

Editing sample

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 presents the framework and data collection and analysis methods used to collect and analyze data in relation to the study. This study aims to establish the pull and push factors that lead foreign students to study in NZ. The country's education system depends on international students since the enrolment of domestic students is low. Unfortunately, the number of international students has begun to reduce. Therefore, the institute had to collect data on the factors that could attract international students. This data was useful in ensuring the population of foreign students increases at the institution. A well-described methodology presented in this chapter shows how the qualitative data will be collected.

This chapter has nine sections. Section 3.1 introduces the aims of the study and the problem being addressed. Section 3.2 describes the research design, which includes exploratory research, its advantages, and its disadvantages. Section 3.3. presents the research paradigm, which has been identified as positivist and interpretivist/constructivist. Section 3.4 presents the qualitative research methodology applied to this study. The advantages and disadvantages of the qualitative research method have been discussed in this section. Section 3.5 discusses the participant recruitment and data collection instrument used in the study. Section 3.6 discusses the data collection, which includes the interviewing process. Section 3.7 presents the methods used to analyze data, which are divided into transcription and thematic analysis. Section 3.8 discusses the ethical principles considered in the study. The last section, 3.9, summarizes the chapter.

3.2. Research Design

3.2.1. Exploratory Research

This study will be based on an exploratory research design. When tackling new problems on which little or most likely no information or previous research has been conducted, exploratory research is a preferable approach. Therefore, exploratory research involves attempts to discover or study new and interesting issues that are not clearly defined in current research by concentrating on a particular research topic. Thus, its primary application is to define a research problem, formulate problems, hypothesis and clarify concepts, and form hypotheses (Sue & Ritter, 2012). The researcher begins with undertaking a literature search, conducting case studies, and conducting a semi-structured interview. In the process, the researcher is more focused on creating hypotheses rather than testing the hypotheses (Sue & Ritter, 2012). It helps determine whether or not to proceed with a research topic and further provides the crucial steps of approaching the problem.

3.2.2. Advantages of Exploratory Research

The exploratory research design was selected due to its advantages that apply to the current study. Exploratory research increases the understanding of the research topic to the required level. Most researchers apply exploratory research to increase their knowledge of a specific topic (Stebbins, 2001). The approach is not used to bring definite generalization or conclusions based on the findings, since the

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method lacks statistical strength. However, it plays a crucial role in helping the researcher start discovering and determining why and how things occur (Stebbins, 2001). The research method allows researchers to assess potential factors resulting in the behaviors or symptoms displayed by decision-makers. Thus, the researcher carries out research to establish an array of factors that potentially result in the study's problem. Further extensive studies may verify the findings by analyzing and distinguish the most likely causes in particular.

The second advantage of exploratory research is the flexibility of sources used for the study. Exploratory research regularly depends on published resources such as existing literature on the topic of concern and secondary sources of information, such as existing data on the same topic (Sue & Ritter, 2012). While this is the source, the approach is flexible. It may apply other sources of information, including informal discussions, interviews (mostly formal structured), pilot studies, and, as already mentioned, case studies (Sue & Ritter, 2012). For this study, the participants include international students. While it is reliable to the researchers, unbiased sources present a challenge to the research process, which calls for a high degree of caution while selecting sources to ensure a broad and impartial understanding of the topic of interest.

Also, conclusions from such study methodologies are substantial and provide openings for future research. Exploratory research is more likely to be more beneficial in influencing consequent investigation methods (Creswell, 2015). A more comprehensive understanding of a problem under study supports smooth succeeding research questions and thus more likely to enhance the convenience of conclusions drawn from the study. The method is also crucial in defining the most suitable procedure to accomplish objectives, as stated and intended by the researcher (Maxwell, 2005). For instance, findings from exploratory research may show that one variable gives information or is a consistent indicator of a specific issue, such as a medical condition or customer purchases and preferences. Thus, this indicates that exploratory research is appropriate when testing an outcome for a future trial (Maxwell, 2005). Furthermore, the research method lays the ground that results in future studies.

