

IMMIGRANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR EXPERIENCES
IN INTEGRATING INTO COMMUNITIES IN
THE LOWER MAINLAND OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

Uzma R. Saeed

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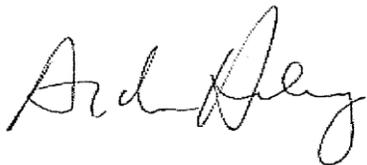
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Immigrants' Perceptions of their Experiences in Integrating into Communities in the Lower
Mainland of British Columbia

APPROVED:

Handwritten signature of Charles Scott in cursive script.

(Faculty Advisor)

Handwritten signature of Ardrey in cursive script.

(Principal of Canadian Programs)

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Abstract

Immigrants integrating into a new culture and/or society might bring certain expectations, perceptions and hopes with themselves. Although generally considered fairly normal and expected for the most part, these expectations can create problems for oneself and for others around the individual immigrant. This thesis will look into the perceptions of the immigrants integrating into the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. The immigrants discussed and studied in this particular thesis are from Pakistan, one of the many different communities that are a part of the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia. The participants selected were five families that are part of the Pakistani community in the Tri-cities area of the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. These families were selected because they were known to the interviewee or they were known through a common friend. A questionnaire was created and the immigrants were interviewed using that questionnaire; some participants completed the questionnaire on their own, without being interviewed. The research was conducted so that a better understanding would be attained by educators and others in lower Mainland regarding the issues faced by the immigrants in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia and as well as their perceptions during the process of integration. It was also hoped that the research would help bring awareness and raise questions for future research and/or studies conducted on the same topic. The research design used was a mixed method qualitative ethnographic study. The key finding showed that the interviews established some themes. These themes were obtained by using thematic analysis. The most common positive themes were 1) *factors helping immigrants*, 2) *educational programs & activities are beneficial*, 3) *managed to integrate by*, and 4) *immigration process*. The most common negative themes were 1) *credentials/work experience not accepted is the biggest challenge/hurdle*, 2) *religion*, 3) *health care not as good*, 4) *high cost of living*, and 5) *lack of*

information. Some minor themes also emerged which were 1) *racism*, 2) *educational system*, 3) *other benefits* and 4) *other challenges*. This research also helped the immigrants in sharing some of their own best solutions for improving the experiences of integration into communities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Most of the information that appeared as a result of this research would also benefit any other future study or research.

Keywords: Immigrants' perceptions, thematic analysis, limitations, qualitative & quantitative research, mixed method, ethnographic study.

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Immigrants' Perceptions of their Experiences in Integrating into Communities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia

Chapter 1

The Problem

This chapter will explain why I chose his particular topic as well as some key elements that led me to further research it. The Lower Mainland of British Columbia is thriving with different immigrant cultures that add to the diversity and beauty of the region. At the same time, it is an adjustment process for the immigrants as well as the host culture. Most of the immigrants bring not just their hopes and dreams but also their fears and apprehensions. As an immigrant myself, I noticed and experienced this first hand. I started wondering each year if these were only feelings that I was experiencing or if there were others feeling the same way. As a teacher, I also came into contact with several immigrant children and heard them express something similar in different class discussions. As a parent myself, I heard my own child share and express similar feelings. The immigrant parents or international student parents that I came to know over the years seem to have similar feelings and concerns. Overall, I started getting more intrigued each time and it seemed like this is something that I should research about and look into since I had the opportunity to do a thesis for my Master's degree. I felt that I should research and write about something that interests and has become very important for me over the course of the last few years of my time in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

In my own personal experience, there are no formal or informal programs for the immigrants at the district that I was employed with. There was no focus on diversity in course curricula and generally very few if any schools had events that celebrated diversity. As I will

explain in the next few paragraphs, some of my own personal experiences over the years have led me to this conclusion.

Background of the Problem

According to Alladin (1996), Canadians have to realize that “a serious study of racism in schools and society will inevitably create controversy [since] racist practices have been so integral in our history that they have gained acceptance” (as cited in Bentheim, 2013, p. 160).

. Not many people seem to realize as to how crucial it is for the host as well as the immigrant cultures to try to understand and cope with issues that are important for either of the two sides to better understand each other.. Little attention seems to be given to such issues as diversity, immigration, or international students. In my eight years as a teacher working in Lower Mainland of BC, only one school (from the countless that I had been moved to over the years within my district)was giving close attention to how all these things are related and was trying to do something about it.

My own experiences have led me to deal with institutional racism a number of times and to start feeling if not outright believing that it is an actual unfairness verses just my perception over the years. The most recent example is that of finishing my Master's program and still not qualifying for a category 6 teaching license through TQS. With three bachelor degrees, two from Pakistan and one from United States, two diplomas from NAMC for Montessori training besides +18 years of teaching experience from Pakistan, USA and Canada; one would assume that I have enough credibility to have at least one of my qualifications accepted as a bachelors but that was not the case. I ended up receiving only a category 5 and a verbal ok that a 5+ category will most probably be given once I reapply after receiving the actual degree—versus all my other colleagues from the same program who received a category 6 at the end of their program. I just

happened to be the only one in the cohort who had earlier education and credentials from outside of Canada. Racism “involves the total social structure where one group has conferred advantage through institutional policies ... it is a social construction based on sociopolitical attitudes that demean specific racial characteristics” (Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 2000, p. 58; cited in France, 2013).

This is one reason that is shaping the immigrants' perceptions of their experiences in integrating into communities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia in a somewhat negative manner. Most immigrants start becoming much attuned to the non-verbal forms of communication and start picking up the vibes of their environment and the people who are part of that environment. “The most important thing to keep in mind about non-verbal behaviors is that they do not translate across cultures easily and can lead to serious misunderstanding. Human behaviors are driven by values, beliefs, and attitudes, and it is helpful to consider how these invisible aspects of culture drive the behaviors we see.” (Carteret, 2011) Immigrants initially feel that they are treated differently and then as time passes and they see that the policies and treatments from different institutions around them seem to be different for the immigrants verses others who are born Citizens, second or third generation immigrant citizens and/or financially well-established and secure; they are even more firm in their belief and feel strongly about what they are perceiving.

Annual visa quotas for sponsored parents and grandparents dropped dramatically between 2005 and 2011 from 20,005 to 11,200, with actual sponsorship applications taking nine to 30 months longer depending on location of visa application. While the rationale may be that sponsored elderly immigrants use social services and do not contribute to tax revenue, this raises a fundamental question of why members of

immigrant communities cannot have their elderly parents and grandparents nearby to look after, a privilege which non-immigrants enjoy. (Arif, 2011)

These are just some of the examples that I have started creating and could be considered a part of the background of the issue being discussed.

Research Problem

Immigrants are the future, and immigrants were the past. When you are a second, third or even fourth generation immigrant, you don't realize how most countries were built and have developed thanks to cross-cultural immigration. Although Canada needs immigrants for future prosperity, the average Canadian is unaware of this fact let alone wanting to accept it.

The need for more skilled immigrants is well documented. As we move through this decade many more people will retire from Canada's existing workforce. At the same time, lower fertility rates mean a smaller number of Canadian-born individuals will be entering the workforce in the coming years. In addition to the fundamental demographic challenges, stepped up resource project activity in the Western provinces is resulting in strong demand for skilled trades, project managers, engineers, and some other types of workers. By the middle of this decade immigration will account for the vast majority of the net growth in the Canadian labour force. (Peacock, 2012)

Many people have very little knowledge of the background of Canadian immigration and the point system whereby immigrants coming to Canada have to be able to qualify as a skilled worker in order to apply for the Canadian immigration. They have very little experience in dealing with those from other cultures, and this may be why they are ignorant about such issues. I want to bring attention to the fact that training and education are needed in order to help people

better understand other cultures, perspectives and ideas in a positive manner. What better tools to use than to perhaps use some of the immigrants as teachers to teach about the true essence of their native cultures. I started realizing the importance of such issues when I experienced a life-altering event, and started looking outside of myself and my own needs. Travel or becoming an immigrant oneself provide education and training about these issues.

Over the eight years that I have worked as a teacher in the Lower Mainland of BC, and the fourteen that I lived in the Lower Mainland, I have seen further demise of programs that in anyway could improve such situations. In 2013, parents of students in French immersion programs were calling on Coquitlam school trustees to hold three public meetings as well as circulating a petition regarding the \$12 million cuts. "The petition has the backing of the Canadian Parents for French (CPF), which says parents are particularly troubled about the cuts to learning support assistants and the loss of a language coordinator. The district receives \$379,392 in federal funds for French education, CPF says" (Steffenhagen, 2013). I know that government has cut back more and more funds each year (see below) but even then the suggestions provided by teachers such as myself never seem to be taken into consideration. Even if we were willing to voluntarily provide such services, they were not regarded as important or valuable by fellow staff and administrator(s) in the school(s). Naylor (2012) writes of "an education system struggling to offer quality education because of consistent and pervasive underfunding, with the proportion of the province's GDP spent on education in decline for some years."

In the more recent years, in one of the schools I was a teacher, one day I was asked to talk about a cultural festival because it fell on a day during the week. I stood and talked about it, mentioning the fact that I was also celebrating that cultural day but was working because in Canada it is not regarded as a holiday. As I spoke, I recalled how I used to do such talks and

created cultural programs and shows in United States ages ago because I had been very involved in all such things and they (in the U.S.) had started regarding me as somewhat of an expert in that area of diversity. You can check out www.uzmasaeed.com/gallery (Links to Programs, 2015)

After I was done with my talk, we asked (another teacher and me) if there were any students in the school who also celebrated this holiday. Only a couple of hands went up, those too very hesitantly. Later, as I was making my way out for recess duty, a girl approached me and said, "Ms. Saeed, I am also from Pakistan and I also celebrate today's special day." For a few seconds, I just absorbed what she had just said and then asked her as to why she didn't speak up when she could have and she said, "Well, I didn't feel comfortable and wasn't sure how others would take it and treat me." I looked at her again and was reminded of my own daughter and how she had felt and experienced all these same fears over the years. I smiled at her and said, "Always be proud of who you are and where you come from because it is all part of you." I also thanked her for having shared this with me and told her that she could come and talk to me whenever she felt the need to talk about her culture. At this point, I had already been thinking about a topic related to immigrants for my thesis and I must say that this particular incident was the final push for me to pursue this particular issue as my research topic. When children are also feeling the differences and acting based on those experiences then the need to speak and research those areas is even more significant, at least in my mind as these children are the future. They need our help in gaining confidence and becoming outspoken about who they are and where they come from? We can at least do that for them if not instill a pride in them of their heritage and not only of their new country.

Statement of the Problem

The following statement of the problem seems to be appropriate for my research: “Immigrants' Perceptions of their Experiences in Integrating into Communities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.”

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to inquire into any perceptions relating to individual immigration experiences exist in the minds of immigrants, to analyze these, and to determine whether or not some further study should be recommended for research regarding those perceptions. I am also hopeful that the outcome will help improve the conditions for students, parents and teachers in the Lower Mainland so that they are better equipped with knowledge and resources for the future generations. As I have mentioned in my opening section, immigrants need support in feeling that their respective cultures are welcomed, honoured, and supported.

Importance of the Study

While living in BC, I have learned that majority of the immigrants have a strong perception of the existence of many biases present and aimed towards them and their cultural heritage in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. As is evident from the following report;

Among non-immigrants also visible minorities are more likely to face discrimination than those who do not belong to a visible minority group (odds ratio of 2.2). The only people who are less likely to face discrimination than those staying in British Columbia are those living in Atlantic Canada (odds ratio of 0.6). Other regions do not show a significant difference from the reference category (i.e., British Columbia). (Nangia, 2013)

The same author further elaborates in the following paragraph of the same report; "Results of the GSS clearly indicate that immigrants face a higher level of discrimination than non-immigrants. Ethnicity and race are the major grounds of discrimination. Most of the discrimination is experienced at the work place.

