Expectations of Canadian Life, Actual Post-Arrival Experience, and Pre-Arrival Information Seeking: Results from a Study on Bangladeshi Immigrants in Canada

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Immigrants need information for their settlement in Canadian society including landing in a professional job. Timely information can support their integration and social inclusion and prepare them to face initial settlement challenges after arrival to Canada. On the other hand, lack of critical information may lead to social isolation, depression, and dissatisfaction with their lives in Canada. Several studies, such as Caidi and Allard, 2005; Esses, et. al. 2013, recognize the need for timely information for immigrants to reduce their worries during settlement as well as to ensure their inclusion in host countries. In this poster, I present findings from my doctoral study on the transitional information practices of Bangladeshi immigrants in Ontario, focusing on the tensions between pre-arrival expectations and actual experiences of Canadian life and on pre-arrival information practices.

Mismatch between expectations and actual experience

I was well informed. It was a great advantage. They [his friends] told both advantages and disadvantages of [immigration to Canada]. And, more or less, it matched after arrival. Therefore, I did not find anything unexpected for me. Imran, 2013

Mainly, my expectation was I will get professional jobs. However, after arrival life is completely different. The reality and the expectation did not match. Life is, otherwise, very smooth here. However, when I think about employment, I feel like returning to Bangladesh. Liakot, 2013

Before arrival, I expected I will be able to work in my professional job [similar to back home]. My husband will do so. Life will be very smooth. Moreover, I thought this [Canadian life] will be more comfortable [compared to life back home], but it is now opposite of [what I expected]. Lipi, 2013

Overall, the findings on expectations of Canadian life and pre-arrival information practices clearly show the importance of pre-arrival information in helping newcomers construct their expectations about life in Canada and to mentally prepare them to face initial settlement challenges.

References


Convenience & purposeful sampling

Face-to-face

Telephone

Skype

Surveys


Community programs

Friends and family

Newspaper

Postal

I will be able to work in a professional job relevant to my previous education/field as I am migrating to Canada as a skilled immigrant, n=36

Initially, it may be very challenging to get a job that is relevant to my previous education/field but it is not unachievable, n=158

I may not find a job related to my profession, and may end up doing a survival job, n=36


Methodology

Qualitative

Semi-structured interviews

(May 2013–July 2013)

Surveys

Research methodology

Quantitative

Convenience & snowball sampling