The planning process for exploratory research involves strategic measures that include controlling the negative impact of factors and enhancing the method (Maxwell, 2005). Exploratory research is more likely to save a lot of time and reduce costs incurred in research by exposing dead ends during the early phases of research (Creswell, 2015). The common purpose of conducting exploratory work is to determine concepts before adopting the market, which is usually costly to the involved parties (Maxwell, 2005). It indicates the research processes that should be dropped and those that should be embraced. For instance, the initial phase of advertising and marketing international institutions should start by applying marketing techniques on a small target group. The international students will react positively or negatively depending on the impact of the institution's advertisement and outlook. Therefore, before moving to larger-scale marketing, the institution must understand the factors involved in driving international students to select

the international institution for study to ensure challenges are dealt with as early as possible.

3.2.3. Disadvantages of Exploratory Research

An exploratory study is likely to create qualitative information and interpretation, subject to bias (Creswell, 2015). Thus, findings of the before-mentioned approach to research are mostly not beneficial in decision making at a realistic level. Exploratory methods focus on a small section of the population, which means the researcher relies on a moderate number of samples that may not sufficiently represent the target population (Creswell, 2015). Consequently, conclusions of exploratory research are unsuitable for use as generalizations to the broader population or community.

Furthermore, the approach does not provide enough solutions to research questions, despite the suggestions or hints at the answers and direction to the most applicable research methods to offer clear-cut explanations (Sue & Ritter, 2012). Findings scertained by qualitative research are mostly at high risk for vital researcher bias (Sue & Ritter, 2012). For instance, results from focus group interviews may not be precise during research. At the same time, participants may overstate their curiosity since they could be attracted to new things.

3.3. Research Paradigm

A research paradigm refers to the research model applicable to conducting research. Rehman & Alharthi (2016) states that a paradigm is a basic belief system and theoretical framework, which provides assumptions on various components, including methodology, ontology, and epistemology. However, other researchers describe a research paradigm as the approach that involves thinking the process of conducting the research and implementing findings (Zukauskas et al., 2018). Three common paradigms applicable to this study are positivist and constructivist or interpretivist. These paradigms are different based on the components, as given by Rehman & Alharthi (2016).

3.3.1. Positivist Paradigm

The Positivist paradigm emerged during the 19th century. According to this paradigm, it is possible to observe real events and explain them using a logical analysis (Kaboub, 2008). The the validity of a scientific theory can be evaluated by measuring whether or not our claims based on theory are consistent with information from our senses (Crook & Garratt, 2005).

The positivist paradigm is preferred for studying the push and pull factors that could influence students' decisions to join the Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology. The investigation in a quantitative research reflects a probabilistic design that is defined by a prior study. Positivist research also involves experimental research that examines the effects of certain factors or interventions through qualitative research (Park et al., 2020). The positivist paradigm assumes that one study's conclusions can be used as a generalization to another research. It is of the same topic, regardless of the context and circumstances, which the different studies are conducted (Somekh & Lewin, 2005). Positivists work to establish a clear understanding of the social world, knowing that the phenomena relies on a cause-effect relationship. After

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understanding the relationship, future events can be predicted with certainty, based on the study's findings.

Researchers study the events that exist independent of them, without affecting or disturbing the factors under observation. In the long run, different researchers working in different places and, at different times, arrive at the same judgments regarding a given phenomenon (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

Considering social and behavioral sciences, researchers understand that any human behavior can be studied and predicted accordingly, and further, the behavior can be described utilizing a systematic procedure to research. Researchers control all the other factors that can impact the research by conducting the study in a laboratory setting while applying the positivist paradigm. Since human behavior is challenging to investigate under controlled conditions; thus, it is difficult for a researcher to use the paradigm in studying human behavior (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). For example, suppose a researcher hypothesizes that most international students who drop out of higher education learning institutions come from unstable political backgrounds or other economic factors. In that case, they have to study those students who failed to complete their courses in a natural environment, preferably than in a laboratory. Since human behavior is nearly impossible to investigate in a laboratory setting, generalizing human behavior to a comprehensive and diverse group of people notwithstanding numerous similarities.

In this study, the objective is to provide insights on the push and pull factors that drive international students to select international institutions for study. Thus, rather than understanding the underlying causal mechanisms invisible to researchers, we are concerned with visible manifestations attributed to positivism's nature (Kaboub, 2008). Thus, the Positivist paradigm applies across this research. The Positivist methodology requires researching in settings that involve controlling and manipulating variables (Kaboub, 2008). Therefore, this research paper applies this approach by studying and comparing institutions with varying conditions, including push and pull factors discussed in previous sections.