Other common situations of unfair treatment occur on the streets, or in stores, banks, and restaurants. A much higher proportion of landed immigrants face multiple instances of discrimination in multiple situations. The mean number of discriminatory incidents faced by immigrants is significantly higher compared to that for non-immigrants" (Nangia, 2013)

As I performed my interviews this appeared to be the case even more so aside from my having experienced similar biases myself while living in BC as a resident immigrant.

The above examples also show how an immigrant to a new country encounters a lot of obstacles in order to adjust and survive in the new environment, let alone adding issues related to biases, general and institutional racism to an already full plate. The study is important for creating better work and living environment for the immigrants so that things can improve for everyone overall, specially if it is not just something that the immigrants are perceiving. Going back to the beginning of this chapter and to what I had stated earlier, the purpose of this study is to "inquire into any perceptions relating to individual immigration experiences exist in the minds of immigrants, to analyze these, and to determine whether or not some further study should be recommended for research regarding those perceptions."

In order to provide some support we need to know the experiences of these individuals. Some kind of education and training could be provided for new immigrants as well as the hosts in order to address different needs that arise due to different cultures coming together to live in a common place with harmony, mutual respect and understanding of each other's perspectivesAs

the number of immigrants in Lower Mainland of British Columbia is increasing more each year, this issue if not resolved soon could create many more problems down the years to come.

Definition of Terms

Immigrant is defined as a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country.

Perceptions is defined as the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses.

Experience is defined as the practical contact with and observation of facts or events. Mental impressions developed on the basis of these sensory observations

Immigrants' perceptions of their experiences is defined as how immigrants' see, hear or think of the different experiences that they are having.

Integrating combine one thing with another so that they become a whole.

Communities a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.

Thematic analysis is defined as the most common form of analysis in qualitative research. It emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or "themes") within data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated to a specific research question.

Push Factors is defined as the reason why people leave an area.

Pull Factor is defined as the reason why people move to a particular area.

Refugee is defined as someone who has left their home under threat of persecution and does not have a new home to go to.

Scope of Study

I will for the most part be looking at this through the eyes of an immigrant myself which might bring some of my own biases to this whole situation; I will need to be attentive to my own biases. I will be looking for common themes to immerse into in order to analyze the situation. I will also look at what factors influence the immigrants and their integration process into a new environment. The limitations and/or boundaries of this study will be explored and discussed in Chapter 3.

Summary

As explained above in the first section of this introduction, my reasons for exploring and learning about this topic are both personal and professional. Due to my own experiences as an immigrant, and as a professional teacher working with other immigrant children and their families, I started developing an interest in order to research this topic further. There appeared to be a disconnect between the immigrant and host groups. It appeared to me that investigating this topic further would prove beneficial for everyone concerned. My purpose is to inquire into any perceptions relating to individual immigration experiences exist in the minds of immigrants, to analyze these, and to determine whether or not some further study should be recommended for research regarding those perceptions. The investigating and the end results might shed some light on the importance regarding the need for more education and training which in turn should help in improving integration between immigrant and host communities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

Outline of The Remainder of The Paper.

In order to do all the research in a proper order, the next four chapters will be proceeding in as much of a logical order as can be possible. Chapter 2 will focus on literature reviewed and exploration of any theoretical and research work that has been done about this topic. Chapter 3

will discuss the research methodology that I used in order to further explore and/or research the current topic. In Chapter 4, I will analyze and discuss the research findings. Finally, in Chapter 5, I will offer my conclusions, discuss the implications of my findings; as well, I will offer my recommendations for working with immigrants in the context of educational services for and with them.

Chapter 2

Review of literature

Introduction to the Chapter

In this chapter the focus will be on literature reviewed and exploration of any theoretical and research work that has been done about this topic. We need to look at the background of immigration and immigrants as well as the history of Canada in terms of these particular topics since that would help in further understanding this topic. We will be discussing different topics such as reasons for immigrating, Canada and immigrants, historical background of Canadian immigration (timeline divided between 1200 AD. to Today), History of immigration law (timeline divided between 1828 to 1977), immigration Policy and a few important terms and provincial participation including the timeline of first world war, the second world war, 1970s, 1980s to 2000 followed by positives and negatives of moving to Canada. To start off, let's look at some of the reasons that people generally decide to immigrate.

Reasons for Immigrating

People have been travelling and immigrating from place to place and country to country all over the world. Sometimes it is due to financial reasons and in search of better job opportunities whereas at other times it is because of personal reasons which could include but may not be limited to marriage, family and/or even friends. According to one article, top seven reasons that people immigrate include financially secured future, high standard of living, education, start of a series, political reasons, needs of different personalities and finally soul mate. (Top Seven Reasons Why People Immigrate, 2009) Other sites further point to the fact that over the decades people have been immigrating because of religious freedom and/or they might be forced to immigrate because of certain living conditions in their own homeland. (Siemborski) (Wills,

2005) Yet another article lists economic migration, social migration, political migration and environmental causes as the main reasons for people to migrate. This article further describes how some people chose to migrate and some people are forced to migrate. Some immigrants might look to become a refugee because of life circumstances. Sometimes there are Push and Pull factors involved that are the reasons for people immigrating. (Geography, Migration Trends, 2014) Although Canadian Immigration extends back to thousand years or so, if we look back historically to Inuit and their arrival around 1200 AD (History of Immigration to Canada, 2015), for the sake of time and space we will focus on more recent immigration and the patterns formed during the more recent times of immigration. As Canada is one of the countries most sought after by the immigrants, it is also dealing with different issues relating to a large population of immigrants coming in and trying to adjust to living in a new place, a new home.

Canada and Immigrants:

When people make a decision to immigrate, they start looking around them to try to find out where to really immigrate to. The general idea is to try to improve the living conditions and/or standard of living in some way. Each person makes a decision based on individual circumstances. As explained in the previous chapter, the reason(s) for immigrating vary from person to person and from situation to situation. For example, being an immigrant myself, I remember each time that I moved the reasons varied. From Pakistan to USA: higher education, more options and opportunities. When we were moving from USA to Canada, we were looking for better opportunities and faster immigration process back in 1999-2000. Now, as we moved from Canada back to USA, we wanted to be together as a family, as well as again looking for better options for our future as a family.

Many people look towards Canada for immigration since Canada offers different options and opportunities that many other countries around the world don't yet offer. Canada is also still allowing, admitting and looking for new immigrants. The following list highlights some of the key reasons behind immigrants choosing Canada as a new home for themselves:

1. Point-system for immigration
2. Healthcare (completely free and/or partially free in some provinces)
3. Better education and job opportunities for the whole family
4. Multicultural and accepting image around the world
5. Re-establishing family ties

The above five seem to be the most commonly repeated reasons that appear in different research related to and done on the topic of Canadian immigration. Let us take a look at each one of these five separately.

1. First and foremost, Point-system for immigration seems to be the primary reason many immigrants apply to immigrate to Canada. Besides Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom, Canada also uses the Point-system immigration. This provides opportunities for skilled workers from around the world to apply for Canadian Immigration. Many of these immigrants are even able to apply for immigration on their own instead of having to hire a lawyer to represent them. Using this system, skilled workers are able to count and calculate their own points to see if they are eligible and qualify to apply for Canadian Immigration. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), if a federal skilled worker scores 67 points or higher (out of 100), they might be able to apply. The points are based and counted on six selection factors. The point grid for each of the following factors is considered: English and/or French skills, education,

experience, age, arranged employment in Canada and adaptability. (Canada, 2015)
(Skilled Worker Points Calculator, 2000-2014) (Canadian Immigration Points Test, 2003-2015)

2. Healthcare is another very significant reason for immigrants as they consider Canada for immigration. The “free” healthcare appeals to many who come from around the globe and are willing to adjust to all the new ordeals and challenges. Just knowing that the cost of ill health will be covered for them by the government seems to bring a peace of mind to them. (Canada, Canada's universal health-care system, 2015) (Rose, 2013)
3. Immigrants look towards Canada’s better job market and education systems as a definite plus, depending on where they are coming from. This tends to vary from person to person, depending on what each individual’s goals might be, field of study that individuals might consider and/or what job options are open and available for one. (Lawyers, 1996-2015)
4. The world regards Canada as a multicultural and accepting country which in turn makes the immigrants willing to invest all their resources in order to move here. The immigrants tend to move here with an accepting attitude believing they will be accepted in turn, as well. (Canadian Multiculturalism: An Inclusive Citizenship, 2012)
(Hussain, 2013)
5. Many immigrants move to Canada because they already have family present here. Having some sort of family ties and being connected as such make it way more appealing for new immigrants to pursue immigration to Canada. Having family ensures, emotional, psychological as well as financial support at times which is why

immigrants feel even more secure in moving to a place where they already have someone who they can connect with in more than one way. (Pendakur, 2000)

Historical Background of Canadian Immigration

Immigrants and the process of immigration have played a significantly important role in Canadian history. It might even be true to say that Canada depends on immigrants about as much as the immigrants depend on Canada. Both need each other for a better future. Looking back towards history when immigration in Canada started or at least as far back as it could be traced; we can see and learn how certain things evolved from it. We can see how immigration was supported and the immigrants were welcomed since more and more people were needed to start and establish this new country. Initial immigrants were from only certain countries but as the word spread people from other countries also started looking towards Canada and applying for Canadian immigration. As such the process of immigration has also been changed over the years to how it is being run right now.

1200 AD. - 1776

The earliest settlers could be traced back to 1200 AD. Inuit are believed to have arrived entirely separately from other indigenous people. They were the pioneers of the land, and have truly made Canada what it is today. They were willing enough to share their beautiful land with all the people who have been coming to Canada since back then. All indigenous people contributed significantly to the culture and economy historically. (edited), 2015)

In 1604 the first European settlement was established by French explorers Pierre de Monts and Samuel de Champlain (north of what is now Florida) The first was at St. Croix Island (present-day Maine) and the next one was at Port Royal, in Acadia (present-day Nova Scotia)

Acadians – descendants of French colonists – began settling in (what are now) Maritime provinces. They brought and shared their own cultural heritage, religion, language and traditions with them. (Canada, Background - facts in Canada's Immigration History, 2011) From 1600s and 1700; about 8,500 French settlers arrived. Most French speaking Quebecers are the descendants of these French settlers (Canada, Background - facts in Canada's Immigration History, 2011)

1776 Loyalists came to Canada from US, to escape American revolution. They were mostly of Dutch, German, British, Scandinavian and Aboriginal origin. Also included were Presbyterian, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Jewish, Quaker and Catholic religious backgrounds. All of them again added a different perspective to Canada and its culture, bringing their own traditions, cultures, religions and languages.

1851 - 2001

In 1867 Canada became a country and Sir John Alexander Macdonald became the first Prime Minister. He was an immigrant, was born in Scotland on January 11th, 1815 and had moved to Upper Canada as a child. It was acceptable if not welcomed wholeheartedly that an immigrant became the very first Prime Minister of Canada. From 1871 – 1901 Canadian censuses first incremented, taken every 10 years on average. (edited), 2015) In 1872 Dominion Lands Act started; a piece of legislation that granted a quarter section of free land (160 acres or 64.7 hectares) to any 21 year old or older settler who paid a \$10 registration fee, lived on the land (own quarter section) for three years, cultivated 30 acres (12.1 hectares) and built a permanent dwelling. (Canada, Background - facts in Canada's Immigration History, 2011) There were so

many different ways that the government showed support for the immigrants and tried to provide ways for them to adjust, settle and survive in their new homeland.

