

**WHY IMMIGRANTS WANT TO LEAVE CANADA: THE STRUGGLE OF
CANADAIAN UNIVERSITY GRADUATE IMMIGRANTS IN THE LABOUR
MARKET**

**WHY IMMIGRANTS WANT TO LEAVE CANADA: THE STRUGGLE OF
CANADAIAN UNIVERSITY GRADUATE IMMIGRANTS IN THE LABOUR
MARKET**

BY

AMBREEN UZAIR

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Social Work

McMaster University

© Copyright by Ambreen Uzair, August 2014

Master of Social Work Social Work

McMaster University

(2014)

Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Why Immigrants Wants to Leave Canada: The Struggle of Canadian University Graduate Immigrants in the labour market.

AUTHOR: Ambreen Uzair B.A., M.S.W., (University of the Punjab, Pakistan)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Stephanie Baker Collins, Ph.D.

NUMBER OF PAGES: viii, 81

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore the personal, cultural and structural experiences and barriers faced by highly skilled Canadian university graduate immigrants regarding finding a good job related to their qualification in the labour market, and how this struggle has shaped their lives. Data was collected through individuals by semi-structured questionnaires. Interviews were the deep source of skilled immigrants' experiences and problems they have faced in the labour market.

Applying the critical race theory perspective and using the Thompson PCS Model as investigating tool, this study sought to capture the participants' reality. The findings suggest that immigrants are facing many structural and systemic barriers and racial discrimination in the labour market. It is affecting them not only individually but also affecting their families and because of that these skilled immigrants have a plan to leave Canada for better job opportunities because even after graduating from Canadian universities they were unable to find work according to their field of study and work experience.

Major themes emerging from this research include: why skilled immigrants pursued more education if they were already graduated from their home countries; immigration policies and labour market policies mismatch; non-recognition of immigrants credentials and work experience; inadequate settlement services; racial

discrimination in job market; and what difference they feel before and after graduating from Canadian university in finding a job.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank to my research supervisor, Dr. Stephanie Baker Collins, whose, guidance, kind assistance and support were of great importance during the development of this research. Thank you so much for all your suggestions, unending availability and being a role model for me.

I would also like to thank the professors who shared their knowledge and expertise with me; in particular, Mirna Carranza for proofreading my research paper. My thanks go to my classmates as well. They together with the faculty and staff at the McMaster School of Social work, contributed to building a positive learning environment.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to skilled immigrants for being participants of my research study; without them, this study would not have been possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, my parents who prayed for me a lot; my better half, whose support has given me the strength to complete my MSW successfully; and my friends for giving me courage all the time; and specially I want to thank to my son for being so gentle and calm boy in the whole period of my study.

TABLE OF CONTENT

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Purpose and Rationale	3
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE	5
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
3.1 Different Immigration Streams	8
3.2 Disjuncture between Point System and Labour Market	9
3.3 Barriers Faced by Immigrants	10
3.3.1 Inadequate Labour Market Policies and Settlement Services	10
3.3.2 Suspect Credentials	11
3.3.3 Discrimination Face by Immigrants in the labour market	11
3.3.4 Other Barriers	13
3.3.5 One Way Training Programs	13
3.4 Impact of Barriers on Immigrants	14

3.4.1 Social Isolation	14
3.4.2 Lack of Citizenship Rights	15
3.4.3 Mobility	16
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY	18
4.1 Research Design	20
4.1.1 Recruitment Process	21
4.1.2 Interview Process	22
4.1.3 Data Collection	23
4.1.4 Data Analysis	23
4.2 Ethical Considerations	24
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS	26
Demographics of the Participants	27
5.1 Reason to Become Participant in this Research Study	30
5.2 Why Participants decided to go for Higher Education in Canadian Universities.....	30
5.3 Experience Studying in Canadian University	32
5.4 Career Aspirations and First Hand Experience in Fulfilling Career Goals....	33
5.4.1 Current Job Experience	36
5.5 Experience before and after doing Master's from Canadian University in Job Opportunities	37
5.6 Barriers in Finding a Job	40
5.7 Racial Discrimination in the labour market	41
5.8 Future Plans or Mobility Plans	42

5.9 Exploring Opportunities other than Professional Jobs	44
5.10 Settlement Services	45
5.10.1 How Settlement Services are working for Graduate Immigrants	45
5.10.2 What should be Included in Settlement Services?	46
5.11 Immigration Policies and Labour Market Policies Mismatch	47
CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	50
6.1 Experience of Highly Skilled Immigrants at Personal Level	51
6.2 Experience of Highly Skilled Immigrants at Cultural Level	56
6.3 Experience of Highly Skilled Immigrants at Structural Level	59
Limitations of the Study	66
Implications for Social work Practice and Research	66
Recommendations for the Government of Canada	68
REFERENCES	71
Interview Questions	76
Letter of Information/ Consent Form	79

Chapter 1

Introduction

Immigration is an important element of population and economic growth in Canada. Each year approximately 200,000 immigrants arrive in Canada. Two-thirds (69%) of the population growth between 2001 and 2006 was because of immigrants. In 2010, Canada accepted 280,681 immigrants (permanent and temporary) of which 186,913 (67%) were Economic immigrants (skilled immigrants); 60,220 (22%) were Family class; 24,696 (9%) were Refugees; and 8,845 (2%) were others (Plante, 2011). The low-wages and unemployment rates of recent immigrants are twice as high as those of similarly-aged non-immigrants or native-born people. Immigrants are doing jobs for which they are over qualified and doing them at low wages (Oreopoulos, 2009; Reitz 2001).

The Canadian immigrant selection system (point system) accepts immigrants on the basis of their skills, which leads immigrants to mistakenly believe that finding employment in their own field should not be difficult, and that their skills and experience will be recognized fully. However, immigrants face barriers such as devaluation of their foreign degrees, an inability to finance further studies, and refusals by professional organizations to recognize their degrees regardless of whether they possess higher or lower levels of formal or informal education. Such practices, in which people assume that Canadian degrees are superior to foreign degrees, are notable barriers to occupations for

which highly qualified and educated persons have been prepared in their own countries (Shields, Rahi, & Scholtz, 2006).

Politically, the Canadian government thinks about immigration in terms of the economy and population growth, rather than thinking about how to integrate skilled immigrants in the labour market after their arrival. Canada assesses immigrants or allows immigration on the basis of immigrants' high qualifications/education, work experience, and language proficiency, using a point based system (Grubel, 2013), but after migration, the labour market rejects this decision by not accepting immigrants' degree's and work experience in the labour market (Teelucksingh, & Galabuzi, 2005). Not being able to practice their profession in Canada has led many immigrants with international professional training into poverty. Social institutional barriers such as education, housing, minimum wage jobs, health care, and political representation have also marginalized immigrants in Canada. Poor integration of immigrants after arriving in Canada suggests that people fall behind regardless of qualifications and experience, because of systemic economic barriers (Bradshaw, 2007).

Canada's immigration policies focus on highly skilled professionals and encourage population growth and economic growth; this is why Canada admits thousands of skilled immigrants every year. However, these policies do not line up with a domestic labour market that discriminates against such immigrants. Immigration policies and integration services are not working well towards immigrants' integration in the new country. As a result, many immigrants decide to get more education from Canadian

universities so that they will be able to find Canadian work related to their previous education. But even after graduating from Canadian universities they are struggling in the labour market, finding themselves over-qualified in education and experience for the jobs they are doing in Canada, and as a result many immigrants are returning to their own countries or going to other countries where they can find better jobs (Beach, Worswick, Green, 2011).

1.1 Purpose and Rationale

My interest in this topic has developed through my own experience. As an immigrant, I have faced challenges in the labour market in terms of language proficiency, devaluation of degrees and refusal from professional organizations to accept foreign experience. Canadian organizations demand the evaluation of immigrants' degrees not only in hiring but also in educational admissions. I have experienced the same challenging situation in job-seeking, and while seeking admission to Canadian universities in Master's programs. The process of degree evaluation was distressing, complicated, long and expensive. However, because of non-recognition of my native home degree in the labour market, I decided to seek admission to a Canadian university. As an insider of the research study population, I know many immigrants who have left Canada because even after graduating from Canadian universities they did not find any work related to their educational qualifications.

As an immigrant I also have a plan to leave Canada after getting my degree because I know I am not going to get a job or I may struggle or wait a long time to find a

job. I ask myself if it is worth struggling for many years just to find job, which may not even be related to my qualifications. For all these reasons, I know many families are leaving Canada or planning to leave Canada as soon as they find a good job in another country. I want to share their experiences and the reasons behind their decision to leave Canada. Having a good and healthy life is the dream of every human being. If a highly educated person has spent 16 or 18 years of his/her life getting a good education, and does not find a good job, it will be disappointing for him/her and then he/she will try to find some other way to live better.

The main purpose of this research study is to understand the experiences of immigrants who have been educated in Canada in finding a job and the effects of these experiences on their decisions about living in or leaving Canada if they do not find a job related to their educational qualifications. Key research questions are as follows: why did participants pursue education from a Canadian university if they were already educated in their native countries; what difficulties do immigrants who get their university degrees in Canada still face in finding suitable jobs related to their own education; and what decisions do immigrants make about remaining in or leaving Canada if they do not find a job within a few years?

Chapter 2

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective related to my research topic is “Critical Race Theory” (CRT). CRT focused upon the application of critical theory, which aims to critically examine the connections of society and culture, with law, race and power (Tara, 2005). Critical theory examines ways in which current conceptions of social and political life maintain relations of oppression, domination, and injustice. CRT puts race at the center of critical analysis and describes the relationship between evidently race-neutral ideals and the structure of white supremacy and racism (Valdes, Culp, & Harris, 2002).

CRT states that racism is an ordinary act which occurs every day for people of colour rather than declaring racism an abnormal or individualistic act. Racism is embedded in the social and institutional fabric of white society, as racism is ordinary, embedded and invisible in its nature. How people holding racial privilege think about people from different races is sometime unconscious or invisible to them, but that “invisibility” of thinking maintains racism in society. However, Critical Race Theory also states that people in power and dominant social discourses can racialize groups of people at different times and in different ways, depending on social, historic and economic needs (e.g., economic downturn means people admit only members of their own race into the labour market rather than other racialized groups) (Abrams, & Moio, 2009). This analytical lens is used to examine existing power structures and to identify white

privilege, which perpetuates the marginalization of people of colour. It resonates with the idea of immigrants facing racial discrimination in Canadian society and a specific group of citizens (native-born white people who possess a better economic, political, and social position in the Canadian labour market) using power and privilege in the labour market (Abrams, & Moio, 2009).

CRT also provides information to help us better understand how discrimination is embedded in the operations of White institutions. Institutional racism demonstrates itself both in material conditions (e.g., gainful employment) and in access to power (e.g., economic strong position and representation in government) (Jones, 2003). “Institutionalized racism is defined as the structures, policies, practices, and norms resulting in differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society by race” (P.10).

CRT critically focuses on racial discrimination, which is found between different groups within society. It will also help to explore the underlying concepts of Canadian immigration policies, which work on the point system to promote Canadian economic and population growth rather than being focused on immigrants’ integration into the labour market. CRT challenges the stories that ignore the systematic inequalities that societal and institutional racism provides, painting a false picture of liberalism and meritocracy in which everyone who works hard can attain power, privilege and wealth (Buenavista, Jayakumar, & Misa-Escalante, 2009). “CRT advocates a rewriting of history to include the lived reality of oppressed groups from their perspectives and their own

words, bringing these narratives into account challenges liberalist claims of neutrality, colour blindness, and universal truths” (Abrams, & Moio, 2009:251).