3.3.2. Interpretivist/Constructivist

Researchers in qualitative research mostly apply the interpretivism paradigm to research. According to Jackson (2018), interpretivism emphasizes that human social behaviors are in multiple layers impossible to determine based on pre-established probabilistic principles. It relies on the circumstances and is determined by environmental agents but not the genes. While scientific variables are controllable, according to interpretivism, human behavior is influenced by various factors and is often subjective (Jackson, 2018). As a result, interpretivism entails studying human behavior in daily experience rather than in a controlled environment.

Interpretivism rejects the assumption that a single reality can be verified independently of our senses (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). However, according to Interpretivists, there are realities that are socially constructed. Furthermore, it is not easy to access external reality that is not contaminated by the researchers' perspectives, attitudes, concepts, and background (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Rehman & Alharthi (2016) argued that researchers and social reality could not be treated as separate entries from

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the topic under study. However, this methodology requires that social phenomena be interpreted through research participants' perception and not the researcher (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Critics of the paradigm are incapable of yielding theories that could be used for generalization on large populations. Furthermore, the involvement of the researcher with participants results in a lack of objectivity.

The Interpretivism/Constructivism paradigm applies to this study in a distinct manner. This research involves understanding the push and pull factors that drive international students to select international institutions for study by considering observations through the students' perspectives, but not the researchers (Jackson, 2018). Analysis of trends is inductive through the discovery of patterns in the data about students. Data is grouped into themes to understand the question under study and generate a theory (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

3.4. Qualitative Research

According to Creswell & Poth (2016), the process of conducting a qualitative research entails collection and analysis of non-numerical data (for instance, audio, video and text) to explain ideas, judgments, and experiences. Qualitative research methods can be used to collect in-depth perspicacity into a research problem or even further generate new study (Lune & Berg, 2017). Qualitative research does not involve numerical analysis of data (Creswell, 2015).

Qualitative research is generally employed in the topics revolving around humanities and social sciences, including sociology, education, health sciences, and history (Creswell & Poth, 2016). It provides insights into the research question and further helps develop hypotheses for possible quantitative research (Lune & Berg, 2017). Another application of qualitative research is uncovering trends in views and opinions and to explore the problem further. Qualitative data collection methods range from unstructured to semi-structured methods (Lune & Berg, 2017). The most common techniques include focus groups, interviews, and participation or observations (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Thus, qualitative research methods involve using one or more data collection techniques collected using various techniques (Creswell & Poth, 2016). For example, data may be collected through observation, interviews, gathering information from participants, questionnaires or even relying on existing data in textual, image, audio, or video formats (Lune & Berg, 2017).

3.4.1. Advantages of qualitative research

Flexibility – According to Kalu & Bwalya (2017), qualitative research leads to data collection containing emotional responses from target groups, which drives decision-making processes. Since it is an open-ended method, there is no “right” or “wrong” response; thus, the data collection process is more straightforward. The methods are not rigid since collection and analysis of data collection can be applied or improved as new ideas or trends arise (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). This is essential in capturing dynamic attributes of customers or a target group under study. The method also relies on existing data and other information (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). Furthermore, qualitative research methods do not necessarily require

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a specific format of data collection, and information reports are generated based on the amount of information collected (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). The researcher is also more likely to change the research process if the study fails to generate useful results.

Natural settings – ~~Collection of data happens~~ in ~~natural or~~ real-world contexts. Target populations are approached using sampling techniques to obtain real-world data and insights into consumer attributes, perspectives, expectations, and changing attitudes (Lune & Berg, 2017).

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Meaningful insights - Qualitative research provides descriptions of participants' experiences or a group of people, their feelings, and perceptions in a detailed manner (Lune & Berg, 2017). The information obtained in this case can be used to design, test, or improve services or products to meet stakeholder expectations.

Generation of new ideas - While the researcher may be concerned with a particular topic, qualitative research methods are more likely to result in surprisingly essential information (Lune & Berg, 2017). More specifically, the use of open-ended answers means that ~~investigators~~ can reveal opportunities ~~or problems~~, which they never had in mind otherwise (Lune & Berg, 2017).

