VIEWING IMMIGRANT LABOUR INTEGRATION THROUGH AN INTERSECTIONAL
LENS: INFORMATION AND IDENTITY IN THE SETTLEMENT OF AFRICAN
IMMIGRANTS TO METRO VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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ABSTRACT

Background: Many immigrants arrive in Canada in hopes of finding a better life for themselves and their families. Securing meaningful employment positions immigrants to have a meaningful quality of life and contribute to the host countries' society and economy. Access to information about employment is crucial to this process and yet inadequately understood.

Objectives: This research sought to determine the kinds of information that African immigrants value when seeking meaningful employment, how they access employment information, what information services are available to support immigrant labour integration, how participants utilized these and how these services could be enhanced, and finally, any relationships among participants' multifaceted identities, information and employment.

Methods: Data were collected through qualitative document analysis of information presented on the websites of settlement and employment agencies in five Metro Vancouver cities, and semi-structured interviews with 25 Black African immigrants in Metro Vancouver. The interview incorporated Information World Mapping, an arts-based elicitation activity. Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

Results: The document analysis revealed an abundance of employment support being offered to immigrants. However, the interviews revealed that participants utilized only a few of these. The interviews also explained this gap and highlighted opportunities for providing information that participants deemed more relevant to them. Participants valued three types of employment information and obtained these both serendipitously and purposefully through a variety of information sources. Sources of information included institutions in Canada, online sources and other people. Participants' pre-migration employment expectations contrasted with realities in

Canada, while intersectional factors such as immigration status and gender were found to be major determinants of employment and information access.

Conclusion: This research has made contributions to theory, research methods and the practice of information provision. This project also demonstrates the generative capacity of a novel research method for this type of inquiry and population. This has led to significant methodological insights. Finally, results of the study suggest that employment information provision that accounts for the intersectional identities of the recipients could be valuable in making support more relevant for immigrants. Future research could explore the dynamics of such intersectional information provision.

LAY SUMMARY

Many immigrants come to Canada hoping to secure good jobs and live a good life with their families. However, immigrants often encounter challenges that prevent them from securing these jobs, including limited access to the information and supports that will help them to secure employment. I analyzed the websites of organizations that support immigrants' employment efforts to understand the kinds of employment supports they provide. I also interviewed 25 African immigrants in Metro Vancouver to understand their requirements when looking for employment and how they secure required supports. Results suggest that there are many supports offered to immigrants, but participants in this study accessed only a few of these. Moreover, the multifaceted identities of the participants played an important role in their ability to access meaningful information and acquire employment. Suggestions are made to the government and organizations to better support immigrants looking for suitable jobs.

PREFACE

This dissertation is an original intellectual product of the student, Millicent Mabi. The dissertation was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Heather O'Brien at the UBC School of Information. Drs. Luanne Freund and Lisa Nathan were members of the student's doctoral committee. The author, Millicent Mabi, wrote every chapter of the dissertation herself, with feedback from the supervisor and committee members incorporated. Millicent conducted the interviews, information world maps and document analysis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMSSAA- Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of British Columbia

BC: British Columbia

EPL- Edmonton Public Library

IEC-BC: Immigrant Employment Council of BC

ISSofBC: Immigrant Services Society of BC

IWM: Information World Mapping

LIS: Library and Information Science

PCRS: Pacific Community Resources Society

PICS: Progressive Intercultural Community Services

PIRS: Pacific Immigrant Resources Society

SIIC: Skilled Immigrant Info Centre

VPL: Vancouver Public Library

YMCA: Young Men's Christian Association

YWCA: Young Women's Christian Association

GLOSSARY

African immigrants: In this dissertation, African migrants refer to people of African descent who have migrated to Canada.

Country of origin: A person's country of nationality or previous usual residence from which they migrated (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2011). In this dissertation, I sometimes refer to the country of origin as *source country*.

Destination country: Country that is receiving immigrants (IOM, 2011). I use this synonymously with *host country*.

Economic immigrants*:* Immigrants invited to Canada based on their qualifications and potential to contribute to the Canadian economy. Examples of economic immigrants are skilled workers, provincial nominees and members of Canadian experience class along with their spouses and dependants (Government of Canada, 2016).

Family class: An immigration class that enables Canadian citizens or permanent residents to sponsor their family members to join them in Canada (Government of Canada, 2016).

Immigrant: The term immigrant is used differently when referring to people who move and settle in other places. While some people use the term to refer to people who have settled permanently in a new location (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2017), others use the term broadly to encompass people who have moved into a new country to live whether temporarily or permanently (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2018; International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2011; Lingel, 2011; The Collins Dictionary, 2018). Since there seems to be no consensus about the term "immigrants" I will adopt the definitions proffered by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation,

IOM and Lingel. The Canadian Race Relations Foundation (2018) defined an immigrant as one who moves from their native country to settle in another country in pursuit of a better life regardless of the motivating factors be it personal, political, religious, social or economic. The IOM (2011) defines an immigrant as a person who moves from their country of nationality or usual residence into a new country which becomes their usual residence. Similarly, Lingel (2011) defined immigrants as all people who have migrated from a place of origin or residence to another country for whatever reason (Lingel, 2011). These definitions imply that immigrants include both temporary and permanent migrants, and are more appropriate for the current study which is more interested in African people who now reside in Canada (Metro Vancouver) rather than whether they are temporary or permanent. As such, immigrants in this paper will be used broadly to refer to temporary and permanent residents.

Immigration: Defined broadly, immigration is the act of someone migrating/ coming to settle in a country in which they are not a native (IOM, 2011).

Information: Information refers to the physical information object, the channel by which information is communicated, or the factual data which is communicated (Wilson, 1981).

Information behaviour: Information behaviour is used to describe people's relationship with information. This includes how they "need, seek, manage, give and use information in different contexts" (Fisher, Erdelez and McKechnie, 2005, p. xix), whether purposefully or passively (Fisher & Julien, 2009). In this dissertation, information behaviour will be used to denote situations or studies that depict motivations for information seeking (information needs), in addition to the consequent information practices, such as information seeking.

Information encountering: Obtaining information serendipitously, that is, where and when people were not looking for it (Erdelez, 1999).

Information needs: An information need as "a consciously identified gap in the knowledge available to an actor" (Ingwersen & Järvelin, 2005, p.20).

Information practices: A "range of practices that can be as premeditated as actively browsing for information to meet a known need or as serendipitous as encountering an unexpected source, miscellaneous fact, or familiar situation that may be of some assistance in meeting some present or future need" (McKenzie, 2003; p. 19). Information practices also include cultural and social factors involved in information seeking, use and sharing (Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, & Qayyum, 2013; Savolainen, 2008). I interpret the definitions of information practice to mean that information practice is action based and emerges when an information need is translated into action. Hence, in this dissertation, information practices will refer to situations where information seeking involves social and cultural components and not discussed in direct relationship with the motivation for action (information need).

Information seeking: The active search for information to meet a goal (Wilson, 2000).

International migrant: A person who has crossed an international border regardless of the circumstances or length of stay. (United Nations, 2020).

Licensing: Licensing in this dissertation refers to the acquisition of required licenses to work in certain occupations in Canada, for example, to practice as engineers in Canada (Engineers of Canada, 2018).

Permanent Resident of Canadian: A person who has legally immigrated to Canada permanently but has not become a Canadian citizen yet (Government of Canada, 2016).

Refugee: A person who involuntary leaves their country of nationality or usual residence due to fear of persecution, has crossed an international border, and due to the same fears, is unable or unwilling to return the original country (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2017; IOM, 2011).

Settlement: The "process through which immigrants adapt to life in their new environment" (Van der Linden, Bartlett, & Beheshti, 2014, p.66).

Skilled worker: Persons selected to immigrate to Canada as permanent residents based on their human capital such as education, work experience and knowledge of Canada's official languages (Government of Canada, 2020).

Temporary resident: A foreign national who is in Canada legally for a short period. This includes international students, foreign workers, and visitors, such as tourists.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work first to God almighty whose grace and strength saw me through. Then to my husband, thank you for your love and support. And my daughters Trixie, Annette and Ivey-Mercedes. Thank you for your love, patience and support through these years of study. Mum loves you all😊

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Many immigrants arrive in Canada highly skilled and highly educated, with hopes of securing jobs that will help them stay financially stable and contribute to the Canadian economy and society (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2015). However, many encounter barriers that prevent them from achieving the desired employment. Inadequate access to information is one such barrier (Caidi & Allard, 2005) and one of the least explored.

Migrating from one country to another often necessitates moving to an unfamiliar information world, where the "people, places and things" in the lives of people that help them to seek, find or use information may be different (Shankar, O'Brien, How, Lu, Mabi, & Rose, 2016, p.3). Successful settlement requires immigrants to build bridges between previous information practices in their home countries and the information landscape of the new country. However, attempts to construct such bridges are impeded by inadequate understanding of the host country's official language, cultural differences, a general lack of awareness of information sources in the new country (Lingel, 2014; Machet & Govender, 2012; Shoham & Strauss, 2007; Su & Conaway, 1995), and an intersection of individual factors that comprise identity (Crenshaw, 2016). This can result in fractured access to information, and subsequent difficulties in finding employment and other essentials. Yet, access to information is rarely examined as a potential barrier to labour market participation. A notable exception to this is a series of recent studies by Caidi and colleagues (Caidi, Komlodi, Abrao, & Martin-Hammond, 2014; Komlodi, Caidi, & Abrao, 2014; Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016) who interviewed 20 immigrants looking for health-related employment in the USA and Canada. Results showed three categories of employment-related information needs: job and career-related information, research developments in their professions, and information about their desired industry. Cultivating

personal networks was an important strategy used by participants to secure jobs and obtain emotional support, calling attention to the affective dimensions of job seeking, such as the impact of failing to secure desired jobs on immigrants. Overall, the researchers argued that more research is needed to further understand the employment-related information needs, strategies, and practices of immigrants seeking to integrate into the labour market of a new country.

It is noteworthy that the role of information has been examined more broadly in immigrant settlement (e.g., Lingel,2011; Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, & Qayyum, 2013; Sin, 2015), but not specifically with respect to employment participation. There are many aspects involved in successful settlement for immigrants, ranging from securing accommodation to being set up in the host country's social systems and reuniting with family members. While all these aspects are important, this research will focus on employment to enable a detailed examination of the phenomenon.

As Caidi and Allard noted, when migrants can successfully settle and integrate into the new society, they contribute to the economic and socio-cultural fabric of the receiving nation (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Conversely, when immigrants are unable to settle successfully, they feel alienated, and the receiving nation, in turn, does not derive the full benefits of a multicultural population (Mwarigha, 2002; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). Settling immigrants is especially crucial for a country such as Canada whose government invests millions of dollars annually to attract and settle immigrants (Thompson, 2018). Reduced birth rates (Statistics Canada, 2017; Provencher, Milan, Hallman, & D'Aoust, 2018), coupled with a rapidly aging population (Canada Department of Finance, 2016), are placing Canadian businesses in need of skilled workers (Cohen, 2018), a trend that is expected to continue (The Conference Board of Canada, 2017). Securing the desired employment partly signifies successful settlement for immigrants (Creese, 2011) and access to

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relevant information is crucial to the job seeking process including career opportunities and licencing information (Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016).

Besides immigrants, Canadian employers could also benefit from this research as it relates to hiring immigrants. The literature portrays an inadequate understanding of immigrants' qualifications and human assets by employers and this limits immigrants' access to employment for which they are qualified (Hosoda, Nguyen, & Stone-Romero, 2012; Timming, 2017). While it is important to understand employers' information practices with regards to hiring immigrants, such understanding is outside the scope of the current research. However, future research could focus on understanding how Canadian employers can be better supported with information towards improving employment and overall settlement outcomes for immigrants. That being said, this research can help employers to better understand the skills that African immigrants can bring to their workplaces, as well as how to better support African immigrants in their workforce.

Information is undoubtedly crucial to the successful integration of immigrants into the Canadian labour force. Yet, only few Library and Information science (LIS) studies have focused specifically on the dynamics of seeking employment information. Consequently, it is not yet clearly understood how information affects employment outcomes for immigrants. Moreover, employment continues to be identified as a priority for immigrants, and the inability to secure it unhealthy for the them and the receiving nations (Caidi, Allard & Dechief, 2008; Su & Conaway, 1995; Subedi and Rosenberg, 2017). It is therefore important to examine the dynamics of how information could influence the employment outcomes of immigrants.

1.1 Population of interest: Why African immigrants?

The population of African immigrants in Canada is growing (Loxley, Sackey & Khan, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2019). In the 1960s, the African immigrant community in Canada represented

less than 1% of all immigrants, while in the 1980s this population had increased to 5% of immigrants (Creese, 2011). The number of African immigrants in Canada has continued to increase and was 11.7% of all immigrants as of 2008 (Milan, 2015) and 13.4% in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2017). If this trend persists, Canada will be receiving more African immigrants in the foreseeable feature.

African immigrants have settled mainly in four Canadian provinces: Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta (Statistics Canada, 2017). Within these provinces, they have settled primarily in major cities such as Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa-Gatineau, Vancouver and Calgary (Statistics Canada, 2007; 2019). However, existing literature has demonstrated a limited focus on the employment-related information behaviour of African immigrants in Canada despite their growing presence and human capital, including the high level of education, work experience, and youthfulness (Keung, 2018; Todd, 2018). An understanding of the information behaviour of this group may help with targeted information provision to enable them to secure jobs that improve the quality of life for them and their families and in turn contribute to the Canadian workforce and economy. This research takes a step to enhance this understanding.

1.1.1 African immigrants: An attractive population?

Confronted with a declining population where retirees outnumber the working population, Canada continues to rely on immigration to support its economy (Milroy, 2017; Provencher, Milan, Hallman, & D'Aoust, 2018). In British Columbia, 861,000 jobs are projected to become open between from 2019 to 2029 according to BC's latest labour market outlook. About 69% of those jobs will be replacing retiring workers while 31% will be due to economic growth. Over 77% of these jobs will require some post-secondary education and 31% of these job openings are expected to be filled by immigrants (Government of British Columbia, 2019). African immigrants in Canada

constitute the kind of population that Canada is hoping to attract in its immigration programs. They are younger than the Canadian population on average, and more likely to be of working age (25-44 years) (Statistics Canada, 2007; 2019). As early as 2001, the majority (98.5%) of African immigrants in Canada could speak at least one of Canada's official languages (English or French), and proficiency in a country's official language is said to ease the settlement process (Creese, 2011).

African immigrants are also more likely than the rest of the Canadian population to be educated (Keung, 2018; Todd, 2018). In 2001 for example, 19% of the African population in Canada were university graduates, as opposed to 15% of the general Canadian population. In the same year, 7.3% of Africans in Canada held masters or doctorate degrees, as opposed to 4.8% in the general Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2007). As of 2016, Africans were reportedly still more educated than White Canadians (Keung, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2016; Todd, 2018). This factor could account for their increased representation in contemporary immigration to Canada because education is one of the prioritized factors of Canadian immigration[1].

1.1.2 Economic status of African immigrants in Canada

The youthfulness and high education levels of African immigrants do not seem to be translating into commensurate employment upon arrival in Canada. African immigrants in Canada continue to face employment discrimination (Bascaramurty, 2019) and are therefore more likely to be unemployed compared to the rest of the Canadian population; in 2001, 13.1% of African immigrants were unemployed versus 7.4% of all labour market participants (Statistics Canada,

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[1] Of the 1,200 points obtainable in the comprehensive ranking system (CRS) for bringing skilled immigrants Canada, Age, Education and Official language proficiency together account for 520 points. Although less than half, this number is still significant because 600 of the remaining points is reserved for applicants who have secured nomination from a Canadian province (Government of Canada, 2017)

2007; Keung, 2016). As of 2016, the unemployment rate for Black women in Canada (Africans inclusive) was 11%, while that of the general population was 7%. Black women also earned 15% less than White women and 37% less than White males in Canada (United Nations, 2016). African-born immigrants had the lowest employment rate and highest unemployment rate of all immigrant groups. Compared to Canadian born individuals, these rates were particularly high for African-born people who had been in Canada for 5 years or less (Ysaad & Fields, 2018). Africans in Canada also have lower incomes than the rest of the population and are therefore disproportionately represented below the poverty line (United Nations, 2016). Torczyner (1997), who investigated the economic integration of Africans in Canada, reported that Africans with a Canadian education had lower incomes and higher unemployment levels than Canadians with equivalent education levels. Overall, African immigrants in Canada were the third most represented in racialized poverty accounting for 18% of all racialized persons in Canada living in poverty (Government of Canada, 2013).

Despite the growing presence of African immigrants in Canada, very little effort has been made to examine the human capital that these immigrants bring and how they can be better incorporated into the Canadian workforce and economy. As the Conference Board of Canada warned in (2017), labour market integration is critical to maximizing the benefits of immigration. If immigrants are unable to contribute optimally to the Canadian economy, then the investment of bringing any skilled immigrant to Canada may be best deemed an exercise in economic futility. Moreover, the number of qualified immigrants who are unable to secure commensurate employment is contrary to the assertion by Cohen (2018) that Canadian businesses are dying from an inadequate labour supply.

Access to employment has been examined from diverse disciplines and dimensions (Hosoda, Nguyen, & Stone-Romero, 2012; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2017), and barriers to equitable employment, such as discrimination and lack of recognition of foreign credentials, have been highlighted. However, it is critical to examine immigrant labour integration from a LIS perspective because securing employment commensurate with qualifications requires access to necessary labour market information. While the role of information in the settlement of immigrants has been examined more broadly (Lingel, 2011), little has been done to understand the experience of immigrants seeking optimum participation in Canada's labour market. One certainty is that the role of information in connecting the human capital of African immigrants to desirable jobs is poorly understood.

1.2 Research focus

The current research explored the role of information and identity for African immigrants to Canada as they attempt to secure employment and integrate into Canadian labour force. The study focused on immigrants who have been in Canada for fifteen years or less. Although the Government of Canada considers a recent immigrant as someone who has been in Canada for five years or less (Caidi & Allard, 2005), some immigrants are not fully settled by the five-year mark and therefore continue to require support beyond this time (Lerner, Kertes, & Zilber, 2005). Moreover, researchers have noted that immigrants need an average of 15 years to fully integrate into the labour market of the host country, with chances improving the most around 20-25 years, and the lowest employment rates being within 1-5 years of arrival (Nekby, 2002). The implication

is that some immigrants may still be employed in survival jobs[2] and working towards securing their desired careers by the time five years have elapsed.

This research was guided by the desire to understand the information worlds of recent African immigrants' attempting to integrate into the Canadian labour market. Information worlds in this research refer to "people, places and things" in the lives of people that help them to seek, find or use information (Greyson, O'Brien, & Shankar, 2019). African immigrants encounter well-known barriers to full labour market participation, such as lack of recognition of their foreign credentials and work experience (Creese, 2011; Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016). However, the ways in which they seek and use information with regards to employment seeking have not been explored and are therefore not well understood. Without such understanding, it will be difficult to adequately support their integration into the Canadian labour market. Therefore, the overarching question of this research centres around understanding the role of information and identity in the employment experiences of African immigrants in Metro Vancouver. Broadly, the research asks: What constitutes the experiences of African immigrants seeking meaningful employment, and what is the role of information in immigrant labour market integration? This overarching research question will be addressed through the following four research questions:

1. What kinds of information do African immigrants value when seeking meaningful employment?
2. How do African immigrants in Canada access employment information?

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[2] Survival jobs are insecure, low-wage jobs that are often accompanied by poor working conditions which   migrants are forced to engage in to meet living costs while they wait to get desired jobs (Reid, Lenguerrand, Santos, Read, LaMontagne, Fritschi, & Harding, 2014).

3. What information services are available to support immigrant labour integration, how are African immigrants utilizing these and what opportunities are there to improve these services?

4. How do African immigrants' identities influence their experience of acquiring employment and information in Metro Vancouver?

1.3 Data Sources for the current study

This research comprises two separate, but related studies listed as Information Services Study and Information Worlds Study. The information services study comprised an analysis of websites and publicly available documents of settlement provider organizations to ascertain the current level of employment support provided to immigrants. The information worlds study involved semi-structured interviews with Information World Mapping, an arts-based elicitation technique. Semi-structured interview questions allowed participants to discuss verbally their employment information worlds in response to prompts from the researcher, while the Information World Mapping served as an icebreaker, provided research participants with an alternate way to express their information worlds, and helped to triangulate other data collected.

These two studies informed each other: Services and organizations identified through the document analysis in information services study were useful during the interviews in the information worlds study where I asked participants about their awareness and use of various services. Pre-existing knowledge of some of the services that participants discussed improved my understanding of participants' stories and my ability to prompt participants appropriately to obtain a richer and more accurate description of their experiences.

1.4 Contributions of the study

Results of this study are expected to make theoretical and methodological contributions to the LIS discipline. The study will provide insight on immigrants and information poverty theory, while adding to the body of knowledge on the employment information practices of immigrants, an area that is currently characterized by limited research. The results are also expected to have implications for practice, including the government, immigrant settlement and employment organizations, and information service organizations in Metro Vancouver. Further, the work can inform employment information provision across Canada. As African immigrants constitute an increasing number of migrants generally, agencies outside of Canada may also find results of this study beneficial to their practice. Knowledge of what information African immigrants seek, the information sources they wish to utilize, and how they navigate information in origin and destination countries can inform policy and decision making. In this regard, service providers can evaluate whether the perceptions of African immigrants towards their services are aligned with their assumptions of the information needs of African immigrants seeking employment. This can, in turn, inform policy and bring about modifications to information delivery practices. For governments, knowledge of the information situation of African immigrants with regards to their employment can inform decisions of what programs and services to provide funding for, as well as policy dimensions that may support better economic integration for African immigrants.