Bradshaw’s theory of poverty (2007) supports the ideas of CRT. This theory states that systemic barriers exist that prevent immigrants from achieving access and accomplishment in key social institutions including jobs, education, housing, health care, safety, political representation, etc. Immigrants falls behind in systemic economic barriers to integration after arriving in Canada regardless of how much they are experienced and qualified. Partly the problem is the fact that minimum wages or unemployment do not allow immigrants and their families to be economically self-sufficient (Bradshaw, 2007).

Both theories combine to help explore the embedded racism in institutions and structural economic barriers faced by immigrants in Canadian society. Both theories will help to understand the inequalities present in society and institutions and how economic and societal barriers are affecting the life of immigrants. How these structural factors serve to exclude immigrants from labour market and how institutional racism put immigrants into the struggle to find a good job related to their own qualification.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Immigration has played a significant role in transforming Canada into a diverse and flourishing nation. Immigrants bring their language, values, culture, high education and work experience to the new country and society (Guo, 2009). “Although Canada has been extolled as an open and tolerant society, it has been criticized for failing to accept differences as valid and valuable expressions of the human experience” (Guo, 2009:38).

3.1 Different Immigration Streams

The Canadian immigration system is classified into three broad categories: economic class immigrants, family class immigrants and refugees. Economic class immigrants include skilled workers, business immigrants, provincial nominees, live-in caregivers and their spouses; Family class immigrants include spouses, children, partners, parents and grandparents of already Canadian citizens; Refugee class include persons who need protection in another country: also called protected persons (Schugurensky; Slade & Luo, 2005). These classes and categories show the economic, social and humanitarian goals of the Canadian immigration policy. Economic independent immigrants are assessed on point system, which assesses the applicants’ eligibility to become an immigrant based on his/her age, education, work experience, language and adaptability (George & Fuller-Thomson, 1997). Previously refugee class and family

reunification class were more important components of immigration policy in Canada but recently economic class has taken the front line (King, 2009). During the last few decades, due to policy shifts, the economic independent class has taken the larger proportion of overall immigration (George & Fuller-Tomson, 1997). In 2010, economic immigrants were 67 percent of all immigrant admittances in Canada (Plante, 2011).

3.2 Disjuncture between Point System and Labour Market

The research literature shows that historically immigration policy in Canada has used selection criteria that emphasize educational credentials and occupational skills for attracting economic immigrants. Moreover, a growing elderly population and demographic evidence for a declining birthrate support an expansionist immigration policy. The attractive point-base system of immigration in Canada admits thousands of immigrants every year to promote Canada's economic and population growth (Anisef, Sweet, & Frempong, 2003). However, research shows that Canada's immigration policies and labour market policies don't match, and this mismatch leads immigrants to do work with low wages or become unemployed. The underutilized potential of skilled immigrants in the labour market has been a subject of substantial concern. Immigrants are becoming more vulnerable economically compared to native-born citizens, despite their high level of education, skills and previous work experience (Walker, 2006; Reitz, 2001).

Economic class immigrants are people selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy, including skilled workers, business immigrants, provincial and territorial nominees, and live-in caregivers (Citizenship and Immigration

Canada Facts and Figures, 2012). Canada's economic class immigration is based on point system in which education has 25 points, ability in English and/ or French speaking has 24 points, work experience has 21 points, and age, arranged employment in Canada and adaptability has 10 points each. Out of total 100 points, applicant has to get 67 points to obtain immigration. The categories including education, work experience and language proficiency have the highest points. Most of the skilled immigrants are highly qualified, have good working experience and also must pass the IELTS English language test to obtain immigration. The Canadian government gives immigration on these bases but then the labor market rejects them on same basis by demanding Canadian education and Canadian work experience rather than considering their previous high education and work experience (Grubel, 2013).

3.3 Barriers Faced by Immigrants

3.3.1 Inadequate Labour Market Policies and Settlement Services

The low incomes and employment discrimination in the labor market has existed with highly skilled immigrants' since Canada opened immigration. Canada has introduced many new policies as alternatives to existing policies regarding immigration, citizenship, and temporary entry to Canada between 2008 and July1, 2012. The recent emphasis of the Canadian government on short-term labour market needs, a less welcoming environment for immigrants, inadequate settlement services and lack of evidence based immigration policies will not only negatively affect immigrants but also the future of Canada. A literature review on Canadian public policies and practice that

directly work towards skilled immigrants' labour market integration shows that despite all the significant efforts, numerous service gaps still exist and need to be improved (Grubel, 2013; Walker, 2006; Alboim, Cohl, 2012). Inadequate labour market policies, inadequate integration services, and racial discrimination, in addition to immigration policies, all play an important role in the failure of immigrants' to integrate into the labour market.

3.3.2 Suspect Credentials

Proof of inadequate labour market policies is the non-recognition of immigrants' prior education and work experience, which is the most outstanding social policy issue today. The knowledge of immigrants including their education and work experience is often treated with suspicion and as inferior after arriving in Canada. Immigrants face deskilling or decredentializing of their previous education credentials and work experience (Guo, 2009; Sheilds, Rahi, Scholtz, 2006; Reitz, 2001).

3.3.3 Discrimination Faced by Immigrants in the labour market

Oreopoulos, (2009) has described an investigation into why Canadian immigrants struggle in finding jobs. In this research, thousands of resumes were sent through online job postings across multiple job occupations in Toronto. Results showed that English-named applicants with Canadian education and experience had interview request rates more than three times higher when compared to applicants with Chinese, Indian, and Pakistani names with the same foreign education and experience. No difference was found with respect to British applicants. Foreign education was less valued by employers

in comparison with education obtained in Canadian institutions. Callback rates for interviews rose 11 percent when resumes were resubmitted with the addition of Canadian experience. Interview request rates for English-sounding names were 40 percent higher than for Chinese, Indian, and Pakistani applicants' names. Overall, the result indicated that employers discriminate against applicants in regard to their foreign names, foreign credentials and foreign experience (Oreopoulos, 2009).

Most literature on ethnic and racial inequality in the Canadian labour market has used a human capital approach to define differences in employment outcomes of ethnic and racial groups (Maximova, K., & Krahn, H. 2005). Research literature describes the employment opportunities and the experience of discrimination for skilled immigrants and their struggle in Canadian labor market due to race, ethnicity and immigration status. Racial discrimination in the labour market is in two main forms: employment discrimination (when generalized assumptions about the worth of racialized employees are made by employers) and treatment discrimination (when a racialized group member is not hired, promoted or paid equally regardless of their high skills and experience) (Sheilds, Rahi, Scholtz, 2006; Teelucksingh, & Galabuzi, 2005).

Anisef, Sweet, & Frempong, (2003), state that graduate immigrants' face inequality in the job market. Earlier research has suggested that whatever adjustment mechanisms have been introduced have proven inadequate or ineffective for the entry of graduate immigrants into the work force. The findings revealed that higher education and work experience did not make any difference in the gaps in earnings of immigrants and

non-immigrants with similar university education and work experience (Anisef, Sweet, & Frempong, 2003). Working for low wages after spending many years acquiring specialized professional degrees and work experience has been shown to cause mental and emotional stress and this situation not only creates a personal loss but is also an economic waste for the country, with serious implications for the long term integration of highly skilled immigrants in Canadian society (George, Chaze, Fuller Thomson, & Brennenstuhl, 2012).

3.3.4 Other Barriers

Studies define different barriers faced by new immigrants in the Canadian labour market (e.g. language barriers, inadequate support services, lack of Canadian job experience or Canadian job references, lack of connections in the job market, foreign experience and credentials being heavily discounted or not accepted), and give us a deeper understanding of the social exclusion experienced by immigrants (Dietz, Esses, Joshi, bennett-abuayyash, 2009; Agocs, Jain, 2001).

3.3.5 One Way Training Programs

Job training programs provide training to immigrants about professional clothing and appropriate interpersonal communication and relationships. The programs mainly emphasize preparing immigrants to fit into the Canadian cultural organizations (Sovran, 2011) rather than encouraging employers to change their shallow Canadian cultural attitudes towards immigrants. In this manner stereotyping about immigrants is also present in the labour market, as employers think that immigrants are less capable in

education and in experience in comparison to Canadian-born people. Discourse such as “fitting in” is problematic and promotes a one-way process of integration, forcing immigrants to adapt to Canadian workplace expectations, but not discussing the employment discrimination that immigrants’ face in the Canadian labour market. Such discourses also imply that there is an idealized universal culture for workplaces in Canada which has no place for multiculturalism (Guo, 2013). In Canadian organizations people expect immigrants to be, think, and act like native-born Canadians rather than considering their cultural backgrounds (Guo, 2009).

Guo (2013) states that job-preparation workshop facilitators encourage the linguistically and culturally diverse immigrants to adopt Anglo norms, by telling them that they are not in their cultural community and they should think and act like a Canadian for successful integration into society. By this kind of training, the facilitator is attempting to colonize the minds and practice of immigrants. Such mentality supports the dominance of white, Eurocentric behaviors and norms. Despite its official multicultural policies, Canada is still dominated by British and French cultural norms (Satzewich, & Liodakis, 2007).

3.4 Impact of Barriers on Immigrants

3.4.1 Social Isolation

The vulnerable condition of immigrants who are underemployed leads them towards restricted social life in communities and society. Most immigrants become so busy making money and working, often doing multiple shifts both day and night to earn

enough money to pay their rent, insurance, and other bills, that they don't get enough time for their social life. They are less involved in community activities, and that causes them to lag behind culturally and socially in adjusting into their new communities (Aycan, & Berry, 1996). Individuals who are accepted as immigrants on the basis of their high education, qualifications, experience and skills may also be more vulnerable to losing their feelings of self-worth and self respect when facing difficulties in finding employment (Aycan, & Berry, 1996). Alienation from the society is another outcome of difficulties experienced by immigrants in employment life in Canada. Alienation occurs when there is a deviation between the desired state that the society values (e.g., having a decent job), and the current state (e.g., unemployment or underemployment) which fails to meet or adapt to societal expectations and norms (Aycan, & Berry, 1996).

3.4.2 Lack of Citizenship Rights

Strong communities build on the bases of people's common identity, autonomy, participation, mutuality and successful integration. Successful integration is based on fulfillment of civil, political, economic and social rights of immigrants in community (George, Lee, Moffatt, McGrath, 2004). A question arises about the capacity of the institutions of the multicultural state to ensure participation and inclusion of all members of the economic, political and social community (e.g., immigrants) (George, Lee, Moffatt, McGrath, 2004). A weakening of Canada's commitment to vulnerable members of the community has increased the polarization of society, especially along economic lines. This economic marginalization resonates with the social marginalization of skilled

immigrants along the lines of difference in race, gender, immigrant status, ability and sexual diversity. The economic vulnerability of immigrants leads them towards civil rights marginalization (e.g., right to own property, right to justice). Financially weak immigrants are not in a position to own property because they don't possess enough money to invest in such projects (George, Lee, Moffatt, McGrath, 2004).

3.4.3 Mobility

Previous literature shows that highly qualified immigrants who are not working in their own field in Canada are more likely to be dissatisfied with their life and not have plans to settle permanently in Canada, when compared with immigrants who have a job in their own field. Despite all the changes in Canadian immigration policies (especially in the point system) and labour market policies, evidence shows that in the global market, skilled immigrant workers are becoming more internationally mobile. Almost 6 out of 10 skilled immigrants leave within the first 10 years after their arrival (Aydemir, & Robinson, 2008; Beach, Worswick, Green, 2011).

Newly naturalized citizens see further emigration as a decision which increases their economic growth because they see Canadian immigration policies as less focused on immigrant's integration in the labour market. Research indicates that Canada has experienced a unique problem related to immigrants because 10% of immigrants leave after getting their citizenship due to the fact that they find other places more economically strong for them rather than Canada (DeVoretz, D. J. 2009).