1901, Dominion Government changed policy and census-taking occurred every 5 years as a result. (edited), 2015) From 1901- 1914, 750,000 immigrants entered Canada from the US. Many were returning Canadians, one-third were newcomers including Germans, Hungarians, Norwegians, Swedes, and Icelanders having previously settled in the American West. (Canada, Backgrounder - facts in Canada's Immigration History, 2011) Also before 1914, 170,000 Ukrainians, 115,000 Poles, and tens of thousands from Germany, France, Norway, and Sweden settled in the West developing a thriving agricultural sector. (Canada, Backgrounder - facts in Canada's Immigration History, 2011) Canada kept growing, changing and learning new ways from each different set of immigrants that arrived with their own unique ways of doing things and were able to share those with the people in the new land. They were able to bring with them experience and numbers which helped improve the agricultural sector of Canada, making it flourish in a relatively short period of time. In 1937, John Buchan – 1st Baron Tweedsmuir and Governor General of Canada (1935-40)—said the following about the immigrant groups, which is carried forward as a philosophy in Canada's Multiculturalism policy. He said that immigrant groups “should retain their individuality and each make its contribution to the national character.” This is something it seems to me that people today have forgotten and are unwilling to accept anymore. Recently, I have seen posts, discussions and comments on Facebook by fellow educators and different educational assistants’ that seem to be of discriminatory and racist nature.

From 1928 – 1971, just through Pier 21 in Halifax alone, one million immigrants came to Canada. (Canada, Backgrounder - facts in Canada's Immigration History, 2011) and in 1960's,

about 1/3 of Canadians took pride in preserving their distinct culture and had origins that were neither British nor French. Others around them were just as accepting for the most part of that fact and some were even willing to learn new things. (Canada, Background - facts in Canada's Immigration History, 2011)

2006 - Today

In 2006, Canada received 236,756 immigrants. Top ten countries of origin were:

People's Republic of China (28, 896), India (28, 520), Philippines (19, 718), Pakistan (9, 808) United Kingdom (7,324), Iran (7,195), South Korea (5, 909), Columbia (5,382) and Sri Lanka (4,068). The top ten source countries were followed closely by France (4,026), Morocco (4,025) with Romania, Russia and Algeria, each contributing over 3, 500 immigrants. (edited), 2015) Proportion of foreign-born Canadians was 19.8%. (Canada, Background - facts in Canada's Immigration History, 2011) As can be seen from the above, diversity started increasing in Canada since more and more people from different countries started to immigrate to Canada and bring with them new ideas and concepts to again contribute to Canada's multiculturalism. Currently, most Canadian immigrants come from India, China and Philippines. Twenty-four percent of Canadians speak languages other than English and French. As fertility rate in Canada is 1.68 children per female, the majority of Canada's population growth is because of immigration (Canada, Background - facts in Canada's Immigration History, 2011), another fact that is sometimes overlooked or unknown by the average 2nd, 3rd or 4th generation Canadians.

History of Immigration Law

1828

Great Migration of Canada—also known as Great Migration from Britain—was a period of high immigration to Canada from 1815 to 1850, including over 800,000 immigrants. Europe was richer due to Industrial Revolution, and population growth decreased the relative number of jobs and forced many to look to North America for economic success. Hence more and more people decided to try to immigrate towards North America.

An Act to Regulate the Carrying of Passengers in Merchant Vessels: Britain passed the first legislative recognition making Britain responsible for the safety and well-being of immigrants leaving the British Isles. The number of passengers carried on the ship was limited, the amount of space allocated to the passengers was regulated and adequate sustenance was supplied to the passengers on the voyage. (edited), 2015) This in some ways would also control the number of stowaways on a vessel besides providing for the people already travelling on the vessel.

1910

Canadian citizenship was originally created under the Immigration Act, designating the British subjects who were domiciled in Canada. Other British subjects required permission to land. (edited), 2015)

1921

The designation “Canadian National” (separate status) was created under the Canadian Nationals Act. All such were defined as being a Canadian citizen as defined above, their wives and any children (fathered by such citizens) who hadn't landed in Canada yet. (edited), 2015)

1931

Under the Statute of Westminster, the monarchy ceased to be an exclusively British Institution, and Canadians and others living in countries known as Commonwealth realms were known as subjects of the crowns. In legal documents, "British subject" continued to be used. (edited), 2015)

1946

Canada was the second nation to establish its own nationality law (from the British Commonwealth). The enactment of the Canadian Citizenship Act occurred in 1946 and became effective on 1 January 1947. To acquire Canadian citizenship on January 1st, 1947, one had to be British subject on that date, an Indian or Eskimo, or had to have been admitted to Canada as a landed immigrant before that date. A British Subject was anyone from UK or its colonies or a Commonwealth country. There was a loss of British subject status before 1947 – determined by United Kingdom law (History of British nationality law) (edited), 2015)

1977

February 15 – Canada removed restrictions on dual citizenship.

Immigration Policy: A Few Important Terms and Provincial Participation

Historically, Canada has welcomed immigrants through its doors. Majority of the policies in the beginning had been started keeping the best interest of the immigrants in mind. It is interesting to note that in some ways immigration has now become somewhat biased compared to how it started in the history. "Over its history, however, immigration priorities and strategies have changed significantly, from an open border approach in Canada's early history, to policy that could be characterized as explicitly discriminatory, to an economically focused approach" (Makarenko, 2010).

Immigration is regarded as “concurrent power” (jurisdiction is formally shared between the federal government and other provinces) under Canada’s constitution. Naturalization and aliens are exclusively under federal government jurisdiction. Federal government has the power and control the number of immigrants admitted to Canada as well as the criteria for their selection. In order to help outline federal approaches to such issues, federal government has introduced key legislation such as the “ Immigration and Refugee Protection Act”. (Makarenko, 2010)

The federal government also collaborates with the different provinces at varying levels to try to establish immigration policies and goals that meet the requirements and works according to each province’s own needs. One of the prime examples of a province actively participating is that of Quebec. Starting in 1960, Quebec has established its own immigration department in 1968 due to its own distinct language and cultural heritage. Quebec has also negotiated many deals with the government regarding immigration policy, targets and criteria. In some ways, this is perceived as a way to strengthen the francophone nature of the province. Around the 1990’s, Quebec’s control over the immigration matters with respect to Quebec itself was secured further with the signing of the Canada-Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens. Other provinces have also signed individual agreements with the federal government between 1998 - 2002, although they have not gone to the same extent as Quebec. Many of these agreements include a Provincial Nominee Program as well whereby provincial governments are able to identify and nominate an agreed upon number of potential immigrants to their particular province(s). Each province has developed its own immigration-related goals and strategies. Manitoba and British Columbia signed agreements which gave them sole responsibility for providing settlement and integration services for new immigrants. The two provinces design and

deliver programs and services for immigrants that settle within their respective borders, with partial funding from the federal government. The federal government has also committed to provide funding to support other provinces in delivering such services. (Makarenko, 2010)

After 1867 Confederation, immigration policy was a priority and attracting a large number of immigrants was viewed as a key economic strategy to improve national demand for domestic goods and stimulate the nation's small manufacturing sector. Canada also looked to immigrants to settle the largely unoccupied lands in the west as a means of securing national sovereignty in these areas. In 1869, first *Immigration Act*, established the basic framework of Canadian immigration policy. In theory, this *Act* portrayed an "open door" policy, with very few restrictions on who could immigrate to Canada, only exception being criminals. It placed restrictions on persons with disabilities, the ill, and the poor. The blind, deaf, insane, or infirm were recorded as such by the ships transporting them. Anyone posing a threat to public safety because of disease or illness was required to post a \$300 bond upon entering Canada. The ship's captain was required to pay a sum of money equal to the travel and initial living expenses for the immigrants that were destitute or poor. The *Act* set out the specific conditions for transporting immigrants to Canada. The *Dominion Land Act* was also passed to attract immigrant settlers to the west. Free land was provided to male immigrants if they agreed to cultivate the land and build a permanent dwelling within three years. Early immigration policy was highly discriminatory in practice, the federal government focused primarily on attracting farmers and labourers, discouraging urban workers, artisans, and tradesmen. The immigrants of Caucasian ethnicity, and preferably of European or American nationality were preferred. The 1885 *Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act* was one of the most openly discriminatory policies. The federal government assisted in bringing thousands of Chinese workers to help construct the Canadian

Pacific Railway (CPR) in the early 1880s. After the railway was completed, Chinese immigration was restricted by imposing a large tax on each individual immigrant besides denying Canadian citizenship to him/her. These restrictions were enforced until 1947; no other ethnic group was ever targeted this way in Canadian history up to that point. (Makarenko, 2010)

First World War.

Greater restrictions were placed on immigrants in the name of national security. Government started taking really strong measures and stopped immigration from Germany, Austria, and Hungary and any other nation that they considered to be an enemy. Under the *War Measures Act, 1914* any immigrants already in Canada from these countries were treated as enemies as well. Many other atrocities were committed at that time. In 1917, *Wartime Elections Act* was introduced by the federal government according to which “enemy alien” who had received citizenship after 1902 did not have the right to vote anymore. After First World War, however, Canada faced significant political and economic issues including the rise of communism, organized labour movements, and the Great Depression. The federal government enforced even more strict immigration rules so as to encourage social harmony and control by keeping out immigrants of certain ideological, religious, or ethnic backgrounds. The idea of protecting Canadian workers from losing their jobs to “cheap” foreign labour was also introduced. Furthermore, in 1919, another *Immigration Act* was introduced, which provided the federal government with new powers. Under Section 38 of the new *Act*, the federal government prohibited and/or limited the entry of nationalities that had fought against Canada and Britain in the war, including those from Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Turkey as well as Doukhobers, Hutterites, and Mennonites, due to the particular religious practices followed by them. Section 41

of the *Act* also gave the government power to deport anti-government and business activists. (Makarenko, 2010)

Second World War.

The 1940s brought changing attitudes towards immigration. Economic growth increased concerns of Canadian workers losing jobs to cheap foreign labour. Tolerance towards welfare state and multiculturalism began starting in Canadian society, acceptance of different ethnic groups and concerns over racial and religious discrimination. Canadian policymakers again started looking at immigration as a tool for economic growth. In 1947, the ban on Chinese immigrants was removed. Although effort was made all over by some to improve conditions, still in 1952, another new *Immigration Act* was passed, continuing many of the previous discriminatory practices. The new *Act* also started “preferred classes” of immigrants, which included British subjects, citizens of France and the United States besides Asian immigrants who wanted to reunite with immediate relatives in Canada. The *Act* also discriminated against Asian immigrants without immediate relatives, gay persons, and persons with mental disabilities as well as provided the federal government with the power to keep out or limit immigration of any groups for social or economic reasons.

The 1960s brought some key changes to Canada's immigration policy. The government brought regulations in 1962 which virtually eliminated racial discrimination as a major feature of immigration policy. Thanks to this immigrants could no longer be denied entry to Canada on the basis of colour, race, or nationality. Also in 1966, a White Paper was tabled by the government on immigration, which recognized immigration as a main source for reaching national goals of population and economic growth. The paper did recommend a preference for immigrants with skills that would be valuable in the Canadian labour force. In 1967, the Points System started.

This system made certain that there were no quotas or restrictions on prospective immigrants who could now pass a points test based on a number of qualities. Canada signed the United Nations *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (and its Protocol) in 1969. Canada formally recognized refugees as a class of immigrants in 1969. The federal government did not start the whole process until 1978, when changes to the *Immigration Act* were introduced. (Makarenko, 2010)

1970s.

The federal government commissioned a study to provide factual background on policy issues resulting in a 1975 Green Paper on immigration proposing to move away from the practices developed under the 1952 *Immigration Act* and the 1966 White Paper. The Green Paper welcomed ethnic diversity besides continuing to emphasize immigration as a tool that could help Canada meet its labour needs. The Green Paper also recognized the need to draw immigrants willing to settle in more remote, less populated areas. Federal government subsequently introduced a new *Immigration Act* in 1976 (implemented in 1978) involving broad reforms and basic framework for Canada's contemporary immigration policy. One of the key elements of the new *Act* was the requirement for greater planning and provincial consultation in immigration policy. The federal government was required to set targets for the number of immigrants admitted each year besides consulting with the provinces regarding provincial immigration. Also included was the introduction of new categories of immigrants.

- **Independent class:** individuals applying for landed-immigrant status on their own initiative

- **Humanitarian class:** a) refugees (as defined under the United Nations Convention on Refugees), and b) other persecuted and displaced persons not covered under the UN Convention
- **Family class:** including the immediate family, parents, and grandparents of individuals already living in Canada
- **Assisted relatives class:** distant relatives who were sponsored by a family member in Canada and who met some of the selection criteria of the independent class

The 1976 *Act* recognized refugees as a legitimate class of immigrants to Canada for the first time. (Makarenko, 2010)

1980s – 2000.