1.5 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. This introductory chapter (1) provides an overview of the motivation and focus of this research, as well as justification for the population of study and expected contributions of the research. Chapter 2 is a review of scholarship related to this research topic, including Library and Information Science (LIS) literature on the information behaviour of

immigrants during settlement and literature outside of LIS about immigrants and job seeking. The two theories that guided this research are also discussed. In chapter 3, I present the methodology adopted in this research. This includes my philosophical worldview, research approach, positionality and measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. I also discuss the data sources for the research, including the document analysis, semi-structured interviews and information world mapping. Thereafter I explain how data from both sources were analyzed, including the coding process.

Chapters 4-6 contain the results of the research. In chapter 4, I present participants' employment information behaviours. This includes the kinds of information that participants valued when seeking meaningful employment, their use of both purposeful and serendipitous information acquisition strategies as well as the information sources used for purposeful information acquisition. Chapter 5 combines results of the document analysis and interviews to demonstrate employment support available to immigrants and how participants engaged/failed to engage with these. Also included in this section is participant's suggestions for making information services more relevant to them.

Chapter 6 explores the relationship between immigrants' multifaceted identities, information and employment. Barriers to securing employment information, and perceptions of the Canadian employment information landscape are also presented, while the theories guiding the research are revisited in light of participants' experiences. Chapter 7 concludes the research. In this chapter I summarize the study, revisit the research questions and discuss the contributions and limitations of the study. I conclude the chapter with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The questions guiding this research centre around understanding the information-related experiences of African immigrants seeking to integrate into the Canadian workforce. My disciplinary perspective is Library and Information science (LIS), but these questions benefit from interdisciplinary research with immigrants. This chapter, therefore, reviews scholarship from LIS and non-LIS perspectives on the settlement of immigrants. To situate how immigrants seek employment information, the chapter also examines how immigrants seek information for their settlement generally as well as challenges inherent in the process. Moreover, theories and concepts that promote understanding of the employment seeking experiences of immigrants are also brought to bear and the population of study is introduced. Finally, the reviewed literature is revisited to foreground the research questions.

2.1 Library and Information Science Literature on the information behaviour of immigrants

Researchers in LIS have linked successful settlement and integration of newcomers to their ability to acquire relevant information (Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, & Qayyum, 2013; Khoir, Du, & Koronios, 2015). *Information* in this dissertation refers to a physical informational object such as a book, or the data that is communicated through an object, such as the content of a conversation or news story (Wilson, 1981). As people move to new countries with different information worlds, they need to adjust how they locate and use information to suit the new situation. In the following subsections I present the information needs of immigrants, their information sources, and the challenges they face when attempting to acquire information. Although the settlement process

comprises several important components, I emphasize employment information seeking which is the focus of this study.

2.1.1 Information needs of immigrants

As immigrants arrive in a new destination and attempt to settle and integrate into the social, economic and cultural fabric of a new country, different information needs arise. Successful settlement is predicated upon the satisfaction of those information needs (Shoham & Strauss, 2008). New immigrants need to learn the languages of the host country, understand the host country's culture, and find housing and employment (Caidi, Allard & Dechief, 2008; Shoham & Strauss, 2007; Su & Conaway, 1995). These needs are fairly consistent among immigrants (George, 2002). With regards to employment, information needs of immigrants revolve around requirements for practicing in their chosen careers and available job opportunities (Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016). It is believed that the satisfaction of information needs leads to greater ease integrating into the new society and labour force (Shoham & Strauss, 2008).

2.1.2 Immigrants information seeking and information sources

Information seeking is defined here as "the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal" (Wilson, 2000, p. 49). Several factors have been known to influence immigrants' information seeking, including context. Context is "the interrelated conditions in which information seeking activities take place and that play a role in motivating and shaping those activities" (Freund, 2015, p. 1594). The context within which people seek information can influence the success of their endeavours. For immigrants, being in a new context can challenge their prior information practices. For example, if immigrants previously relied on family and

friends as sources of information in their countries of origin, then their information sources may be reduced in their new country where they may have fewer social networks. In addition, they may be unfamiliar with their new physical environment. If people cannot find their way around a geographic location, then they may find it difficult to locate information (Lingel, 2011; Oh, Butler & Lee, 2014).

Furthermore, individual differences influence immigrants' information seeking. Individual differences in LIS literature have been conceptualized as demographic, cognitive, personality and affective variables (O'Brien, Dickinson, & Askin, 2017, p. 247). Demographic variables include people's socio-economic status, such as level of education and income; cognitive variables include people's learning abilities and cognitive styles; and personality and affective dimensions include personality types, interests, motivations, and mood (O'Brien, Dickinson & Askin, 2017). Immigrants are heterogeneous on many of these dimensions (Caidi & Allard, 2005). They possess different education and literacy levels and are of different ages. The implication is that information seeking may be influenced by these variables, which may also account for different levels of success in information seeking. Currently, little focus has been given to determining how such variables influence information seeking and settlement outcomes and, more specifically, employment information seeking for immigrants.

One important demographic factor that appears to influence information seeking and access to information is migration status. The status[3] of an immigrant may determine the level of settlement support and information for which they may be eligible (Caidi, Allard & Quirke, 2010). In Canada, for example, landed immigrants, people who have obtained permanent resident status but have yet

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[3] See page xviii for definitions of different migration statuses.

to become citizens (Government of Canada, 2018), have access to more information and support than do temporary residents, such as visitors and international students. The government of Canada provides funding for provinces and service provider organizations to help landed immigrants settle (Tilson, 2010). Such support includes help finding housing and employment and navigating the Canadian society. Temporary immigrants are not eligible for the majority of such supports.

Interpersonal sources such as family and friends have been found to be most immigrants' preferred information sources (Lingel, 2011; Caidi & Allard, 2005; Fisher et. al., 2004). Immigrants have described interpersonal sources as reliable, sometimes familiar, and easy to access and use (Fisher et al., 2004). Interpersonal sources serve as emotional support systems, information systems, and social networks. Shoham and Strauss (2008), for example, emphasized that having friends and family in a destination country helped immigrants find a sense of belonging.

2.1.3 Immigrants and barriers to information acquisition

Immigrants encounter many barriers as they attempt to obtain relevant information. The most frequently cited barriers are language and culture differences (Fisher et al., 2004; Quirke, 2011). If immigrants cannot read or understand the information being provided to them, then this information cannot be useful to them. Immigrants have also noted that obtaining translation and interpretation services are expensive, and some cannot afford such services (George et al., 2004). George and his colleagues suggested that information in various media be translated into various languages. While there is evidence that such translation practices exist, it is unclear how pervasive such services are, and it is not feasible to cover every immigrant's language. Cultural differences also impact immigrants' information seeking. As Caidi, Allard and Dechief (2008) reported, learning the culture of the host country ranked high on the priorities of immigrants seeking to integrate into a new country. Due to differences in cultural practices, immigrants may be unsure

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of what behaviour is acceptable or not and may therefore not pursue needed information for fear of behaving in an unacceptable way (Shoham & Strauss, 2007; Machet & Govender, 2012).

Other barriers include immigrants' lack of familiarity with information sources in a new country (Lingel, 2011; Machet & Govender, 2012; Shoham & Strauss, 2007; Su & Conaway, 1995). Some immigrants may not be familiar with available information organizations, perhaps because they have no such organizations in their places of origin and therefore do not anticipate the wide range of settlement resources and services that such institutions offer (Peterson, 2014). As such, they may be unsure of what services are available and how to access them. In addition, immigrants may be uncomfortable asking for help from the staff of such organizations, due to mistrust and unwillingness to be viewed as possessing inadequate skills (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Furthermore, immigrants may not seek information from institutions or people in authority for fear of exposing themselves or loved ones if they are in the country illegally for fear of deportation (Peterson, 2014). While some organizations have policies that promote service to people regardless of their immigration status (Vancouver Public Library [VPL], 2016), immigrants may not always be aware of or trusting of such policies for a variety of reasons.

Immigrants require a lot of information to settle into a new country. However, their attempts to obtain the required information are sometimes met with challenges (Caidi & Allard, 2005). LIS researchers have done valuable work in identifying the information needs of immigrants, their information sources, and barriers that challenge their access to information. However, there is a need to deepen scholarship in this area and these previous works have provided a valuable foundation for other researchers to build on. Understanding the interaction of factors that shape the information-seeking experiences of immigrants will be one such contribution to the scholarship on immigrants' information behaviour. Since immigrants and information service providers

operate in a complex space of information need and provision, a better understanding of the drivers of immigrants' information practices could improve the delivery of effective information services.

2.1.4 LIS stages of immigrant settlement

Researchers have noted that the settlement of newcomers happens in three stages: Initial or transitioning, intermediate or settling in, and final or being settled (Caidi, Allard & Quirke, 2010; George, 2004; Lloyd, Anne Kennan, Thompson & Qayyum, 2013; Mwarigha, 2002). These stages represent the movement of migrants from immigration through settlement (Van der Linden, Bartlett, & Beheshti, 2014).

The transitioning stage happens before migrants arrive in their destination countries. During this stage, migrants seek information about life in the new destination country, such as where to find food and housing upon arrival (Caidi & Allard, 2005). In the intermediate stage, migrants have arrived in the destination country and have satisfied some initial needs, such as finding housing and food. They then begin to navigate the systems and institutions in the new location. This could include accessing medical and legal services or gaining employment. In the final stage, immigrants attempt to participate equally in the economic, political and social spheres of the new country (George, 2004).

These settlement stages are iterative, and it is unclear how long each stage lasts (Khoir, Du & Koronios, 2015). The duration could vary by individuals (Sin, 2015), although Khoir, Du and Koronios (2015) suggest that immigrants who have spent less than five years in a location will have different information needs, adopt different information practices, and face different barriers than those who have stayed five years or more. Although these settlement models place finding employment in the second settlement phase, many immigrants continue to look for their desired job well beyond this point (Nekby, 2002). The current study will add to what we know about

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settlement stages by examining whether employment sits only in the intermediate stage, or if it cuts across stages. Such knowledge could support more targeted employment information services.

2.1.5 Employment information seeking

Extant literature on immigrants' information behaviour has improved our understanding of the information needs of immigrants and the information sources they consult. Although some literature exists on the general information seeking behaviour of immigrants, more research is still required to advance understanding of the specifics of information seeking and use among immigrants. In addition, employment often tops the list of immigrants' needs, and information is crucial to securing employment (Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016). While some research has examined how immigrants seek and use employment information, opportunities still abound for future research to contribute in this regard.

When people migrate to a new country, many necessarily give up their employment in hopes of securing better or similar jobs in the new country. Securing desired employment partially signifies successful settlement for immigrants (Creese, 2011) and any information that facilitates the attainment of those jobs is invaluable (Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016). To explore the kinds of employment-related information that immigrants seek, Rayes et al. (2016) conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 international medical graduates (IMG) in the USA and Canada. The researchers found that participants needed information about re-certification and licensing, career opportunities in the health sector, residency positions, research developments in the medical field, and information about jobs within the health sector while they were completing their re-certification. Some barriers that participants faced in their quest for employment information were lack of Canadian work experience, which employers consistently required (Buzdugan & Halli, 2009), and employment-related information illiteracy (Guerrero &

Rothstein, 2012; Shinnar, 2007). Information literacy is the ability to determine what information is needed, the best source to retrieve the information from, and how to evaluate and utilize the information obtained (Bawden, 2001). With regards to employment seeking, information literacy is the ability to identify needed information and to locate, evaluate and apply it effectively to obtain desired employment (Bruce, 1999). This could, for example, include knowledge of where to obtain information about employment in a specific sector.

2.2 Immigrants and job seeking

Earlier scholars have done important work related to immigrants and job seeking. These have created opportunities for future researchers to deepen their understanding of the dynamics of immigrants and employment. The current study builds on this prior research. This study contributes an information lens to our understanding of immigrants and employment by focusing on the role that information plays in helping immigrants secure desired employment. Below, I discuss employment information seeking, as well as barriers that threaten the ability of immigrants to secure meaningful employment.

2.2.1 Barriers to labour market integration of immigrants in Canada and around the world

Immigrants in Canada, like immigrants in other parts of the world, encounter challenges in their attempt to integrate into the labour market of their host country (Salaff, Greve, & Ping, 2002). In subsequent sub-sections I discuss some of the challenges and how they are connected to LIS.

2.2.1.1 Lack of recognition for foreign credentials and experience

Many skilled immigrants find that their foreign education, skills and work experience are not recognized in Canada. This often necessitates them to undergo a re-certification processes to obtain professional or trade licenses from Canadian institutions of learning to practice in Canada (Rayes,

Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016). The re-certification process could take anywhere from months to years depending on the nature of the work and the immigrant's personal circumstances, such as access to timely and relevant information and their ability to dedicate the time required to achieve re-certification (Shinnar, 2007). Immigrants often take up survival employment to support themselves and their families and sometimes work in more than one job (Subedi & Rosenberg, 2017), which leaves them little time to pursue re-certification in their desired profession. The financial cost, time and processes required for re-certification may force immigrants to abandon their dreams of practicing their professions in a new country. From their study of Chinese immigrants in Canada, Salaff, Greve, and Ping (2002) reported that immigrants who held various professional positions in China were prompted to become re-certified due to lack of recognition of their Chinese credentials. Older immigrants, in particular, found it difficult to go back to school. As a result, many professional immigrants left the workforce altogether.

2.2.1.2 Racial discrimination

While commenting on the job outlook of African immigrants in Canada, Tettey (2001) noted that the prospects of African immigrants in Canada to secure jobs commensurate with their qualifications was bleak due to racial stereotyping by Canadian employers. The prospect of growth within the organization for those who managed to secure any kind of job was equally dismal. Other researchers have also problematized racial stereotyping of applicants by employers (Cocchiara, Bell & Casper, 2016; McDonald & Kennedy, 2004; Salaff & Greve, 2003; Subedi &Rosenberg, 2017; Wilkinson, Bhattacharyya, Bucklaschuk, Shen, Chowdhury & Edkins, 2016). These recurring reports of discrimination in every day and work spheres point to a larger societal and systemic issue. Canada has national and provincial policies against workplace racial discrimination (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2001; Government of Canada, 2018; Government of

Quebec, 2006). In addition, the Canadian government has earmarked $23 million to support initiatives that contribute to combating racism, including a country-wide consultation to develop a national anti-racism approach (Colour of poverty-colour of change, 2019; Leblanc, 2018). However, plans are still in the preliminary stages which makes it unclear what strategies will be adopted or what results will be achieved.

It is noteworthy that some Canadian workplaces have policies that foster diversity and inclusion in their hiring practices (e.g., University of British Columbia [UBC], 2016) and are intolerant to discrimination of all kinds (e.g., Canadian Broadcasting Corporation [CBC], 2010). However, regardless of the policies, some organizations still engage in hiring practices that perpetuate otherness, the condition of being different (Zevallos, 2011) (see Creese 2011; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2017; Turchick Hakak, Holzinger, & Zikic, 2010, for example). Turchick Hakak, Holzinger, and Zikic's (2010) Latin American research participants held Master of Business Administration degrees from Canadian institutions of higher learning yet faced challenges in securing employment based on language, culture, and not being "Canadian."

2.2.1.3 Language and culture barrier

There is evidence of a positive correlation among fluency in a country's official language, an understanding of the culture (or assimilation into it), securing full-time employment and earning high wages (Arbel, Tobol, & Siniver, 2014; Bleakley & Chin, 2004; Siniver & Epstein, 2015). This means that immigrants who speak and understand the language of the host country and assimilate into the culture have a higher probability of securing full-time jobs and earning higher wages than those who do not. Yet, not all immigrants can attain this fluency and not at the same pace due to individual differences such as demographic factors.

2.2.1.4 Foreign accent discrimination

Speaking with a foreign accent can jeopardize peoples' chances of securing desired employment (Bagnall, 2012). In 2017, Timming examined the impact of five accents (Chinese, American, English, Mexican and Indian) on employability in the United States of America (USA). The findings demonstrated that employers actively discriminated against applicants with Chinese, Indian and Mexican accents in a telephone interview. These applicants generally fared worse in the employment process, especially for customer-facing positions, and were considered more for non-customer facing duties such as stocking grocery shelves (Creese, 2011). The British accented applicant fared similar to or better than the American applicant, despite the fact that the study took place in the USA. This further suggests that some non-American-English accents were more welcomed than others in employment decision-making.

African participants in Creese's (2011) study described accent discrimination as a strong barrier in the Metro Vancouver labour market. According to one of the interviewees, as soon as people heard an immigrant speak with an African accent, they stereotyped the immigrant as ignorant (Creese, 2011). Cocchiara, Bell and Casper (2016) also noted that employers viewed job applicants with a foreign accent negatively. They explained that when people with an accent apply for jobs, interviewers looked for reasons to disqualify those candidates or reasons to hire the applicant with the preferred accent or skin colour.

Securing a job is not the only case where a foreign accent poses an employment barrier. Day to day performance in the workplace and the prospect of advancement in the organization are also impacted. Describing the complex issue of accents in the workplace, Russo, Islam, and Koyuncu (2017) argued that hearing a foreign accent from a supervisee may lead managers to misunderstand communications from non-native speakers, which could lead them to judge such speakers as low

performers and adopt a more controlling supervision style towards them (Russo, Islam, & Koyuncu, 2017). Because outright discrimination based on skin colour could carry consequences, employers use accent as a covert parameter to discriminate against certain immigrant nationalities (Creese & Wiebe, 2012). One of the interviewees in Creese and Wiebe's (2012) study explained their ordeal of being denied an internal position at work based on their accent, but they perceived that the actual problem was that the company did not want a "Black" on the front line; they preferred her in the workroom at the back. This situation resonates with Hosoda and Stone-Romero's (2010) and Timming's (2017) positions that foreign-accented applicants are viewed less favourably for customer service positions and positions that have high communication demands. Foreign-accented speech is the bane of employment woes for many immigrants despite the skills they can contribute to the workplace. Integrating them into the labour market necessitates citizens of host countries recognizing that they can listen to the content of speech, rather than the accent of the speaker, because adults cannot completely discard an accent.

Many of these barriers, such as racial and foreign accent discrimination are beyond the control of immigrants. A different study will be required to highlight these practices and perhaps recommend strategies to alleviate their impact. However, having information about the persistence of such practices may better equip immigrants to approach the labour market, as will information about the need for re-certification due to non-recognition of foreign credentials, and the need for fluency in the host country's official language. Although the literature describes a wide range of discriminatory employment practices, far less is available specifically on information provision. My literature search so far has not found evidence of discriminatory provision of employment information to immigrants. What is prevalently reported is inadequate access to information that

immigrants face due to their immigration status and being in a new country with unfamiliar information landscape.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

As noted previously, immigrants and information service providers operate in a complex information space and will benefit from an examination of that space with different lenses. Below I discuss the concept of intersectionality and information poverty to help understand the position of immigrants seeking employment.

2.3.1 Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to how markers of difference such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, ability, and status intersect to inform individual realities and lived experiences (Hill-Collins, & Bilge, 2016; Mason, 2010). The concept of intersectionality was introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw to describe the double oppression of Black women who faced sexism and racism simultaneously (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Crenshaw, 2016). Crenshaw sought to demonstrate that the experiences of Black women were different from those of Black men and White women because Black women were discriminated for their race and gender (National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), 2018).

Intersectionality had roots in feminism (NAIS, 2018), but the concept has since been expanded to issues beyond gender (Chaze & George, 2013). Contemporary researchers use the term to refer to the multiple identities that individuals hold, and how they can experience benefits or discrimination based on any combination of their identity components (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). People tend to have multiple identities and loyalties such that it is over simplistic to define them by one parameter such as "African immigrant" (Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and

Service Agencies [AMSSA], 2017). For example, an African immigrant in Canada can be a female, single mother and student.

For the current study, the concept of intersectionality is employed to understand how the makeup of African immigrants' identities can impact their access to information and employment as well as its relationship with information poverty if experienced by this group. Moreover, when linked with LIS frameworks of immigrant settlement, intersectionality can deepen our understanding of how intersecting factors influence settlement stages. Employment, for example, has been identified as a need in the intermediate settlement stage. However, intersectionality reminds us that due to the possibility of holding multiple identities -- some of them disadvantaged -- employment may not occur in this stage for every immigrant.

2.3.2 Information poverty

Information poverty is a global phenomenon affecting many segments of societies, particularly those who are already facing other forms of inequality (Bruce, 2016; Clement & Shade, 2000). Immigrants are one such population who may be already marginalized and therefore at risk of experiencing information poverty. As Nwakanma (2017) summarized, access to information is the leveler of all inequalities, which implies that access to information can empower people to overcome obstacles, utilize opportunities available to them and generally improve their lives (Marcella & Chowdhury, 2018). Hence, it remains pertinent to attain "information inclusion" for everyone (Bruce, 2016).