Previous research has indicated that Canada has inadequate immigration policies and labour market policies. Studies have also indicated that racial discrimination is present in the labour market (employment discrimination and treatment discrimination) and also different barriers are faced by immigrants (language, credentials not being accepted, lack of Canadian job experience, etc.). Research studies have also shown that immigration policies do not match with the Canadian labour market policies (point system vs labour market policies) and that due to these differences, immigrants are often working for low wages or unemployed. This unemployment or underemployment has been shown to lead immigrants to migrate to other countries or return back to their native countries where they can find better jobs related to their educational qualifications.

Previous research has provided a good base for my research topic and research study questions. However, my work is built on these studies in this way (1) how unemployment or underemployment leads immigrants to decide to obtain new degrees from Canadian universities in order to find a good job related to their qualifications and (2) why, even after graduating from Canadian universities immigrants are struggling in the labour market and (3) their future plans to go back to their native countries or to other countries where they will find better jobs related to their qualifications. This research study will explore two main ideas: first, why immigrants graduate from Canadian universities when they have already graduated from institutions in their native countries, and second, why they struggle in the Canadian labour market even after graduating from Canadian institutions and have thoughts of returning to their native countries or migrating to other countries.

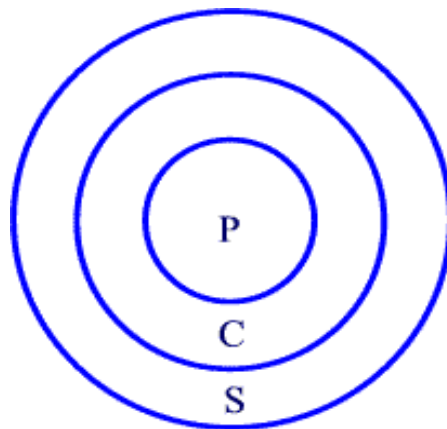
Chapter 4

Methodology

This research study aims to understand the significance and labour market experiences of immigrants who graduate from Canadian universities. As a methodological or analysis tool I will follow the Thompson PCS (personal-cultural-structural) model in order to define or explore the experiences of immigrants related to their integration in the labour market. PCS is a diagnostic tool which helps to uncover the issues that the theories and reviewed literature of my thesis indicate are behind immigrants' experience. To understand discrimination, one of the most influential models in social work is the PCS model. The PCS as tool for analysis provides a useful means of understanding the interactions relevant to how individuals and their situations fit into a larger system. The three key levels in the PCS model are mutually interactive and closely linked as a context for one another (Parrish, 2010).

Thompson's (2006) personal or psychological level provides a base for exploring and understanding individuals' thoughts, feelings, actions, and attitudes. The cultural level provides a base for understanding shared ways of seeing and thinking, including shared values, comic humor and conformity to social norms. The personal level is emerged or embedded in the cultural level which describes how individuals think and feel about themselves and others around them. "This is the level where stereotypes are created, where "taken for granted assumptions or 'unwritten rules" are processed" (P.27).

Then both the cultural and personal levels are embedded in the social or structural level. The structural level provides a base for understanding structural and institutional networks of social division within society. “This is where systemic discrimination is created and ‘institutionalized’ through social policy” (p.28).



The PCS model is used to explore the individual, cultural and structural experiences of Canadian-educated immigrants in the labour market. PCS is a model for explaining how oppression and institutional racism within society result from personal beliefs, cultural values and norms, and structural institutions. It recognizes and describes discrimination and oppression as not just an individual problem, but also present in cultural and societal networks and structures (Thompson, 2006). By the use of PCS model we can consider the situation of a person who is an immigrant, personally; someone who has migrated may have experienced the traumatic loss of his/her previous lifestyle and be facing many difficulties in finding employment. Culturally, they may feel isolated living without familiar support or having trouble with different language, religion and food that were previously taken for granted. Socially, they may be discriminated

against and face labour market exclusion. Thus their situation is a combination of all three levels of the PCS model that address the interactive aspects of coexisting elements between people and their environment (Parrish, 2010).

This explanation of PCS model goes well from personal to societal level with the CRT and Bradshaw's ideas of institutional racism, inequalities, discrimination and structural barriers present in the society. PCS as an analytic tool will help to analyze my research questions from personal experiences to societal and institutional racism faced by immigrants.

4.1 Research Design

I conducted 6 semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with immigrants to Canada to capture the direct, in-the-moment responses of my research study participants. I wanted to understand the personal, social, psychological, and economic problems they are facing in relation to labour market integration in Canada and their future planes with regards to living in or leaving Canada. A research assistant assisted during interviews by taking notes and providing translation assistance, as English was the primary language for interviewing but is not my first language. Data were collected from April to June and each interview was approximately 30-40 minutes in length. Interviews were audio recorded and hand written notes were taken to facilitate collection of information and to make sure that important information was not missed. Interviews were, transcribed for analysis.

4.1.1 Recruitment Process

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling. The population of interest for this study was immigrants who had graduated from a Canadian university, and were struggling in the labour market to find a job in their own field. I selected the sample based on the purpose of the research study. Eligible participants had to be 24-40 years in age. I also used a snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling is a method to expand the sample by asking one informant or participant to recommend others for interviewing (Groenewald, 2004). Through snowball sampling, I requested my friends and family members to pass on my email recruitment script along with my information/consent form to their immigrant friends and family members with whom I did not have a personal relationship (my friends and family members were not my participants, I only used them to pass on my recruitment email and information/consent letter to other immigrants).

I also requested the MSW graduate secretary to send my recruitment email and information/consent letter to MSW alumni. I also contacted job seeking agencies in person to inform them about the study and requested them to forward my recruitment email script to their immigrant clients. The emails highlighted the purpose of the study, criteria for participants; the approximate length of the interview. A letter of information and consent form gave more details about the study and the researcher, as well as more information about their right to withdraw from study and about their confidentiality, and what would take place during the interview. Candidates contacted me through email and

through calls or messages. In initial conversations, candidates were informed about the purpose of the research study and assured of the confidentiality of information they delivered during the interview and to set the mutual time and place for the interview.

4.1.2 Interview Process

Prior to the initiation of this research project, approval was granted by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. Interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis and begun with the reviewing of the purpose of the study by the researcher. This was followed by explaining the process of the interview; reviewing issues of confidentiality, asking for permission to record the interview, and clearly defining the voluntary character of participation in the study, making sure that each participant understood that withdrawal and choosing not to answer some questions were viable options. It was explained to each participant that their anonymity would be kept confidential by all means throughout the study's written documents, from transcribing to the publication of the thesis. I met with each potential participant individually at a location mutually agreed upon and before the start of each interview; each participant was asked to read the Letter of Information and Consent Form. After reviewing, if they had given their consent to participate in the research study then I provided them 2 copies of Letter of Information and Consent Form to sign.

Pseudonyms were asked from the participants. During the interview, participants were asked to respond to the prepared semi structured questions and any follow up questions to clarify the depth and meaning of their answers and experiences. This semi

structured interview questions resulted in active engagement and dialogue between researcher and participant. By actively engaging in the dialogue, I was able to clearly identify the perceptions and meanings of the participants' thoughts and experiences, and distinguish them from my own thoughts and perceptions.

4.1.3 Data Collection

Data was collected from participants by asking semi structured interview questions. Field notes were taken to capture everything that the researcher has seen, heard, experienced and thought in the process of collecting data about the participant's experiences and thoughts. Audio recording of the interview was also taken place with the permission of the participant to capture the participant's thoughts. Each interview was assigned a code (e.g. Participant-A, 4 May, 2014) (Groenewald, 2004).

4.1.4 Data Analysis

After the interviews, voice recordings of the participants were transcribed. Then coding of the interviews was done. A reflective record, i.e., diary, was kept to note down key information, ad-hoc notes and categories identified for each important/appropriate stage of the process. This exercise was also very useful in creating an audit trail to increase the trustworthiness and transparency of the research (Shaw, 2010). Main points of the analysis are: familiarizing/understanding of the data (at least- two initial readings of the data was done with observations recorded in the diary, to become familiar with the words of the interviewee in order to develop a deep sense); identifying initial categories (descriptive summaries and initial understanding was written). In the clustering process, I

looked for the most common categories in all of the interviews as well as for individual variations and subordinated them to central concepts in order to reach a comprehensive understanding of the topic under examination. Care must be taken in clustering/combining categories because significant differences exist. By writing a composite summary, everyday expressions of the participant were transformed into the appropriate expressions of scientific discourse, supporting the research and according to analysis tool, organized the identified categories under the themes of personal, cultural and structural (Groenewald, 2004).

4.2 Ethical Considerations

It is important to briefly discuss the ethical considerations of the research study. The first issue was the confidentiality of the participants. By all means the identity of the participants was kept confidential and not revealed to any one except the researcher. This was clarified in the confidentiality letter provided by the researcher to participants of the study. No personal information that may reveal the identity of the participants is included in the research study or in thesis.

Also as a researcher, and as an insider of the research study population, I needed to be aware of the power imbalances between me and participants of the study. Another important side to consider was the social and cultural location of both the participant and the researcher. So it was really important to note that people may have the same immigrant status but every individual is different from the other individuals, in their experiences, backgrounds, and socio-economic status. By acknowledging this, I tried to

enhance the trustworthiness of the study which is one of the most significant goals to be achieved in writing the thesis.

Chapter: 5

Research Findings

This chapter presents a summary of the interviews and data collected from Canadian university graduate immigrants. The chapter explores the internationally trained highly skilled educated immigrant's experience with respect to the job search in their own educational field in the Canadian labour market after graduating from a Canadian university. It particularly examines what highly qualified immigrants say about their job expectations before and after graduating from Canadian universities. It draws attention to the challenges and barriers they have faced in finding a job.

The findings are presented in this chapter from data analysis and reflect the deep, rich experiences of the research study participants. It should be noted that all the names have been changed in order to maintain the anonymity of the participants. The participants were involved in the process as they were asked to provide a fake name of their choice which was used in writing the finding section of the thesis.

In the first section, a brief demographic background and participants' thoughts about participating in this research study is presented, followed by their responses to interview questions. The chapter then explores the participants' thoughts, suggestions and recommendations about their struggle in finding a job, about the labour market/immigration policy mismatch, their job search expectations after graduating from

a Canadian university and the barriers they have encountered in looking for work in Canadian job market. Finally, their future settlement plans in Canada are studied.

The section starts with the brief introduction of the research study participants especially regarding their education, as it is really important to demonstrate that all of the participants had the same difficulty in finding a job related to their education qualification even with different educational backgrounds.

Demographics of the Participants

Participant 1: Salim

- 1) Gender: Male
- 2) Age: 34
- 3) Educational background: Master's and PHD in chemistry
- 4) Native country: Bangladesh
- 5) How long ago did he arrive in Canada: 10 years
- 6) Marital status: Married
- 7) Children: 2

Participant 2: Sara

- 1) Gender: Female
- 2) Age: 26
- 3) Educational background: Master's in Social work

- 4) Native country: Korea
- 5) How long ago did she arrive in Canada: 3 and a half year
- 6) Marital status: Single

Participant 3: **Nasir**

- 1) Gender: Male
- 2) Age: 41
- 3) Educational background: Master's in agriculture and Master's in engineering.
- 4) Native country: Palestine
- 5) How long ago did he arrive in Canada: 11 years
- 6) Marital status: Married
- 7) Children: 3

Participant 4: **Rayan**

- 1) Gender: Male
- 2) Age: 28
- 3) Educational background: Master's in biological engineering
- 4) Native country: Jordan
- 5) How long ago did he arrive in Canada: 10 years
- 6) Marital status: Single

Participant 5: **Khan**

- 1) Gender: Male
- 2) Age: 42
- 3) Educational background: Master's in environment and resource study and Master's in environmental planning.
- 4) Native country: Pakistan
- 5) How long ago did he arrive in Canada: 10 years
- 6) Marital status: Married
- 7) Children: 3

Participant 6: **Adam**

- 1) Gender: Male
- 2) Age: 42
- 3) Educational background: PhD in genetic engineering and biotechnology and Master's in safety and quality assurance.
- 4) Native country: Iraq
- 5) How long did he arrive in Canada: 8 years
- 6) Marital status: Single

5.1 Reasons for Participating in this Research Study

In gathering the data, all of the six research study participants described their feelings about struggling for a job in the labour market after graduating from a Canadian university. The issue that made them want to participate in this research study was their constant struggle in finding a good job related to their education in the Canadian job market. One of the participants described it as follows:

“I realized, actually, I should give the opinion, because I’m really having difficulties to get a job. So, probably that would in the future, may be you never know in part of policy makers who can change things probably that would help people like us doing who studies and having difficulties to get job in Canadian job market.”