The *Immigration Act* was further amended to include a fifth immigration category: the business class. People could immigrate if they were bringing significant financial capital to Canada in order to start a business or to invest in the domestic economy. This has been used extensively by immigrants of Chinese origin, particularly during handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997. From 1983 - 1996, approximately 700,000 Chinese business people immigrated to Canada, bringing billions in investment funds.

Federal government introduced the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* in 2001 which replaced the previous 1976 *Immigration Act*. This *Act* tightened eligibility requirements for refugees, skilled immigrants, and business immigrants. It extended family entitlements to same-sex and common-law relationships which allowed individuals united under such relationships to bring their partners to Canada. As a result of the 2001 legislation, government now had new powers to deal with terrorism following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in

the United States including powers to arrest, detain, and deport landed immigrants on the suspicion they might be, or could become, a security threat. The issue of security further led to the Canada-United States "Safe Third Country Agreement," in 2002 with important implications for refugees and asylum seekers. Refugees were only permitted to make refugee claims to the country of initial entry. The purpose of the legislation was to prevent individuals in the US from leaving, and possibly escaping US authorities, by making a refugee claim in Canada (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2009). (Makarenko, 2010)

The federal government and province of British Columbia announced a new inter-government agreement on immigration in April 2010, and British Columbia secured greater influence over the selection and settlement of immigrants to the province. The federal government also agreed to transfer \$114 million to help support provincial settlement and integration services. This provided British Columbia more power and funding to be able to deal with different immigration related issues.

Positives and Negatives of Immigrating to Canada

The immigrants face many issues in the host culture which effect their survival in and shape their perception towards the host culture at the same time.

Examining the positives.

An average person is able to apply for immigration to Canada because of point system which basis everything on the immigrant's skills and the needs of Canada. (Canada, Six selection factors-Federal skilled workers., 2015)

The education system in Canada is regarded as one of the best around the world and immigrants receive the best benefit for not just themselves but for their children as well. Even in

terms of religious education, there are equally if not better places for people from different faiths to try to practice, learn, teach and improve their education and that of their children. Public education is free and there are different programs available for the elementary-aged children that the parents can enroll their children in for free and/or claim later in tax exemptions, specially in health and sports-related activities. (High Quality Public Education in Canada, 2015)

The safety and security in Canada is very comforting, peaceful and easy to live in verses many other countries around the rest of the world where it is still not very safe. (10 safest Countries to Live i the World 2014, 2014). As well, family ties can be re-established as the immigration policies work to bring together families. (Canada Family Class Immigration, 1996-2015)

Examining the negatives.

The issue of acceptance, which has been an on and off problem throughout the Canadian history with regards to immigration laws and policies, still seems to be there. Most immigration policies are still discriminatory and biased. Certain races and religions are given more encouragement and support verses others. For example, the current issue of Niqab and/or hijab would not likely be considered if we were trying to consider nuns from a church. This issue of Niqab and/or hijab within itself is a classic example of what perceptions can do. The expectations, perceptions and rules are so different for people from different cultural backgrounds. This could very well impact one's identity and cultural heritage also. (Macdonald, 2015)

One more similar issue is that of healthcare. Although easy enough to access on surface, research shows that it is after all not as easy and not the same for everyone overall. "The results of eight focus groups reveal that immigrants face geographic, socio-cultural and economic

barriers when attempting to access health care services in their community.” (Asanin & Wilson, 2008).

Not realizing prior to their immigration, most immigrants are soon faced with much higher taxes and the realization that the healthcare is not free after all but is actually being covered through some of their high taxes (Kelly, 2014). Maybe if it wasn't advertised as free healthcare but rather being called healthcare paid through taxes, it might not be as misleading or shocking for the new immigrants. Accessing first-contact healthcare services has brought its own set of difficulties for Canadians with regular doctors and for recent immigrants. “New immigrants were almost two and a half times more likely to report difficulties accessing immediate care than were Canadian-born respondents” (Claudia Sanmartin, 2006).

Another issue is that of professional job opportunities which are slacking more and more each year. According to the Work BC official website, the projection for 2012-2022 labor market outlook shows that currently the province is developing the liquefied natural gas sector (LNG) and attracting major project investment throughout the province, becoming increasingly focused on small business and services (with service sector providing four-fifths of the jobs) and strengthening ties with Japan, China, Korea and India to become a trade hub for goods, services and people travelling between Asia and North America (Labour Market Outlook, 2015). As such, Labour and trade jobs are encouraged and approved more, verses people trying to go into professional jobs including those in educational fields and/or different professions.

Again, it is harder for immigrants to find jobs verses someone who grew up in Canada. Immigrants arrive in Canada based on professional skills and yet upon arrival learn the fact that actually their expertise and skills from overseas are not really accepted here so they need experience or degrees from here otherwise they need to get into a trade business or approach

labour related jobs. Most work places require Canadian work experiences which is hard to acquire when no one hires you in the first place. (Haider, 2015)

Although Harper government has taken away the sponsorship for parents, and in its place has started a ten year visa program which does not cover benefits such as health coverage and/or letting parents become permanent residents and eventually citizens of Canada one day . (How can I sponsor a family member to immigrate to Canada?, 2015)

Further studies, more than just one definitely, need to be done regarding all these issues. My thesis is hopefully a step in the right direction; I hope it will serve to bring more insight and awareness towards at least one of these serious issues that could impact the future of this country in more than one way.

Other Impacts and Perceptions of Immigration.

On the other hand, one realizes that media as always contributes to the negativity portrayed in relation to immigration and the process it entails. "Media representations shape public opinion of immigration, affect policy debate, and influence immigration law." (Bauder, 2008)

Immigrants perceive their hosts and surroundings as unfriendly since they are looking closely at body language, unspoken messages conveyed through silent treatments, personal biases, outside pressures, financial and cultural struggles besides media portrayal. The people from the host culture might have some prejudice and may be perceiving immigrants as those who are here to take everything away from the natives of the land. "The existence of multiple and potentially competing political identities may complicate the integration process, particularly if the central government and the substate nation promote different conceptions of citizenship and different nation-building projects." (Banting & Soroka, 2012)

Immigration is a very high stress process considered by some as high as divorces, death, moving and suicides, as the following sub-sections will demonstrate. "By any measure, immigration is one of the most stressful events a person can undergo" (Antonius C.G.M.Robben, 2000). In the more recent years, emphasis has been placed on conducting studies on stress related to immigration. It has been acknowledged as to how much stress an immigrant has to go through when they leave the familiarity of their home, culture, job security, familiarity of surroundings, country where they have been brought up, in some cases the ease of practicing religions and most of all their support system in the form of extended families and friends. (Antonius C.G.M.Robben, 2000) also acknowledges what I have said above and further goes on to add that, "Immigrants are stripped of many of their sustaining social relationships, as well as of their roles which provide them with culturally scripted notions of how they fit into the world (Antonius C.G.M.Robben, 2000).

Speaking from my own personal experience, I can state that as you arrive in the new country, your expectations and hopes are high. You are running on adrenaline and feeling as if you've achieved something huge and as such are also feeling that you can achieve anything at that point. Partly because you have been given the impression that now that you are an immigrant, you can and will be able to find jobs right away, fit into the new culture and society, be able to practice your beliefs very openly and easily. This is specially the case in Canadian Immigration but might apply to other countries also. I say Canadian Immigration because I had experienced this first hand and realized soon enough that although I had the credentials, the immigration, the licensure for being able to practice my teaching, I still had significant challenges and not much guidance or help. The very credentials that sometimes help you get the Canadian Immigration through the point system for immigration sometimes become useless

when actually applying for a job position since there is no coordination between the immigration process and the political bureaucracy within the country itself. Each job you apply for will ask you for Canadian work experience, some sort of English Testing Requirement, even though you might be speaking better or more fluent English than some people interviewing you, a Canadian Teaching License in my case in particular, some degree from a Canadian university preferably, and so on. Hence you almost feel doomed from the beginning

Impact on children.

“This study examined, in the context of a stress-buffering model, the relationship of certain family-level variables to children's adjustment after immigration. Immigrant Chinese mothers from Hong Kong completed questionnaires regarding post-migration stress, personal distress, perceived social support, and their child's adjustment.” (Short & Johnston, 1997)

Findings revealed that, for boys, family stress and maternal distress were significant predictors of child problems and that maternal support helped the association between family stress and child problems. Contrary to expectation, the relationship between maternal distress and boys' problems was stronger at higher levels of maternal support. For families of girls, although there were significant relationships between the predictors and child behavior, no stress buffering was evident. Cultural explanations are also discussed.

Another study conducted goes on to discuss adjustment in the first post immigration year, “In this study of 429 newly immigrant children (ages 7-18 years) and their parents, we addressed generational variation in the stresses related to immigration. We also assessed whether child and parent psychological adjustment varied as a function of high versus low levels of stress and social support. Finally, we examined the comparability of effects across participants from different countries. Participants originated in Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, and the English-

speaking West Indies.” In this case children generally reported more immigration stress than did parents, although parents were more likely to have economic worries. The higher the stress level, the more it compromised the adjustment of both children and parents. If social support was available for the family, it facilitated adjustment but was more effective for parents than for children. Both stress and support levels varied, but links between stress, support, and adjustment were mostly comparable across country-of-origin groups. (Levitt, Lane, & Levitt, 2005)

The stress resulting from immigration is the worst for the children and specially the adolescent immigrants, in some cases even more so for females verses males. “Recent research confirms that immigration results in enormous stress for children” (McCarthy, 2010). The added stress of trying to fit in between the home and the host cultures and balancing the two start taking its toll on the adolescents’ mental and psychological health. According to (McCarthy, 2010), they might be doing great academically but there is a lot of internal turmoil that is going on and sometimes it starts to take its toll on the individual child, which also accounts for other problems that could start appearing such as suicidal thoughts, substance abuse etc. Most of the research conducted in the past focused on the problems and maladaptive behaviours of the immigrant children hence targeting them more so as the problem instead of trying to understand their problems. More recently, this awareness has started in some of the host cultures and positive approach has started towards conducting research and gathering information which in turn has brought out more information related to the needs of the children instead of targeting them with institutional racism (McCarthy, 2010) These studies also make it very clear that immigrant children have unique needs and the schools should address these needs proactively otherwise there generally are serious risks to the overall growth of the child in question.

An average person can very well understand and maybe even relate to the hardship of moving from one neighbourhood to another, maybe even changing city and/or province/state: how hard it is to be connected, accepted, to make friends and settle into new surroundings. Add to that the fact that an individual or family has also moved to a completely new country with cultural and social norms and maybe even has a language that they are not familiar with. As McCarthy (2010) writes, “The educational and psychological challenges faced by immigrant children in the United States today – English language acquisition, cultural and psychological adjustment, and for some, the effects of limited formal education – are undoubtedly complex and interconnected.”

The age of an immigrant can also signify the amount of stress one can or cannot handle. Generally it is easier for younger children to adapt versus older children since younger children can easily adapt in a new environment and situation versus older children, Younger children don't have a preconceived notion full of expectations. For young children, it is a fairly normal beginning for most things since they don't need to compare many things and whatever they do compare is more fascinating for them in a new place versus the older place. The customs and cultural impact has not set in as firmly yet. For all intents and purposes, the child is like a clean slate and could adjust very easily anywhere at that age. “Although initial adjustment may prove difficult for young children, on average, they adapt more easily to a new culture than do teenagers and adults” (Pungello, 2000).

Social Media Issues and Impacts.

Another thing that is a fairly new factor for stress is social media and other modern technologies. This could be both positive and/or negative for anyone concerned and it depends

on who is at the other end that one is interacting with. There is barely any knowledge and/or means of controlling the kind of communication that takes place online as well as the kind of interaction that takes place online between different individuals. Problems arise when the technology that is supposed to bring people together is used instead to abuse others, pushing peers out of their social network into a world that is filled with loneliness, embarrassment, fear or shame” (PREVNet, 2015). When immigrants are using modern technologies, they are essentially learning about and getting introduced to another new culture with new social norms and values as well as a new cultural language.