2.3.2.1 Defining information poverty

Scholars have proffered various definitions of information poverty. Some of these definitions have tended to present information poverty as a problem of the economically and digitally

disadvantaged (Jaeger & Thompson, 2004; Chatman, 1985; Spink & Cole, 2001). That is, the digitally and economically poor are also information poor, because they cannot afford the education required to be information literate, nor can they afford ICTs required to access information in digital formats. This position could be due to the fact that participants in such studies have mostly included people in low-income categories (Chatman, 1999; Spink & Cole, 2001). This issue of sampling includes studies that have attempted to contradict the widely held notion that the economic poor are the information poor (Yu, 2010). However, while information and economic poverty do overlap, it cannot be overemphasized that economic poverty does not translate to information poverty in all cases (Hersberger, 2003). Hence, information poverty may not be exclusive to economically poor people (Goulding, 2001).

One definition of information poverty, which is close to the intention of this study, was provided by Britz's (2004): information poverty is "the situation in which individuals and communities, within a given context, do not have the requisite skills, abilities or material means to obtain efficient access to information, interpret it and apply it appropriately" (p.194). Britz relates information poverty to a causal relationship between economic status and access to information via modern information and communication technologies (ICTs); availability and suitability of information; and skills and abilities needed to harness information. Unlike other definitions that consider only one factor (e.g. economic or digital disadvantage), Britz's definition considers the skills and economic investment required to obtain information, as well as the content of the information.

To arrive at this definition, Britz delineated three approaches to information poverty:

- **Information connectivity approach:** This approach focuses on the lack of access to modern information and communication technologies (ICTs), premised on the assumption of a causal relationship between economic status and access to information via ICT.

- I**nformation content approach:** This approach attributes information poverty to the unavailability of quality information and deficient access. It considers information poverty in the light of information availability, affordability, and suitability.

- **Human approach**: This approach asserts that access to information alone is not sufficient, but that people must also be able to derive maximum benefit from the information. It relates this ability to skills and education needed to harness information.

African immigrants in Canada may have arrived directly from African countries where information infrastructures are less developed and less prevalent than in developed countries such as Canada (Britz, 2006). Information infrastructure here refers to systems for "communicating information" such as libraries, book publishers and mass media (Britz, 2004). Thus, African immigrants will need to learn skills to navigate this unfamiliar information infrastructure to enable them harness information effectively.

2.3.2.2 Why immigrants are at risk of information poverty

The information poor have been painted as: the economically poor who may not be able to afford requirements for information access (Kagan, 2000; Lloyd, Lipu & Kennan, 2010; Spink & Cole, 2001; Symonds, 2000); those with limited information literacy skills, which prevents them from obtaining required information (Kagan, 2000; Yu, 2010); people with limited access to technologies (Yu, 2010); the elderly, who may be limited by health and mobility issues (Jaeger & Thompson, 2004); people with limited language skills who cannot conduct the conversation

required to obtain information in person, or enough language abilities to search digital information systems; and people with limited education (Jaeger & Thompson, 2004).

Immigrants may very well fit the picture painted of the information poor. They arrive at different ages, including older adulthood. They also have varying levels of education, information, and digital literacy skills (Caidi, Allard, & Quirke, 2010). Consequently, some of them have low education and skills, while others arrive highly skilled and highly educated. While some immigrants arrive wealthy, others arrive without financial resources, especially those who had to flee their original countries of residence, due to such situations as war and conflict, thereby leaving their possessions behind. Moreover, they are in an unfamiliar environment, in which the best of information acquisition skills can be challenged due to unfamiliarity of systems, language, and cultural differences, and so on (Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, & Qayyum, 2013).

While it is overly simplistic to assume that all immigrants are information poor, it is equally overly simplistic to ignore the fact that immigrants are at risk of not having adequate information to facilitate successful settlement. They are in a new environment and may be faced with other challenges, such as financial and language competency constraints. Yet, studies that focus specifically on the relationship between information poverty and immigrants are limited. Information poverty in immigrant populations is often mentioned as a by-product of studies with a different or related focus, such as Kennan et al.'s (2011) study of how information literacy practices manifest in refugee settlement. They found that refugees faced an information disjuncture and required assistance to navigate the information landscape that they had arrived in, which was different from their previous information world.

As Clement and Shade (2000) argued, information inclusion for everyone who desires it requires deliberate measures. To advance conversations about the requirements for bringing equitable

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access to all, Clement and Shade proposed a model of access called the "Access Rainbow". The Access Rainbow has seven components, which include governance, literacy, service access provision, content, software tools, devices, and carriage facilities. These components describe the policies, content, physical devices, skills and organizations involved in creating access to information. However, Clement and Shade's propositions are linked to digital information, which, while widespread, is not the only form of information. Immigrants and most other people still navigate physical information spaces such as public libraries, which can be a difficult process for people unfamiliar with such system of organization and the physical space.

2.3.2.3 Information poverty framework

There are different frameworks of information poverty such as those developed by Chatman (1985; 1987; 1996; 1999). However, Britz's (2004) framework which he termed "important elements of information poverty" more closely captures the interests of this study. Britz states that information poverty is:

1) "related to the accessibility of relevant and suitable information

2) co-determined by the absence of a well-developed information infrastructure

3) closely linked to the level of literacy, particularly information literacy

4) co-determined by the attitude/approach towards information and the value that can be attributed to it

5) a global phenomenon but can also differ from one context to another

6) related to a lack of material means to access information, and

7) not only an economic occurrence but has an important bearing on the cultural and social spheres of society" (Britz, 2004 p. 194).

It can be argued that it is unhelpful to classify people as information rich and information poor, information haves and information have-nots, or other dichotomous descriptions of individuals or communities. Yet it is equally unhelpful to ignore the disparity in information access among individuals, communities, and nations. Doing so overlooks and continues to marginalize those who do not have optimal access to information (Clement & Shade, 2000). A more appropriate terminology for my interest would be information inequality (Yu, 2010), however, my literature search did not reveal any theory or framework for information inequality. Yet, because the current study is concerned with access to employment information, and existing research suggests inequitable access based on individual demographics, it is necessary to examine factors that influence access to information to which Britz's "important elements" of information poverty draw attention (p. 194).

Britz's elements highlight important determinants of information access such as context, material means to access information or the lack thereof, information literacy, individual agency in information access, and social and cultural dimensions. These elements also point to the concept of intersectionality by recognizing that many factors make up the identities of individuals and these can predispose them to information poverty or inequality.

2.4 Summary of the literature

There is a substantial body of literature on the settlement of immigrants in their new destinations. Some of these have focused on aspects of housing and labour market participation (D'Addario, Hiebert, & Sherrell, 2007; Suto, 2009), which are important determinants of successful settlement. LIS researchers have addressed the information needs and information practices of immigrants (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Khoir, Du & Koronios, 2015), with a focus on specific destination countries (Lingel, 2014; Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, and Qayyum, 2013) and source countries (Khoir, Du &

Koronios, 2015). Yet more work is required to bring a more comprehensive understanding of immigrant settlement from a LIS perspective because information plays a crucial role in settlement. Focusing on immigrants from Africa who have previously not been well understood (Creese, 2011; Owusu, 1997) is one such valuable contribution. An important work in this direction was done by Hakim-Silvio (2006). Hakim-Silvio examined the information behaviour of immigrant South Sudanese youth in Canada. Results of this study showed that the immigrant youth were largely unaware of where to obtain settlement information. Hakim-Silvio's study, however, focused on youth, which still leaves a gap about immigrant African adults who are more likely to be highly educated and experienced (Keung, 2018; Todd, 2018).

Studies in other disciplines that have investigated the settlement experiences of African immigrants have addressed issues of labour market marginalization and related employment challenges or housing discrimination (see Tettey & Puplampu, 2005; Creese, 2011). Such studies have found that African immigrants in Canada are largely unaware of available services and support (Garang, 2012). Most of these studies are concentrated in Toronto and Montreal (Creese, 2011; Mensah, 2002), while few have focused on Africans in Metro Vancouver (Creese & Weibi, 2012; Mensah & Adjigbolosoo, 1998; Adjigbolosoo & Mensah, 1998; Masinda & Ngene-Kambere, 2008). Given that Canada is receiving increasing numbers of African immigrants, most of whom settle in Metro Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2017), it is apt to explore the role of information in the settlement of adult African immigrants in this region.

Studies of immigrant labour market integration, in general, have mostly eluded to information seeking as a component of securing jobs; the few to have explicitly addressed that aspect have not focused on African immigrants (Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, and Sundin, 2016). Consequently, it is not well understood how African immigrants who settle in urban areas such as

Metro Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2007; 2017) seek employment and career information. Because language, culture, and infrastructure in African countries differ from those in Canada, studies of non-African immigrants to and from Canada may not be applicable to this population. Moreover, the ability to secure desired employment has been linked to successful settlement and a sense of belonging (Creese & Weibi, 2012), while the inability to secure meaningful employment has been said to breed a sense of alienation (Creese, 2011) and impact negatively on immigrants' health (Subedi & Rosenberg, 2017). As Canada continues to actively recruit skilled immigrants from Africa, it is imperative to examine how they seek employment-related information and barriers they encounter in the process. This will facilitate policy and practice recommendations to improve immigrant settlement for the mutual benefit of immigrants and Canada. The current study aims to bridge this gap.

The current study examines the role that information plays in helping African immigrants to Canada, and specifically Metro Vancouver, to secure meaningful employment. The study recognizes that immigrants possess diverse identities, some of which may serve to disadvantage them in the Canadian labour market. Accordingly, the study drew on the concepts of information poverty and intersectionality to elicit factors that define the employment-related information worlds of African immigrants in Canada. I seek to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What kinds of information do African immigrants value when seeking meaningful employment?

Research with immigrants with international medical qualifications seeking employment in Canada and the United States of America (USA) has suggested that they need information about available job opportunities, staying up to date with research developments in the medical field and becoming apprised of requirements for practicing in their chosen profession (Rayes, Martin-

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Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016). However, this research did not focus on African immigrants specifically and is also limited to immigrants seeking employment in the medical professions. It is unclear what kinds of employment-related information African immigrants require to participate optimally in the Canadian labour market and across multiple employment sectors and professions.

RQ2. How do African immigrants in Canada access employment information?

Much has been written about how immigrants seek information to settle in general. A major insight of such research is that social networks such as family and friends are preferred for information seeking (Caidi, Allard & Quirke, 2010). Research has also suggested that personal networks such as friends, family, and mentors play an important role in helping immigrants secure employment (Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016). Literature specific to employment information seeking of African immigrants is limited and, given that these immigrants may not have built social networks in their new country, it is important to examine what other information sources and strategies they defer to and potentially how information service providers can provide information in alignment with immigrants' preferences and information practices.

RQ3 What information services are available to support immigrant labour integration, how are African immigrants utilizing these and what opportunities are there to improve?

Many information services have been criticized for adopting a *one-size fits all* approach to serving clients (Garang, 2012). Immigrants are heterogeneous on many dimensions and each dimension of difference can impact their experience with receiving and incorporating information (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). While it may be impracticable to understand how each immigrant group will experience information, examining the growing population of African immigrants will be an

important addition to existing literature on successful settlement of immigrants, as well as to Canadian employment information service providers who hope to obtain a wider reach and enhance the effectiveness of their information services. Through this question, I hoped to learn more about service provision for African immigrants, and their awareness, use and perception of services, with the intention of informing service provision with the research outcomes.

RQ4 4. How do African immigrants' identities influence their experience of acquiring employment and information in Greater Vancouver?

This question aims to explore the place of intersectionality in the employment integration of African immigrants. Previous studies have found a relationship between identity and employment (Cocchiara, Bell & Casper, 2016; McDonald & Kennedy, 2004; Salaff & Greve, 2003; Subedi &Rosenberg, 2017). African immigrants hold multiple identities with respect to race, gender, professional and educational qualifications - all of which have the capacity to shape their employment experiences (Tettey, 2001). Moreover, the multifaceted identities of African immigrants could potentially influence their access to information required to secure meaningful employment. By exploring the relationships between identity and employment information seeking, I hope to uncover if and how identity has influenced participants' access to employment information and jobs with the goal of making recommendations to better support this population.

Having delineated the research questions of interest to this study, in the following section I discuss the research methods that informed the research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

I commence this chapter with a discussion of the research approach used in the study, before moving into the philosophical worldview that guided the research. Subsequently, I address the sampling procedures, research site, specific methods for data collection and analysis, as well as a discussion of ethical considerations. Then I discuss data collection methods for the information service and information world studies, present the profile of interviewees and conclude the section with a summary.

3.1 Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology to explore and better understand how intersecting factors shape the employment information worlds and experiences of African immigrants in Metro Vancouver. As an approach that seeks to understand people in their natural environments (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), qualitative research is useful for gaining a deeper and more detailed knowledge of a phenomenon (Richard & Morse, 2007), especially when the group of interest or phenomenon has not been adequately represented in research (Creswell, 2014; Morse, 1991). As I have noted in previous sections, the employment information behaviour of African immigrants in Canada is inadequately explored and poorly understood, which made qualitative research appropriate for this study. Qualitative research helps to explore and understand phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing it, rather than the researcher's perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Walker, 1987). It was believed that by hearing from the immigrants directly, the characteristics of their employment information behaviour would become clearer.

Qualitative research seeks to understand and explain the experiences of particular people, without necessarily intending to generalize findings to other groups (Creswell, 2014). Results of this study are expected to lead to a better understanding of the information behaviour of African immigrants seeking employment in Metro Vancouver, for the overall purpose of providing more targeted information services for them. However, the findings may also indirectly improve understanding of the information behaviour of African immigrants seeking employment in other parts of Canada, as well as that of other immigrant groups seeking equitable employment in Metro Vancouver and other Canadian cities.

3.1.1 Philosophical worldview

This study adopted a constructivist tradition as a "philosophical worldview" (Creswell, 2014; Dewey, 1963). A worldview is a researcher's belief about the world that guides their inquiry (Creswell, 1998; Guba, 1990). Constructivism believes that human beings seek to understand their work and everyday lives (Creswell, 2014) and they attribute diverse meanings to their lived experiences (Flick, 2007). As with other researchers who align with constructivism, I sought to use open-ended questions to allow individuals to construct and articulate the meaning of a situation (Flick, 2007) and to understand and interpret the meanings that individuals ascribe to events (Burr, 2015; Creswell, 2014; Flick 2007). My aim was not to impose meanings on participants, but to allow them, through interactions with others and the interplay of the individual identities, historical and cultural norms that shape their lives, to construct meaning through discussions with me, the researcher (Burr, 2015; Bryman, 2012), while I positioned myself to acknowledge how these factors influence their interpretation (Creswell, 2014).

3.1.2 Positionality

I am a Black African woman who arrived in Canada as an international student. Since my arrival, I have obtained Canadian graduate education and work experience, and engaged with immigrant serving organizations for both personal and work purposes. Africa comprises 54 countries which share similarities and differences. I come from an African country where information seeking and sharing for employment and everyday life is largely oral. Therefore, I expected that interviewees in this study would prefer to seek information from other people such as friends and family upon arrival in Canada. However, with potentially fewer social networks than they had pre-migration, I anticipated that participants may find it challenging to obtain information through this means. Moreover, while many African nations are aspiring and implementing initiatives to participate equitably in the global information economy (Britz & Holmer, 2013), internet technology remains less widespread in African countries than it is in developed nations such as Canada (Ponelis & Holmner, 2015). This left me wondering how African immigrants effectively made the transition to the more digital information space of Canada to obtain employment information while possibly not having family and friends around. My second research question followed from this line of thought, to understand the strategies that immigrants employ to navigate their new employment information world.

I anticipated that some immigrants would find services intended to help them frustrating, inaccessible and unhelpful. From my experience helping a family member seek employment information at an immigrant serving organization in Vancouver Canada, I came face to face with the one-size fits all approach to serving immigrants that participants in Garang's (2012) study described in Manitoba. Despite having a university degree and communicating fluently in English, my family member was required to take Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

courses as a prerequisite for receiving other services. LINC provides instruction in basic and intermediate level English for adult immigrants to Canada (IssofBC, 2016). Taking this course was intended to help the organization determine my family member's English language proficiency. The organization did not consider that my family member obtained a university degree in English and was from an English-speaking country. My family member declined the services in frustration, citing that his English language skills were sufficient for the Canadian environment and workplaces. Other immigrants, such as an Iranian couple whom I met in Vancouver recently, shared similar experiences. One held a Ph.D. but was working in a job that did not require his qualifications at the time and hoped that I could provide helpful direction having lived in Canada longer than they had. Based on my experiences, I hold the view that immigrants are made to follow a similar settlement process despite the diversity of their skills, experiences and situations. This is why I am using the concept of intersectionality to elicit how the employment information worlds of immigrants are shaped by their identities. Hopefully, such findings will help service providers tailor service provision to better meet the needs of their diverse clients.

Having been in Canada for a while, some newer immigrants rely on me as an intermediary for their settlement and employment information seeking. Looking for information on behalf of such immigrants has exposed me to different kinds of employment information services. From my experience with such services, I believe that they are well-intentioned and that service providers are doing their best. However, I also believe that the service providers could benefit from external input to support their in-house assessment of their services. For example, a representative from an immigrant-serving organization told me that another friend of mine (for whom I was seeking information) did not need a Canadian qualification to get a job in Canada; this is true but mostly for survival jobs, which the representative neglected to mention. Such partial information leads

immigrants to expect jobs that they may not secure for a long time. My friend has since returned to school to obtain a Canadian qualification, a familiar experience for many immigrants wishing to return to jobs similar to ones they held pre-migration. I have observed from some of the immigrants I have met that gaining a survival job does not appear to be a problem, but securing jobs equivalent to immigrants' education, skills, and work experience is.

There are agencies that specifically support employment integration for citizens and immigrants. In August 2018, I met with a staff from an immigrant service organization. During our conversation, I learned of the important support being provided to immigrants to secure jobs. Such support includes free credential evaluation, which is otherwise expensive. A more intriguing part of my conversation with the staff was that a caseworker at this organization is assigned to look at an immigrants' individual circumstance and help them chart a course for their career. I was excited to hear this because this service seemed to recognize the diversity of immigrants. The caseworkers further assisted immigrants to establish the requirements to reach those goals, and secure employment to support themselves until they reached their desired goal. To my disappointment however, most of the jobs secured for immigrants through this process were still survival jobs, and when immigrants work more than 20 hours a week, they are considered to be employed full time and therefore ineligible to receive further support. In Greater Vancouver, the cost of living is high and immigrants, especially those with families, need to work more than 20 hours a week to pay bills successfully.

If available support, which is well-intentioned, cannot take immigrants to their desired career destinations, how then do immigrants navigate the Canadian job market to propel themselves to meaningful jobs? These experiences aroused my interest in this topic and shaped my research

questions regarding the kinds of employment information that immigrants need, where and how they get them, and how agencies can more effectively support immigrants.

I hope that my personal experiences and engagement with the literature will lead to the collection of rich data (Weinreb, Sana, & Stecklov, 2018), although my background has presupposed some of my expectations for conducting the research. As I hear from participants about how they navigate this social and economic space, I will be able to contribute to shaping information service provision for African immigrants seeking fulfilling employment in Canada. Yet, having prior knowledge and being part of a community that one is researching can introduce bias in the research (Batsida, 2010). In the "trustworthiness" section, I have outlined measures that I took to ensure rigour in this research and mitigate bias.

3.1.3 Trustworthiness in qualitative research

Trustworthiness, also known as the rigour of the study (Connell, 2017), is the measure of confidence in the methods of data collection, the data collected, and the interpretation provided by the researcher (Pilot & Beck, 2014). Generally, trustworthiness refers to how quality is ensured in qualitative research. Due to the subjective nature of qualitative research (Connelly, 2016), trustworthiness is critical to the utility and integrity of the findings (Cope, 2014).

Researchers have proposed diverse methods to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative research. Those proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are the most closely related to the purpose of this study. According to Lincoln and Guba, ascertaining trustworthiness of qualitative research involves the determination of the following:

1) **Credibility** (internal validity) which refers to the truth of the stories told by the participants, and the researcher's interpretation of participants' lived experiences (Cope,

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2014; Shenton, 2014). Credibility is enhanced when the researcher describes their positionality (Connelly, 2016), and conducts member checks to ascertain that they are accurately representing the views of participants.

2) **Transferability** refers to the possibility of transferring findings to other settings or groups; that is, if people with similar characteristics as the research participants can relate to the findings (Cope, 2014). Enhancing transferability involves describing the research process in detail. Qualitative studies are often not intended to be generalizable but should be replicable with similar participants following the same procedures. This is the interest of transferability (Cope, 2014).

3) **Confirmability** is the ability of the researcher to demonstrate that the data collected represents the views of the participants, and not their own (Kornbluh, 2015; Pilot & Beck, 2012; Shenton, 2004). Providing adequate information about the research participants, while also protecting their identity, improves confirmability. In addition, providing rich quotes from participants can support that views presented belong to them. Member checking also helps to ensure that the researcher has accurately represented participants' stories.

4) **Authenticity** refers to how researchers demonstrate a range of realities and realistically convey participants' experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Pilot & Beck, 2014). Selecting appropriate participants and providing a rich and detailed description of phenomena can enhance authenticity (Schou, Hostrup, Lyngso, Larsen & Poulsen, 2011).