Another participant added:

“Actually, this is not only about me. But this is actually about the immigrants. In particular, the immigrants are highly skilled, and they are unable to get a suitable job here in Canada.”

Another participant said:

“I think as an immigrant and as a social worker, I have been really feeling these barriers and obstacles to work in my field. They are recruiting highly skilled people, but they are apparently leaving the country. So, I think it’s such a good idea, and I hope that it will be beneficial for me too, because I feel this barrier every day”.

5.2 Why Participants decided to attend Higher Education in Canadian Universities

When the participants were asked why they decided to go for higher education in Canada, all of them generally have the same understanding. Everybody has the same

feeling that they would have a quicker and better integration into labour market by taking local higher education. Everyone responded that they expected to get more opportunities after completing education. Participants also indicated that because of the non-recognition of previous credentials they decided to get an education from a Canadian university so that they can be able to find a job in the labour market. One of the participants said:

“To find a suitable job in Canada, because they are preferring the qualifications from Canada rather than my previous qualification from back home.”

Another participant mentioned:

“When I was working since 2004 until 2010, then I was struggling to find a job. So I decided to go back to school and study something that can help me find a job again.”

Another participant added:

“I wanted to live in Canada. That’s why I realized if I just don’t have a degree here, that may be very difficult for me to get a job here, and I always wanted to pursue grad school.”

Two participants decided that they wanted to get higher education from abroad and in hopes of finding better opportunities. One of them said:

“It was a difficult choice. I had the choice of either staying in Jordan and doing a medical degree or coming to Canada and getting my degree from there and hopefully having a better opportunity towards education and employment. So, I picked that decision. It wasn’t easy, but I took that decision hoping that would be better for my future.”

Another participant said:

“Basically, when I was looking to study abroad, I found that Canada is a relatively peaceful country, not much population, and a relatively multicultural society. Actually, there’s the main part: that I thought it could be easier for me to be integrated into the society.”

Another participant had an opportunity through a scholarship to study abroad. However, he was still unable to find a job. So he decided to go for a second degree to avoid wastage of time in trying to find a job.

5.3 Experience studying in a Canadian University

All of the participants described positive feelings about their educational experience in a Canadian university. Everyone described their experience with their professors, colleagues and supervisors as supportive. Everyone said that it was a great opportunity for them to receive education from a Canadian university. As one of the participants said:

“To getting the degree actually was a very nice experience. I was in a good environment during my Master’s and my PhD as well. And my colleagues, co-workers, everyone, and my supervisor was nice to me”.

Another participant defined:

“It was a very good and nice experience. Although we have little bit different system, but they have a very good system. If you have a good academic background, then it is easy to go through.”

Two of the participants mentioned that in beginning it was hard for them to understand some of the terms because of the different language and educational backgrounds and now studying in different education system. But they defined it as a

learning process and later on as a good experience which will help them in getting better opportunities. Here are the experiences of these two participants:

“Generally speaking, it was a good experience. It was a hard adjustment time of probably two years, because it was a little bit new for me. There was little bit of an adjustment period, but overall, it was good.”

“My experience was pretty, I would say, good. But it was also difficult just because the language that we are speaking here is quite different. I was frustrated for my first class, because I was not able to understand quite a bit. I was so frustrated. Why? I’m here, right? But it was getting better. Professors helped me a lot. Overall, it was a good experience.”

5.4 Career Aspirations and First Hand Experience in Fulfilling Career Goals

All of the participants have same aspirations towards their career. Everyone wants to get a job in his/her own profession to pursue his/her professional career rather than working at low paid odd jobs. All of the participants described that after spending a long time in getting an education in their field, they just want to have good jobs in their profession. One of the participants described this goal as:

“I’m looking for a professional job that is relevant to my education. Not odd job and odd job there that is unable to give me some perspective or give me more.”

Another participant mentioned:

“I’m just trying to find something that’s related to my educational background, and I’ll just keep trying”.

None of the participants have been able to find a stable job according to their education and aspirations even after doing exhaustive job search efforts. Everyone has different firsthand experience in fulfilling their career goals but shares the same experience of being stuck in low paid jobs, odd hours and night shifts. A few participants had jobs but not related to their field and qualification. All of them said that these are not permanent jobs, they don't pay them enough money and have no benefits. The only participant with a full-time equivalent job they was working odd hours, night shifts, or covering others hours without any security and benefits. Participants said that they don't want to continue these jobs and are trying to find jobs related to their qualification. One of the participants said:

"I will say it was a little bit difficult. Frustrating. Well, I'm working right now. I'm working with international students as counselor. I like my experience but I wanted to change as soon as possible because this is not a real social work job and don't pay me very well and also, my schedule is like a wacky. I started work at 4 and I finish work at 12 or sometimes 1 o'clock, because I need to be there and I rarely go to bed. I'm looking for jobs still, because my experience before coming to Canada doesn't seem valid because I'm immigrant here."

The same participant also said that:

"I apply for many jobs and I never heard from them, so that discouraged me too. It's been difficult, so I was pretty struggling a lot."

Another participant gave his opinion as:

"So far, it's not that great. Like, I couldn't find the job I'm looking for. I'm working as a part time in the university as a research assistant. That's not the job I'm looking for. This is the research. That's more for

PhD student or somebody who is looking for vacant position in the university. That might be helpful. But for me, no, that's not. Especially, that doesn't cover one-third of my monthly expenses. My experience living with the family with such a minimum amount of income is very harsh."

Two participants were unemployed and described their experience as really frustrating and hard living on a low income after getting a higher education from Canadian universities. They described their experiences as:

"Well, it was really difficult basically to try and find something. The opportunities in Canada are unfortunately limited, possibly also due to the bad economy we're in. Yeah, the other thing is I haven't been able to cross the barrier of handing in my resume to actually getting a phone call to coming in for an interview. It's a little bit frustrating."

Another said:

"I have tried things, but I never get the job to do regarding my educational background."

Another participant said that the demand of Canadian experience is the main hurdle in finding a job and there is no such opportunity for immigrants to get hands-on experience.

This participant said:

"Actually, the one thing that is the main hurdle is the experience. Initially, it is very hard to enter the job market here in Canada. In my country, I have experience and it will be easy for me to get a job. But here in Canada, I have no Canadian experience. All the time, they're asking for the Canadian experience. There is no proper way to provide Canadian experience to new immigrants. All the time, the employer looking for person having Canadian experience."

One of the participants were thinking to start his own business rather than struggling more for the job in the labour market. He said:

“I couldn’t found some suitable job for me, regarding my qualification. I’m trying- Nowadays, I’m thinking to start my own business rather than trying to find a job in other places. Because really, it’s hard to find a suitable job, even after getting my Master’s degree in Canada. I have to work and get money for the living expenses. That’s why I prefer to start with a business rather than wasting more time in finding a job.”

5.4.1 Current Job Experience

All of the participants were doing different jobs but not equivalent to their qualification. One of the participants was unemployed and one has started his own business rather than “wasting his time” in finding a good job related to his qualification. Participants said that they are not happy with their current jobs because they do not match their qualification and work experience. They said that these are temporary jobs not paying them much but they have a family and they have expenses so that’s why they are bound to do these jobs. One the participant described his experience as:

“I feel like it’s low-skill job. Also my status right now is on-call, so it’s not even a permanent job. I’m part-time. I cover other people, then I don’t get benefits and I don’t get paid well either. I’m working 40 hours almost every week, but then my status is part-time because I’m on-call. I don’t know how many hours I’ll get next week. That makes me feel more like I really need to look for a job. It’s frustrating sometimes, and my co-workers will be like, oh, I hope that you share your benefits, because you’re working full time.” But then you’re not full-time so it’s unfair.”

Another participant said:

“I do research with my advisor. That’s not the job I’m looking for. This is research. But this is not a surviving job. It’s just temporary. That’s

more for PhD student or somebody who is looking for a vacant position in the university. That might be helpful. But for me, no, that's not. Especially, that doesn't cover one-third of my monthly expenses."

Another participant added:

"I'm working on part-time basis. They are paying me a good per-hour salary, but they are not giving me the full-time employment. It is either 10 hours; either 8 hours; either 12 hours per week. It is below, as you can say, my expectation and below my earning."

One participant also said that living with low income also brings criticism by their family members and relatives from back home. This situation also took them into depression and anxiety. One of the participants described his experience as:

"People in my back home pushing me that probably you are not smart enough to do something, actually because they could see that they are doing many things that I could not, they are affording many things that I could not, but at the end they are not seeing the real picture what's going on here."

5.5 Experience before and after completing Master's from Canadian University in Job Opportunities

The most important thing to be considered for this thesis is the experience of skilled immigrants in finding a job in the labour market before and after completing a Master's from Canadian university and whether their Canadian education improved their job opportunities. The interviews with the research study participants confirmed that they didn't find any difference before and after graduating in finding a job. According to the participants they are unable to find a job according to their qualification and still bound to

do low paid, temporary jobs or be unemployed after completing their Master's. Here are the experiences of participants in this respect:

"I was looking for jobs after graduation. I got some jobs, but they were not of my interest and according to my qualification. Most of the time I avoid them. Meanwhile, I got some job from my home country, so I went back two or three times in most recent years. Although I tried my best to look for a job here in Canada, but unable to do so."

"It's the same; I don't feel any difference in job opportunities after graduation. Because I did not get the job. The experience is like.. I'm not even getting.. The only thing is many people think there are not enough jobs in the market that feel they have studied, but that's not the case. The case is they have enough jobs. If I open my email, I can show you that everyday there are three, four, six, seven, eight openings. Every single day. Openings. And I'm not getting anywhere."

"It's still the same, yeah and my frustration is right now after my graduation, and the fact that I can't even get an interview. It is frustrating."

On the other hand, two of the participants were a little hopeful in finding a job after graduation even they were not able to find the job according to their qualification yet.

They define their experience as:

"It should be. It opened more. Like, I couldn't find the job yet, but now there are more areas where I can search for a job. I used to be an agriculture engineer. Now I am a water resource engineer, so that's opened my career more."

"I feel more confident applying for jobs now. When I'm writing my resume, that means something. I have MSW and a lot of social work jobs require MSW, so that encourage me to apply for more jobs. But also, because my education is high. MSW is high and my expectation is high too. Because I studied hard, and it was hard work. I feel like I need to look for better jobs which pay better and better hours. Things that I really want to but it doesn't meet my needs and reality doesn't meet quite."

Another important thing participants have mentioned is that they have wasted their time and money in getting more education from a Canadian university because they have already graduated with this degree back home and only got another degree because the labour market was not considering their previous education and work experience equivalent to Canadian education and work experience. As the literature review also showed, skilled immigrants are not able to find a job in the labour market because the labour market considers their education and work experience as not equivalent to Canadian one. Participants have described their experiences in this respect:

“I am here from 10 years, so I spend 8 years in post graduation degree plus two years for Master’s and six years for PhD. And in eight years, I was almost six n half years international student. And then I got immigration. And seven years, I paid three times more tuitions than probably do you know. And when I do the tax return every year, I see how much money I have spent, more than \$150,000. That’s definitely a waste of time and money as well.”