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3.4.2. Disadvantages of qualitative research

While the approach has strongholds discussed above, researchers must consider the drawbacks of qualitative research methods (Vogt et al., 2012).

Unreliability – According to Vogt et al. (2012), the research method uses a real-world ~~environment, thereby increasing the unreliability of~~ making qualitative research due to uncontrolled factors that influence the data.

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Subjectivity - Data collection approaches and analysis techniques are under the researcher's control, making it impossible for other researchers to replicate data from qualitative research (Vogt et al., 2012). The researcher's role includes deciding the crucial details and irrelevant sections of the data after collecting, hence interpretations from various researchers or studies may have a significant variation (Vogt et al., 2012). While the process is time-consuming, misleading conclusions will result in rejection of the study.

Limited Generalization - Results and conclusions from qualitative research may not be reliable regarding generalization on the population. The methods are mostly used to collect accurate data concerning specific settings, which cannot be applied in generalizable conclusions due to business exposure and inability to represent the entire population (Vogt et al., 2012).

Labor-intensive - While software may be applied in the processes, qualitative methods can still require intensive labor (Vogt et al., 2012). Managing and recording large amounts of text is most likely possible, unlike data analysis, which more often requires checking or execution manually.

3.5. Participants, recruitment, data collection instrument

Toi-Ohomai will be the setting for the research as it is one of the major higher education

institutions of New Zealand that attracts a significant number of international students. Selecting an appropriate sampling method is necessary for recruiting the participants. For the current research, participants who meet the criteria of studying in semester two at Toi Ohomai were recruited using non-probability quota sampling.

Quota sampling is typical to purposive sampling since it involves the researcher’s judgment on the participants' eligibility (Etikan & Bala, 2012). The researcher can design how many people have the required characteristics to participate in the study. Some of the traits considered are age, gender, class, or profession. In this study, quota sampling was selected as the best methodology since the target group consisted of a few members. The target population is primarily international students at the Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology. Therefore, it is to target individual international students and inform them about the study. The researcher understands the student’s experiences from frequent interaction with them. Consequently, it is possible to identify those who can willingly participate in the research and provide reliable information (Etikan & Bala, 2012).

The aim was to collect interview data from 8-10 international students. An email was sent along with an information sheet to the international students studying in semester 2, inviting them to participate in this research. Interested participants were selected to attend one to one interview as per the convenience of the participants. The interview questions were emailed a few days before the interview to familiarize them with the interview questions. The interview Questions for the semi-structured interview were attached to this application. The first set of Questions Q1–Q3 were opening questions used to learn about the study participants. The second set of interview questions, Q1-Q5, was about the country choice and the institution choice.

3.6. Data Collection

The data collection methods applied to qualitative research are observations, interviews, and textual or visual analysis. According to Gill et al. (2008), qualitative interviews are standard methods for collecting data in most qualitative studies. This study involved interviews to collect data.

Tool	Advantages	Disadvantages
Observations	<div><div>· Provides detailed and context-related information.</div><div>· Leads to the collection of factual data.</div><div>· It is possible to conduct reliability tests on data collected.</div></div>	<div><div>· High chances of observer bias.</div></div>
Focus groups	<div><div>· They are easy to conduct.</div><div>· They are non-intrusive since they involve asking general questions to the entire group.</div></div>	<div><div>· Researcher bias could influence the outcomes.</div><div>· Could lead to invaluable insights.</div></div>

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In-depth interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Provide a good understanding of the study subjects or participants. · They lead to collection of detailed data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · They are time-intensive. · Researcher bias could affect the quality of the information collected.
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Several factors led to the selection of interviews as the best data collection method when investigating the push and pull factors that influence international students' decision to select their preferred institutions. The first consideration was the nature of the data required (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The aim was to collect the students' perceptions or opinions based on their experience when selecting the institution. Therefore, qualitative information, rather than quantitative, was needed in this case. According to Gill et al. (2008), interviews are best used when the data required is qualitative. The second factor was the sample size (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The study involved only 8-10 participants, making it convenient to use interviews, which were also easy to conduct. The third factor is the cost of the study. As noted by Creswell & Poth (2016), interviews are less costly, making them appropriate for this study. Finally, the study had a limited time, making it suitable to use interviews that required only a few minutes per participant.