For this study, a number of methods were used to ensure trustworthiness. Member checking (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) was one such method. Member checks involve the researcher confirming with research participant(s) that the researcher has captured their intended meaning

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(Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This can be done during and immediately after the interview by the researcher summarizing the interview content to the interviewee and obtaining their confirmation. Member checks can also be done well beyond the interview time, such as by sharing transcribed data with participants to confirm the accuracy of representations of their views (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For the current study, I conducted member checking during the interviews by seeking clarifications from participants for any response that I felt I did not understand. For example, when a participant referred to networking as a way of getting employment information, I was uncertain about the kind of networking that was being referred to. I therefore asked clarifying questions, and the participant elaborated that they were referring to online forums and social networks. I also invited participants to contact me should they desire to review their responses. Some participants contacted me afterwards to further clarify some responses and indicate portions they wanted to be anonymous, such as institution or individual names. This process helped me to obtain an accurate understanding of participants' lived experiences from the beginning, and also provided participants an opportunity to retract statements they were uncomfortable sharing.

To further ensure trustworthiness, I acknowledged and discussed my positionality upfront (Connelly, 2016) with participants and in the preceding section. As well, I provided a detailed description of the research process and developed eligibility criteria to elicit a range of lived experiences of the phenomenon under study to enhance the study's authenticity (Schou et al., 2011), for example, age, gender and immigration status. Further, I included detailed descriptions of research participants, such as their demographics, without compromising their identities, and supported the presentation of the findings with rich and relevant quotes (Creswell, 2014).

3.1.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

The current study is confidential but not anonymous. Anonymity refers to the state of being unknown, while confidentiality relates to discretion in keeping received information (Novak, 2014), mostly on the part of the researcher. As anonymity was impossible due to the nature of face-to-face interviews, I maintained confidentiality of information shared with me as part of the research. I refrained from discussing the results of the interview in any way that identified the participants.

3.1.5 Ethical review and informed consent

Ethics approval was obtained for the semi-structured interviews from the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Participants signed an informed consent form prior to participating in the study. Scholars who write about informed consent argue that consent must be free and given from a position of adequate understanding of the research requirements (Bryman, 2012). This argument suggests that informed consent involves providing research participants with relevant information about the research that is understandable to them (Banks et al., 2013) so that they can decide whether to participate or not. Accordingly, I developed an informed consent form (Appendix A) for the study. When I had confirmed that interested people met the eligibility criteria to participate in the study, I gave them the informed consent form so they could review it and decide whether they still wanted to participate or not. At the time of the interviews, I explained the content of the informed consent form, confirmed with participants that they understood the content, answered any questions they had, and gave them time to sign before we commenced the interview. Participants were offered honorarium in the form of $20 CAD gift cards to thank them for their time and contributions.

3.1.6 Research design

This research comprised two studies that informed and enriched each other: The Information Services Study and the Information Worlds Study. Each study is described in more detail in the succeeding sections. The research commenced with the information services study. Through this study, I became acquainted with available employment support for immigrants. This information was valuable during the interviews as it made me familiar with services that participants mentioned when I asked them about their awareness and use of services. Having this prior knowledge helped to triangulate data, improved my understanding of participants' stories and my ability to prompt them appropriately to obtain a more detailed description of their experiences. The information worlds study enriched the analysis of the information services study by helping me to understand participants' experiences of accessing available support, as well as identify gaps in supports.

3.2 Information Services Study

The information services study comprised an analysis of websites and documents of settlement provider organizations. The goal was to ascertain the types of employment support being provided to immigrants and provide preliminary information that would inform the information service portion of the interviews, thereby leading to a rich picture of available employment support, how the supports are serving African immigrants, what gaps there are (if any), and what opportunities there are to improve. The information services study provided answers to a portion of research question 3.

Documents are often used as secondary sources of data for research. They are heterogeneous data sources that have not been produced specifically for the particular research or at the request of the researcher (Bryman, 2012). As with other research methods, document analysis has benefits and

drawbacks. Since documents are already written, the researcher saves time and cost associated with transcribing other types of qualitative data, such as interviews. In addition, documents illuminate the phenomenon of interest without requiring an additional time commitment from research participants. On the other hand, documents may be difficult to interpret since the researcher was not part of their creation. Moreover, researchers must actively locate the documents, which may represent an incomplete corpus (Creswell, 2014). Despite these limitations, documents are convenient to use and can be evaluated with existing criteria to determine their authenticity and accuracy.

For the current study, documents included data from websites of immigrant-serving organizations in Metro Vancouver that were related to employment support for immigrants. Metro Vancouver comprises 21 municipalities, one electoral area and one treaty First Nation that work together to plan and deliver services (Metro Vancouver, 2018). African immigrants reside mostly in the major cities in Canadian provinces (Statistics Canada, 2007; 2019); therefore, I chose to focus data collection on five major cities from within Metro Vancouver: Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby, Richmond and Coquitlam. These cities have the highest number of immigrants in their populations (NewtoBC, 2018).

3.2.1 Selection of organizations

I considered different strategies to obtain a list that represented most of the immigrant employment service providers in these five cities. Two databases appeared most relevant. First was the database of free settlement and employment services provided by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). I accessed the database through the "WelcomeBC" website. WelcomeBC is the government of British Columbia's page for prospective and current immigrants to BC. It provides immigration and settlement information, including information on federal and provincial

immigration programs, settlement services and employment in the province. From this page, I was redirected to the IRCC database of settlement services in Canadian provinces. One can search for organizations on the IRCC database by city name or postal code and then apply filters (Figure 1).

Figure 1:IRCC Database Homepage

The filter relevant to the current research was "help finding job". My preliminary search using this filter returned 388 results for free employment services. The number of search results did not change when I attempted to search within these results for the five cities of interest. For example, when I typed in a postal code in Vancouver, or the name "Vancouver," the results spanned the entire City of Vancouver, and beyond, including the cities of New Westminster, other Metro Vancouver cities, Maple Ridge, Northern BC and Vancouver Island. When I searched with a postal code in Surrey, I received the same results as when I searched with a City of Vancouver postal code. While all the returned services were relevant, there was no way to limit results to the specific cities of interest. Therefore, I did not use this database.

Through further exploration, I found a second and more relevant source to locate organizations, the NewToBC website. NewToBC is an organization that partners with libraries and immigrant service providers to provide support for immigrant settlement across BC. I became acquainted with

NewToBC through its Library Champions Program. The Library Champions program is a 3-month volunteer program that enables Canadian permanent residents and refugees to gain local work experience, learn about local library and settlement resources, and promote the program to other newcomers in their circles to facilitate their settlement. NewToBC hosts and maintains a database of settlement services in the province. Through the NewToBC website, I selected organizations from the five cities of interest: Coquitlam, Burnaby, Surrey, Richmond and Vancouver. Navigating through the "Immigrant Settlement Information" tab on the website, I arrived at the "Immigrant and Refugee Programs and Services" page. Here I could search for organizations by city and then filter results by one of seven services: employment services, English language services, settlement services, children's services (ages 0-12), seniors' services, teen and youth services (ages 13-30), and Refugee services (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Screenshot of the 7 services and my selection of employment services for city of Burnaby

From this list, I selected "employment services" according to the interest of this study. I then searched the database for employment services in all 5 cities of interest. I searched for each city independently as the database did not permit searching all five cities at the same time. Several results were returned, and I confirmed that the results did not go beyond the city I searched for. This search resulted in a total of 129 services being offered by 51 organizations. Figure 3 shows a breakdown of services and organizations by city. By "organization" I am referring to agencies that offer services. All the organizations offered more than one service. By "service" I refer to the specific support that organizations offer, for example, resume and cover letter creation workshops. Surrey had the most employment services while Vancouver had the most employment organizations.

Organizations and services by city

Burnaby: Organizations 7, Services 16
Coquitlam: Organizations 5, Services 11
Richmond: Organizations 6, Services 11
Surrey: Organizations 13, Services 47
Vancouver: Organizations 20, Services 44

■ Organizations ■ Services
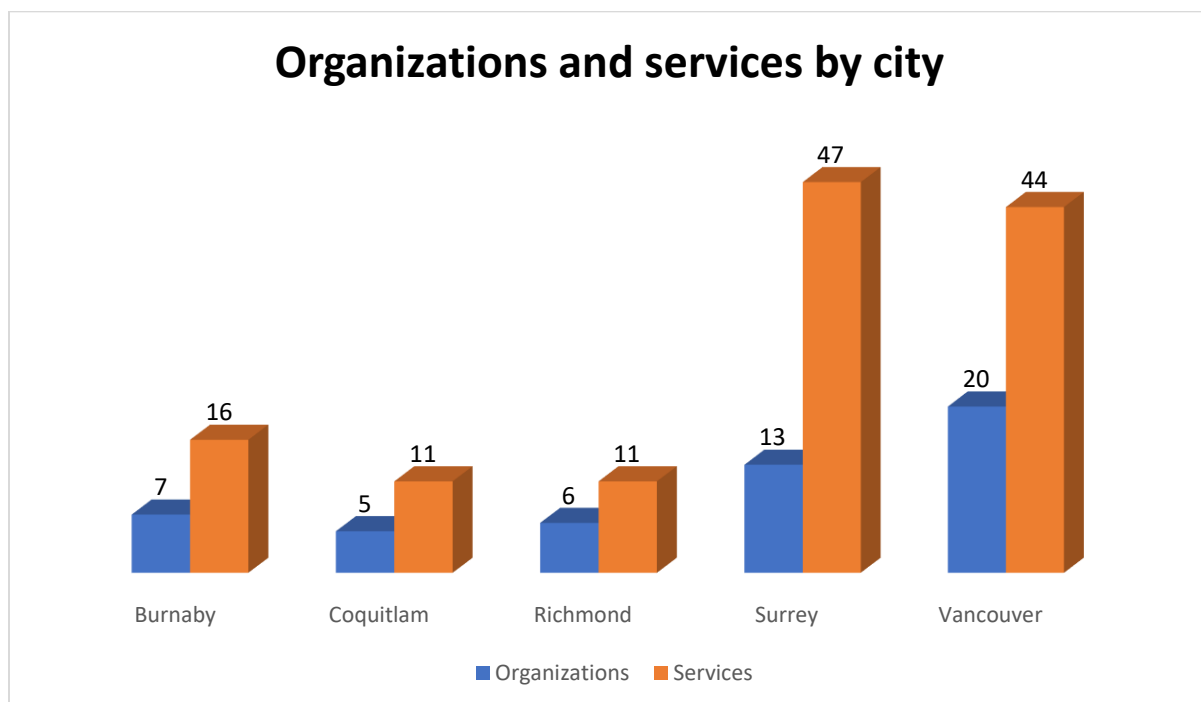
Figure 3: Organizations and services offered by city

The aggregate number of organizations (51) and services (129) contained duplicates, i.e., some organizations have locations in more than one city, and, in each city, such organizations offer similar services. To remove these duplicates, I explored the websites of the 51 organizations in-depth to determine if they had locations in the five selected cities. I then selected only one location for duplicate organizations based on the location with the most services. This was to ensure that I captured all the services offered in the locations that I did not select. This reduced the list to 30 organizations and 96 services in total.

As I explored the NewToBC database to find the organizations and services, I encountered some situations that raised questions for me. These are summarized in Table 1:

Observation/ situation	Questions
Some organizations offer more services than those listed on the NewToBC database	▪ Limit my analysis to the referenced service or explore other relevant offerings of such organizations? E.g. Richmond Public Library.
Although most of the links led to the described services, some links to services described were dead, while other links led to services other than the ones described in the database.	▪ Remove services with dead or incorrect links or find updated links. ▪ What would an immigrant seeking employment information do?
Some organizations that provide employment information and support were missing from the database.	▪ Should I include known organizations that were not on the list? E.g. Welcome BC

	• Is there a comprehensive and easy to use database of employment support that immigrants can rely on?

Table 1: Observations and questions from database use

I decided to explore all the employment offerings of the listed organizations since I was interested in the range of employment support being offered to immigrants. I hoped that this would increase the accuracy and richness of the data collected. I also sought correct links in cases where the listed links were dead or incorrect. Finally, I decided not to include known organizations that were missing from the list. While including such would have provided more relevant information for immigrants and other people that will engage with the current research, it would however have jeopardized the transferability of this research.

3.2.2 Approach to data analysis

I used qualitative content analysis to analyze web content that resulted from the search. Qualitative content analysis entails searching for and describing topics evident in content of communications that are relevant to the research agenda. Content analysis is valuable for analyzing texts and generating themes (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008; Schreier, 2014). Given the need to provide a rich picture of employment support available to newcomers, it was more feasible to focus on fewer organizations and analyze their employment offerings in depth than to provide a cross section of services with little detail. As such, I sampled from the 30 organizations using the following steps and criteria:

Step 1*:* I categorized the organizations according to similarities in the type and nature of the employment services they provide (Table 2). To create the categories, I examined characteristics

of the organizations, e.g., "public libraries" or geography, e.g., city name. For each category, I listed the number of services associated with them.

Category	Number of Services
1. Public Libraries	
Vancouver Public Library	2
Burnaby Public Library	3
Richmond Public Library	1
2. Faith Associations	
YMCA	1
YWCA	2
Jewish Family Services	3
3. Educational Institutions	
Sternberg College	1
Douglas College	2
4. City Specific	
South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (Vancouver)	1
Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House (Vancouver)	2
Little Mountain Neighbourhood House (Vancouver)	3
Kiwassa Neighboutrhood House (Vancouver)	4
Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House (Vancouver)	5
Collingwood Neighbourhood House (Vancouver)	6
Options Community Services Society (Surrey)	7

Diverscity Community Resources Society (Surrey)	8
Richmond Multicultural Community Society (Richmond)	9
5. General employment support	
GT Hiring solutions	1
Sources Community Resources Society	2
Family services of Greater Vancouver	3
Open Door Social Services Society	4
6. Employment support in French	
BC Francophone Immigration Program / Programme d'immigration francophone de la Colombie-Britannique	1
7. General immigrant service providers	
MOSAIC	1
Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC)	2
Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC)	3
SUCCESS	4
Back in motion	5
Pacific Community Resources Society (PCRS)	6
Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS)	7
Pacific Immigrant Resources Society (PIRS)	8

Table 2: Categorization of services

Step 2: Some categories were not mutually exclusive. For organizations that fell into more than one category, I placed them into the category where they appeared to have the most impact based

on the services offered. For example, I have a category for "public libraries," and another for city specific services. Public libraries are city specific, yet I wanted to tease out the offerings of public libraries separately because they are similar in their funding, mandate, and possibly collections and services, although these may vary based on the demographics of the cities where they are located. Neighbourhood Houses[4] are city specific and yet some Neighbourhood Houses also only offer Work BC services, which is another category on my list. I placed these under city specific because Vancouver is the only city of the five that has Neighbourhood Houses. If I placed Neighbourhood Houses under "WorkBC locations," there is the possibility that none of them may be selected for analysis based on the sampling criteria in step 3.

Step 3*:* Next, I applied purposive (criterion) sampling to select organizations from each category. The criteria were as follows:

- Organizations selected must offer employment services to immigrants exclusively or as part of their general employment support. In essence, the organization must not offer general employment services only.

- There must be one organization per category. Except for the category that provides general employment support that is not tailored to newcomers and immigrants. This is because they do not meet one of the selection criteria, which is that organizations selected must offer services to new Canadians exclusively or in addition to other general employment services.

- Avoid overlaps as much as possible when selecting organizations that are in different categories but offer similar services. For example, Kiwassa Neighbourhood House is

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[4] A Neighbourhood House is a place where people come together to connect, learn, share and participate in their community through various activities (ANHBC, 2015).

categorized under city specific, but it offers WorkBC services which are duplicated by other organizations.

- Give higher preference to organizations that offered more employment support to newcomers than general employment support. This was because they may have more targeted support for immigrants which I would like to explore.

- Select any organization that is alone in its category or subcategory because it may have unique employment supports that are worth exploring.

Some organizations serve as venues for WorkBC services only. I explored them all, but they did not offer immigrant specific employment services. Some of them such as Open Door Social Services Society offer employment services for people with disabilities or substance use and mental health issues, while other organizations, such as Sources Community Resources Society, offered services for youth, women and survivors of violence. While newcomers may fall into any of these categories, my criterion was that the organization must offer employment support to immigrants whether it also offers the same services to the general public or not. Moreover, excluding this group was not a limitation because other organizations included also served as WorkBC centres and offered similar services. Therefore, I did not select any organization from the category that served as venues for WorkBC services only.

Eight organizations were selected following the sampling criteria. These organizations offer services to newcomers. While some exclusively serve newcomers, others offer services to both newcomers and Canadian born. The organizations are:

- The Skilled Immigrant Info Centre (SIIC) at the Vancouver Public Library
- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House

- Douglas College

- BC Francophone Immigration Program / Programme d'immigration francophone de la Colombie-Britannique

- Jewish Family Services

- Richmond Multicultural Community Services

- Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBS) and

- DiverseCity Community Resources Society

Some organizations were city specific. They were based in specific cities and had no branches in other cities. Neighbourhood Houses in Vancouver are a good example as they are specific to Vancouver. Throughout my search for organizations, I excluded other settlement support for newcomers that was not employment related due to the scope of the current study.

3.2.3 Coding procedures

I explored the websites of selected organizations. On the websites, I visited the tabs that contained employment related information to glean information about their employment supports. For organizations that also offered settlement programs, I visited their settlement tab as well in case some employment services were listed there. However, I excluded general settlement support and focused only on employment support. Through this process, I got a good sense of the services offered as well as similarities and differences among the offerings of the eight organizations. I also started to see potential codes and made note of them. I summarized the employment offerings of the organizations into codes such as orientation, mentoring, workshops and entrepreneurship. I then commenced the initial coding where I wrote down all the codes I developed in my initial exploration of the organizations' websites on sticky notes. Sixty-nine initial codes emerged (Appendix B). I went back to the websites concurrently while reviewing and defining the codes.

Figure 1 shows the 69 initial codes laid out on a table from where I started to categorize them into themes.

Figure 4: Sixty-nine initial codes

Having laid out all 69 codes in a way that I could see them clearly, I started a more focused coding to group these initial codes into categories by similarity. I then named these categories according to what theme was apparent. Nine themes emerged. Thereafter I sorted the codes and themes and placed each theme with its corresponding codes which were on post it notes into zip lock bags (Figure 5). There were 9 zip lock bags representing the 9 themes: Barrier-targeted employment support, self-employment, experiential job search help, programs for employers, customized employment support, workplace preparation supports and trainings, resource-based job search help, financing, activity-based job search help (See Table 16 for a more detailed description of the themes).

Figure 5:Themes with corresponding codes in zip lock bags

3.3 The Information Worlds Study

The goal of the information worlds study was to elicit information directly from participants about their information requirements when seeking employment, how they obtain such information, how existing employment support served them, and the role of identity in their employment search. Semi-structured interview questions allowed participants to verbally discuss their employment information worlds in response to prompts from the researcher. Twenty-five African immigrants were interviewed. The interviews also comprised an information world mapping session that both served as an ice breaker and provided participants with an additional way to share their experiences. I intended to find out how participants sought employment information, how they

unpacked barriers and challenges encountered if any, and if participants will list or draw some of the services and sources identified from the document analysis. This was to gauge their awareness, use, and perception of services and sources. Drawing the maps also gave participants an opportunity to express their views in different ways, and data from the Information World Maps were used to triangulate the interview data. I used qualitative content analysis to summarize the Information World Maps (Greyson, O'Brien & Shankar, 2018) and related the results to data resulting from the interviews to both triangulate and give more meaning to the interviews.

3.3.1 Description of the population

African immigrants are younger than the Canadian population on average and more likely to be of working age (25-44 years) (Statistics Canada, 2007). The majority of African immigrants also are highly educated and speak English or French, which are Canada's official languages (Creese, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2007). Due to the nature of Canada's economic immigration programs which focus on young, highly educated immigrants who speak at least one of Canada's official languages (Government of Canada, 2017), African immigrants are being increasingly represented in the Canadian population. As of 2016, Africa was the second largest contributor to Canadian immigration (Statistics Canada, 2017). This trend may continue for as long as Canada is set to recruit skilled immigrants. For the current study, the population included all African immigrants in Metro Vancouver.

3.3.2 Sampling

Sampling for this study was done using general purposive sampling (Bryman, 2012). General purposive sampling encompasses characteristics of purposive sampling, which includes the deliberate selection of participants based on the qualities they possess that will help to answer the

questions of interest to the study (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). I kept the research goals in mind as I strategically recruited research participants (Creswell, 2014). Since purposive sampling is neither random nor convenient (Bryman, 2012), I needed to have clear inclusion and exclusion criteria *a priori* (Hood, 2007). I tried to obtain diversity and variety in my sample, even though I knew the findings may not be generalizable to other populations (Bryman, 2012). Therefore I adopted the following purposive sampling strategies: criterion sampling, which involved using inclusion and exclusion criteria to determine participant eligibility (Table 3); opportunistic sampling, which capitalized on opportunities to collect data from individuals who met the set criteria with whom I had unplanned contact; and snowball sampling in which my participants suggested other eligible participants (Bryman, 2012).