“Yeah, of course. Doing a Master again is just a waste of time and money. I already have a Master degree, like I should not go through this. But most jobs ask for Canadian education and Canadian experience too.”

“If you are talking about Canada, I might get a job but it will take a little bit longer and it’s not easy. If I plan to go back to where I was raised, I don’t see any issues getting a job or getting a good salary for that.”

Another issue participants and literature review also mentioned is that the over qualification of skilled immigrants in finding a job is a problem in the labour market. Participants said that for some jobs employers reject them by saying that that they are

over qualified for these jobs and they need some diploma holders or undergraduates for this post. One of the participants said:

“The thing is I started looking for job, and in first month I got an interview and I went there. They didn’t ask a single question. Not even a single question. I was driving like 200 miles almost for the interview, and when I went there the company chairman was telling me for forty minutes how good their company is and how nice things they are making in their plant. And after that, then they said, “we are not going to hire you, because we think you are over qualified.” That is the only line they said.”

Another participant mentioned:

“Sometimes the entry-level positions that they’re looking for, they’re looking for an undergraduate. If somebody who finishes their undergrad or a 3-year diploma. Master’s might be overqualified for some of the positions.”

5.6 Barriers in Finding a Job

This section is one of the most important and relevant to the purpose of the study. It confirms that the barriers skilled immigrants face in finding a job in the Canadian labour market are similar to the barriers mentioned in the literature review. According to participants, the lack of network and work experience is the main hurdle in finding a job according to their qualification. Participants also mentioned that before getting their degrees, their lack of Canadian education was also the hurdle to get into the job market as employers don’t see their education equivalent to Canadian education. One of the participants said:

“Lack of network and work experience, I would say is a barrier. Because I don’t have Canadian experience they don’t really hire you. I

guess one of the reason is they are truly comparative. If you don't have experience, they don't see you as a capable employee. But since I don't know how to get experience since no one is hiring me because I don't have experience. This is difficult. And yeah also just a lack of information."

Another participant added:

"Right now, I can't get into an interview, which is a problem. People sometimes crawl with connection, so for me as an immigrant, I have no connections. Not even company. So, I don't know that might be a problem."

Another participant mentioned:

"If you don't have good references and if you don't have Canadian experience that is a problem. I think the employers will not trust you to give you job, as per your qualification and experience. Most of the time, they prefer to hire fresh candidate instead of hiring a good, qualified, and experienced person based on their qualification and experience. But only, the thing is Canadian experience."

5.7 Racial Discrimination in the labour market

Two of the participants said that language may also be a problem as their native language was different from English. Participants also said that employers sometimes discriminate based on the race and colour, while hiring an immigrant as employee. Participants describe their experiences in this respect:

"I could only imagine it's my name and the colour. That's my feeling is that because of colour and my name, I'm not getting the job. And to believe that the reason that is-there is a person, one of the smartest chemists I have ever seen in my life in my group and he never got the job. The places he's been applied, he never got an interview. He has more than 20 publications in my field, and other people you can't even compare with him-they're not as smart compared to him are getting

those positions with zero publications because they are white and native born.”

“I can’t say definitively, because may be if you look at my name and it’s an unusual name. May be it’s from the name.”

“I have been hearing so many things and all of the important thing I hear is that Harper government is still all the people, that no immigrant should get the job unless the Canadian is not available to do the job. So, after that, I think it’s wasting time to look job in here. So basically, whatever they are doing is showing. There are certain things you don’t tell, but you can feel it. You know what I mean? Because you don’t need to tell that I’m discriminating you, but the way you are behaving and the way you are interacting, or making the way you are doing policies-that eventually will be rooted out.”

Participants also mentioned that while giving them the job employers ask them to provide job references and because of lack of network they mostly request to their professors and supervisors to give their reference to these employers, but some of the professors don’t want to give references for them because they are immigrants.

5.8 Future Plans or Mobility Plans

Plans of skilled immigrants to move back to their home countries or some other country where they can find better job opportunities is one of the main issues presented in the literature review. Four of the participants have plans to go back to their native countries or somewhere else if they are unable to find a job in their profession in few months. According to participants, they have tried for a long time but are not able to enter in the job market yet and are now planning to move to their native countries or somewhere else where they find better job opportunity. One of the participants mentioned that:

“I’m waiting for month or two, not more than that. If I will not be able to get a job, then I will move back to my home country.”

Another participant added:

“I’m going to look a couple of more months. I am looking actually either in my back home or somewhere else. So, if I don’t get a job in Canada, then eventually I will move.”

Another participant described his thoughts by saying:

“I hope it’s going to be better. I’m still working hard to find a job, and I wish that it’s going to end up with something really good. Otherwise, I can’t survive forever on this situation. And then I have to decide: either go to the U.S., go overseas somewhere else. But, I mean, I’m not single anymore, and I can’t survive by myself. I have a family and they need money for those, so I have to find a solution.”

One participant said:

“I’m hoping that I can find something, because if I can’t find something that’s in my career field then there’s no point in me to stay in Canada, right. I’m wasting my time basically.”

On the other hand one participant was still hopeful that if she keeps on her struggle to find a job, she will get it. She was also thinking to upgrade her expertise so that she can have better opportunities to find a job. She described her feelings as:

“I’m hoping to get a new job this year or next year. That’s my goal. If I don’t get a good job, then I’ll keep trying just getting more experience and better equip myself to do better at work and performance. I still believe I’m young and I just need experience. I like Canada but if I can’t get a job, then what can I do? Then I have a plan to move to another country or go back home if there are better opportunities for me.”

The last participant doesn't have plans to move to another country or back home from Canada because he was starting his own business in Canada and want to give all his attention and time to his new business rather than moving somewhere else and starting his carrier from scratch.

5.9 Exploring Opportunities other than Professional Jobs

All of the participants have the same opinion about exploring opportunities to build their carrier other than their chosen profession except one participant who already given up his efforts to find a job and is trying to start his own business. He described it as:

“Nowadays, I’m thinking to start my own business rather than trying to find a job in other places. I don’t want to waste my time anymore.”

All the other participants were not interested in doing other kind of jobs or to avail themselves of other opportunities after spending many years in getting their field education. As one participant expressed his feelings as:

“I spend so much time and money in building my career and getting an education. I got two master degrees from Canada, so it will be hard to switch my career. I’m not interested in switching my career, so if I will look job in my own career and my background. Otherwise, I will move.”

Only one of the participants said:

“If the right opportunity presents itself. I don’t see why not, but you invest so much time and money into something that you would like to do as a career. And in the end, it’s really a difficult choice to go away from all that and start something new all over again.”

5.10 Settlement Services

5.10.1 How Settlement Services are working for Graduate Immigrants?

As already mentioned in the literature review, settlement services are not working well for skilled immigrants. All of the participants have similar views about settlement services that they are not working well for highly skilled immigrants. The participants mentioned that settlement services are working for those people who don't have any idea about how to write a cover letter or resume or who don't have internet access. Research study participants mentioned that they have these skills, and they need guidance about where the problem is in finding professional jobs and they need someone to fix the problem rather than teach them all these things which they know already very well. Participants described their experiences as:

"I think these settlement services are only for the people who are not qualified and not educated. It's not for the people who are graduated from the university, because I've been there so many times and only seen the people who could not speak or who don't have competent literacy. Because they mostly help people who don't know how to write English cover letter/resume, to send resume, send out email, or how to find a job. But I know better than them, especially in my field on how to look for the job. So, I think for university graduates, they seem useless, to me."

Another participant added:

"It wasn't really what I was looking for. I really wanted somebody to look into my resume, look at a job position and then see if it was a good fit, or have even some mock interviews, if you will."

Another participant mentioned:

“I will say no these services are not adequate to deal with skilled immigrants, because they will give you some help. They help you in writing a good CV. They will help you and providing you addresses, but they will not provide you hands on training or opportunities to get Canadian experience which we need.”

One of the participant stated that settlement services just want to make money from immigrants rather than really help them to get a job in their field. He shared his experience as:

“They don’t care about what best fitting you, or not. Sometimes, they send me jobs that, basically, I’m not going to be doing it. Like, I have a programming background and they ask me to go and work on a factory line that produces computers. So, those, I would say are not professional and great. All they care about is they want to make money out of you, that’s it.”

5.10.2 What should be Included in Settlement Services?

When participants were asked about what kind of settlement services should be provided to highly skilled immigrants, they all have the different views according to their qualification and current situation. They added their comments as:

“At least they provide a job-shadowing program. Like, okay, I graduated in the biopharmaceutical field. If they have a program where I can follow somebody who’s been working there for 10 or 15 years and enjoying working in that industry for that long and has all this experience, at least now I know what to expect to better prepare myself for a future job or future interview.”

“They must have some institutions or some training center where they provide hands-on, something that is equivalent to Canadian experience. I have two degrees-two Canadian degrees- but still, they ask for Canadian experience. Another thing is that they should establish a mechanism to utilize tuition credit. If a person is unable to

get a job, at least they may be able to use their tuition credit to their debt.”

Another participant said:

“They have a settlement services and employment services, but will probably need more than that, especially for people who have higher education. Our expectations are high. We may not live past that. I want to stay here. It’d be nice if they would help us out.”

Participants’ views indicate that there is a need for better and more focused settlement services which provide them Canadian experience, good reference to jobs related to their qualification. Participants’ said that after getting high education from Canada their “expectations are high” and now they want specific settlement services according to their needs.

5.11 Immigration Policies and Labour Market Policies Mismatch

This section is one of the most important in the findings section. Here I present one of the main causes of the unemployment or working in low skilled jobs for highly skilled immigrants. In the literature review it is mentioned clearly that immigration policies and labour market policies have a mismatch and for this reason highly skilled immigrants are unable to find work related to their qualification in Canadian labour market. Participants also possess the same views about this mismatch by saying that immigration policies are working well for the Canadians but not for the immigrants. Canada admits immigrants based on their high qualification and experience and then they

forget about them. They need to integrate successfully in the society by getting good jobs according to their education and experience. One of the participants added:

“I think they need to work hardly to match with each other. Not just in offering sessions. They have to do something more.”

The interviews also revealed that after getting such a high education from Canadian institutes living with limited amount of income or unemployed and having a family is really tough and frustrating. Participants described their feelings as:

“My parents are doctors and applied through the skilled worker class. You’re asking people to uproot themselves from where they’ve lived for so long and come here and start a new life, but there’s no mechanism or some streamline for them to start here. You’re going to have a family, you’re going to have expenses, you need money, and you need a good job. I can’t expect after all the high education to work at a restaurant or drive a taxi. Basically, if you’re saying you need them and you give them immigration based on that, and they come here and can’t practice medicine because you want to start them from scratch, it doesn’t make any sense.”

Another participant said:

“There is no common thing between immigration policies and labour market policies. It’s like; you come here and deal with finding a job. When I am graduate, I was working back home and my job was okay, but I wasn’t informed about the future. And unfortunately, I had to step down. Like, I worked in a warehouse when I came, and then I grew up with a company to reach a managerial position. But when I got laid off, all the positions I’m applying for, nobody wanted a manager. They wanted me to step down again, and start again and I can’t do that. The government wants immigrants and people come here, it sounds unfair for them to come and leave their jobs in their countries, and come here and find nothing. Just sitting at home with no future. It is really stressful living with the family like this.”

Another participant mentioned:

“The policy is good for Canada, but in reality, they don’t give much credit to immigrants. And it’s difficult for people who have high skills to live here to get a job here. They start to complain about it and they got bitter, so if you used to have good life back home and now you don’t have it. Even if policy says, “come, you have high skills and you will get a good job”. If you don’t get it, then you are frustrated for sure and got bitter. I think they need to balance it out. If they are hiring good people, like qualified people, you should find a way to adapt them into the system or society.”