“Unlike other forms of bullying, the harassment, humiliation, intimidation and threatening of others through cyberbullying occurs 24 hours a day” (PREVNet, 2015). This is very crucial to understand and realize because this kind of bullying can and does leave significant marks on its victims.

Impact on Maintaining Cultural Heritage.

I have been an immigrant myself and as such keep learning more things about myself as well as about the culture that I try to become a part of. It is a constant struggle within oneself and very hard to explain to others. “Many people may say it is unique to grow up from a different ethnic background, but the struggle to balance out my identity with the collision of two cultures is difficult to manage. One part of me wants to appreciate where I am from and embrace who I am, but another part of me wants to live a life like my friends who do not have to worry about following specific cultural norms or worry if other people of their own ethnicity will judge them for being “too American”. Deep down, I know my parents would be hurt if I portray myself as an American more often than a Bangladeshi.” (Mitu, 2013) In my opinion, you have to try to

maintain as much of your identity, culture, religion etc. as you possibly can because otherwise once you lose it all, it will be gone for generations and could never truly be recovered. I feel that one has to try to at least maintain and save what one can of one's culture, religion and/or heritage. Maybe it is because I am a first-generation immigrant or maybe it is because of my upbringing. My daughter most probably has to deal with a lot more struggle because in some ways, she is only learning about the culture, religion, identity from me, my husband, her cultural/religion teachers, our families and as such has very mixed views about it.

“Growing up in a different culture meant following cultural norms. However, I disagree with some of them such as reputation being most important aspect of one's life and the notion of arranged marriage” (Mitu, 2013). It is hard for an immigrant adolescent to actually relate to, understand or agree with all the expectations that are surrounding them. The culture they grew up in and the culture that their parents are trying to have them learn about and follow are two different parts of a whole and the challenge is to maintain one's cultural identity through it all as well as to truly try to understand it and appreciate it without having really been a part of it while growing up.

Summary

The reason people immigrate varies from person to person and from country to country. Canada is sought after for immigration especially because of the following reasons; Point-system for immigration, Healthcare (completely free and/or partially free in some provinces), Better education and job opportunities for the whole family, Multicultural and accepting image around the world and Family Ties. Historically Canadian Immigration has gone through different changes both in favour of and against immigration. It appears that there were times in history when immigration was needed more and as such was encouraged and supported more, as well.

Some prominent positive aspects of immigration are reviewed: the point system, education system, safety and security as well as family ties whereas some negative aspects are acceptance, healthcare, jobs and family sponsorship specifically parental sponsorship. Some other things that are impacted by immigration are perceptions, children, social media and maintaining cultural heritage. It is evident that the process of immigration and to be an immigrant, both are clearly not that easy and as such do not create many positive perceptions. Although, Canada is a wonderful country and very welcoming to new immigrants, nevertheless there is room for improvement and further education so that this whole process could be easy for everyone including immigrant families specially the children. One thing that we can see from the review is that there is a lot of history behind this whole immigration process in Canada and over the years many things have changed for the better and improved as such. If this trend can continue and more education is provided to both the immigrants and the host society, things can definitely keep on getting better. Educators play a significant role in it and can definitely benefit from some training regarding learning about and dealing with other cultures. That could benefit not just the educators but the future generations as well as create harmony between different cultures.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

One of the key elements of any research paper is the methodology used in the research and the reason for using that particular research method. There are various types of Educational Research Methods present and available. Each of the methods has certain distinct characteristics besides having its own purpose, advantages and disadvantages. One has to understand which method had been used for a particular research as well as look at the quality of the research itself based on the criteria for a particular method. Generally, the methods include quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method. The use of numerical calculations to summarize, describe and explore relationships among traits is called quantitative research. When the emphasis is placed on conducting studies in natural settings using mostly verbal descriptions, resulting in stories and case studies rather than statistical reports, it is called qualitative research. In the case of mixed methods research, qualities of both quantitative as well as qualitative designs are used. (Wergin, 2010, 2006, 2002, 1998) One has to give careful consideration to all the factors coming into play before one can decide which of the three methods to choose. "Given these three approaches, what factors affect a choice of one approach over another for the design of a proposal? Three considerations play into this decision: the research problem, the personal experiences of the researcher, and the audience(s) for whom the report will be written." (Creswell, 2003)

Description of Research Methodology

This research design is a mixed-method qualitative ethnographic study. Some kinds of qualitative research are based on a philosophy called phenomenology, which is a perspective that

holds that knowledge is gained by understanding the direct experience of others. Such research is descriptive in nature, relying primarily on narrative and story (Wergin, 2010, 2006,2002, 1998). Phenomenological research focuses on the lived and inner (subjective) experiences of individuals or groups. The data was collected directly from people in order to get an insight into their perceptions; thus, my research is a form of phenomenological research. A combination of an ethnographic study design with an emphasis on thematic analysis seemed like the right way to do this particular research. "An ethnographic study involves direct engagement with the participants to obtain an in-depth description and interpretation of behavior or culture within a social group" (Wergin, 2010, 2006,2002, 1998). Thematic Analyses was important in order to look for and pursue any themes that would emerge from the data that was collected while interviewing the immigrants. "As data are collected – through interviews, observation and analysis of documents – themes begin to emerge that are tested and refined until the thematic categories hold up under scrutiny" (Wergin, 2010, 2006,2002, 1998).

Research Design

There are different strengths and weaknesses related to the kind of research design that is being used here. One of the strengths of the mixed-methods is the fact that you can design studies that can capture the best of what each method has to offer. The first weakness includes the fact that it can be very confusing for a new consumer. It is simply due to the fact that one won't be able to classify research articles according to decision tree specially when there is a new article that defies classification. It then becomes hard to decide as to what criteria should be used from the different research methods. The second weakness being the researchers own bias and assumptions towards the nature of truth and how to get to it. This might have an impact on the kind of truth that exists and that one looks for (Wergin, 2010, 2006,2002, 1998).

According to Brown, the strengths of a phenomenological research study include the fact that it “provides a somewhat rich and complete description of human experiences and meanings. The findings are allowed to emerge, rather than being imposed by an investigator. Techniques are carefully used to keep descriptions as faithful as possible to the experiential raw data; this is all accomplished by extreme care in moving step by step and in being ever mindful not to delete from, add to, change, or distort anything originally present in the initial meaning units of the participant transcript.” According to (Brown) Some of the weaknesses of this particular method usually depend on the articulate skills of the participants who generally provide the information; overall logistical and generalisation issues are connected with this. (Brown)

Finally, a few of the strengths and weaknesses of the ethnographic studies. Through ethnographic studies people start to see other cultures positively instead of always regarding different cultures negatively hence creating better understanding about other cultures. “Ethnographic studies can turn the preconceived notions and misunderstandings about a particular culture into positive comprehensions. Ethnographic studies can also lend credibility to other interpretations from studies about a particular culture that have been done in the past. In addition, ethnographers can give people a better understanding” (Kerley). On the other hand, ethnographic studies can take a lot of time to complete and should be done with an unbiased opinion, otherwise they can do more harm than help. “The ethnographic study of a culture can be time consuming. Even before an anthropologist is immersed in a culture’s natural environment, he must first learn the language and research the culture. This can take an enormous amount of time and it can be extremely dangerous for an anthropologist if he does not understand a culture’s traditions and taboos. An anthropologist must also take the time to gain the trust and

respect of a culture's people, and seek permission to conduct an ethnographic study before he proceeds. (Kerley)

This research is titled "Immigrant's Perceptions of their Experiences in Integrating into Communities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia." This study will help bring some attention towards the different experiences that immigrants go through during their integration process in a new place, more specifically Lower Mainland of British Columbia and all the perceptions that appear as a result of their integration experiences. As mentioned previously, this is a mixed-method qualitative, ethnographic study. I am examining the "experiences" of the immigrants. These are the different factors that influence the participants' ability to integrate; they include the experiences that are gained while integrating into the community. On the other hand, I am also examining the influence of these experiences on the "perceptions of the immigrants", the internal thought process about the external factors (e.g., "What is happening around me?").

Selection of Subjects

I was very fortunate to have found participants that were willing to share and talk about their experiences as an immigrant parent. It was important that the parents that I was interviewing were comfortable with the whole process and had a good understanding of English language so that everything was clear for them before, during and after the interview process. All of the parents were immigrants from the same country which made my task somewhat less challenging. As I am also from the same country, I can relate to this particular research. "When observing in a qualitative study, for example, the extent of the observation and background of the observer are key elements in determining quality" (Wergin, 2010). Since Wergin is referring to

the researcher in this quote, I feel that I can relate to it and it applies to me because my background as an observer is from the same place as the participants of this study.

Just as previously explained in the IRB proposal that was submitted, participants were immigrants who are known to me personally through my past community involvement and through mutual friends; I used a "snowball" sampling recruiting technique (Creswell, 2013). According to the explorable.com, there are certain limitations with regards to snowball sampling technique which include; the researcher has little control over the sampling method, representativeness of the sample is not guaranteed, sampling bias is also a fear of researchers when using this technique since initial subjects tend to nominate people they know well which makes it highly possible that the subjects share the same traits and characteristics (Snowball Sampling, 2009). Participants were limited to those whose English skills allowed them to (a) understand the nature of the study and their informed consent and (b) be able to understand and respond meaningfully to the interview questions. (Saeed, 2014) The limitations or disadvantages of snowball sampling include but are not limited to the following; a) the researcher does not have control over the sampling method, b) the true distributio of the population and of the sample are not known to the researcher and c) when using this sampling, researchers have a fear of sampling bias. It is very possible the researcher will obtain a sample that is only a small subgroup of the entire population. As the initial subjects tend to nominate people they know, chances are the new subjects share the same traits and characteristics. (Snowball Sampling, 2009)

I created a list of different immigrant parents that I knew personally through my previous community involvement and through mutual friends. I initially approached the parent participants through an email (see Appendix A). I decided to call all the parents on the list followed by sending an email/letter. The email/letter clearly stated the purpose of the study being

conducted. The fact that the parent participation was completely voluntary was emphasized and that the confidentiality of the families would be protected. The parents were informed through the letter that there will be no names of any family member included whatsoever in the final report. The email/letter also assured the families as to how the data would be kept completely safe and that in 5 years time all the records would be completely destroyed. A final date was provided so that the parents could decide and respond prior to that if they wanted to be a part of the study or not.

There were five parent participants who responded and were willing to be interviewed. The age ranges were likely between 25-40; they were all parents of school-aged children. All of them were from Greater Vancouver, BC. There were both females and males, and all of them were immigrants. All the parents who were interviewed signed an informed consent form as required by the IRB. No personal or demographic information was collected during the interviews. It was thanks to these parents and the data that I was able to collect through their willingness to participate in this study that I was finally able to complete my work relating to immigrants and their perceptions of their experiences in integrating into communities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

Ethical Considerations

First of all, this study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the City University of Seattle. Participants were then contacted initially by phone and then a follow up was done in the form of an email/ letter to solicit their involvement in the study. The script (see Appendix B) was read to them and they were also presented a written version of the letter to sign and give their consent. The ethical considerations were also written in the letter so that the participants knew what to expect and how their information would be protected. They were

given all the information so that they could make an informed decision and were fully aware of the details of study and how they would have choices during the entire process including being able to ask questions, refuse to answer any questions, or to withdraw from the study altogether. They were assured that even after they had signed and given their consent to proceed with the interview, they could at anytime still stop the process if they felt they needed to do that. The parents were also made aware of the fact that their confidentiality would be of utmost importance and parents were provided with a couple of different options of meeting places that were acceptable to each parent individually. A couple of the parents opted to fill out the questionnaire and return it instead of doing it in an interview format. Again, all data collected for the interviews will be kept in a portable safe and destroyed in five years time.