Since African immigrants, like some other immigrants, are a difficult population to access for service provision or research participation (Creese, 2011; Kumaran & Salt, 2011; Williment, 2009), opportunistic and snowball techniques helped to reach eligible people who were previously unknown to the researcher. Specifically, I recruited African immigrants who had arrived in Canada in the past fifteen years as immigrants only become fully settled between 15- and 25-years post arrival (Nekby, 2002). The study included African immigrants who arrived under different immigration streams to garner a diversity of skills and experiences that might influence employment information seeking.

Factor	Included	Excluded
Race/ethnicity	Black Africans	All others
Length of stay in Canada	0-15 years	16 years and beyond
Location in British Columbia	Living in Metro Vancouver	Other areas in BC and Canada

Immigration stream	Economic class (Skilled immigrants, Canadian experience class, skilled trades category), family class, humanitarian immigrants.	Temporary workers, current international students.
Immigration status	Citizens, permanent residents, temporary residents, refugees, undocumented immigrants.	None
Language proficiency	English Language	Non-English speakers
Education	Any	None
Occupation	Any	None
Age	18-64	0-17; 65 and above
Gender	All	None

Table 3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the study sample

3.3.3 Research site

Most immigrants to Canada from 2011 to 2016 settled in four Canadian provinces: Ontario (39.0%), Quebec (17.8%), Alberta (17.1%) and British Columbia (14.5%). Many immigrants who settled in British Columbia were concentrated in Metro Vancouver[5] (Statistics Canada, 2017), hence, the choice of Metro Vancouver as the study location.

3.3.4 Participant recruitment

I created an invitation letter (Appendix C) and an advertisement flyer (Appendix D) that identified me as the primary investigator and explained my affiliation with UBC. The letter provided

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[5] Metro Vancouver is also known as Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) (Canada Legal, 2004; Metrotown, 2018). Metro Vancouver is a "federation of 21 municipalities, one electoral area and one treaty first nation" that collaborate on service planning and delivery (Metro Vancouver, 2018). GVRD has a land area of 2,882.68 square kilometres, and a population of 2, 463,431 in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2017).

information necessary about the study for potential participants to make a decision. I continued to recruit research participants until I achieved saturation in the data (Bryman, 2012), taking guidance from similar studies that achieved saturation after interviewing 20- 40 participants (see Addison, 2017 and Wilson, 2016 for example). By the time I interviewed the 20th participant, I noted that I was hearing recurring themes. To be certain, I recruited five additional participants and confirmed that saturation had been reached.

I distributed the invitation letter and advertisement flyer in community spaces, such as African grocery stores and African hair salons, in major Metro Vancouver cities: Coquitlam, Vancouver, Surrey, Richmond and New Westminster. Moreover, as an African immigrant, I have personal contacts and utilized these to recruit a small portion of the participants. Recruitment through personal contacts was limited to avoid recruiting participants with very similar experiences or circumstances. For participants who were verbally contacted, I emailed, or hand delivered an invitation letter to them when they indicated their interest to participate in the study after a brief verbal description of the study.

3.3.5 The interview

The interviews lasted an average of one hour for each participant. This included time for the informed consent process, information world mapping activity, semi-structured interview and demographic questions. Participants were invited to provide a preferred name by which to be referred to. Some participants chose pseudonyms while others used their names. Names associated with quotes presented in the results section and the names on the Information World Maps represent those chosen by the participants.

3.3.5.1 The information world mapping activity

The interview commenced with an information world mapping (IWM) activity (Greyson, 2013). Developed to help research participants represent their information behaviours in context, an Information World Map is a diagrammatic representation of participants' information worlds (Greyson, O'Brien, & Shoveller, 2017). For this study, Information World Mapping was used to deepen the researcher's understanding of interview responses; the maps served as a reference for participants' responses and provided prompts to engage them further. Participants were given a flip chart sheet and encouraged to draw their employment information worlds. The prompt below was given was to participants:

Recall a time that you were looking for a job in Canada.

- Can you represent yourself and what you did? For example, who did you talk to? Where did you go? What did you find? What had you hoped to find but did not? Did you encounter any challenges? What was helpful? What was not helpful?

Some participants talked as they drew, explaining what they were drawing and taking me along on their journey. Other participants drew in silence and explained their drawings later. When participants finished drawing, I asked them to walk me through their diagrams and asked clarifying questions as necessary. This helped me to interpret the maps as participants intended, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the study.

As with all parts of the interview, the mapping was an optional activity for the participants. Sixteen of the 25 participants completed the Information World Mapping, while others opted to skip it and responded to the prompts verbally. While I did not specifically ask participants for reasons behind their preference not to participate, I did observe a general lack of enthusiasm for diagrammatic

representations, limited understanding of, and unfamiliarity with the method. Participants fared better when presented with concrete prompts than when asked open ended questions about their employment information worlds. With open ended questions, participants tended to write down lengthy responses that were better presented verbally or come up with no answers until more streamlined prompts were presented. One participant who was artistic wanted their drawing to represent their personality; they therefore mixed and matched colours, while some participants completed similar drawings to the examples presented to them.

The Information World Mapping session was a segue into the main interview, and I began with different interview questions depending on how the explanation of the diagram went. If, for example, a participant addressed one of the interview questions while explaining the map, then I skipped ahead to the appropriate interview question to continue the conversation. Altering the order of the questions as needed ensured a smooth interview process and allowed participants to finish a train of thought without interruption.

3.3.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect detailed information from interviewees about their employment information worlds. The open-ended questions provided some flexibility for the respondents to elaborate on their experiences and for the interviewer to pursue leads (Bryman, 2012), but still had some predetermined questions (Wildemuth, 2009) aimed at eliciting responses to particular interests of the study. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study because I desired for participants to have the freedom to express ideas that I may not have anticipated (Bryman, 2012). I also wanted the flexibility to adjust the questions and probes as needed to maintain the flow of the interviews and obtain a detailed description of participants' experiences (Creswell, 2014; Wildemuth, 2009). In this study, semi-structured interviews allowed for a two-

way conversation where I validated responses, and the participants requested clarifications (Creswell, 1998; Williamson, 2002). Interviews were conducted in person and audio taped with the consent of participants.

There were some challenges with scheduling interviews. Interviews had to fit into participants' already tight schedules that included work, job seeking activities, dropping off and picking up children from school, and other daily life activities. Some participants worked more than one job, which necessitated that interviews be scheduled at different times of the day, including evenings, to accommodate participants' availability and convenience. Interviews were mostly held in participants homes, while other locations included my home, homes of participants' friends, coffee shops, and public libraries. To support some participants who were nursing mothers during the interviews (i.e., the Information World Mapping activity requires both hands), I helped them to rock and soothe their babies.

3.3.5.3 Interview Questions

The interview consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit responses about participants' experiences. The questions were broken down into the following four sections: 1) employment history and current employment situation; 2) participants' job search in Canada, such as how they obtained employment related information; 3) questions related to participants' use and perceptions of information services; and 4) demographic questions. The interview questions with a more detailed rationale for the inclusion of various questions are included in (Appendix E). I also developed and followed an interview protocol (Appendix F).

3.3.5.4 Pilot interviews

I conducted three pilot interviews to test the information world mapping (IWM) and the semi-structured interview protocols. From the first pilot interview, I received valuable feedback that I implemented in the second and confirmed in the third pilot interviews. I noticed in the first pilot interview that the participant fared better with more direct questions that went straight to the point rather than indirect questions. I kept this in mind going into the second pilot and noticed a similar pattern. Therefore, I armed myself with more prompts going into the third pilot and I noticed that this worked well. As the study is qualitative and employed more open-ended questions, this knowledge helped me to prepare prompts without nudging participants to respond one way or another. For example, one of the original questions was "Can you recall a time where having access to information made a difference in your employment situation? Tell me about that." During the pilot I found that modifying this to read "was there a time that having information helped your employment search, or when not having information impacted your ability to secure a job?" was more understandable to participants.

I also noticed from all three pilot interviews that the Information World Mapping technique was not well understood. I found that showing pilot participants examples of other people's information world maps from the literature helped them to better understand what was required. Therefore, as I prepared for the actual interviews, I drew an Information World Map myself and obtained consent from the three participants in the pilot test to show their maps to interviewees to help them understand. I was therefore able to present interview participants with four examples of Information World Maps and a few from the literature as a guide. Participants were able to find one or two examples that resonated with their style. Still, participants needed prompts to help them with the mapping. Participants worked well with prompts but were unsure what to do when I ran out of prompts.

3.3.6 Interview Data Analysis

As Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) noted, there is no single or best way to analyze qualitative data. Yet, all qualitative data analysis involves some common elements, such as taking the data apart to make sense of it and putting it back together to convey the sense made (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell, data analysis happens concurrently with other components of qualitative research such as data collection, memo taking and writing-up of findings. Qualitative research often generates rich and dense data such that not all the information can be used in the analysis. This necessitates filtering to information most pertinent to the research agenda (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). For this study, I used the qualitative data analysis framework described by Creswell (2014) which includes the following steps:

As Creswell explains:

- Step 1 involves preparing the data for analysis, e.g., transcribing interviews.
- In step 2, the researcher gets to know the data by reading, reflecting on it and getting an idea of emerging patterns and impressions. Spending time with the data has been said to possibly improve the accuracy of the analysis (Vardell, 2017).
- In step 3, the researcher starts to code the data. Coding entails organizing data by breaking down chunks of text or images and giving descriptive labels to the categories that seem to be salient to what interviewees explicitly said or inferred (Bryman, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).
- Step 4 involves generating themes and rich descriptions of the setting and participants from the codes.
- Step 5 involves organizing the themes and descriptions in the form a narrative.

- Step 6 involves interpreting the findings to capture the essence of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Specific to this study, many facets of data analysis were done concurrently. While still collecting data, I started to transcribe completed interviews and engage with the data by reading transcripts to familiarize myself with the data (Bryman, 2012; Smith, 1995). As I transcribed individual transcripts and read through them, I made mental and physical notes of patterns that were emerging. Thereafter, I started to code the transcripts. In coding the transcripts, I adhered to Bryman's (2012) recommendation that coding should be done as soon as possible to improve understanding of the data. I read through the transcripts initially without giving any interpretation to the data, and then I read the transcripts again with the intention of beginning to note down any observations, such as key terms used by participants. These notes contributed to developing initial codes. I continued coding and reviewing the initial codes to determine similarities to other codes generated and the possibility of creating larger themes from the codes. Throughout the initial and focused coding process, I wrote memos of my impressions and emerging patterns (Bryman, 2012).

3.3.6.1 Coding

Interviews can generate a deluge of data such that it becomes inefficient to attempt to manually code them all; qualitative software can be used to make organizing, sorting and searching for information more efficient (Creswell, 2014). I used NVivo qualitative software to develop a codebook (appendix G) and applied the codes to the interview data. A codebook is a set of codes along with their definitions and examples that serve as a guide for analyzing interview data. It also helps to determine what constitutes examples and non-examples of a particular code (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, P. L., & McCulloch, 2011). There is no consensus on the structure of a codebook although, at a minimum, researchers include a codename, a definition and example(s) of that code.

I included the name of the code, defined the code in a way that identified what was included and excluded, and provided examples that depicted the code, including citations from literature or excerpts from the raw data. Due to the conversational nature of interviews, more than one code may appear in a chunk of text, such as a sentence or paragraph (Vardell, 2017). Since there are no clear guidelines about what should constitute the appropriate unit of analysis in interview data, I focused on units of meaning where complete sense is made rather than relying on naturally occurring units such as sentences or paragraphs (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013; Garrison et al. 2006). I adopted an iterative process of revising the code definitions as I gained more insight from the interview data.

I initially coded five transcripts to develop a codebook. The five transcripts belonged to participants who had been in Canada for varying lengths of time and arrived through different immigration streams as an international student, refugee, permanent resident, or family sponsorship. I selected participants with diverse demographics in order to capture any variance in experience that may influence the codebook. Two of the participants participated in the Information World Mapping while three did not.

With the first three transcripts I coded, I kept building the codebook by adding new codes, removing or merging others. For the fourth and fifth transcripts, I was able to code without any additional modifications to the codes. At this point, I felt that the codebook was sufficient to code the remaining transcripts, therefore, I proceeded to use the codebook to code the rest of the data. I also returned to the five transcripts coded first to ensure uniformity. The codebook also sufficiently coded the Information World Mapping responses. As participants mapped their employment information worlds, I audio recorded their explanations of their drawings which I transcribed as text and coded along with the rest of the interview data.

Nine themes and 46 codes emerged from the coding. The themes were: 1) Challenges with getting and keeping employment; 2) the role of being African on employment seeking; 3) employment support; 4) pre- arrival work experience; 5) pre-migration dreams and expectations; 6) employment history in Canada; 7) employment information acquisition; 8) types of employment information sought; and 9) how to improve employment prospects for African immigrants. These themes are built into narratives in the results chapters, and contribute to answering the research questions. Themes 1 and 2 help to answer research question 4: (How do African immigrants' identities influence their experience of acquiring employment and information in Greater Vancouver?) and are elaborated on in chapter 6. Theme 3 contributes to answering research question 3 (what information services are available to support immigrant labour integration, how are African immigrants utilizing these and what opportunities are there to improve these services?) and is presented in chapter 5. Themes 4, 5, 6 and 9 deepen understanding of the participants and help to build the narrative around other themes. They are distributed across the results chapters as necessary. Theme 7 answers research question 2 (How do African immigrants in Canada access employment information?), while theme 8 helps to answer research question 1 (what kinds of information do African immigrants value when seeking meaningful employment?). Both themes 7 and 8 are presented in chapter 4. In Appendix G, I provide a definition of the themes and their associated codes and offer examples of the codes.

3.3.6.2 Demographic Questions

The interviews contained demographic questions which were used to determine how demographic markers shaped information and job seeking experiences. I asked the demographic questions last to allow participants to spend more energy on the interview questions because I thought that the demographic questions would require less energy than the interview questions. I read the

demographic questions aloud to some participants, while other participants opted to hold a copy while we went through the questions together. The demographic questions were close-ended and took no more than five minutes to complete. There were 10 questions in total. Questions were related to participants' countries of origin and departure if they migrated to Canada from a country other than their country of origin; year of arrival, which was to ensure that they met inclusion criteria for this study (0-15 years); the immigration stream they migrated through, and their immigration status at the time of interview.

3.4 Participants' Profiles

Data from the demographic questions were summarized quantitatively using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and measures of central tendency (Bryman, 2012). Results were also depicted diagrammatically such as through column charts. After analyzing the responses separately, I also analyzed them with the semi-structured interviews and Information World Maps to gain a richer picture of the research participants.

3.4.1 Age and gender of participants

Twelve men and thirteen women participated in the interviews (Table 4). The gender composition of participants was balanced, with no significant potential to skew results in favour of any gender. The majority of participants (40%) were in the 35-39 age bracket. In total, participants between 18 and 39 years old represented 80% of the total participants, while those between ages 30 and 39 years old accounted for 64%. Only five participants (20%) were 40 years of age and over, and four of these (80%) came in through family sponsorship. This trend is representative of the Canadian skilled immigration system which prioritizes youthfulness of candidates invited to immigrate to Canada.

Age	Male	Female	Total
18-24	1	0	1
25-29	0	3	3
30-34	2	4	6
35-39	6	4	10
40-44	1	2	3
45-49	1	0	1
50-54	1	0	1
Total	**12**	**13**	**25**

Table 4: Age of participants distributed by gender

3.4.2 Marital status of participants

The majority (84%) of participants were married and had dependents. Only the two single participants had no dependents. None of the women interviewed reported being separated or living in a common law relationship. Table 5 depicts the marital status of participants.

Marital status	Male	Female	Total
Married	8	13	21
Single	1	1	2
Common Law	1	0	1
Separated	1	0	1

Table 5: Participants' marital status

3.4.3 Length of stay in Canada

Length of stay (Table 6) was calculated from the month of arrival to the month of interview and rounded to the nearest decimal. The majority of participants (76%) were recent immigrants, having arrived in Canada within the five years preceding the interview. A significant number (42%) of these had been in Canada for less than one year, representing the largest category for length of stay. Two of the participants who had been in Canada for less than a year had only been in Canada for a little over 3 weeks, while another two had arrived 5 months prior. Seven participants, representing (37%) had been in Canada for 2-3 years. This represents the second largest group. Together, participants who had been in Canada for 0-3 years accounted for 60% of the total participants.

Length of stay	Number	% of total	Male	Female
0 – 1 year	8	32	3	5
2-3 years	7	28	3	4
4-5years	4	16	3	1
6-7 years	4	16	2	2
8-13 years	2	8	1	1
Total	25	100	12	13

Table 6: Length of stay in Canada

3.4.4 Participants' country of origin

Participants originated from 5 of the 54 countries in Africa: Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Liberia and Congo (Tale 7). Four of the countries are in West Africa, while one is in East Africa. The majority of respondents were from Nigeria, and no comparisons were made in the analysis by country.

Country of origin	Number	% of total
Nigeria	18	72
Ghana	4	16
Congo	1	4
Tanzania	1	4
Liberia	1	4
Total	25	100

Table 7: Participants' country of origin

3.4.5 Country of arrival

Six participants arrived from countries other than those of their origin. Two of these had been raised in these countries and lived there for extended periods of time having migrated to those other countries as refugees where they built a new life before moving to Canada as a sponsored refugee or to join a spouse who was already in Canada. These two participants had high school completion certificate as their highest pre-arrival education level. The rest of the participants who did not arrive from their country of origin had schooled in the country they arrived from and had lived in those countries for a shorter period than the former group. Together, participants arrived from 10 countries (Table 8).

Country of arrival	Number of participants	% of total
Nigeria	14	56

Ghana	4	16
Congo	0	0
Tanzania	1	4
Liberia	0	0
Germany	2	8
United Kingdom	1	4
USA	1	4
Kenya	1	4
Guinea	1	4
Total	25	100

Table 8: Participants' country of arrival

3.4.6 Current immigration status and arrival stream

Most of the participants (68%) were permanent residents, followed by temporary residents (20%) and lastly citizens (12%) (Table 9). Among the five temporary residents, one was a spouse of an international student, while four held post-graduation work permits having completed schooling in eligible Canadian institutions of higher learning[6]. Nearly half (44%) of the participants arrived through family sponsorship. Some sponsored participants joined their spouses who were already in Canada as students; others were accompanying spouses to skilled workers. A significant number

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[6]The postgraduation work permit is issued to by the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to international students who have completed schooling at eligible "Canadian designated learning institutions" (GOC, 2019). https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/temporary-residents/study-permits/post-graduation-work-permit-program.html

of the participants (32%) had completed post-secondary education in Canada and gone on to become permanent residents. Only one of the eight participants who arrived as an international student had acquired citizenship and had been in Canada the second longest. Of the other two participants that were citizens, one arrived as a sponsored refugee while the other joined a spouse through family sponsorship. These three participants with Canadian citizenship status have stayed in Canada the longest (13, 8 and 7 years).

Current immigration status	Number	% of total		Arrival stream	Number	% of total
Citizen	3	12		Skilled worker	5	20
Permanent resident	17	68		Family sponsorship	11	44
Temporary resident	5	20		Sponsored refugee	1	4
				International student	8	32
Total	25	100			25	100

Table 9: Immigration status and arrival stream

3.4.7 Education

Bachelor's degrees were the most widely held pre-arrival qualification among participants. Seventeen participants, representing 68% of the total participants, held this degree. Some had two Bachelor's degrees, while others had 5-year bachelor's degrees that were assessed by Canadian Government approved agencies as equivalent to a Canadian Master's degree at the time of immigrating. The next most held qualification among the research participants was a master's

degree, which was held by six of the 25 participants (24%). Although some participants held professional qualifications such as specific Information Technology certifications, these were not their highest levels of pre-arrival education. Only two participants had not studied beyond high school completion, and these were females. Men and women held equal numbers of master's degrees, though men held slightly more bachelor's degrees. On average, men and women held very similar levels of qualification (Table 10).

Highest pre-arrival education	Male (% of total)	Female (% of total)	Total
Master's degree	3 (12%)	3 (12%)	6 (24%)
Bachelor's degree	9 (36%)	8 (32%)	17 (68%)
High school completion certificate	0 (0%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)
Total	12 (48%)	13 (52%)	25 (100%)

Table 10: Pre-arrival education

The majority of participants (*N*=19) obtained their qualifications from their country of origin, five (20%) of the participants obtained their degrees from their country of departure, but not their country of origin. Two obtained their degree from a foreign country and returned to their home country to work before coming to Canada. One participant obtained two degrees, one from his country of origin and one from his country of departure, while one obtained a degree from their country of origin, accompanied a spouse to obtain a degree in a Western country without obtaining any certification in that country, and migrated to Canada from that country. Among those who schooled in countries other than those of their origin, one obtained her degree in North America,

two in Europe, and the rest in Africa. Table 11 shows countries where participants obtained their pre-arrival education from.