The findings present that immigration policies and labour market policies have a mismatch that push skilled immigrants to get more education from Canadian universities because of non-recognition of their previous credentials and work experience in the labour market. It has shown that skilled immigrants have a good experience of getting education from Canadian universities. Study findings also revealed the systemic and structural barriers are present in the labour market that prevent skilled immigrants to find a suitable job related to their qualification. Findings have shown also that settlement services are not working well for highly skilled immigrants and need to be improved. In the next chapter I will present a deep analysis and will draw themes from these findings.

Chapter 6

Analysis and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore (a) the experiences of highly skilled immigrants who pursue higher education in Canadian universities, in terms of finding a suitable job related to their field and (b) the stated future plans regarding staying in Canada. Analysis and discussion will use Thompson's PCS (personal-cultural-structural) model to explore the experience of attempting to integrate in to the Canadian labour market and society. The personal level provides a base to explore the individual experiences, thoughts, actions, feelings and attitudes; the cultural level provides a base to understand shared ways of seeing and thinking, including shared values and social norms; the structural level provides a base to understand structural and institutional networks of social division within society (Thompson, 2006). In the first section I present the personal experiences, hopes and discouragement of highly skilled immigrants regarding finding a job in the Canadian labour market and their expectations about finding a job before and after completing graduate education in Canada. In the second section I use the cultural part of the PCS model to discuss these immigrants' experiences and expectations regarding studying in a Canadian university and being accepted in Canadian society. Finally, in the last section I present the structural piece of the PCS model by discussing the structural barriers and institutional racism that exists in Canadian society and prevents highly skilled immigrants from finding a good job related to their qualifications.

6.1 Experiences of Highly Skilled Immigrants at the Personal Level

Immigrants are an essential part of Canada's economic and population growth. Therefore, they should have the same rights and obligations as Canadian born citizens. Canada's point-based system awards immigration on the basis of immigrants' high skill levels, education and work experience (Grubel, 2013), which gives immigrants a misconception that after arriving in Canada getting a job in the Canadian labour market will not be a problem for them. However, the reality is very different after their arrival. Highly skilled immigrants are facing unemployment or doing low-paying jobs even after spending a lot of money and time to get higher education from Canadian universities. It builds a feeling of high discouragement and betrayal in immigrants that they are unable to obtain good jobs even possessing high qualification and work experience (Aycan, & Berry, 1996).

The results of the current study show that participants were deceived by their new country during the immigration process. Participants mentioned that they felt misled by the immigration policy criteria of accepting immigrants on the basis of their high qualifications and experience. This criterion gave participants the misconception that they were being selected for their high qualifications and that they would therefore find a good job easily, but reality was different from their expectations. Participants said that they were not informed when applying for immigration that after arriving in Canada they would have to start their lives from scratch. Because of this, they became unemployed and/or worked at low wages after their arrival.

This study's findings indicate that these skilled immigrants have pursued more education from Canada and those who have sought admission after their undergrad also had the knowledge that if they did not have education from Canada, it would not be easy for them to find a job in the Canadian labour market. It seems that, for these skilled immigrants, there were push and pull factors involved in pursuing more education. The research findings indicate that participants were unable to find work related to their previous education and work experience and that living with family pushed them to get more education from Canadian universities. Study findings showed that participants had hope (the pull) that getting more education might make a difference in job opportunities and they might find a good job related to their qualifications, but at the end the situation was the same or even got worse. Some participants became bitter because of the disappointment and frustration of doing low paid, odd jobs to meet the needs of themselves and of their family, despite possessing high qualifications. Participants said that they were overqualified for the jobs they were doing and they were also being rejected or refused by some employers for good jobs because of being overqualified.

This study also shows that Canada was unable to fulfill its promise to give a better life to immigrants in this country. Participants indicated that they not only wasted their valuable time getting more education but also spent a lot of money in this process. They were already graduated from their home countries and only pursued more education to find a suitable job in Canada. Findings show that even after spending a lot of money and time on getting more education these skilled immigrants were unable to find a job related to their field. Participants revealed that when they arrived in Canada they hoped for a

better future and a better job than they could get in their home countries. It was really disappointing for them, as they were doing good jobs in their native countries and living good lives, but after arriving in Canada they were unable to find a good job according to their skills, education and work experience, even after graduating from Canadian universities. Now they were bound to do low paid, odd hour jobs without any kind of benefits. Findings indicate that because of the pressure of taking care of family and to fulfill their living expenses these highly skilled immigrants were doing temporary, low paid, odd hours jobs which don't even cover their monthly expenses because after applying for many jobs they were not getting anywhere in the labour market. Participants indicated that living on a low income with family is really disappointing and frustrating for them after spending so much money and time on getting more education. At the end situation was the same for them.

The other thing immigrants face in this scenario is an isolated life caused by doing part time jobs to earn enough money to meet their family needs (Aycan, & Berry, 1996). Study findings show that participants were doing part time, temporary, low paid, odd hours jobs to meet the needs of themselves and of their families. One of the participants described that because of doing a part time, night shift job she hardly went to bed at night and wanted to change her job but was not able to find a suitable job related to her qualifications. Findings reveal that doing these part time jobs with random hours puts these immigrants into social isolation. This study reveals that skilled immigrants' feelings of isolation and frustration about not getting a suitable job leads to other kind of psychological and physical illnesses (George, Chaze, Fuller Thomson, & Brennenstuhl,

2012). In the case of these skilled immigrants, firstly participants' were having stress and strain due to unemployment and then doing part time jobs to run their family expenses. This stress and strain created psychological problems. One of the participants mentioned seeking counseling services due to the stress and frustration she was bearing because of being unemployed.

Findings show that these skilled immigrants are also facing criticism from their peers, friends and family members from back home because of “doing nothing good” while staying in Canada. Participants informed this researcher that people from their own countries criticize them and comment that they are not capable of doing anything and that they are not intelligent enough to find a good job in Canada. These commentators cannot see the real picture behind all this and why the skilled immigrants are not able to find a job in Canada.

Because of this situation, skilled immigrants are now moving back to their own countries and to other places where they find better job opportunities (Beach, Worswick, Green, 2011; DeVoretz, D. J. 2009). Study findings indicate that highly skilled immigrants arrived in Canada because of the dream of getting good job opportunities, but after arriving the situation was that they were not getting a job anywhere. Participants also described that they don't feel any issues in getting a good job related to their qualification in their home countries and in some other countries with the high qualification they possess in contrast with Canada. One of the participants described that “government want immigrants and when they arrive they find nothing, just sitting at

home with no future, it sounds unfair for them to leave their jobs in their countries and come here and find nothing.” Participants in this study also revealed that because of the uncertainty of life in Canada, even after getting more education from Canada, they have plans to leave Canada as soon as they find better job opportunities in some other country or back home. When a person is well educated and spends a lot of time in their field getting more education, their expectations become high for finding a job. They always feel that because they are highly educated it will not be an issue to find a job in their field, but when the situation becomes different from their expectations, then that person has to find some other way to survive.

Another important thing to consider is the awareness of these skilled immigrants about their rights as a member of a society and how they have demonstrated this in their responses. The participation of these skilled immigrants revealed that they wanted to raise their voice for this important issue of being unemployed or underemployed in the Canadian labour market. Findings shows that these skilled immigrants wanted to share their struggling experiences regarding labour market integration through this research with the hope that policy makers will think about the highly skilled immigrants’ successful integration in the society. Participants mentioned in their responses that they were mislead by the immigration policies that if Canadian government don’t take their responsibility of integration in the labour market then government should not recruit immigrants on the basis of their high qualification.

Participants also mentioned about the discrimination present in the labour market while hiring immigrants and due the uncertainty present in the labour market these immigrants were planning to go to other places where they find better job opportunities. Findings also revealed that these skilled immigrants didn't find settlement services working well for them and mentioned that these services don't care the need of highly skilled immigrants and work according to their own criteria. Participants also mentioned in their comments that immigration policies are working good for Canada but not for immigrants and if people were needed in the Canada on the base of their high qualification then if they were not able to practically use this qualification for their better future in Canadian labour market then it does not make any sense to call thousands of skilled immigrants very year. The participants' responses in this manner show their sense of being aware about their rights and they know they should raise their voice for their rights fulfillment as a useful member of the Canadian society.

6.2 Experiences of Highly Skilled Immigrants at Cultural Level

When we talk about the culture of a country, it doesn't mean only its norms, values and traditions. The meaning related to the culture of a country has more to it than that. Culture also includes how people of the country think, and behave with other people, how they show their norms and values to others. In this sense, if we talk about skilled immigrants arriving in a new country, that country must accept them as part of the country rather than giving them a feeling of being a foreigner in the country or not a part

of the country. The same thing needs to be adopted by the immigrants: they must accept that now they are in a new country and need to respect its culture, norms and laws.

This study shows that skilled immigrants had a good experience doing their Master's degrees in Canadian universities. Participants said they were in a very good environment during their Master's. They said that they never felt like they were being discriminated against or oppressed by anyone. Their professors, supervisors, class mates, everyone was really nice and supportive to them. This data shows that it is possible for native-born Canadians to treat immigrants equally and accept them as a part of their country, culture and society.

However, on the other hand when we look at skilled immigrants' experience of integration into the labour market or the larger society they had the experience of being discriminated against or not being accepted by native-born white people (Guo, 2013). Participants said that the reason behind not getting jobs anywhere according to their qualifications was their name or skin colour or their immigrants status. One of the participants said that native-born people see immigrants as foreigners in Canada and think that skilled immigrants are here to get their jobs. This participant felt that native-born Canadians don't accept immigrants as a part of their culture, society, and country, and that's why they behave in this manner. The participant also said that native-born white people need to have an awareness that immigrants are now here in Canada and they are here for Canada's good, so they should accept them or help them to adopt a new country without any discrimination. Skilled immigrants' integration into the labour

market as well as into Canadian society is not only important for them but also for Canada's economic and population growth.

Educational and job-giving institutions have created a contrast in the treatment of the skilled immigrants in this study. It raises the question of why Canadian culture and society accept or welcome skilled immigrants as students but not as workers in the labour market. Findings reveal that participants have spent a lot of money getting education from Canadian universities and some of them have paid international tuition fees (which is almost double than regular student fees) because of their non-immigrant status at the time of getting their education. It's a genuine reason that if skilled immigrants are contributing in the economy of Canada in the form of their tuition fees then of course they will be treated well. On the other side there are lots of international students who are studying in Canadian universities, and if they do not receive good treatment then they will inform other people back home, and then international students will avoid seeking admission to Canadian institutes.

When we come to the point of skilled immigrants being treated in the labour market, then the situation is altogether the opposite. In the job market, the employer has to pay money to employees rather than taking money as tuition fees in an educational institute. Secondly, the job market is very tight, and employers give jobs to white native-born people as compared to immigrants irrespective of their higher skilled abilities.

6.3 Experiences of Highly Skilled Immigrants at Structural Level

In this section the broader picture of institutional racism and structural barriers experienced by skilled immigrants is presented. The painful reality demonstrated by the six skilled immigrant participants in this study is that there are major problems existing in the Canadian labour market with the existing accreditations, recognition of previous work experience, and institutional racism or discrimination on the basis of colour, name and language. Generally when we talk about discrimination there is some reason behind that discrimination e.g., race, colour, gender etc. In the case of skilled immigrants, employers discriminate on two different bases: first, employers discriminate against immigrants while hiring them because of racism and/or because they are immigrants; secondly, employers discriminate against them on the basis of their foreign education and work experience (Teelucksingh, & Galabuzi, 2005). The question arises as to why employers discriminate against immigrants and how are they allowed to discriminate. There is no legal right to discriminate, in fact, it would be against the charter and other human rights to discriminate during hiring process, because if immigrants are being accepted by Canada to be a part of their society then the labour market should accept them the same as their white counterparts.