The benefits of the study are that it will help us as educators better understand the experiences and perceptions of immigrants, thus enabling us to support them with more effective social, cultural, and educational services and outreach.

Instrumentation

To better understand the perspective of each parent, individual interviews were conducted so that they each had the opportunity to speak their own minds and share their thoughts and perspectives in regards to their own experiences. The interviews were conducted by using a questionnaire with open ended questions that were also previously approved by the Institutional Review Board. "Qualitative researchers tend to use open-ended questions so that participants can express their views" (Creswell, 2003, p. 09).

Data Collection and Recording

Data were collected in interviews through open-ended questions, except for a couple of parents who opted to fill out the questionnaire instead of doing it in an interview format. Interviews were conducted in a calm environment and proper manner making certain that the interviewees were completely at ease while responding to the questions. I tried to use open ended questions instead of leading questions so that the participants could answer without any choices that were presented and/or implied. I tried to use some gentle/effective probing instead so as to stimulate the participant to provide more information instead of trying to inject myself too much into the interaction. Finally, my goal was to let the participant lead the conversation. My goal was to help the participant stay focused on a topic of interest. "Things we do in qualitative interviews are; use open-ended questions, avoid leading questions, probe issues in depth and let the informant lead" (William Weiss, 2000, p. 21).

Data Analyses

Data were analyzed over time and each interview response was read, reviewed and any audio recording was listened to a few times in order to clarify all the meanings as well as to look for themes to emerge. The responses were typed out on a separate sheet each, replacing the participants name with a code letter for the purposes of creating anonymity. Focus was placed on looking for themes to emerge in any and all the responses that were provided by the participants. Themes were compared to look for any common patterns to emerge. Next the themes were divided into different groups and sub-groups. Thematic analysis involves pinpointing, examining and recording patterns (or themes) within data. I will go over the material and start looking for themes, patterns, common things, give them a name and start working on creating my research paper. (Thematic Analysis, 2015)

Methodological Assumptions

There generally are certain assumptions in all methods of research. First and foremost, being an immigrant myself, I had preconceived assumptions, notions and ideas about the kind of responses that would be provided by the parents. Secondly, there was the assumption that since the interview been conducted by me, someone who they knew through my involvement in the local community or through common friends, they would feel more open, relaxed and willing to share their true responses. It might very well have been that they might have opened up more to a stranger and provided a different set of responses. It is possible the participants offered answers they thought I would want to hear. The assumption that all immigrants might have the same perceptions whereas in reality that cannot be true since all of them might have different experiences which would make all of their perceptions different as well.

Limitations

There were certain limitations that had to be considered throughout the process. The number of people interviewed was quite low. They were all from the one and the, same culture. All of them based their experiences in the Lower Mainland of BC. The data is not generalizable because of the small and non-representational sample size (that is, the participants cannot be said to represent all immigrants to the Lower Mainland area of BC). It was an open ended interview so the length of the replies varied. The advantage of that was that if there was someone who had good insightful responses and lengthy answers were really good for the survey. On the other hand, if the responses were lengthy but without insight or any helpful feedback, that did not help the process. Participants who decided to opt for doing the questionnaire only instead of the whole interview could not be probed effectively. I felt that the conversations were much more helpful and brought more clarity verses a questionnaire response only. Participants had to be proficient in

their English Language skills which meant we were limited to interviewing only certain immigrants.

Summary

A mixed-method qualitative ethnographic study was conducted which provided some insight into the perceptions of immigrants and provided some feedback regarding their experiences while integrating into communities in the Lower mainland of British Columbia. The study involved interviewing five participants using open ended questions, looking for any themes to emerge through the responses provided by them by engaging in a thematic analysis.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

I felt that interviews were the best part of the whole research. As far as I could see the parents also seemed very comfortable, relaxed and appeared to be very open in terms of their responses. They were very forthcoming and it looked like they were glad to have this opportunity. Although I knew all of them from before in some way or the other, I must say this experience brought a whole different aspect to our relationship. For the ones who felt extra emotional about the topic, I made sure to give them option of stopping and not continuing on but they refused that option and instead wanted to continue on. I really liked listening to all the interviewees respond to the questions and letting me into their world, so to speak. I could very well relate to them since I am an immigrant myself but made certain that I did not interrupt their thought process in any way by pushing my opinion on them. Being quiet and attentive seemed to be the best way to conduct the interviews. Of course, I asked a second question if I did not understand something and needed a clarification from them. I had to be on my guard and extremely careful that my own biases did not come out during the interview. At the same time I had to be careful that my being extra-cautious did not make it uneasy for them during the interview so basically I had to keep my attitude normal and relaxed. I felt that I succeeded in doing so because the parents seemed very relaxed during their interview. All the participants were open to responding to the questions regarding the topic. There were variations in the kind of responses, a couple of the participants gave really long, detailed and lengthy answers, and wanted to even add more information by going back to the question(s) at the time. Whereas others gave to-the-point short answers and needed me to try to stay alert and ask an open ended

question where possible so that they would elaborate with some of the details. I found that it was hard to not push people for details and to insert or share my own experiences with them while they responded. I think I have now become better at this skill thanks to these interviews. I also discovered that I had to stay focused and give my full attention to the interviewees and their responses. Besides letting the parents know that they had my full attention, it also helped me whenever they missed responding to any part of the question being asked. I found the interview process to be very positive and a great learning experience for me as well as the parents, and this is the one reason why I do feel sad about the parents that could not be interviewed in person but instead had to complete their responses by filling out the questionnaire. I felt that the experience of interviewing the parents in person was very enriching for me. I gained an inner understanding by watching them share their thoughts and experiences and somehow felt connected with them at the end. It was a privilege and an honour to have them all share so much of their personal life experiences, feelings and perceptions with me.

The purpose of this study was to try to understand the immigrants' perceptions of their experiences in integrating into the communities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. In order to respect the identity of all participants, they will each be given a different number from 1 through 5 and referred to as such throughout the discussion as well. The most common themes for the study included positive perceptions related to factors helping immigrants, educational programs & activities are beneficial, managed to integrate and the immigration process. Negative perception included credentials/work experiences not being accepted, health care not being as good, the high cost of living and a lack of information. For minor themes, racism, educational system, religion, other benefits, other challenges and best solutions were the main topics. The results of the interviews brought out some prominent and some not-too-prominent themes that

can be seen clearly in the following Table, and then we discussed after these each question in slightly more detail. Although I had only five participants in this study, most of them contributed and provided a lot of input. As a result, I found out that I had a number of subthemes and subthemes coming out of my initial theme. When you look at the table below and read the details after that, it will become more evident as to what I am saying.

Table 1 – Themes

Themes	Subthemes	Subthemes (2)
Positive perceptions	1) Factors helping immigrants and their children (All 5 participants listed that there were factors helping them whereas 4 of the 5 listed that there factors helping their children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Own community helpful & friendly ✓ Finding other immigrants ✓ Being well informed ✓ Doing own research ✓ Having an accepting nature ✓ Positive attitude ✓ Cultural center ✓ Local mosque ✓ Making an effort ✓ Volunteering ✓ Language ✓ Culturally diverse community ✓ Walking to school ✓ Presence of family & family drop-ins ✓ Support from temp. agency ✓ Multicultural events & integration programs ✓ Drop-ins and programs at the Community center ✓ Sports related activities ✓ Events like Canada day

	<p>4)Immigration Process (2 of the 5 participants mentioned this)</p>	<p>workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Upgraded self professionally with spouse's support ✓ Celebrated thanksgiving, Xmas ✓ Involved children in after school activities ✓ Tried making new friends ✓ Learned about local culture ✓ Being able to speak English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Immigration process, paperwork security ✓ Freedom to run multiple jobs ✓ Security factor (to be out on streets without any fear) ✓ Being a citizen meant more options
<p>Negative perceptions</p>	<p>1)Credentials/work experience not accepted is the biggest challenge/hurdle (All 5 participants listed this as the biggest hurdle)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Credentials Assessment ✓ Education from other countries not recognized ✓ Not able to find work in your field of expertise ✓ Only Canadian job

	<p>2) Religion (All 5 participants mentioned this)</p>	<p>experience accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Transfer credits from US and other countries not accepted ✓ Lost opportunities because of lack of Canadian credentials, experiences and references ✓ University policies not friendly ✓ Lack of good websites for institutions and companies a hindrance ✓ Asked to redo studies and gain similar experience as one already acquired from before elsewhere by spending more of one's time and money. ✓ Having to start from scratch again ✓ Frustrating to not be able to work in own field ✓ Effects one's life style ✓ Immigration given on the foreign education yet jobs not found on that <p>✓ Religious background</p>
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	<p>3) Health Care not as good (3 of the 5 participants mentioned this)</p> <p>4) High Cost of Living (3 out of 5 participants mentioned this)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Providing religious guidelines for own kids because of this society ✓ Norms that conflict with our religious beliefs become a question mark for the kids and they have a hard time understanding it ✓ Being a Muslim is very difficult in School (Children of one family came home and said that after 911) ✓ The same family also reported one of their kids was also told that "people who believe in God are stupid" ✓ Religious people are regarded, looked at and treated negatively ✓ Good family doctors are difficult to find ✓ Over-crowding in hospitals and emergency rooms ✓ Medical system not good, doctors do not provide you with information ✓ Doctors spend literally 2 minutes with you, give you prescription and set
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	<p>5) Lack of Information (3 out of 5 participants mentioned this)</p> <p>6) Racism (3 of the 5 participants mentioned this)</p>	<p>you off</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Doctors are understaffed ✓ High cost of living compared to other parts of Canada ✓ High real estate cost ✓ So expensive to live here ✓ Public transport is expensive ✓ People in offices seemed they could care less (As opposed to American customer care) ✓ All the receptionist seemed stern ✓ Lack of information and network ✓ Country of origin ✓ Colour of skin ✓ Feeling that things would've been easier if they had not been from where they are ✓ Racism to some degree in some areas ✓ People unsure of
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		immigrants (not racist), better over the years
Minor Themes	1)Educational System (2 of the 5 participants mentioned this)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Not enough support for kids in school ✓ Teachers in elementary are not confident enough in Math ✓ Education system holding kids back ✓ Not learning as much if parents don't work with them at home ✓ System not strong enough ✓ Education system of Canada is not what one thinks it will be like before coming here ✓ Felt huge difference in school system here, very lost in the first year ✓ Absolutely no communication with teachers unless you make the effort yourself. ✓ Very hard to make friends for kids ✓ H.W is classwork not finished at school, new concept ✓ For 16 year olds, popularity contests, rich, middle and poor. Where

	<p>2) Other Benefits (1 out of 5 participant mentioned this)</p> <p>3) Other challenges (2 out of 5 participants mentioned this)</p>	<p>do you live? Do you go to parties? Do you have a laptop? etc. Not enough support coming from school. If you don't want to be part of a crowd, it should be accepted. Acceptance is a challenge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Constant struggle for parent, talk to the teenager ✓ Just one report card every semester, otherwise no communication unless we enquire on our own. ✓ Request own meeting and then get all the information ✓ What is being covered in the curriculum? ✓ Clean parks and kids play areas available ✓ Better health care ✓ Peaceful nature of the country ✓ Economic factors ✓ Better life for middle class
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cultural shock ✓ Lack of Family support ✓ Language & socioeconomic challenges hinders in getting good jobs and mingling with the society ✓ Your job is your family, no time for family life ✓ Shopping/food options seemed less compared to US.
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Positive Perceptions

Positive perceptions help make the integration process a lot smoother and easier for the immigrants to try to integrate into a new place. The more positive one feels about a certain place, the easier it is to try to adjust there. Generally, your perceptions are shaped by how positive or negative you are feeling. Your feelings are just your feelings. Sometimes how you are feeling also relates to your circumstances and/or what is happening around you as well as what is happening with or even within you as a person. Through this research, I have come across the positive perceptions people have and I have tried to divide into subthemes and subthemes (2) what the reasons behind all of the positive perceptions.