Country of pre-arrival education	Type of Education			
	Bachelors	Masters	Professional certification	High School
Nigeria	12	2	1	0
Ghana	4	1	0	0
Cameroon	1	0	0	0
Guinea	0	0	0	1
Kenya	0	0	0	1
Tanzania	1	0	0	0
UK	0	2	0	0
Germany	1	0	0	0
USA	0	1	0	0

Table 11: Country of pre-arrival education

Since arriving in Canada, 17 of the 25 participants had obtained some level of education (Table 12). This included 10 males (59%) and 7 females (41%). The majority of the participants who did not acquire any Canada education had been in Canada for less than one year. One participant had secured admission to a master's degree program at the time of the interview. Only two participants who did not obtain any education since arriving in Canada had been here longer than one year. One of these two obtained previous education from the USA and did not require a Canadian one.

The other was caring for her family and planned to return to school in time. No participants had obtained a Bachelor's degree in Canada.

Highest education obtained in Canada	Male (% of total)	Female (% of total)	Total
Masters	5 (20%)	1 (4%)	6 (24%)
Professional diploma	1 (4%)	4 (16%)	5 (20%)
Professional certificate	4 (16%)	2 (8%)	6 (24%)
None	2 (8%)	6 (24%)	8 (32%)
Total	12 (48%)	13 (52%)	25 (100%)

Table 12: Highest level of education obtained in Canada

3.4.8 Participants' work experience

Twenty four out of the 25 participants had worked prior to coming to Canada, while only one participant had not worked. The participant who did not work arrived Canada in her mid-teens and attended high school in Canada. Twenty-two of the participants who had worked had held professional positions that were equivalent to their education, skills and experiences. The minimum qualification for all the positions they held was a bachelor's degree or equivalent. Some positions required additional training and certification based on the industry. This included the medical and IT professions. Participants' pre-arrival work experiences ranged from 1 to over 7 years, and cut across different sectors, including human resources ($N=2$), marine sciences ($N=1$), medicine ($N=2$), occupational health and safety ($N=1$), government ($N=2$), information technology

(*N*=3), teaching (*N*=5), general and investment banking (*N*=4) and telecommunications (*N*=2). Some participants had worked in more than one sector. Participants had held different job titles, including Attending Physician, Safety Professional, Banker, Dentist, Network Analyst, Human Resources and Protocol Officer, Security Programs Analyst, Teacher, Sales and Customer Support officer. Some had reached supervisory and management positions.

Since arriving in Canada, participants had engaged in different employment opportunities. I grouped participants into four categories based on their current employment situation: Optimally employed, self-employed, under employed, and unemployed (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Participants' employment situation in Canada

Those who were optimally employed were working in jobs that they self-reported as equivalent to their skills and qualifications. Those who were self-employed owned a business, while those who were underemployed were working in a job that was lower in pay and status than their pre-arrival

and or current qualifications. These jobs were not professional and often not in participants'
previous fields of study. Participants explicitly described or insinuated that the job was something
they did while they waited or hoped to secure a more ideal job. Participants who were unemployed
were not working at the time of the interview. Five of the six unemployed participants were
married females, while one was male. Four of the five females were currently not searching for
jobs because they were caring for their families, while one was actively searching. The
unemployed male participant was injured on his last job and was home recuperating.

3.5 Summary

In this chapter I presented the research approach adopted for the current study. This included the
philosophical worldview, positionality, trustworthiness of the research, confidentiality and
anonymity and obtaining informed consent from participants. I also discussed the data sources,
including the document analysis and interviews. I presented the document analysis procedures and
described the eight organizations selected for the analysis. For the interviews, I described the
sampling procedures, research site, participant recruitment, the conduct of the interviews and how
interview data was analyzed, including the coding procedures. Finally, I presented participants'
profiles, including gender, length of stay in Canada, age, country of origin, country of arrival,
immigration status, arrival category, education level, marital status and work experience.

In the following three chapters, I present the research results. The content of each results chapter
corresponds to a research question. In Table 13, I demonstrate how each research method
contributed to answering the research questions. Chapter 4 answers research questions 1 and 2,
chapter 5 answers research question 3 and chapter 6 answers research question 4. Chapter 7
concludes the research and connects the findings back to the research questions.

Research Question	Description	Document Analysis	Interviews	Information World Maps
RQ1	What kinds of information do African immigrants value when seeking meaningful employment?		✓	
RQ2	How do African immigrants in Canada access employment information?		✓	✓
RQ3	What information services are available to support immigrant labour integration, how are African immigrants utilizing these and what opportunities are there to improve?	✓	✓	
RQ4	How do African immigrants' identities influence their experience of acquiring employment and information in Greater Vancouver?		✓	✓

Table 13: Mapping research methods to research questions

CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPANTS' EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION BEHAVIOUR

4.0 Introduction

This chapter answers research questions 1 and 2: What kinds of information do African immigrants value when seeking meaningful employment? And how do African immigrants in Canada access employment information? respectively. Data reported in this chapter were obtained from the interviews and represent the themes related to employment information acquisition and types of employment information valued.

I commence with the types of information that participants valued when seeking employment. This included job postings, information about a company or industry of interest, as well as the geographical location of the job. Subsequently I discuss how participants accessed required employment information, including serendipitous information acquisition and active seeking through information sources. Information sources used included agencies in Canada, online sources and interpersonal sources. No participant mentioned using public libraries as an information source. Finally, I discuss the findings and conclude the chapter with a summary.

4.1 Types of employment information valued by participants

Participants reported seeking different kinds of employment related information. This ranged from job postings, to information about the industry or company of interest, and to the province or city where the job is located. When participants were perusing job postings, they also researched the company that had the job opening by exploring its website and locating reviews of the company to ascertain if it was a good fit for them. They further sought information about the geographic location of companies they were interested in such as the city and province. Such information informed the decision of some participants to settle in a particular province or city.

Participants mostly sought information about available job opportunities, which they obtained from job postings. When participants found job postings, they analyzed the contents of those postings to glean additional information about the job opportunity:

> "In addition to job postings I tried to see what my skills is worth at the same time, like how much… you know way back in Africa I got exposed to different areas in my field so I'm comfortable with different kinds of areas in IT so I try to see here in Canada where should I gather more knowledge in… where should I develop more focus on. So I try to see the area that also pays more like compare how much does a Developer earn and how much does a support Tech. earn" (Dad)

Dad's pre-arrival work experience was in different areas of the Information Technology (IT) sector. Dad noted that compensation looked different in Canada compared to his home country. Therefore, when looking at job postings, Dad tried to evaluate which specialization was better compensated so that he could gravitate towards that area and develop himself further, such as by earning necessary re-certifications.

Frank and Saviour also looked at the required qualifications for the position, as well as the duties and compensation. From learning about required qualifications for positions that participants were interested in, they identified gaps in their own qualifications and sought to bridge these gaps, which prompted new information searches for relevant courses. Michael discovered the skills he needed to acquire to bridge the gap between his skill set and the requirements for jobs he was interested in. He sought to make himself more "marketable" by returning to school and taking the necessary programs.

Generally, participants examined industry and company information to assess their skills, fit, identify gaps and determine how to proceed, including seeking further clarifying information. Participants, such as Dammy and NI, explored specific industries of interest and sought out different companies in those industries for potential employment. They researched the companies

to help them write targeted cover letters, as well as to prepare for potential interviews. NI reflected that,

> "I needed to understand the health care structure here to know which level of job that I could apply for. You know, transferable skills and all of that" (NI)

When looking at company information, participants tried to learn more about the company, including information that was not directly related to the position they were interested in. Oghazi, for example, said

> "I look for information about the company, I look for information about how they treat their employees, I look for all the information that will help me to do well during the interview when I actually get called" (Oghazi)

While most participants conducted industry and company searches within Canada, a few like Dammy started this search before moving to Canada. Dammy arrived in Canada with a list of companies she had researched and was ready to approach for jobs. Dammy searched for companies on LinkedIn[7] and made contact with employees of such organizations. When she arrived, she met in-person with a staff member of one such organization and was provided with information that she deemed very valuable, including information about the industry, required certification and advancement opportunities.

Related to researching industries and companies, participants searched for information about jobs in particular locales. This occurred pre-arrival, as described by Dammy, of her choice to settle in British Columbia

> "So, in my search, the biggest 5 marine farms in Canada are in BC. So, we decided to choose BC. So now we've chosen BC" (Dammy)

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[7] LinkedIn is the worlds largest professional network with over 600 million users and in more than 200 countries (LinkedIn, 2020)

Dammy was a Manager in a big marine farm in her country and wished to continue in her profession in Canada. Dammy was therefore particular about finding "big" marine farms in Canada and settling in whichever province such farms were located.

Ignace is multilingual and speaks both of Canada's official languages. In fact, Ignace holds a degree in one of Canada's official languages and wished to be employed in positions where he could utilize his English and French language skills. He equally desired to remain in British Columbia and Vancouver in particular, as much as possible.

In summary, participants desired different kinds of information to support their employment search. Job posting was a common information needed by all participants regardless of gender or length of stay in Canada. Participants tended to pay more attention to the job qualifications when they had newly arrived because at that time, they only held the qualifications they brought from their source countries. Therefore, in addition to deciding which jobs they were eligible for, learning about requirements for jobs they were interested in helped them to decide which courses and certifications to pursue. Participants also looked for "in-demand" jobs to ease the process of securing jobs once they had completed further schooling in Canada.

4.2 Accessing employment information

Participants exhibited diverse information practices in acquiring employment information. This included acquiring information about employment in Canada while still in their source countries which helped some participants to prepare for what to expect with regards to securing jobs in Canada. However, as they explained, no amount of preparation truly prepared an immigrant for the reality on ground which in their case contrasted with their expectations.

Upon arrival in Canada, participants acquired information through various means, including serendipitous and purposeful information acquisition. Serendipitous information acquisition accounted for only a few of the information acquisition experiences, hence, I have spent more time on describing the purposeful information acquisition strategies. In the next section, I describe participants experiences and strategies with both types of information acquisition.

4.2.1 Serendipitous information acquisition

In the course of their daily lives, some participants encountered employment information where and when they were not looking for it. Sule Jolomi was waiting to board a bus when he spotted an employment agency across the street. He crossed the street and walked into the agency office to inquire about their services. Similarly, Miss A saw an employment agency where she was not looking for it and like Sule Jolomi, she went in to make inquiries:

> "I went for my child's immunization and the office was in the same complex so I just decided to go in there and have a conversation with them" (Miss A)

In another case, Ewura overheard her classmates mention the name of a company so many times that she researched the company and finally ended up working there after graduation. In all three cases, participants invested no effort in gaining the information, but acted on the information encountered by walking in and making inquiries or researching the companies. Information encountering is a known source of information for many. For immigrants especially who may not have developed social networks in the new country to draw on for employment information, serendipity could be an important means of gaining information.

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4.2.2 Purposeful information acquisition

In their active pursuit of information, participants consulted different information sources. Three categories of information sources emerged from participants' descriptions: institutions; Other people; and Online sources. These are shown in Figure 7.
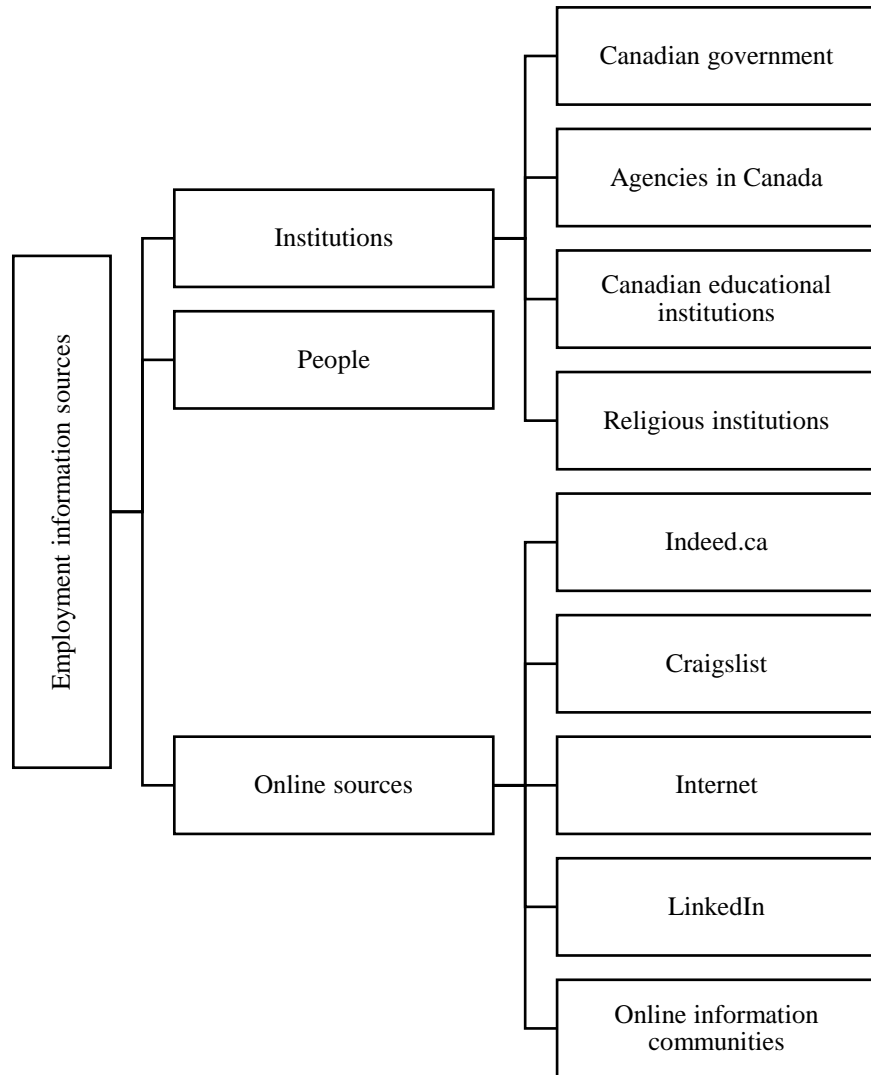
Figure 7: Information sources used by participants

Nine information sources stood out from all three categories combined. Table 14 shows how many participants used what information sources and how many times they were mentioned.

Categories	Information source	Number of participants	Number of references
Canadian Institutions	Agencies in Canada	11	15
	Canadian educational institutions	3	6
	Canadian government	4	5
	Religious institutions	3	5
People	Other people	17	47
Online Sources	Craigslist	3	5
	Indeed.ca	12	17
	Internet	15	22
	LinkedIn	5	6
	Online information communities	2	3

Table 14: Frequency of use of information sources

"Other People" was the most cited information source, followed by general internet search and indeed.ca jobsite. Each information source is described in more detail in the succeeding section.

4.2.2.1 Canadian Institutions

By "Canadian institutions", I refer to information sources that are provided by organizations in Canada. The four sources that emerged under this category were: the Canadian government,

agencies in Canada such as immigrant settlement and employment agencies, educational institutions and religious institutions.

4.2.2.1.1 The Canadian Government

The Canadian government sends out relevant information to candidates who have been approved to immigrate to Canada as permanent residents. These candidates receive the information in their source countries prior to departing for Canada. The information is intended to help them prepare for life in Canada and includes the contact information of immigrant settlement agencies. Tao, a permanent resident, referred to this as "prepared kind of help by the government" (Tao). As the Canadian government sends information about settlement and employment support to permanent residents while they are still overseas, it also shares information about the incoming immigrants with the settlement and employment agencies. Some of these agencies proceed to contact the immigrants and offer them support pre- and post-arrival. Some of the immigrants, such as Dammy and Michael, were already in communication with such agencies as ISSofBC prior to arriving in Canada following their approval to travel as permanent residents. Michael was asked to send his passport to the Canadian Government to have his immigration approval documents attached; this email request came with additional information such as links to support agencies.

As immigrants navigated the Government of Canada's website to obtain information, they had different interpretations of the information they found and sometimes these interpretations may not represent the intention of the government. Michael was a banker in his home country and was happy to migrate to Canada based on his interpretation of the skilled worker program he was migrating through. Michael explained that he had hopes of securing a skilled job immediately upon arrival in Canada in the banking sector where he had gathered many years of professional work experience and educational qualifications.

"That's what the program says; it says skilled worker … so it's how the Government of Canada presents it" (Michael)

Michael's expectations were based on his interpretation of the immigration stream he was admitted through. To him, when the Canadian government admits him through the *skilled worker* program, it connotes that he is coming to Canada to work in skilled occupations. Michael, who had not yet secured a job in the banking industry, was disappointed to find that the reality on ground was far different from the picture he understood from the Canadian government's description.

Michael and other participants who reported receiving settlement and employment information from the Canadian government had arrived directly as permanent residents. No participant who arrived as a temporary resident reported receiving or utilizing similar support from the Canadian government, at least not until they acquired permanent resident status and became eligible for such services. However, by the time they became permanent residents, some of them had become familiar with and could navigate the Canadian employment landscape to secure jobs without help.

4.2.2.1.2 Agencies in Canada

Canadian settlement and employment support agencies provide information to help immigrants settle and find jobs. Many of these agencies receive funding from the Canadian Government to run programs and offer support to immigrants. Tao, who immigrated as a permanent resident, was contacted by MOSAIC, an immigrant settlement agency, to offer him information about available support in Canada before he left his country.

"There was this one I think it was MOSAIC before we landed and they told us all this settlement programs available in online and we got some information at the airport also and when we came we went to service Canada and they told us the same about all these MOSAIC, Work BC, SUCCESS BC and all that so immediately when I landed I think I just decided to go with one of them" (Tao)

Upon arrival in Canada, Tao decided to get support from one of the immigrant support agencies. Other participants such as Oge also utilized support from immigrant settlement and employment agencies. Oge first landed in Ontario before moving to British Columbia. Oge accessed these services in Ontario but was yet to access any agency support since arriving in British Columbia as she had only been in Metro Vancouver a short while prior to being interviewed for this study. Philanta accessed support from Avia, MOSAIC and WorkBC (Figure 8). Philata relayed that she was referred from one agency to another and that was how she became aware of their existence.
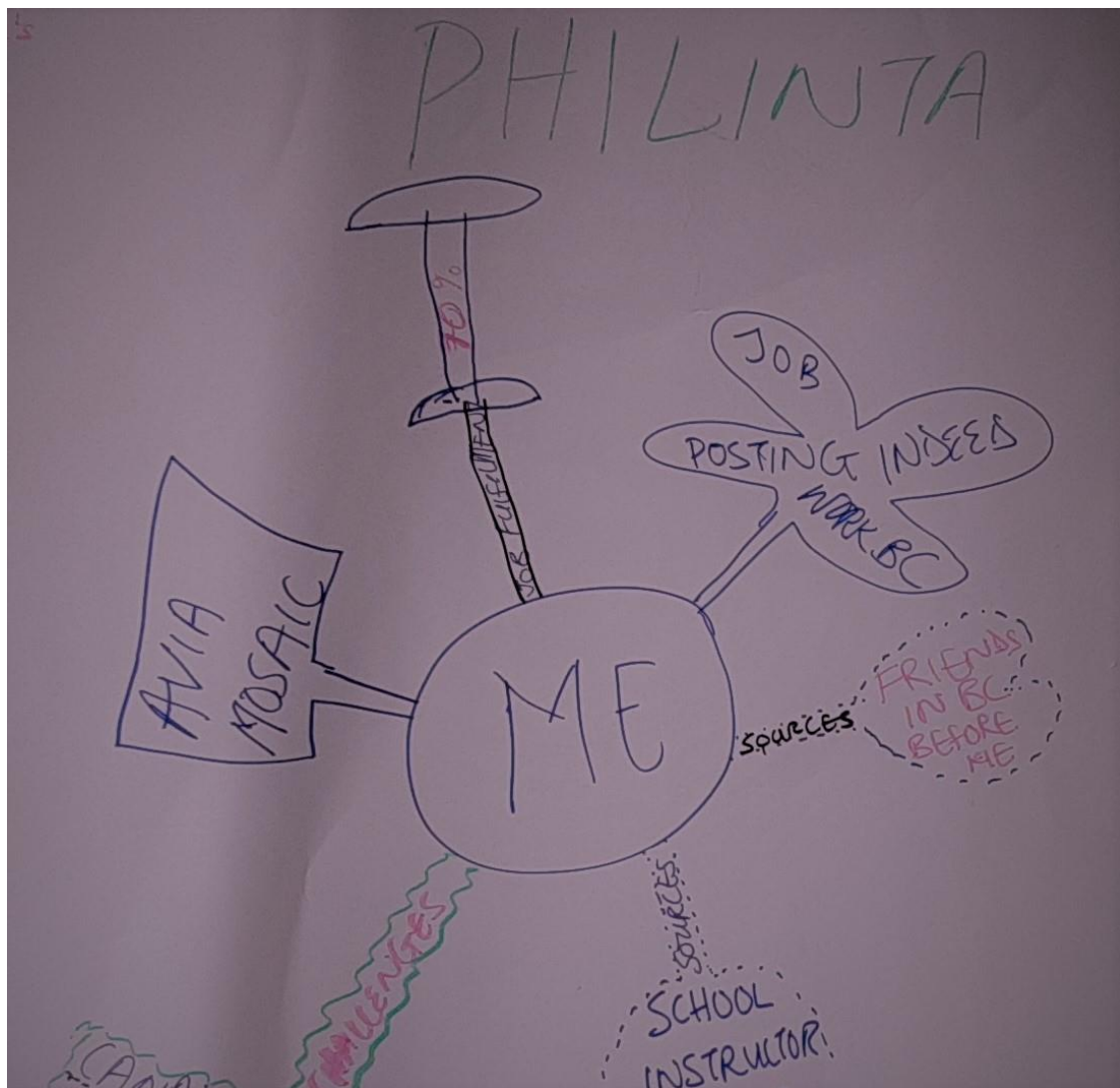
Figure 8: Philanta's information world map showing agencies utilized

The Canadian Government connected some immigrants to these agencies, while other immigrants, such as NI and Oghazi, found them on their own. Oghazi described going to WorkBC in person to seek job-related information based on information found on the Work BC website. Employment agencies also referred people to other agencies if they felt that the other agency's services were better suited to the needs of the immigrant. Those that were connected by the Canadian government were mostly immigrants admitted to Canada as permanent residents, while those who found them on their own had often arrived through other immigration categories. These participants found agencies through referrals from other people, or serendipitously. Some participants started using these agencies' services pre-arrival. Dammy relayed her experience using a pre-arrival program and receiving valuable information about employment:

> "So, I've joined the before you land program and we were even told about the fact that our qualifications might not be relevant and we might need to be introduced into the Canadian workforce through bridging programs" (Dammy)

These agencies offer a suite of resources and support for settlement and employment integration.