When writing from critical race theory perspective, the participants' responses have to be analyzed not only as discourses to be interpreted but as discourses that need to be explained in terms of how racism is embedded in Canadian institutions. This is true for this research study participants that employers discriminate or give priority to native-born

white people over immigrants when hiring for jobs. It is clear from participants' responses that they are being discriminated against on the basis of their name, colour and language. One of the participants revealed that employers hire native-born white people with zero publications and don't hire immigrants with more than 20 publications in their field. This type of story supports the idea that in spite of having equal or better education and experience than white native born applicants, the participants of this study are not being hired (Anisef, Sweet, & Frempong, 2003; Oreopoulos, 2009).

During my research study, another point supporting immigrants facing racism is that some immigrants told me that some of their white university professors refused to act as a reference for immigrant students in the job application process. This refusal existed even when the applicant had a job offer and needed two references but because of not having any reference they lost their job opportunity. In any case, the point is that immigrants face this discrimination in different forms on a daily basis regarding their job opportunities. It shows that native born white people use their power and authority to take decisions which shows their racism towards immigrants.

Study findings also reveal that professional skilled immigrants' opportunities in finding a job related to their field are further compromised due to structural barriers existing in the Canadian labour market: lack of social networking resources, non-recognition of foreign credentials and previous work experience (Sheilds, Rahi, Scholtz, 2006; Reitz, 2001). As noted by the participants, Canadian education was the first thing employers' demand for the Canadian job market before Canadian experience. According

to the research study findings, to overcome this barrier skilled immigrants get more education from Canadian universities, but even after getting education they are unable to find jobs related to their field due to the lack of Canadian experience, lack of social networks and racial discrimination. Once the education barrier is overcome, other barriers become more visible to these skilled immigrants in finding a job. One after another hurdle comes in the path of these skilled immigrants which they have to jump over in any way by themselves.

Another barrier experienced by skilled immigrants is their lack of social networks. Skilled immigrants' job opportunities are further compromised due to lack of social networking in Canada (Dietz, Esses, Joshi, Bennett-Abuayyash, 2009). Recent evidence indicates that about 80 % of all jobs are gained through informal networks (Reitz, 2007). Participants mentioned in their responses that as immigrants they don't have many opportunities for social networking and due to this lack of networks they are unable to enter into the job market. In turn, existing barriers force skilled immigrants into low-paying odd jobs which are not highly desired by Canadian native-born people because they don't require Canadian education and work experience. Study findings reveal that due to all these barriers skilled immigrants don't get into job interviews. Participants said that they have sent hundreds of resumes but not heard from any employer yet.

This situation pushed these skilled immigrants into different job fairs and to use settlement services for immigrants. Most of these job fairs and training programs are for skilled immigrants to teach them how they can adopt the culture of the Canadian job

market (Sovran, 2011) rather than to teach employers to change their Canadian attitude towards immigrants and adopt them as a part of their country. These one way programs are creating more misconceptions in the mind of Canadian-born white people that only skilled immigrants need to adopt Canadian culture and need to change or upgrade their degrees and work experience. Without changing this stereotyped thinking and attitude of employers towards immigrants, nothing will be changed for skilled immigrants in Canadian society.

Regarding settlement services, research study findings and previous literature reveal that settlement services are not working well for highly skilled immigrants (Alboim, Cohl, 2012). According to the findings these settlement services are providing very limited services to immigrants e.g., helping them in writing a cover letter and resume and helping those people who don't have internet access. Skilled immigrants are people who have a high education and work experience in their field; they already know very well how to write a resume and cover letter. Findings show that these settlement services are for those people who are uneducated and provide job links to people that are not related to a job-seekers field and not even related to the standard of their education and work experience. Study findings reveal that these services are almost useless for skilled immigrants because they need more than what these settlement services are providing to immigrants. The settlement services that work for skilled immigrants are teaching centers rather than settlement agencies. Skilled immigrants need to have programs where staff understands where the problem is, where highly skilled immigrants

can get Canadian experience or some job references connecting directly with the labour market.

There are structural limitations present in the settlement sector which is working under the same neo-liberal government that creates the mismatch between immigration policies and labour market policies by putting all burdens on skilled immigrants after their arrival in Canada to successfully integrate into the society. The settlement services are also bound by the government to provide limited services to immigrants due to limited amount of funding, so there is a need to make significant changes in policies at the government level to make them work well for skilled immigrants.

This study also confirms that there is a mismatch between immigration policies and labour market policies. Immigration policies have a point-based system to accept highly skilled immigrants on the basis of their high qualifications and work experience but the labour market rejects them on the same basis and demands Canadian education and work experience, leading highly skilled immigrants to become unemployed or to do work on low paid, casual jobs (Reitz, 2001). Participants revealed that they were accepted as skilled immigrants by the Canadian government based on their high education and previous work experience, but after arriving in Canada they were unable to find a suitable job related to their field because of non-recognition of their previous education and work experience. Participants said that these policies are working well for Canada but not for skilled immigrants because the policy says that if you have high skills you will get a job but the reality is different and you don't get anywhere after arriving in Canada.

Listening to the participants' situations for this study left me questioning why the Canadian immigration system admits skilled immigrants into the country on their high qualifications and professional experience, if the same qualifications are not acceptable for the labour market. Why does Canada need more immigrants on the basis of their high qualifications if they are not needed in the job market? If Canada doesn't need highly skilled people in the labour market or if their previous experience and education is not valid in Canada then Canadian Government should not recruit immigrants on the basis of their high qualification and work experience. As participants in this study revealed, they waste valuable time and money in the process of migration to Canada and after that they spend more time and money in getting more education to find better jobs, although they were already graduates in their home countries. The study findings show it was really disappointing and frustrating for participants that even after getting more education and going through more struggles, they were unable to find a job related to their field.

In conclusion, the problem which comes in to view from this research is that despite the high qualifications and work of skilled immigrants in their field of study, they continuously experience marginalization and exclusion from the labour market. The government should know about how skilled immigrants are suffering after arriving in this country. Government officials should realize that Canada's immigration policies and labour market policies include a significant mismatch which is creating really hard and creates tough conditions for skilled immigrants and for their families. The Canadian government must realize that when accepting immigrants they declare that these immigrants are now going to be part of Canadian society and now they have to care about

them like their native-born citizens. Immigrants' rights and obligations should be fulfilled in this manner in this country where the Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives everyone the right of freedom and equal rights. Apparently, the Canadian labour market puts all the responsibility for finding a good job on skilled immigrants and it is therefore not receiving any benefit from their knowledge and experience which should be an asset in a multicultural society.

The achievement of equal opportunity, participation and successful integration of skilled immigrants requires a non-coercive two-way process which requires mutual change by both immigrants and Canadian society. It is not just the immigrants who need to adapt to Canadian cultural norms; there is also a need for the receiving society to change, in order to recognize the cultural, political, linguistic and economic contributions of immigrants to Canada (Guo, 2013).

Trainers and employers need to adopt a multicultural approach which challenges their own thinking about difference, so that they can become transformers and cultural brokers by providing immigrants with good strategies to overcome employers' racism (Guo, 2009). From a recognitive justice perspective these trainings, organizations and employers need to include immigrants' knowledge and community input into the implementation and creation of appropriate programs (Fraser, 2009). A recognitive justice framework calls for the "pluralist citizenship" that recognizes that immigrants have multiple attachments to specific cultures, languages, and values. It requires the

transformation in practice and policy of different training programs for skilled immigrants by taking into account the plural ways of becoming Canadian (Guo, 2013).

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative study allows intense and deep examination of the personal experiences of the participants, but at the same time the potential problem of the researcher's subjective bias cannot be avoided by any qualitative study. This is true and really hard especially when the area of investigation involves the personally relevant topics.

Another limitation is the small sample size of participants, limited time and resources which prevented the diversity of the participants and their experiences. When studying the diverse communities in qualitative research, sample size may always be a limitation because these communities are present all over Canada. Because of the smaller sample size the findings of this study might be the representative of experiences of a small subset of individuals. The larger sample size, more diversity, good amount of resources and time would give more comprehensive and broader aspects, experiences and thoughts of this group.

Implications for Social Work Practice and Research

Social work from a social justice perspective and serving human rights profession should advocate against the injustice present in the society for immigrants. Social workers at settlement services should advocate for skilled immigrants by criticizing the injustice present in the system. Social workers can educate immigrants as their clients

that they can raise their voice about their rights in the society and also become part of it to support them. Social service organizations and agencies working for immigrants should be more comprehensive in their services towards immigrants. Participants of the research study mentioned that these services are not working well and provide very little services to immigrants according to their own criteria. Immigrants should be treated in these social services according to their needs and the problems they are facing in the labour market and society.

There is a need for social services that help immigrants with psychological and social support in the time of their struggle. For that there is need for community based organizations that work especially for that purpose. These services also need to provide education and awareness about socio-economically diverse groups and about their rights as new members of the society with employers that employers would deal with diverse group members with full awareness of their diversity and needs. Also it should be part of social work education in schools that immigrants are an essential part of Canada and people should know about immigrants' adjustment problems in a new country and be aware of their importance as a productive member of the society. This would help to eliminate the barrier of race and different cultural background faced by immigrants in Canadian labour market.

Limited amount of time, resources and small sample size restricted the exploration of more components and aspects of this area of research. Firstly a large sample size for the future research is needed that may explore more comprehensive and

different experiences of skilled immigrants. For instance, there is need to involve families of immigrants in the research to capture their experiences too in regard with social and psychological stress they are facing with unemployment or living in low income. There is need to include other diverse groups which were not the part of this research study (especially other than Asian). Also there is a need to interview employers and settlement services workers to get their opinions and experiences about this important topic that will open more ways of seeing the immigrants' experiences and situation. There is a need to look more deeply in settlement services and agencies working for immigrants and need to suggest a plan for their betterment accordingly.

Recommendations for the Government of Canada

Based on the findings of the research study and reflection on the experiences of highly skilled immigrants' integration into the Canadian labour market, it is clear that the situation needs structural and systemic changes at different levels of government and society. Here are a few recommendations:

- Pre-arrival information and services should be expanded. Pilot projects in the native countries of immigrants should be started for this purpose so that the government could better communicate about labour market realities and needs and could provide better guidance to potential skilled immigrants (Lewkowicz, 2008).

- The government of Canada needs to engage employers and municipalities in identifying labour market needs and challenges, so that when selecting the skilled immigrants they know what the needs of the job market are (Muthui, 2012).
- More comprehensive and transparent enforcement of equity and anti-discrimination policies, rules and regulations is needed in the labour market. There is a need to target access to employment. Employers should be monitored and report about their workforce in terms of accommodating ethnic-cultural diversity (Schmidtke, Kovacev, & Marry, 2006).
- There is a need for more pro-active and detailed settlement programs and services for highly skilled immigrants and for that successful changes would need to be made at the government level to give settlement services more space to work for skilled immigrants. These programs' main priority should be the integration of these immigrants into the labour market according to their qualifications and needs (language training, work experience and provision of suitable links to jobs according to their education and work experience).
- There is a need for multicultural training programs for employers so that they realize and consider immigrants' different cultural backgrounds and better understand their situation in a new country and become transformers in the labour market (Guo, 2009).
- For example, the Toronto Regional Immigration Employment Council (TRIEC) is one of the good service provider organizations which have a successful mentoring partnership program. This program brings employers and service delivery partners

together to facilitate mentoring matches for skilled immigrants. It matches skilled immigrants with established professionals with the same occupation. It also provides bridge training programs to skilled immigrants and provides them with paid internships so that they will get Canadian experience (www.triec.ca).