Interviews are classified into unstructured, semi-structured, and structured groups (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Unstructured interviews involve questions not limited to a specific answer (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The questions also do not follow any particular format or style of answering. This interviewing style is used when the research is on a sensitive topic, and the researcher does not want to hurt the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Then, a semi-structured interview involves a meeting in which the researcher does not use formalized questions (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The researchers do not use straight forward questions that require direct answers. Instead, the questions used are open-ended, and respondents have to discuss their answers (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Lastly, a structured interview involves formal questions, which require specific answers (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Most of the questions are closed-ended and are administered to respondents in the same order.

~~Collection of qualitative data involved semi~~-structured interviews. The study was exploratory, which made it effective to use semi-structured interviews. The author selected the semi-structured interviews because they have applied in related studies. For instance, Ahmad & Buchanan (2017) used semi-structured interviews involving 18 international students to determine the factors that motivated them to select international branch campuses in Malaysia. Similarly, Özoğlu et al. (2015) applied semi-structured interviews as an effective qualitative research method to establish factors that ~~drive~~ international students to select Turkey as their tertiary education destination. These studies are closely related to the present research, and their outcomes contributed to the decision to choose semi-structured interviews.

3.6.2. Interview Process

A specific room for interviewing and the participants allowed to attend depending on their

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schedule. Before beginning the interview, the researcher informed the participants on the study's purpose and allowed them to sign a form of consent. They were told they could withdraw their participation unconditional. They were then made comfortable by being assured that the interviewing was just a friendly interaction. Then, they were then asked the interview questions and allowed adequate time to respond. Their responses were recorded using a tape recorder. The researcher also recorded some notes in the notebook for a reference or further analysis.

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Despite the high efficacy of the interviewing process, several challenges were encountered. Unlike what the author thought, conducting the interviews was a taxing process (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Some of the participants felt that the questions were targeting their personal decisions. The interviewer had to assure them that the questions were generalized. Some of the questions had to be rephrased to ensure all participants feel comfortable answering them. Therefore, the process was time-consuming since the interviewer sat with each participant and listened to their responses (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

3.7. Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2015), qualitative data analysis is primarily focused on converting raw information by identifying trends in the raw data to comprehend the message lying underneath it. Data analysis is used to establishing the meaning of the findings (Bourke, 2009). In qualitative research, the process of data analysis is continuous (Bourke, 2009). Ngulube (2015) remarks that the analysis of data demonstrates a qualitative researcher's competency. The data is prepared and arranged transcripts for analysis. Then codes are used to classify the data into several themes data (Creswell, 2007).

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In qualitative research, data analysis involves text or image data organization, reducing them into themes through coding (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The coded data is finally presented in tables, figures, or discussed directly. Creswell & Poth (2016) state that qualitative data analysis is a continuous process that is revised regularly. New data analysis methods are established, particularly with the use of computer programs (Creswell & Poth, 2016). For this study, analysis of data involved two major stages; transcription and thematic analysis.

3.7.1. Transcription

As recommended by Creswell & Poth (2016), transcription entailed documenting the participants' responses. The researcher documented information provided by each individual using audio recorders. The researcher also summarized the information provided by each of the participants into notes, documented differently. The written information was compared to the audiotapes to ensure all the details have been recorded accurately before summarizing them into themes.

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3.7.2. Thematic analysis

The transcribed data were analyzed to identify specific themes. Castleberry & Nolen (2018) suggested that the researcher familiarize first with the data transcribed to ensure it makes sense. Several topics can be generated in relation to the research question. The second step was to generate codes

(Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The codes present a brief description of what the respondents said during the interviews. They are small groups of data generated from the respondents' general information (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Some of the codes were generated on the influence of the cost of education, academic standards, distance from the country of origin, prestige status of the institution, and career growth plans. Other codes were on the student's experience with the institution they had selected.

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After coding the data for each participant, the researcher identified specific themes from the codes (Terry et al., 2017). The codes were compared to establish those that relate and can be classified into a broader category. These categories were the theme, which was further classified into different levels. The next step involved reviewing and refining the themes (Terry et al., 2017). This review helped to determine themes that were contradicting or overlapping. The theme found to be contradicting were divided into different themes. The next phase was defining and naming the themes (Terry et al., 2017). Each theme was named according to how it relates to the research question.