All the 5 participants had one thing or another to contribute to this section of positive perceptions which made it one of the most common themes coming out of this research. There were five different subthemes that came out of this particular theme. In essence, the positive perceptions were a result of these five subthemes. The first one concerned the factors that are helping immigrants, the second showed how educational programs and activities are beneficial for the immigrants, the third talks about how immigrants managed to integrate and the fourth one deals with the immigration.

Factors helping immigrants and their children.

There are various perceived factors that helped immigrants and their children, such as perceiving they have a friendly and helpful community of immigrants from the same country as themselves, being able to find other such immigrants, being well-informed, doing own research, having a positive attitude and accepting nature. Still other factors include perceptions around using the cultural center, local mosque, making an effort, volunteering, being able to speak in English, and so on.

All of these and the other factors in the table point to one thing in common, which is the fact that as an immigrant, one has to make sure that one is doing everything one can to take the initiative and being involved, at least to some degree, so that one can integrate, which is what all of these immigrants seem to be trying through all these different factors. As such, of the list provided in Table 1, one of the most common subthemes (2) was being involved in programs, drop-ins, multicultural events and integration programs really helped during this process (Participants # 1, 3, 4 and 5). Participant # 3 also said that “events like Canada day Festival, Winter Harvest Festival and other local events not only helped children integrate but also educated them to become responsible members of the community”. Another common subtheme

(2) was being an immigrant before and/or having moved from one country to another for some other reason besides immigration (Participant # 1, 4 and 2). The last common subtheme (2) was volunteering and/or volunteer work (Participant # 4 and 2). Many other good ideas were also generated from this discussion, including one point that not many do or would not have thought of doing, but what participant # 4 shared. Participant # 4 said that walking to school to pick up the children made it easier to get to know people in the community and helped with the integration. Overall, the perception was that making efforts to reach out to and integrate into the community helped the immigration process.

Educational programs & activities are beneficial.

Overall, educational programs and activities do help the overall integration just through the ways people come into contact with each other through them. For the immigrants and the host culture, these are times when you look at each other through a different lens, instead being unsure and/or negative around each other. Just as there is importance associated with children and the play time, these programs and activities are just as important for adults and families to get to know each other better. In all, 4 out of 5 participants had something to add to this particular subtheme (2). They included perceptions about free education, the number of options available for after-school programs and activities, strong start & other affordable mother/toddler programs, curriculum being identified so you know what your child will be learning each year, mixed grades and classes and support programs. While all of these were very important to all the participants that were interviewed, the most common subtheme (2) in this particular group revolved around perceptions having to do with availability of after-school activities (Participant # 4 and 5). I began to see a particular pattern where most people are perceiving and feeling that

the integration process gets better by reaching out, taking part in something and communicating with the host culture.

Immigrants managed to integrate.

As I put the list together for Table 1 and looked at it after, I realized how much effort these five immigrants and their families are putting into this whole integration process. So much time, effort, planning, coordinating and constantly trying without giving up. It gave me an insight into their lives, struggles and strength, which truly is amazing. Each one of the five participants was trying their hardest to somehow trying to integrate into the host culture. They all tried to understand Canadian culture in some way, some of them tried to get their credentials evaluated and one person even attended a job search workshop, upgrading self professionally with the spouse's support. Some tried to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas, besides involving children in after-school activities. They tried making new friends and learned about the local culture. All five did not have any problem with speaking in English since each one of them had been brought up learning English. I feel that this definitely contributed to the success that these ladies are having as immigrants. Knowing the language of the country that you are immigrating to and being able to speak the same helps immensely during the initial transition phase, as well as later on. The two most common subthemes (2) that came out of this particular section were being able to speak in English (Participants # 1, 2,3, 4 and 5) and immigrants involving children in after-school activities (Participants # 1, 3, 4).

Immigration Process.

Basically, 2 of the 5 participants had something to say about this very important subtheme. I call it very important because I feel sometimes people tend to forget and/or realize the importance of the whole process of immigration. The factors that immigrants shared in this category included

their perceptions of the immigration process itself, paperwork security, freedom to run multiple jobs, security factor (being able to be out on streets without any fear) as well as being a citizen meant having more options. The most common subtheme (2) was the perception that being a citizen and having the paperwork security meant more options in everything. Both participant # 1 and 2 had listed these two factors.

Negative Perceptions

Negative perceptions are based (just like positive perceptions) on what and how individuals feel at a certain time in their lives about anything and everything. Again, how we feel can at times depend on what is happening around us. This feeling can be based on anything, as it is a perception after all, which is neither right nor wrong but is instead what it is. There were five subthemes that emerged from the research. The first perception concerned credentials/work experience not being accepted, the second had to do with religion, the third was health care not being perceived as good as they had experienced previously, the fourth high had to do with the cost of living, the fifth was lack of information and the sixth concerned racism. Again, in essence all the negative perceptions are a result of these five subthemes.

Credentials/work experience not accepted.

One common subtheme that all five participants strongly agreed on and counted on as the biggest hurdle/challenge for them was the fact that none of the credentials/work experience was accepted here making it really hard for each one of them to try to find work in their own expertise area. As Participant # 1 even mentioned, foreign education was not being accepted here, yet they are given immigration based on that and yet there are no jobs found based on one's education and field of study. Participant # 2 is clearly not willing to spend time and money on getting credentials which were already achieved. I believe Participant # 2 is rightful in feeling and doing

that. I don't think anyone would want to keep repeating the same degrees and diplomas over and over again pretty much using up all of their finances. All 5 participants strongly believed that not having their credentials recognized was the main reason that they were not able to find work in their field of expertise. All the participants felt frustrated that only Canadian job experience is accepted. For all of them, it was a very emotional topic and it appeared to have affected them deeply at varying levels. The fact that transfer credits from US and other countries are not accepted meant they weren't considered qualified enough to do much of anything relating to their field of study in Lower Mainland of British Columbia. According to Participant # 5, "I tried to transfer credits from University of Washington to Simon Fraser University back in 2008, still haven't received any response. I stopped pursuing 4 months after applying because SFU required 2 more years to complete bachelors which was supposed to end in 8 courses at University of Washington". The other subthemes (2) mentioned by the 5 participants were lost opportunities because of lack of Canadian credentials, experiences and references, university policies not being friendly and lack of good websites for institutions and companies a hindrance. Besides all of these, there are others listed in Table 1.

Religion.

All 5 participants mentioned points regarding this topic of religion. Participant # 4 had a few different instances where their children were targeted in one way or. Older child came home sometime after 9/11 and shared that being a Muslim is very difficult in school and the younger child came home one day and shared that someone had told them that "People who believe in God are stupid." Participant # 4 also felt that people who are religious are not looked at very positively at school. Participant # 1 felt that through religion one is taught to be respectful and tolerant of others beliefs and as such if someone is different, they would still have to accept them

and treat them properly and respectfully. Participant # 2 shared that although they aren't religious; living in this society they've had to make some religious guidelines for their children. Participant # 3 felt that there were some religious and cultural differences.

Health care not as good.

Out of 5 participants, 3 strongly felt that health care in Canada is not as good as it is initially portrayed when one is trying to immigrate to Canada. According to Participant # 2, "good family doctors are difficult to find" and Doctors spend literally 2 minutes with you and set you off". Participant # 2 found all of this to be very different from USA from where they had moved. On the other hand, Participant # 4 felt that the doctor their family went to was good but the doctor's office was always understaffed. Participant # 5 shared that there was "overcrowding in hospitals and emergency rooms". There are still other thoughts on the same topic shared in Table 1.

High cost of living.

Of the 5 participants, 4 feel that Lower Mainland of British Columbia has a high cost of living. Participants # 1 and 2 feel that is expensive to live here whereas participant # 4 feels that British Columbia has a higher cost of living compared to other parts of Canada. They had moved here from east Coast and as such found it to be much more challenging, cost wise. The same participant also feels that real estate cost and public transport is also higher in British Columbia relative to other places.

Lack of information.

Information seems to be not provided unless people ask for it. At least, that is what 3 of the 5 participants feel. If you want information, you have to pursue it. As Participant # 2 pointed out that one has to be, "doing own research". Same participant also points out that for everything;

“being well informed” is the key. Participant # 5 felt that, “people in offices seemed to care less (as opposed to American customer care)”. Other opinions are listed in Table 1 as well.

Racism.

Out of five, there were three who mentioned racism and felt that it existed in the Lower Mainland. They also felt that country of origin and colour of skin play a part in causing hindrance in the process of integration. Participant # 2 felt that “Things would have been easier if they had not been from where they are”. Participant # 3 felt there was racism to some degree in some areas. Participant # 1 felt that people were unsure of immigrants (not racist) and that it has gotten better over the years.

Minor Themes

Besides the major themes, some minor themes also emerged as a result of this research. They are just as significant and could prove useful to keep in mind should there be any future research conducted. There were three, including educational system, other benefits and other challenges.

Educational system.

Two of the five participants felt that the educational system needed significant change. Participant # 1 felt changes were needed in the overall education system, with public education needing support financially from the government as well as emotional support from the people, whereas participant # 2 felt that there wasn't any communication from the teachers unless parents made the effort to get in touch, which happens to be very different from the USA (where they immigrated from). Participant # 2 also felt frustrated about the fact that the parents had to be the ones constantly helping teenagers since there was not enough support coming from school. The participant felt that in her daughter's school and the school district, the teenagers (16 year-olds) have popularity contests with rich, middle- and low-income students. There are questions

such as: "Where do you live? Do you go to parties? Do you have a laptop?" And so on. It appeared from hearing this that the school and home are becoming places that are creating conflicting situations in the minds of the students.

Other benefits

There are other benefits that were listed as part of the positive perceptions which don't quite fit into any of the above categories. They include clean parks and availability of children's play areas, the peaceful nature of the country, economic factors, better health care verses some other places, a better life for middle class in the society. Of those, the most common was better life for middle class in the society and economic factors. Two of the five participants (Participant # 3 and 4) listed one or the other, indicating that for each of them this was a significant positive trait.

Other challenges

Some other challenges that were hindering the progress of integration for immigrants as shared by them included cultural shock, lack of family support, job is your family, no time for family life, as well as language and socioeconomic challenges that hinder them in getting good jobs and mingling. There wasn't really one common factor for these but rather all of these together formed a subtheme (2) of other challenges that are hindering the progress of integration for immigrants.

Summary

This chapter provides the details of the research itself. It talks in details about the different major, minor themes that came out of this research. The perceptions are divided into positive and negative perceptions and then each of those two are further divided subthemes and from there on to subthemes (2). All the themes discussed how parents perceived certain things in certain way and how those themes were generated from the responses provided during the interviews which

in turn might help bring some kind of important information and basis for future research. Besides the themes, there were also other benefits and other challenges that came out as a result. These were also significant since any and all of these might provide more help for the future. One of the most important things coming out of positive perceptions was the fact that a variety of programs and activities are really very beneficial for everyone. In the same manner, the most significant negative perception has to do with the fact that credentials/work experience of the immigrants are not being accepted although sometimes that is the very basis people have been given immigration in the first place. Immigrants already have it really hard when they come to a new land and on top of it to keep trying to fight all sorts of battles from others around them. There are some solutions that immigrants have also provided and will be discussed in next chapter. It was an interesting experience working on thematic analysis and looking for common themes through all of the interviews.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

I immigrated to Canada from USA in January 2001. I had been an international student living in Minneapolis at the time of my immigration. I had travelled to St. Cloud, MN in December 1991 to start my education in the field of Elementary Education. Prior to that, I lived in Karachi, Pakistan where I was born and grew up. I worked as a teacher in Pakistan and already had two bachelor degrees before leaving for USA in pursuit of another bachelor's degree.