References

- Abrams, L. S., & Moio, J. A. (2009). Critical race theory and the cultural competence dilemma in social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(2).
- Agocs, C., & Jain, H. C. (2001). *Systemic racism in employment in Canada: Diagnosing systemic racism in organizational culture*. Toronto: Canadian Race Relations Foundation.
- Alboim, N., & Cohl, K. A. (2012). *Shaping the Future: Canada's Rapidly Changing Immigration Policies*. Maytree Foundation. p.1-74.
- Anisef, P., Sweet, R., & Frempong, G. (2003). Labour market outcomes of immigrant and racial minority university graduates in Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 4(4), 499-522.
- Aycan, Z., & Berry, J. W. (1996). Impact of employment-related experiences on immigrants' psychological well-being and adaptation to Canada. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 28(3), 240.
- Aydemir, A., & Robinson, C. (2008). Global labour markets, return, and onward migration. *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 41(4), 1285-1311.
- Beach, C. M. Worswick, C. & Green, A. G. (2011). *Towards improving Canada's skilled immigration policy: An Evaluation Approach*. C.D. Howe Institute.
- Bradshaw, T. K. (2007). Theories of poverty and anti-poverty programs in community development. *Community Development*. 38(1), 7-25.
- Buenavista, T. L., Jayakumar, U. M., & Misa-Escalante, K. (2009). Contextualizing Asian American education through critical race theory: An example of US Philipino college student experiences. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 142, 69-81.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada facts and figures: immigration overview permanent and temporary residents (2012). Research and evaluation branch Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Retrieved from www.cic.ca/english/resources/statistics/menu-fact.asp.

Dietz, J., Esses, V. M., & Bennett-Abuayyash, C. (2009). The Evaluation of Immigrants' Credentials : The Roles of Accreditation, Immigrant Race, and Evaluator Biases. *Canadian Labour Market and Skills Researcher Network (CLSRN) Working Paper*, (18).

DeVoretz, D. J. (2009). Immigrant circulation and citizenship: hotel Canada. Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. *Institute for the study of labour*.

Fraser, N. (2009). *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. New York: Columbia University Press.

George, U., & Fuller-Tomson, E. (1997). To stay or not to stay: characteristics associated with newcomers planning to remain in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*, 20(1), 181-194.

George, U., Chaze, F., Fuller Thomson, E. & Brennenstuhl, S. (2012). Underemployment and life satisfaction: A study of internationally-trained engineers in Canada. *Journal of Immigration and Refugee Studies*, 10 (4), 407-425.

George, U., Lee, B., Moffatt, K., McGrath, S. (2004) Exploring Citizenship in Contemporary Community Practice. *Journal of Community Practice, Organization, Planning and Change*, 11(3), 71-86.

Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(1). p 1-26.

Grubel, H. (2013). Canada's Immigrant Selection Policies: Recent Record, Marginal Changes and Needed Reforms. *Fraser Institute Studies in Immigration Policy*.

Guo, Y. (2009). Radicalizing Immigrant Professionals in an Employment Preparation ESL program. *Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry* 1(1) : 40-54.

- Guo, S. (2009). Difference, deficiency, and devaluation: Tracing the roots of non-recognition of foreign credentials for immigrant professionals in Canada. *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, 22(1), 37-52.
- Guo, Y. (2013). Language Policies and Programs for Adult Immigrants in Canada: A Critical Analysis. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 45.
- Jones, C. P. (2003). *Confronting institutionalized racism*. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Public Health.
- King, K. M. (2009). *The Geography of immigration in Canada: Settlement, education, labour activity and occupation profiles*. Martin Prosperity Institute.
- Lewkowicz, P. (2008). Institutional innovation for better skilled immigrant labour market integration: A study of the Toronto region immigrant employment council (TRIEC).
- Maximova, K., & Krahn, H. (2005). Does race matter? Earnings of visible minority graduates from Alberta universities. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 35(1), p. 85-110.
- Muthui, D. (2012). The Role of Stakeholders in Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Workforce. *Edmonton Soial Planning Council*.
- Oreopoulos, P. (2009), Why do skilled immigrants struggle in the labor market? A field experiment with six thousand resumes. *Canadian institute for Advanced Research*. P.1-30.
- Parrish. M, (2010). Social work perspectives on human behavior. McGraw-Hill Education, Open University Press.
- Plante, J. (2001), Integration of Internationally-educated Immigrants into the Canadian Labour Market, determinants of success. *Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics Division, Statistics Canada*. p.81-595, (094).

- Reitz, J. G. (2001). Immigrant skill utilization in the Canadian labour market: Implications of human capital research. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 2(3), 347-378.
- Reitz, J.G. (2007). Immigration employment success in Canada, Understanding the Decline. *International migration & integration* 8, 37-62.
- Satzewich, V. & Liodakis, N. (2007). *Race and Ethnicity in Canada: A Critical Introduction*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Schugurensky, D., Slade, B., & Luo, Y. (2005). Can volunteer work help me get a job in my field? On learning, immigration and labour markets. *In Proceeding of the Lifelong Learning and Work Conference, Toronto, ON, Canada*.
- Schmidtke, O., Kovacev, M., & Marry, B. (2006). Policy memo: Canada's immigration and integration policies: A multi-national evaluation of labour market integration of skilled immigrants. In *Policy workshop: Social policy and labour market integration in Canada and the EU*.
- Shaw, R. (2010). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In M. Forrester (Ed.). *Doing qualitative research in psychology*. London: Sage Publication Ltd.
- Shields, J., Rahi, K., & Scholtz, A. (2006). Voices from the margins: Visible-minority immigrant and refugee youth experiences with employment exclusion in Toronto. *Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement-Toronto*. P.6-15.
- Soveran, L. (2011). *Empowerment and Conformity: An Ethnography of a Bridge-to-Work Program for Immigrant Women*. Master's thesis, University of Calgary.
- Tara, J. Y. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth". *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8 (1). 69-91.
- Teelucksingh, C., Ph, D., & Galabuzi, G. (2005). Working precariously : The impact of race and immigrants status on employment opportunities and outcomes in Canada. *The Canadian Race Relation Foundation* (Report No 202).
- Thompson, N. (2006). *Anti-discriminatory practice*, 4th edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Valdes, F., Culp, J. M., & Harris, A. (Eds.). (2002). *Crossroads, directions and a new critical race theory*. Temple University Press.

Walker, K. (2006). *What works: Labour market integration initiatives for skilled immigrants in Canada*. Policy Research Directorate Human Resources and Social Development Canada.



Interview Question Guide

Struggle of Canadian University Graduate Skilled Immigrants in Canadian Labor Market

**Ambreen Uzair, (Master of Social Work student)
(Department of Social Work – McMaster University)**

Introduction and Instructions:

Hello, my name is Ambreen. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Just to remind you, I'm looking at opinions about how immigrants graduated from Canadian universities are struggling in the labour market and how they see their future in Canada if they cannot find a good job in Canadian labour market.

Information about these interview questions:

This gives you an idea what I would like to learn about immigrants experience of labor market. Interviews will be one-to-one and will be open-ended (not just “yes or no” answers). Because of this, the exact wording may change a little. Sometimes I will use other short questions to make sure I understand what you told me or if I need more information when we are talking such as: “*So, you are saying that ...?*”), to get more information (“*Please tell me more?*”), or to learn what you think or feel about something (“*Why do you think that is ...?*”). I would like to begin by asking you some demographic questions.

Opening Question:

Please give us your first name, and tell me one thing that made you want to participate in this study? Your age? Are you married? Do you have children and how old are they?

Introductory Questions:

How long you have been in Canada?

What is your education background in Canada?

What brought you to study at a university in Canada?

Transition Questions:

What are your career aspirations?

What are your impressions or firsthand experiences in fulfilling your career goals?

Tell me your feelings about having received your education in a Canadian university?

Key Questions:

Are you employed right now?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If no, describe your current circumstances that prevent you from finding work?

If yes, tell me about the work you are doing now?

Is the job related to your own educational qualification?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If no, what is your experience about this job?

What the wages have been for jobs you have had, have you been working at low wage jobs or were the wages consistent with your skill and experience?

What kind of barriers you have encountered in finding a job?

Which barrier is the most significant?

What do you think about your future/career in Canada?

What you do if you will not find a good job in the next few years?

What do you think about to explore other opportunities other than own profession job to build up your future?

Do you think you will remain in Canada or would you consider going to some other country where you might find better job opportunities?

What kinds of settlement services, if any, have you drawn on to help you find work?

What do you think about immigration policies and settlement services working for immigrants? Are they adequate to deal with immigrant's integration?

What kind of services government should provide for better integration of highly skilled immigrants?

Ending Question:

Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know or you want to tell?



DATE: _____

LETTER OF INFORMATION / CONSENT

Why Immigrants want to leave Canada: Struggle of Highly Skilled Immigrants in Canadian Labor Market

Investigators:

Student Investigator:

Ambreen Uzair

Department of Social Work

McMaster University

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

(226)-500-2740

E-mail: (uzaira@mcmaster.ca)

Faculty Supervisor:

Stephanie Baker Collins

Department of Social Work

McMaster University

Hamilton, ON. Canada. L8S 4M4

905-925-9140, x. 23779

E-mail: (sbcollins@mcmaster.ca)

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a research study I am conducting as part of my Master's degree in the Department of Social Work at McMaster University under the supervision of Professor Stephanie Baker Collins. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

Purpose of the Study

Considering immigrants integration in the labour market after getting their education from Canadian university, the purpose of this study to explore the experience of immigrants who have been educated in Canada in finding a job and their opinion about remaining in or leaving Canada, if they don't find a job related to their educational qualification.

This study will focus on your professional experience living in Canada. I want to explore that how this experience impacts on your socioeconomic life and on your family.

Procedures involved in the Research

In the interview you will be asked open-ended questions but following a semi structured design, allowing you to express your personal experiences and thoughts in answering them. For example, I will ask you some demographic/background information like your education and I am going to talk about your experience living in Canada after getting an education from a Canadian university and your experience in finding a job. I will be asking you questions about your views on for remaining in or leaving Canada if you do not find a good job related to your qualification. Every interview will be approximately 40 min in length and will take place in a mutually agreed upon location (e.g. public places such as cafe). With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded and hand written notes will be taken by me and by the research assistant to facilitate collection of information and to make sure that I do not miss important information, and later transcribed for analysis.

Potential Harms, Risks or Discomforts

The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. You may feel uncomfortable answering some questions or you could feel emotionally upset in defining your experience as an immigrant. These risks are not greater than those you might encounter in your everyday life. If you feel uncomfortable with sharing certain experiences, please let me know. You do not need to answer questions that make you uncomfortable or you may refuse to answer questions that you do not want to answer.

Potential Benefits

Although the research will not benefit you directly, the findings of this study will help the researcher understand more about skilled immigrant's problem in finding job and the effects of doing low paid jobs on your life. The research will provide an opportunity for you to reflect on your personal experiences related to job finding being an immigrant. It will make visible the importance of Canadian university graduate immigrants facing troubles in settlement for immigrant population, for Canadian society and to future researchers.

Confidentiality

All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Every effort will be made to protect (guarantee) your confidentiality and privacy, your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study. However, we are often identifiable through the stories we tell. Please keep this in mind in deciding what to tell me. No one but me and the research assistant will know whether you participated unless you choose to tell them.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the study or not. If you decide to be part of the study, you can stop (withdraw), from the interview for whatever reason, even after signing the consent form or up until approximately *[15 June, 2014]*. However, after June 15 I will have started to write up results from this study and cannot remove your data. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any data you have provided will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study.

Information about the Study Results

I expect to have this study completed by approximately *[august, 2014]*. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me at:

uzaira@mcmaster.ca,

Or at

226-500-2740(cell)

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance.

If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat

Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142

c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support

E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Ambreen Uzair**, student of McMaster University.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time or up until approximately **June 15, 2014**
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study and to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: _____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

In addition to participating in this study, would you like to receive a summary of the study's results?

Yes _____

Please send them to this email address _____

Or to this mailing address: _____

No _____