3.7.3. NVivo

After thematic analysis, the recorded audio data was transferred to the NVivo software for further analysis. The researcher used Nvivo software to identify meaning patterns from the participants' responses and categorize them into themes (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). NVivo is available in the postgraduate research lab at Toi Ohomai. According to Creswell & Poth (2016), NVivo is the latest software used to store and manipulate qualitative data. The software makes it easy to store different data types into a single file, making it easy to conduct searches for specific words (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). The purpose of using this software was to group related ideas into the same groups. The researcher also used this software to examine the relationship in the data provided by the respondents. The latest version of the software, NVivo 12, was preferred. The categories of data produced were then compared to the themes generated through thematic analysis to determine if they have similar patterns.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

In qualitative research, ethics are moral standards used to guide researchers' behaviors while protecting the rights of participants. This study followed three ethical principles, which are justice, autonomy, and beneficence. The autonomy principle is honored in qualitative research by obtaining informed consent from participants (Orb et al., 2001). The major aim of obtaining informed consent is to allow participants to exercise their rights of deciding independently whether they want to participate or withdraw from the study at any stage or time without being penalized (Orb et al., 2001). In this study, before obtaining the participant's informed consent, they were given a brief explanation about the aims, purpose, and benefits of the research, how much time it will take for the interview will be provided to the participants (Goodwin et al., 2020). They were also assured of their right to withdraw at any time, and there will be no harm, and the participation in this research is voluntary. Furthermore, the participants were informed that the information they were providing was confidential, and if they are interested, they can get

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the results. The participants who agreed to participate were then given the forms of informed consent to sign.

The researcher then observed the principle of beneficence. According to this principle, researchers should focus on doing good and avoiding hurting or harming others; in this case, the study participants (Orb et al., 2001). In relation to this principle, all information was gathered from the participants complying with the ethical considerations of research that involve principles of confidentiality, the dignity of the participants, and voluntary participation (Goodwin et al., 2020). Any information related to the participants' identity, including name, specific age, and student ID, was not collected. During the data collection, the names and the student ID of the participants were not be collected.

Furthermore, all the data used in the research report would be anonymized (Goodwin et al., 2020). The participants' email address was not included in the dissertation and only the research could access their details. All the raw data collected through the interview was accessible by only the researcher and the supervisor. The participant's confidentiality was strictly maintained, and no name and id of the participants will be used for the data collection. The participants' information will be collected as Participant 1 or Participant 2...

The study also ensured the participants were protected from any emotional, mental, or physical harm (Goodwin et al., 2020). The interview was conducted according to the participants' free time, and their participation was voluntary to ensure their privacy was not evaded. To ensure participants are not pressurized, they were informed of the participation terms that allowed them to withdraw from the interview without consequences (Goodwin et al., 2020). The researcher also avoided any questions leading to social or religious push and pull factors involving the interview. The researcher provided some prompts with the semi-structured interview questions to avoid any sensitive push/pull factors (religious and social).

The last principle ethical principle observed is justice. Orb et al. (2001) states that the principle of justice requires fair and equal treatment of all participants. The researcher ensured that all participants' interviews occurred within the same conditions (Goodwin et al., 2020). The researcher also considered the vulnerability of all the participants and the information provided by each. There was no special treatment for any participant in this study.

3.9. Chapter Summary

This study was based on the explorative research design to collect new information on the push and pull factors that influenced international students' decisions to select the Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology. The researcher applied the positivist paradigm to understand the push and pull factors identified by the participants. The researcher also used the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm to understand the human social behaviors that could have played a role in the students' decision to join the Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology. The researcher adopted a qualitative research methodology, which effectively established the participants' experiences, perceptions, and opinions on the influence of push

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and pull factors on their decision to join the Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology. In this qualitative research, interviewing was used as a data collection tool. The study population consisted of 8 international students, which made it appropriate to use interviews. These participants were selected through a quota sampling approach. The data collected was recorded using an audio recorder and analyzed through thematic analysis. NVivo software was also used to help in analyzing the qualitative data. When conducting the interviews, the researcher followed all the ethical principles of justice, autonomy, and beneficence.

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