

Immigrants in canada: positive adjustment and integration



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Immigration has become a large and important part of Canadian society. People from all over the world are migrating to Canada in search of prosperity for themselves, and their families. It is the main reason why my grandparents decided to emigrate from Hong Kong in the early 1970s. The metropolitan city of Hong Kong boasts an incredibly large population, which made living quarters very tight. My mother, youngest of her family, and who was eleven at the time she immigrated to Canada, lived in a tiny, government assisted apartment that held her seven siblings and both parents. There were no separate rooms, just one small space that had to be shared between ten people. There were public washrooms and kitchens available, which was shared between the entire floor. The living conditions were not ideal, and neither was the amount of money needed to pay for school. In Hong Kong, parents had to pay for everything related to school, which included uniforms, books, supplies, etc. It was very difficult for my grandparents to support schooling for all eight children. My mother's older siblings were not able to finish middle school, at best, because they had get a job to help support the family. My grandmother did not have a formal job, leaving the income up to my grandfather. Living in Hong Kong did not seem to have much opportunity, education-wise, for their children, so my grandparents, at the ripe ages of fifty-five, decided to immigrate to Canada. My grandfather used to work as an herbalist, yet when he immigrated to Canada, his skills were not acknowledge nor needed. He ended up working in a Chinese restaurant as a chef due to his lack of knowing English. Not knowing the language in the country one lives in is extremely difficult. It limits communication, job opportunities, and creates negative social adjustment into society.

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Immigration is the epitome of what brings Canada and the Third World into contact. Canadian goals of immigration include using immigrants as a fillers in Canada's aging labour force and fillers in the general population due to low birth rate. The trend of immigration is short term solutions. More and more immigrants clutter Canadian society with barely anything to offer both socially and economically. By focusing on immigrants' settlement needs to become active and efficient contributors to Canadian society, emphasis on language acquisition and making a transition to Canadian standards are a must. Through adjustment and higher paying jobs, poverty rates will decrease. Although Canada uses immigration as a way to meet short term economic needs, immigration policy should prioritize proper adjustment and integration of immigrants into society, which will in turn reap of more long term economic benefit.

When minority immigrants come to Canada, not knowing the language proves to be the biggest barrier that prevents one from fully immersing into Canadian society. Between skilled workers, temporary foreign workers, family class immigrants and refugees, proficient knowledge of either French or English is not as developed as it should be, in order to prosper economically and socially. Mandatory proficiency of either official language will prove to be a great asset for immigrants. To be able to communicate is a quality that is needed to survive in a foreign land.

In a social aspect, minority immigrants who do not know the language should make a significant effort to learn. To know the language that is spoken by the general population means taking the necessary steps to immerse oneself into a new environment. In a survey by the CIC (Citizen and Immigration <https://assignbuster.com/immigrants-in-canada-positive-adjustment-and-integration/>

Canada) in 2007, about half of Canadians said that the largest barrier between immigrants was language and/or culture (Biles, Burnstein, & Frideres, 2008: 223). In the same survey, 46% of Canadians felt that immigrants “take jobs that Canadians don’t want” (ibid, 223). There may be mixed feelings among non-ethnic Canadians about immigrants. Although, if and when immigrants start being assimilated like their fellow Canadians through the language they speak and the way they live, Canadians may not have as big of a problem. Canada is, after all, a mosaic of people around the world. Therefore, social acceptance of immigrants by the general society is aided by making an effort to learn the language of the country in which they will be residing. Language proficiency will not only aid in socially, but also economically.

In an economic aspect, being able to communicate in English or French is extremely significant for any type of job in Canada. By emphasizing the ability to speak the language(s) of Canada, there will be more and more jobs that immigrants will be able to qualify for. Whether it be in the service industry or a profession, being able to communicate in a coherent manner can be considered as a top quality necessary for any job. Li described the human capital value that an immigrant held versus that of a non-immigrant. Li explained:

Earning disparities between immigrants and non-immigrants are typically seen as resulting from immigrants having less human capital than the native-born, in terms of marketable skills and credentials, Canadian experiences, as well as language capacity (Li, 104-105).

This means that any wage disparities can be partly due to language ability.

Although the social impact by changing the immigration policy to further help immigrant adjustment, there are still many flaws within the system. In a study taken in 1998, 17.4% of Canada's population was foreign or born in a foreign country. In the same study, it was shown that 19.2% of the country's total population was foreign or foreign born working in the labour force (Li, 104). These statistics show that immigrants and foreign-born people represent a substantial amount in the labour force. Labour does not require many skills, even if the biggest step to contributing to society is by first learning the language, professionals who have been falsely led to believe that there are jobs waiting in Canada will not necessarily be given equal opportunity. Many blame immigrants for not being as knowledgeable, yet when qualifications are legitimate, Canadian employers are still not as willing to provide jobs. The difficulties for a worker, who has passed the point system, prove to be lack of Canadian experience. A professional may be even more knowledgeable than those with Canadian education and work experience, but without Canadian credentials, employers are much more hesitant because of possible risk factors.

Transitioning from one country's standards to another can be quite confusing and difficult. Through more help from government programs, immigrants would be able to adjust and familiarize themselves with Canada's workplace practices. One of the biggest problems with the current immigration policy is that professionals are not being hired. Standards in one country will indeed be different than Canada's. The notion that Canada will provide one with adequate and proper employment is in some ways a lure for immigrants. In a <https://assignbuster.com/immigrants-in-canada-positive-adjustment-and-integration/>

study taken in 1998, 17.4% of Canada's population was foreign or born in a foreign country. In the same study, it was shown that 19.2% of the country's total population was foreign or foreign born working in the labour force (Li, 104). These statistics show that immigrants and foreign-born people represent a substantial amount in the labour force. Li also examines the lack of recognition of an immigrant's education, stating that 44% of new adult immigrants have obtained at least one university degree. This demonstrates how immigrants with degrees are working in low-skill positions. By working in labour jobs, these professionals are not using their skills and knowledge to their full potential.

Social settlement needs of immigrants should be met to prevent increased poverty rates. If immigrants continue to work low wage labour jobs, poverty will quickly become a reality. Immigrants who have to support their family will not be able to sustain a Canadian lifestyle. Canadian immigration policy should ensure that immigrants are being well adjusted into society to create long term economic benefits. Intense language instruction will allow immigrants to

In brief, Canadian immigration policy should focus on immigrants' needs for proper settlement to benefit Canada's economy in the long term. Ensuring that immigrants learn either English or French will provide them with a valuable asset to succeed in Canada. Adapting to new environments and relating to fellow Canadians will positively allow more lenient social acceptance. Economically wise, knowing how to effectively communicate will increase chances of finding a job. It is also quite important that the

government help professionals and skilled workers by helping the transition
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process to Canadian standards. There are too many overqualified people working low-skill jobs because their foreign credentials are not being recognized or because of lack of Canadian experience. Finally, by making immigrants more self-sufficient, poverty rates among immigrants will surely decrease. On the whole, Canadian immigration policy has many flaws. The suggestion to improve the social experience of an immigrant to see economic prosperity in the future is only one of many. Immigrants come to Canada to seek more opportunities and a better life, and there is no reason why it should not come true. By investing in short term expenditures, long term benefit will surely follow.