Looking back, I can honestly say that regardless of all the difficulties I have faced over the years, I have also grown and learned more and more from each of those experiences and have become who I am today. I thank God on a daily basis for all his blessings, help and bounties in my life. I was blessed to have been much better off than many other people around me specially ones who had moved from another country. Yes, there were many who were more fortunate than me as well but that is all part of life and we each have to try to make the best of our own individual situations. My initial reaction upon arrival in a different country was probably pretty biased and looking back I feel that I was over-confident each time also ...both upon my move to the USA and then when I immigrated to Canada. I can even say that this last move was also over-confident. There are fears also each time but I feel it is human nature to try to look at and think only of positive things so that our focus is only on those things and we are not as worried anymore. As you get to a new place, after the adrenaline rush wears off, you start feeling depressed and are somewhat scared because all of a sudden you realize as to what has happened and that you have to somehow try to adapt to your surroundings, start all over, be accepted for who you are or more accurately change yourself to be accepted in the host culture. Unfortunately later is more true and common verses the former. Sometimes, it is even more unfortunate when

you realize that no matter what you try to do, there is a very high probability that you will not be accepted still. Some immigrants are more fortunate that they can speak the host culture's language while for others it is another battle to fight. As I recall, I used to sometimes try and help translate things for fellow international students on the campus and felt thankful that I didn't have a similar need. The more I worked with other students, the more I realized how much all of this intrigued me further and that I wanted to somehow help where possible as well as try to change and improve things for the better.

Summary

The issue being discussed in this paper, the focus of my research, is the immigrants' perceptions of their experiences in integrating into communities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. It has been somewhat of a journey, through this process of writing the thesis. Immigration is certainly not an easy process and entails many details. History was looked at also to see how immigration spread and immigrants travelled to the US over the years. Once an immigrant moves to a new country even more stress continues to build. It takes quite some time before they can start calling the new place home and even longer for it to feel like one. As evident from the interviews and points that some of these participants have shared, it has certainly not been an easy road for them to travel. All these immigrants gave up a lot to be where they are today.

Conclusions and Implications

The perceptions that came out were sort of similar to what had been already expected. There were an almost even number of people having positive and negative perceptions regarding immigration and most of it appeared to have been there because of certain subthemes (2). It would appear that changing the subthemes (2) would probably change the end result as well so

that more people would feel happy about being an immigrant in Canada and decide to stay here instead of leaving it as soon as an opportunity arises.

The implications arising from my research could impact some people more because of their frequent interactions with the immigrants. They include teachers, administrators, agencies like MOSAIC and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. As I had mentioned in an earlier chapter, educators (including teachers and administrators) could be provided some training regarding learning about immigrants, other cultures, immigration process, policies; and later they can pass on that knowledge to others so that things improve, overall. Training could be provided by using resources, such as already established immigrants in the community, such as the parents in a school; collaborative groups could be created within the schools to help improve learning about other cultures. Parents and teachers could really help each other create a very positive learning environment for the students by learning about different cultures alongside with the students. Students could become teachers and teach other students and teachers about their cultures. It would also bring confidence to a new immigrant student if the student wanted to do something like this.

For all the new immigrants, there are also the agencies such as MOSAIC and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. that can help the immigrants to settle in initially and/or even after if needed. Both of these agencies are non-profit and at times have many immigrants from different countries working for them which makes it easier for communicating, extra positive and welcoming for the new immigrants. The local embassies for different countries could also be contacted. Another good resource for the new immigrants is the local worship areas for different religions, such as the mosque/masjid (Islam), church (Christianity), synagogue (Judaism), gurdwara (Sikhism), temples, monasteries (Buddhism), mandir/temple (Hinduism) and/or others etc.

Best Solutions

Looking at the solutions provided by the immigrants, you can see that these are some very appropriate recommendations. As you further look at each of these solutions provided by the immigrants in a little more detail, we can understand somewhat the reasoning behind these ideas. Let me start with the first two from the table that were provided by the participant # 3; having a positive attitude and building a strong social structure around oneself helps. According to participant # 3, that is because it prevents depression and stops one from going into a downward spiral. It may also provide the right direction for getting a job and the associated training.

The next one in the table was provided by the participant # 4: better counselling services for children in school of families who have just moved to Canada. Participant # 4 felt that it should be done specially for kids from other countries.

Participant # 5 said that it would be good if Canadian universities keep some co-ordination with the American universities. Participant # 5 explained how growing up in Pakistan and then moving to US was a change of culture but when participant # 5 moved to Canada, the hope was that Canada would be more sympathetic to American university transfers, which was not the case. The process became even more tedious for participant # 5 when the participant needed to transfer credits/conversions from Pakistani to American to Canadian.

Participant # 1 had provided two pieces of advice: the first was to study the culture here (in Canada) before one arrives and before getting here to make sure to check ahead about your credentials, checking with professional/cultural organizations so that everything is not a big shock. Participant # 1 further advises that these organizations can also help one get into jobs. According to the same participant, using these organizations would also be beneficial since they have people from the same background.

Next, we get to participant # 2, who suggested that there should be acceptance and recognition of the newcomers, to value the person's experience, their knowledge and education. This participant felt that this would change all over Canada and not just here (in Lower Mainland of British Columbia), it would make a huge difference and one would feel so proud and honoured. One would then want to be here. That is one of the reasons that this participant felt that people are so discouraged from moving here, especially to British Columbia. According to the participant, it is very expensive to live here. In the participant's opinion, all the training and the hard work, if it is accepted would be a primary factor and would make a huge difference for people moving here (to British Columbia), and for their lifestyles.

Participant # 2 also felt that it was also very important to improve the medical system and the education system.

These immigrants have shown what they believe needs to stay and what needs to change. One of the main points to remember is that we need to seriously address the issues regarding acceptance of the credentials for all of these immigrants, as well as for any future immigrants.

Recommendations

Before getting into research recommendations, I would like to provide some recommendations for the agencies that might work with the immigrants, the educators who might work with them or come in contact with them and also for government policy.

Agencies

I would recommend that the agencies first try to find out the actual nationality, religion and language for the particular immigrant at the time. Try to find some sort of connection for the immigrant to feel welcomed, relaxed and connected. You can try to find somebody from the individual's country, from their religion through their place of worship, and so on.

Educators

Educators play a very significant role in this whole process. From connecting with the family and the student to helping them learn about the school system in Canada versus where they are coming from are some important and crucial steps. Sometimes we as educators overlook the fact that as an immigrant someone is coming to a new environment with a new set of rules and it would be so helpful if someone took the time to explain those rules to the newcomers.

Informative pamphlets could be created, but they need to be in a variety of different languages. It wouldn't hurt to actually encourage immigrant parents to form a group at each school which might function similarly to S.U.C.C.E.S.S or MOSAIC but on a smaller scale at the school level. Perhaps the bigger agencies could create their positions at each school or send representatives there periodically. I realize the cost might be significant, but these are ideas that could be started small and grow bigger eventually, but this should really be looked into so that there is more and better communication for everyone concerned. An educator could support this whole process and take responsibility of getting the immigrants to connect with the different agencies if the need arises. A good idea would be to also look at all the resources available within the school and the district prior to an immigrant family's arrival (if time permits) so that the educators and the students have some awareness regarding a particular new immigrant family and the new student also feels relaxed, welcomed and connected.

Government

With the arrival of the new Government in Canada, hopefully things can improve on the immigration front. There needs to be coordination between the different departments so that everyone realizes, acknowledges and respects the fact that when all these immigrants are coming from different countries with such high credentials and qualifications, than those need to be

accepted by the officials all across Canada so that all this knowledge brought with the immigrants is not wasted. They are able to use their true qualifications easily and become a useful member of the new country based on their qualifications instead of trying to survive and do odd jobs to try to make a living. The whole mindset needs to be changed where people having the idea that only Canadian education and qualifications are worth anything needs to change. The world has much to offer and Canada has much to learn if the Government lets these immigrants truly shine and be proud of who they are and what they have to offer. It is so disheartening to keep fighting all these battles as an immigrant, I can truly relate because I am one of these immigrants. I have fought way too many battles myself as well in order to try to use my credentials to support my living and yet even after a Masters from Lower Mainland of British Columbia will end up with a 5+ TQS category instead of a 6 like my colleagues. Besides credentials, Government also needs to improve the immigration process which was pretty much destroyed in the more recent years by the previous Government. Immigrants need to be treated with respect and it needs to be realized that everyone was an immigrant to Canada a one point, so lets no create more difficulties for the new immigrants. The recent changes into reuniting immigrant families needs to be looked at again. The health insurance for the parents of new immigrants needs to be re-instated and the parents should be allowed to be sponsored again instead of only allowing them visitor visa. Lastly, immigrants should not be labeled as second-class citizens, nor should they be treated as such.

Research

I would highly recommend that some future study be conducted with a bigger number of participants as this particular research has barely touched the surface. It has for sure shown the need for a future research so that all the issues that have come out can be looked into again and

dealt with at that point. This research has shown that there is definitely a need for further inquiry and research regarding this topic.

Table 2 – Best Solutions, as Mentioned by the Research Subjects

Best solutions	Participant #
✓ Having a positive attitude	3
✓ Building a strong social structure around one	3
✓ Better counselling services for children in school who have just moved to Canada	4
✓ It would be good if Canadian Universities keep some co-ordination with American Universities.	5
✓ Study the culture here before you get here.	1
✓ Checking ahead about your credentials, checking with professional/cultural organizations so that everything is not a big shock. They can also help you get into jobs.	2
✓ Acceptance, value the person's experience, education	2
✓ Improve medical system	2
✓ Improve education system.	

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Appendix A

"I am a Master of Education student at City University of Seattle. As part of my work in obtaining my degree, I am conducting a thesis research study on the experiences of immigrant families in the host communities of the Lower Mainland of B.C. who have school-aged children. I would like to interview about five parents individually to explore their experiences. This is an exploratory study and my questions will be broadly-focused to allow participants to talk about the experiences that have been significant to them. I will record the interviews with a digital recorder. All the information you convey to me in these interviews will be kept strictly confidential. The recordings and any notes I make will be kept securely locked in a cabinet in my home and only my City University research supervisor will have possible access to that information. Participation is entirely voluntary and if you agree to participate, I will have you sign a consent form, but you are free to withdraw your consent at any time, even after the interviews; in that case, I will permanently destroy any and all data I have collected from you. You are also free to refrain from answering any of the questions during the interview or later requesting that some of your answers be removed. I will not identify you or your family members or share in my report any information from the interviews that might identify you or your family members. The only people who will ever have access to this recorded data (or any of the data) will be myself (Uzma Rahat Saeed), my research supervisor, and the director of Canadian programs at City University. Your privacy and well being are my highest priorities, and you are free to ask any questions or raise any concerns with me at any time. I am obligated to retain my recorded and written data for five years, but after that time all recorded and written data will be permanently destroyed."

Appendix B

Dear Parents,

My name is Uzma Saeed and I am a teacher by profession. At present, I am also completing my thesis for my Master of Education program at City University of Seattle. The thesis is focused on the experiences and challenges faced by the immigrants/international families with school-aged children in the host communities of the Lower Mainland, BC. If you agree to participate, I will contact you about the interview time and place. Your confidentiality will be protected: no names or any information that could possibly identify the participants or their family members will be included in my final report. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can remove yourself from the interview process at any time--before, during, or after without any negative consequence. If you decide to withdraw after having started, I will destroy all data I have collected from you. You are also free to refrain from answering any of the questions during the interview or later requesting that some of your answers be removed. Your privacy, well being, and preserving the confidentiality of your information are my highest priorities, and you will also be free to ask questions at any time. The interview will be recorded on a digital recording device, but the only people who will ever have access to this recorded data (or any of the data) will be myself (Uzma Rahat Saeed), my research supervisor, and the director of Canadian programs at City University. Your identity will not be recorded--your name will be replaced by a code. I will transcribe all data into written form. The interview will then be typed into transcripts, on which your identity will be coded. All data, whether digital or written, will be kept securely in a locked cabinet in my home; digital data will be encrypted. All raw data, the recordings and transcripts, will be destroyed after 5 years. If you would be willing to be interviewed please sign the City University Informed Consent Form I will supply.

It is possible that this interview, like many research projects, might evoke strong emotional reactions from you. In that case, I will provide the names of professional counselling services in your community.

The benefits of the study are that it will help us as educators better understand the experiences and perceptions of immigrants, thus enabling us to support them with more effective social, cultural, and educational services and outreach.

Printed name: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____