4.2.2.1.3 Educational institutions

None of the permanent residents or refugees reported seeking information from Canadian institutions of higher learning. Participants who did report using Canadian educational institutions as information sources had a prior affiliation with the institution. Some had attended the college or university, while others accompanied their spouses who were international students in those institutions. Employment information that participants acquired during their time as international students proved valuable both during their time as students and after graduation. For some, the institutions exposed them to other information sources or seeking strategies, or they learnt skills that were valuable beyond their time as students. Such skills included cover letter and resume writing as well as interview preparation. Ifedi sought feedback at job fairs, and Oghazi "attended

most of the sessions and trainings" in the experiential job placement program for students even though he did not work in any experiential job placement until he graduated. From those trainings, Oghazi gained familiarity with employment information sources which he consulted for his job search after graduation.

4.2.2.1.4 Religious Institutions

Participants also reported obtaining employment information from places of worship. When participants arrived in Canada, they sought out places to meet and connect with people and re-establish the religion they practiced in their home countries. In these places of worship, they met people who provided them valuable employment information. Oorloochy arrived as a permanent resident and soon sought out a place of worship for herself and her family. In the place of worship, Oorloochy came across other people that she chatted with about employment. Oorloochy found the information she got from these interactions helpful for her job search:

> "You go to church you meet one or two people you hang out and then while you are talking while you're trying to talk to someone he tells you ok, I think I can talk to someone. For example, the first interview I went for was actually word of mouth less than a month after I landed someone just said I think I heard blah blah blah blah blah is recruiting why don't you come in and check so I was so excited" (Oorloochy)

Other participants such as Judy also conversed with church members and through these conversations learnt about some online information sources. Some of the employment information received in places of worship were referrals to support agencies or insider information about employment opportunities in the workplaces of church members, as was the case with Oorloochy. Judy and Dammy equally received referral to employment support agencies.

4.2.2.2 Other people

"People" were the most utilized information source. This refers to human beings as information sources, and not the agencies they represent. People included friends, colleagues, professors and acquaintances.

Dammy went on LinkedIn and searched for a company she was interested in applying to. On LinkedIn, she saw some staff of the company, one of them being directly involved in the position Dammy was interested in. Dammy connected with this person on LinkedIn, and the person agreed to meet in person where they had conversations about Dammy's interest. The person was also an immigrant and was able to give Dammy valuable information about not only the company or position, but also about settling in successfully into work and daily life. They offered insider knowledge about how things worked in their particular industry, specifically getting their education financed by being involved in certain kinds of projects. Dammy described the experience as very rewarding.

Ewura and Philanta consulted with their professors as experts in the fields they desired to work in. These professors provided referrals which led to jobs for both participants. Philanta shared:

> "I will always give credit to my instructor; she was very instrumental to my job search and getting a job eventually" (Philanta)

For Finda, it was a client who told her about a job vacancy. Finda's operates a hair salon business in which she personally attends to her clients. While making hair for her clients which usually takes a few hours, Finda and her clients often engage in conversations to pass the time. During this

time, Finda's business location becomes an information ground[8] (Pettigrew, 1999) in which information is shared and received as a secondary activity. On this occasion, Finda was the beneficiary of information shared by a client. Finda followed up on the vacancy information that the client provided and secured the job.

Emy was able to commence his job search with information provided by friends. Emy explained that his friends had limited information themselves, having arrived in Canada at about the same time as he did. Ewura asked her classmates and alumni of the program she was enrolled in about job sources during her time as an international student. Through asking her classmates, Ewura got referrals to specific employers, which she looked up specifically instead of relying on general internet searching. Ewura was retained as a permanent staff in the same job she held as an student intern. She had not engaged in any further job search since graduating. Ewura explained that as a new international student at the time she was in school, she had not become friends enough with anyone in her class to directly seek employment or any other kind of information from them. She therefore engaged in information monitoring, whereby she listened to her classmates as they chatted with one another and picked up pieces of helpful information that she later researched on her own.

> "I just went there and typed printing companies in Canada because I was an international student, so I didn't know much. But most of my classmates used to mention that one of the top printing companies in Canada so for my Google search that was basically the main even though I was looking at other options" (Ewura)

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[8] Information grounds refers to a situation whereby people come together to perform an activity, but from which spontaneous information sharing also occurs as a by-product (Pettigrew,1999, p. 811).

Some of the information she picked up included information about popular employers in her field of study. These were employers mentioned most often in conversations she monitored, as well as experiences shared by people who had engaged with others who had worked with such companies.

Ewura further noted that as an international student, she had no knowledge of employers in her chosen field and thus did not know what to search for when looking for information. She therefore engaged in a lot of general Google searches that returned a deluge of information which she had to sift through mostly unsatisfactorily. However, asking her professor, classmates and just listening to her classmates even when she could not ask them directly provided clear pointers for her such that she then knew specific companies to look on their websites, and engaged in fewer general Google searches from that point on:

> "…so being an international student, you have so many options because you don't really know. You know, like when you're searching for something it's easier if you have an idea than just going on Google to search for printing companies which gives you a lot of options, things that actually you don't need but once your search is specific it gives you what you really need…being an international student if not for the recommendations I got from friends and my professor it would have been way difficult for me than it was" (Ewura)

Friends provided contextual information, went "the extra mile" and offered emotional support. Finda received appropriate information and additional support to overcome a barrier to information acquisition:

> "…The way it started I had a friend that told me oh I think the work you do is very good you need to find out more about it…. So, somebody just drove me down to this school where I asked and then they said I could start classes" (Finda)

In this case, friends not only provided information, but by understanding Finda's work and interests, they knew which information would be relevant to her. Beyond just providing information, they drove her to the school to make inquiries in person. Friends provided advice,

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and resources such as their cars, time, and knowledge of the information and physical landscape; they also offered emotional support, as expressed by NI:

"I think most of the helpful advice I got was from my Nigerian colleagues by the time they moved over you know so they are in their provinces none of them is here they are in Alberta, Ontario they are in their provinces, they offered advice that was useful…and then also they encouraged me psychologically and all of that which was a big boost honestly if not it would have been terrible" (NI)

Oghazi, Saviour and Ignace also explained that they found great value in having friends because friends invested time to call them and volunteer information or offered to help them look for information. Many participants who participated in the information world mapping included friends as an information source on their maps, including Oghazi (Figure 9). Oghazi said, "I also tend to rely on friends a lot. Friends were very helpful because they will take their time to explain things to you more than what the general internet search will give you…"
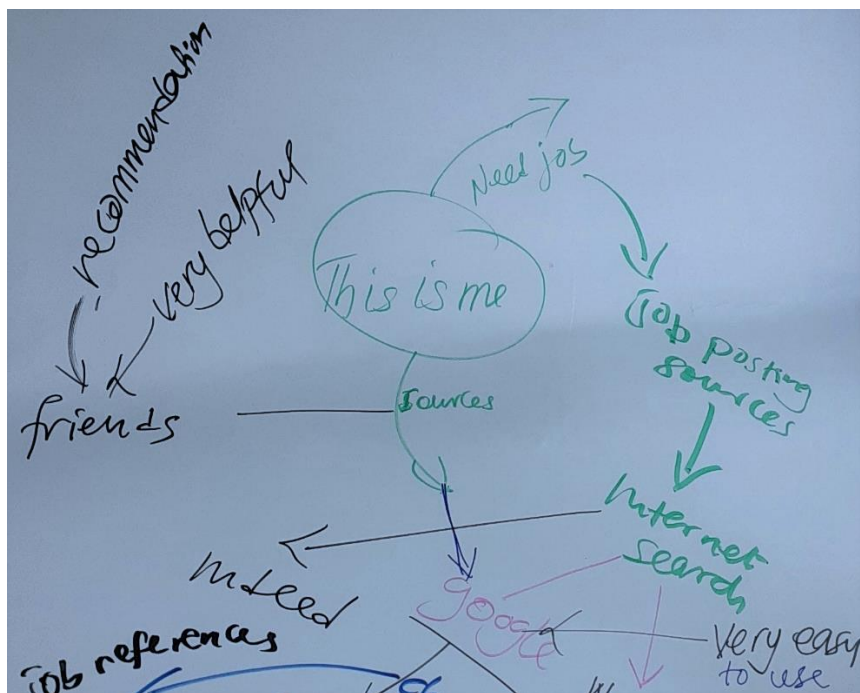
Figure 9: Oghazi's Information World Map highlighting friends as helpful

Saviour explained how a friend who was aware that he was searching for a job phoned him about a job opportunity and asked if he was interested:

> "I was just walking on my own and a friend of mine who is working for the school called me and was like Saviour there is someone here who is looking for workers and I was like ok sure I'm down for it since I'm not doing anything. So that was how I started working there" (Saviour)

Ignace shared a similar example of how a friend volunteered employment information to him and further highlighted this as one of the values of having friends. He emphasized that friends do not wait for an immigrant to request for information but are able to anticipate what information their friends may find valuable and volunteer such information. Ignace who considered friends as a very valuable source of information shared that not all immigrants had access to friends.

Friends referred people directly to jobs and other information sources. Friends also went beyond referrals and assisted participants to apply for jobs and prepare strong resumes and cover letters. According to participants, the time that friends invested to understand their needs, unpack the information and support them set friends apart from other information sources, which can be impersonal (e.g. internet), or be limited in their ability to assist them (e.g., bureaucratic and staffing challenges inherent in agencies).

People as information sources have no boundaries and tend to wear multiple hats to support their immigrant friends. This is why Eto did not know about the existence of immigrant and employment support agencies; her husband provided all the information she needed, having arrived many years before Eto. Eto stated that her husband was like her "social worker" hence she did not require any additional support. Participants particularly appreciated information provided by people who had been through the same settlement process.

Interestingly, people inadvertently influenced the career paths chosen by some participants as Philanta relayed:

> "When we came the information on ground was ok what were the *selling* jobs. The selling jobs according to the information we got from friends and people we came across like other fellow Africans was that the health sector so a lot of people you see a lot of Africans going into nursing and things like that" (Philanta)

When immigrants arrive, some of them necessarily change careers. Information received upon arrival shaped the decision made by some participants, such as Philanta, to either continue in their former career or to change careers. Participants often wanted "selling" jobs that were in high demand in Canada so that they could more easily secure jobs when schooling was finished. Philanta was told by a friend's husband that she could get some schooling for free if she was changing careers in Canada. This information was timely for Philanta, who changed her career path accordingly and was saved of the tuition she would have paid had she not received such information when she did.

Friends of many participants were immigrants themselves and had passed through the stages that participants were at. Friends provided firsthand experiences of employment situation in Canada and were thus able to provide concrete contextual advice.

4.2.2.3 Online employment information search

There were two predominant starting points for participants seeking employment information online as shown in Figure 10. This included the Google search engine and specific job sites.
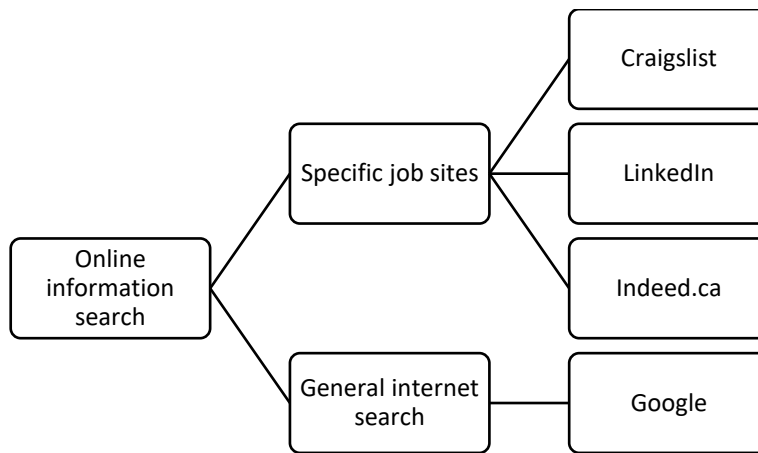
Figure 10: Online information seeking

Fifteen participants described using the Google search engine to perform generic job-related searches for the name of a company or type of job such as "nursing." According to Oghazi, the Internet "was very easy to use," and he could find a lot of information. Some of the participants, such as KD, reported that they were happy using the internet because they found the information that they searched for, including requirements for the jobs that they were interested in. Tao cherished the ability to read about other people's experiences on the internet as some of the stories shared by other immigrants on online communities helped him in his settlement. In addition to using a general search engine, participants consulted specific job sites, namely Indeed jobsite, Craigslist and LinkedIn as can be seen in Mr. A's information world map (Figure 11).
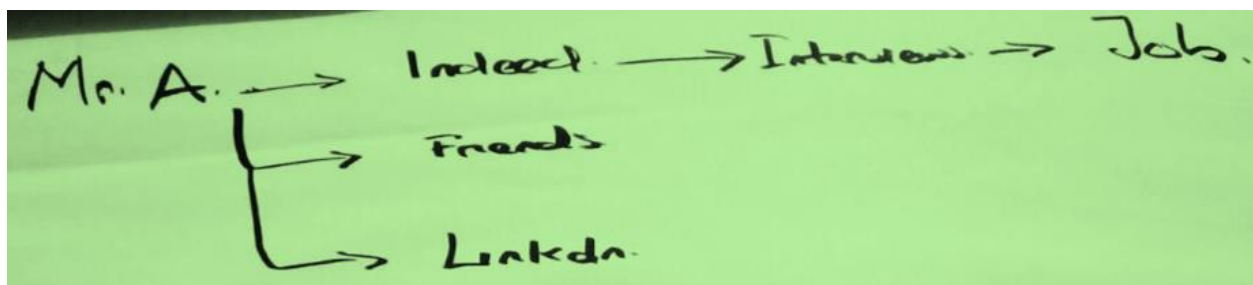
Figure 11: Mr. A's Information World Map showing the use of specific job search sites

Mr A. got his first interview from a job posting that he found on indeed.ca. The interview led to the job he held at the time of the interview. He used LinkedIn to search for his former classmates to see where they were working and reconnect with them for job search help. Indeed.ca, is a job search engine that aggregates job postings from other job boards on the internet. Craigslist.ca is an advertisement website that provides local classifieds for housing, jobs, selling and buying of various items, and more. LinkedIn.com is a professional website that helps people connect with other professionals. Indeed.ca jobsite was the most popular job site among participants, and often co-listed with Craigslist. Ignace secured the job he held at the time of this interview through LinkedIn.

Many participants visited and found online sources valuable, but this was not always the case. Philanta, who completed a certificate program and was looking for jobs, reported that Indeed jobsite and search engines did not work for her when she was looking to change jobs. Oorloochy also relayed how she could not get any job that matched her requirements on two job search engines (Indeed.ca and ziprecruiters). Oorloochy therefore relied very much on friends' referrals.

Three participants described being on online communities that provided employment and settlement support for immigrants. Some of these communities were hosted on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and *WhatsApp,* an instant messaging platform. On these forums, people asked questions and got referrals to job sources. Participants on these forums who were already in Canada also posted job vacancies from their workplaces and assisted interested group members with their applications. They equally provided insider information to help interested group members prepare for their interviews.

Some forums were specific to nationalities or occupations, while others were more general for anyone interested in migrating to Canada. These groups provided personalized support for the

immigrants, which seemed to fit with their preferred mode of seeking employment information—from people. Some people who met on these online communities took their connection further by meeting in person to share resources and information. Okey described sharing information with a forum member who was preparing to take the English Language test required for processing Canadian immigration. Okey met the person physically to give him study materials that had helped him to pass the same exam. He also provided free tutoring and test tips to the individual.

People joined different groups for specific professions or nationalities. Oorloochy, who was a dentist in her home country, joined a WhatsApp group for internationally trained dentists who were migrating to or had already arrived in Canada. Oorloochy reported that dentists in the group came from different continents such as Asia and Africa and did not have Canadian or American certification. They shared their journey and experiences of being internationally trained dentists in Canada on the platform. According to Oorloochy, learning from the lived experiences of others alerted her to the potential difficulties of integrating into the Canadian workforce and helped her to prepare accordingly.

In addition, participants explained how people on the forum canvassed for newcomers to reside in their geographical locations to increase the number of Africans and people from their home countries in those areas. Oorloochy, who moved to Metro Vancouver partly on the recommendation of a friend on the forum, explained how forum members offered to secure housing for newcomers, cook and stock their fridges with local food, pick them up from the airport, and help them navigate the environment upon arrival, including introducing them to their own friends to help them build social networks.

4.2.2.4 Use of multiple information sources

Many participants such as Ewura (Figure 12) used more than one information source at a time, including both online and offline sources. Several combinations of information sources were reported.
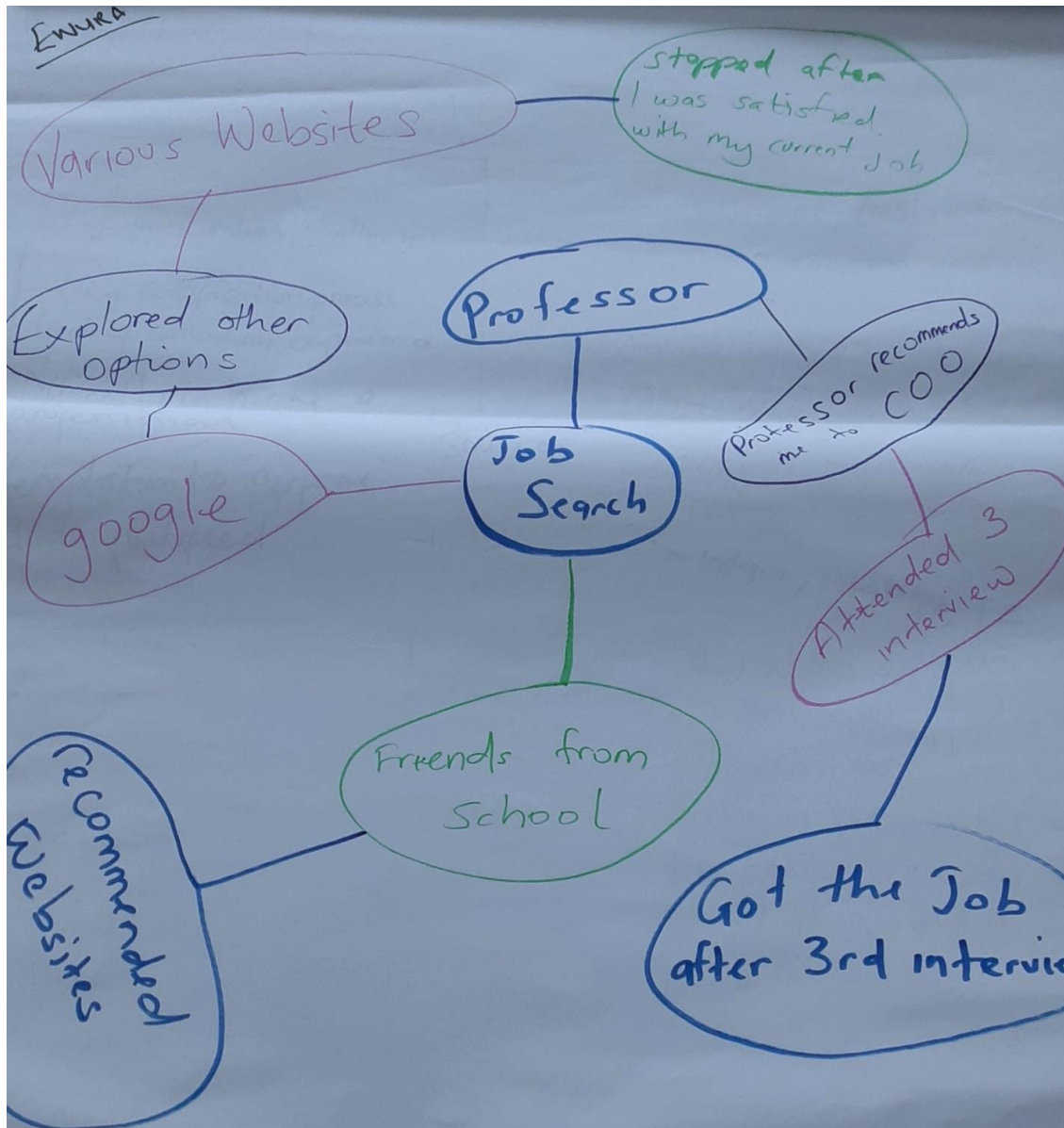
Figure 12: Ewura's employment Information World Map showing use of multiple information sources

Ewura arrived in Canada as an international student and therefore, she did not receive support from any Canadian agency as evidenced by her information world map (Figure 12). Ewura mostly obtained support from interpersonal sources connected to her school, such as friends, professors and classmates, as well as online sources.

