	31
		INDIA	475	470	945								

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