Some participants started their search offline with recommendations from friends and ended up online. Other participants started with online resources and then went to settlement and employment agencies. Yet, other immigrants went through several offline sources such as agencies, or several online sources as Okey who searched over seven online sources explained:

> "I use technology applications and you know social media I use Glassdoor, LinkedIn. I searched on the web and I registered on Monster, Indeed, Ziprecruiter. Basically, online platforms and media for job search and networking" (Okey)

Participants such as Okey who used multiple online resources when looking for a job, often combined general internet search with searching specific job sites. Sometimes when participants found a job posting from a specific job site, they would conduct a general internet search on the company that was advertising the position.

Mr. A had schooled in Canada as an international student and therefore had friends with whom he could share ideas about his job search. He had also acquired knowledge of some Canadian employment information sources which he drew upon:

> "I have a bunch of friends already in Canada so I kind of talked to them about getting a job. I started my application on Indeed. I also went through LinkedIn…. (Mr A)

Frank, who also obtained a post graduate degree in Canada, used both online and offline sources for his employment search. Frank explained that he searched for employment information online,

on Craigslist, Indeed and other sources, and that he sometimes got recommendations from friends about where to look for information.

There was no clear pattern observed in how participants combined information sources. They used online and offline sources randomly as they became aware of them, or as they deemed fit if they were already aware of their existence. Only Saviour explicitly stated that the sources he consulted were dependent on the kind of job he was searching for. Ney's Information World map (Figure 13) also suggested the use of different information sources for different information needs.
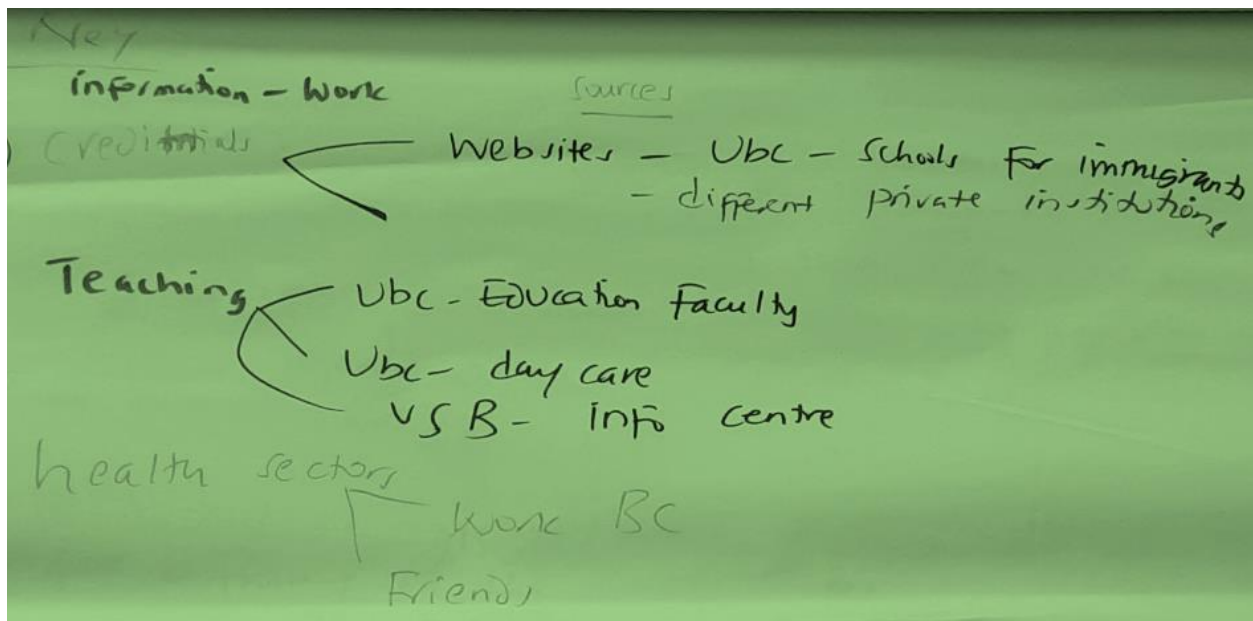
Figure 13: Ney's employment information world map showing use of different information sources for different information needs

Ney explained that when looking for information about required credentials to practice in a profession, she consulted the websites of higher institutions of learning, such as the website of The University of British Columbia (UBC) and a few private institutions. When searching for information specific to the teaching profession, Ney consulted UBC's education faculty, UBC

daycares and the Vancouver School Board's Information Centre. When looking for information to practice in the healthcare sector, Ney went to WorkBC and consulted her friends.

4.3 Discussion

In this section I bring together the foregoing discussion on the information behaviour of participants while seeking employment. This includes their information behaviours before and after they arrived in Canada and the relationship between their employment information behaviour and the Library and Information Science stages of immigrant settlement. I also discuss the role of public libraries in the employment seeking experiences of participants, as well as their preferred information source.

4.3.1 Immigrant settlement stages and employment seeking

Immigrant settlement is said to occur in three stages: Initial or transitioning, intermediate or settling in, and final or being settled (Caidi, Allard & Quirke, 2010; George, 2004; Lloyd, Anne Kennan, Thompson & Qayyum, 2013; Mwarigha, 2002). Employment is often associated with the intermediate stage (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Lloyd, Anne Kennan, Thompson & Qayyum, 2013). However, for participants in this study, employment cut across all three stages of settlement.

Participants described well-established pre-arrival information practices. Some participants started to seek employment information pre-migration, which was in stage 1 (initial or transitioning) and continued to seek employment through stage 2 (intermediate or settling in). In the first stage, some of the participants signed up for online communities on social media platforms where they connected with other potential immigrants to Canada from all over the world. While some of these forums were for immigrants from a particular country, others were for specific occupations. Some of the immigrants had joined more than one online community. Through these online communities,

participants obtained information about eligibility to migrate to Canada, requirements to practice in certain occupations in Canada, and access to job vacancies in the workplaces of other online community members. Participants who arrived as permanent residents were more likely to seek employment pre-arrival, while those who arrived as international students were more likely to seek employment in the intermediate stage as they were focused on their studies at the initial stage. Some participants sought employment in stage 3 (final or being settled). People in this circumstance tended to be entering the workforce having been a stay-at-home parent during their initial years in Canada, or still be searching for their ideal job having been working in survival employment in their initial and intermediate stages.

4.3.2 Characteristics of information sources

Participants overwhelmingly preferred "other people", including friends, family and professors, as a source of employment information. This finding corroborates those of other studies that have reported on the information sources used by immigrants during settlement (Lingel, 2011; Caidi & Allard, 2005; Fisher et. al., 2004). Other people are crucial to the information worlds of immigrants, be it in their overall settlement or some dimension of it. Participants relayed that they preferred to seek information from other people because people offer personalized, highly contextualized information, take the time to convey information to enhance their understanding, "go the extra mile" to help them gain access to information, provide emotional support and are accessible anytime via different media. Interpersonal sources therefore served as an information system, an emotional support system and a social network, which is consistent with findings of previous scholars (Shoham & Strauss, 2008; Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016). Employment information and support that recognizes the value of "people" would be congruent with the context and culture of participants in this study.

Some participants found information provided on government websites unclear. They interpreted such information in light of their previous information worlds. By providing information that while possibly clear to Canadians may be ambiguous to other nationals, the Canadian Government indirectly shaped the pre-arrival expectations of study participants.

4.3.3 Public Libraries were not prominent in participants' employment search

Public libraries in Metro Vancouver are spaces for all community members to enjoy regardless of their immigration status, ethnicity or socioeconomic status (see VPL, 2020 for example). In addition to providing free spaces for all to feel welcome and engage (Lashley, 2017), public libraries provide a range of other (free) services. These include collections in different languages for a wide readership, free access to computers and internet, electronic resources covering diverse subjects, and a wealth of programs, including settlement and English Language resources (Mabi, 2018; Sirikul &Dorner, 2016). More specific to this research, public libraries provide employment resources and programs, including those offered in partnership with employment focused community organizations. Examples are Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants, resume and cover letter workshops, and volunteering opportunities to gain Canadian work experience and references. Undoubtedly, libraries offer cost saving opportunities for immigrants to learn about the culture of the host countries and obtain career and settlement information. However, none of the interviewees listed the library as a source of employment information.

With the wide range of employment offerings that public libraries present to immigrants, it was surprising that the library was not utilized in the course of participants' job search. Inadequate knowledge of the value of the library among immigrants has been documented (Edmonton Public Library [EPL], 2014; Peterson, 2014). That being said, many public libraries have implemented initiatives to increase their visibility to newcomers, including outreach events, partnerships with

settlement agencies, and the Library Champions program where immigrant volunteers are trained to promote the libraries to other immigrants who are not currently using libraries (NewToBC, 2018). Despite these efforts, the findings of the current research suggest that more outreach to immigrants of minority ethnicities could be valuable. Participants had fewer social networks and consequently limited chances to acquire information about libraries.

4.4 Summary

When seeking meaningful employment, participants valued information about available job postings, information about the company and sector of interest as well as the geographic location of the companies as this influenced their choice of settlement location. These findings are congruent with Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, and Sundin's (2016) findings. However, participants' in Rayes et al.'s study were medical professionals, and their needs were focused on the health sector, including residency opportunities and research developments. Participants in the current study had diverse professional backgrounds and therefore sought information on different employment industries and settlement locations.

To obtain the desired information, participants exhibited both pre- and post-arrival information practices. Some participants started to gather information about employment in Canada while they were still in their source countries. They did this by joining online social communities hosted on social media platforms, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, searching the internet broadly, and contacting agencies sent to them by the Canadian government. While such information proved helpful to some, it did not eliminate the challenges associated with securing jobs, nor did it make it easier to secure employment information once they had arrived in Canada.

Upon arrival in Canada, participants utilized information sources grouped into three categories: Canadian institutions, other people and online sources. People were the most cited and preferred information sources for the participants, followed by online sources. General internet searching was popular for online employment information acquisition. Participants found online communities valuable, while many utilized more than one information source to secure employment related information. Only three participants mentioned acquiring employment information serendipitously, but information encountering remains none-the less valuable (Oh & Butler, 2015). Since I did not specifically ask participants about information encountering, it is possible that instances of serendipitous information acquisition may have been underreported in this study. Encouraging immigrants to explore their environment could increase their chances of encountering unexpected information and supports.

Moreover, having the right information on time can help immigrants decide their career paths sooner and avoid delays. As immigrants take on average 15 years to fully settle economically (Nekby, 2002), it is possible that having access to the right information at the right time - preferable earlier on in their arrival - can help to shorten this time by exposing them to different career options and requirements.

CHAPTER 5: SERVICE AVAILABILITY AND USE

5.0 Introduction

This section examines available employment support for immigrants obtained from the document analysis. This is compared with interview findings about employment services used or not used by participants. Suggestions from the interviews to make employment support more relevant to African immigrants are also presented. The section begins by presenting the organizations whose services were analyzed, along with the support they provide, which were grouped into categories. Subsequently I discuss how these supports serve participants. This included participants who successfully used support, those who used support but were unsuccessful, those who did not use/ did not mention or were unaware of support, and those who actively declined support. I also present factors that contributed to a sense of success and lack of success with services used. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a discussion and summary.

5.1 Employment support for immigrants in Metro Vancouver

This section first describes the eight organizations identified through the document analysis (section 3.2.1), before moving into the themes identified from analyzing the employment offerings of these organizations. These organizations' offerings are presented in Table 12. More detailed descriptions of the organizations follow.

Organization	Summary of offerings
The Skilled Immigrant Info Centre (SIIC) at the Vancouver Public Library	Housed at the Central branch of the Vancouver Public Library, the SIIC offers employment information to skilled immigrants province wide.

Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House (MPNH)	MPNH provides services to immigrants in Vancouver's Mount Pleasant neighbourhood. It also has services for immigrants who are ineligible for federally funded employment support.
Douglas College	Post-secondary institution that offers a limited amount of employment support to immigrants and employers.
BC Francophone Immigration Program / Programme d'immigration francophone de la Colombie-Britannique	Provides employment support targeted at French speaking immigrants in British Columbia.
Jewish Family Services	Offers employment services to support the integration of Jewish immigrants, as well as the broader community.
Richmond Multicultural Community Services (RMCS)	Based in the City of Richmond with no branch in any other city. RMCS provides employment support to help immigrants live meaningfully in the City of Richmond.
Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBS) and	ISSofBC offers a wide range of employment services to support immigrants in British Columbia.
DiverseCity Community Resources Society	Based in the City of Surrey with no location in any other city. It offers a wide range of employment support to immigrants in different languages.

Table 15: Summary of organizations and services

5.1.1 Skilled Immigrant Info Centre (SIIC)

The Skilled Immigrant Info Centre (SIIC) started as a pilot project at the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) in March 2008. The goal of its establishment was to provide skilled immigrants with targeted employment information that will assist in their search for jobs in their chosen fields (VPL, 2008). In Canada, skilled immigrants are people who have at least one year of work experience within the last 10 years, in one of the occupations listed under skill level 0, A or B of the National Occupational Classification[9] (NOC) (Government of Canada [GOC], 2019). This service, the only one of its kind in British Columbia, is funded by the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition Program in partnership with the Government of BC. SIIC operates an online and in-person presence to meet the needs of skilled immigrants. Staff of the Centre work with skilled immigrants to identify possible career opportunities and connect them with appropriate resources, including professional organizations, employer associations and immigrant services (GOC, 2008).

The SIIC offers employment guides that include labour market outlook, wages/salary information, industry associations, employment outlook, credential evaluation information, industry journals and industry websites (VPL, 2015). By September 2015, the SIIC possessed over one hundred employment guides and close to twenty guides to alternate careers. The alternate career guides provide information on related careers that immigrants could use their overseas qualifications to secure. The SIIC further offers three major programs for skilled immigrants. This includes the career and job search tour, a session that introduces attendees to the intricacies of navigating the hidden job market, career options, and job application resources; the small business tour, which

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[9] The National Occupation Classification (NOC) is a standardized terminology used to describe occupations in Canada for statistical and planning purposes (GOC, 2019).

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helps attendees to locate information about starting and operating a small business in Canada; and the career explorer, a six-hour workshop that provides more comprehensive information on career and job options than the previous two. The SIIC also offers one-on-one appointments for more customized career and job-related services.

5.1.2 Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House (MPNH)

MPNH began operations in 1976 and currently serves over 3,000 people annually who originate from over 40 countries. In partnership with several funders, community partners and volunteers, MPNH offers community-oriented events and activities that meet the changing needs of the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood[10]. The employment support at MPNH is targeted at newcomers who are ineligible for employment support under federally funded programs. Such groups include temporary residents and naturalized citizens. MPNH's services include mentoring, information/orientation, referrals, resume and cover letter creation, workplace rights and safety, labour market information, workplace culture, volunteering, job fairs and social benefits such as employment insurance and the Canada Pension Plan.

5.1.3 Douglas College

Douglas College is a post-secondary institution with two campuses in New Westminster and Coquitlam. Through its contract training department called the "Training Group," Douglas College offers customized labour market training and programs for government, businesses and other community groups. The training group offers programs in six areas: Employment Services and

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[10] Mount Pleasant is the neighbourhood in the City of Vancouver that runs from False Creek southeast towards the intersection of Broadway, Kingsway, and Main Street.

Career Development, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada, Essential Skills, Self-Employment Training, Programs and Services for Employers, and Short-Term Training.

Some of the programs offered by the Training Group across the six areas include the Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants which is restricted to people who have held permanent resident status for 5 years or less. Temporary residents are not eligible. Other programs include information sessions, employment programs for youth 15-29 years old, self-employment services, business research, referrals and workplace English.

5.1.4 BC Francophone Immigration Program / Programme d'immigration francophone de la Colombie-Britannique

This program works to attract and support Francophone immigrants[11] to settle in BC and Canada. They offer services to naturalized citizens, permanent residents pre- and post-arrival, and temporary residents. The organization also offers services to employers, including access to a pool of candidates, free participation in job fairs, and opportunities to pre-screen applicants and publish job openings on the organization's website. Employment support offered to immigrants includes job search strategies, interview preparation, preparation of job applications and exploration of career opportunities in the Canadian labour market.

5.1.5 Jewish family services (JFS)

Jewish Family Services offers services to improve the quality of life for individuals and families in Vancouver and beyond at all ages and stages of life in the Jewish and broader community (Jewish Family Services, 2020). Services offered cut across demographics, including seniors,

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[11] Nearly 20% of Blacks in Canada speak French as a mother tongue, while 28% of Blacks speak French at home (Statistics Canada, 2019).

children and immigrants. Such services include employment support, financial aid, food deliveries and counselling. Career counsellors at Jewish Family Services work with newcomers to create career action plans. Employment services offered include resume and cover letter creation, employment workshops, interview preparation, alumni mentorship, coaching, and referrals to employment agencies.

5.1.6 Richmond Multicultural Community Services (RMCS)

RMCS provides services to promote harmony and support immigrants in Richmond to live a meaningful quality of life. Among other services, they provide English Language conversation opportunities, settlement services and employment support. Employment counsellors at RMCS help newcomers to build resumes and cover letters and help to place them in entry level positions. Newcomers are promised services in English or their first language. Immigration categories eligible for service include naturalized citizens, permanent residents, refugees, provincial nominees selected by provinces based on province-specific needs, live-in caregivers and refugee claimants. Temporary residents are not eligible.

5.1.7 Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC)

Established in 1972, ISSofBC serves over 20,000 clients annually. As one of the largest immigrant serving agencies in British Columbia, ISSofBC provides free services to support newcomers in their settlement, employment and English language learning. ISSofBC offers roughly ten employment support programs. This includes specific services for different demographics such as women, youth, skilled immigrants, and employers. Also included are referrals to programs, services and staff; help to select appropriate employment support; mentoring; internship

opportunities; child minding; connection to employers; help to prepare for job and overcome employment barriers; work experience placement and career portfolio development.

5.1.8 DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society (DCRS)

DIVERSEcity is a registered charity that empowers newcomers to Canada through personalized and caring support services. For over 40 years, DCRS has served newcomers in Surrey, Delta, Langley and Whiterock. Some of the services offered include free bus tickets, child minding and various subsidies. In addition, DCRS provides employment support for different demographics such as includes youth employment programs and the H.E.A.L. for Work Program for Women. It also offers resources for employers and entrepreneurship support for newcomers. Services are offered in English and a few other languages.

5.2 Types of Employment Support

Exploring the websites of immigrant settlement and employment agencies yielded nine categories of employment support being provided to immigrants: Barrier targeted employment support; self-employment; experiential job search help; programs for employers; customized employment support; workplace preparation supports and trainings; resource-based job search help; financing; activity-based job search help. These are presented in Table 17 and elaborated after the table.

Themes	Description	Example	Organizations offering service
Barrier targeted employment support	Supports that remove or reduce barriers to accessing other supports	Transportation support, child minding	ISSofBC, DIVERSEcity

Self-employment	Support to help immigrants set up their own businesses.	Workshops and information sections to explore and understand the requirements for starting a business in Canada.	Douglas College, ISSofBC, DIVERSEcity, SIIC
Experiential job search help	Employment support that leads to the acquisition of experience about a position or industry of interest.	Volunteering, job shadowing and interning	SIIC, Programme d'immigration francophone, JFS, ISSofBC, MPNH, DIVERSEcity
Programs for employers	Services to help employers to successfully hire and include immigrants into their workplaces	Information about accessing the immigrant pool, diversity and inclusion training and help with recruiting and onboarding. However, these are not discussed as it is outside the focus of the current study	Douglas College, ISSofBC, BC Francophone Immigration Program, DCRS
Customized employment support	Employment support that is targeted to specific demographics and professions	Mature worker employment, technology careers, support for specific age and gender	Programme d'immigration francophone, Douglas College, ISSofBC, DIVERSEcity, MPNH
Workplace preparation	This support provides information to newcomers about	Personal protection, workplace rights and responsibilities trainings	Douglas College, RMCS, MPNH, JFS, SIIC, DIVERSEcity

supports and trainings	Canadian workplaces without participatory or experiential elements		
Resource based job search help	This type of employment support provides employment related resources to immigrants in digital and/or print formats	Information/orientation, market research, research guides	SIIC, Programme d'immigration francophone, MPNH, Douglas College, DIVERSEcity, JFS, ISSofBC
Financing	Funding for employment related activities	Loans	ISSofBC, DIVERSEcity
Activity-based job search help	Supports to help immigrants participate in employment related activities that do not involve acquiring on the job experience for particular industries or positions of interest	Cover letter and resume help, credential evaluation, career portfolio development	SIIC, Programme d'immigration francophone, DIVERSEcity, JFS, RMCS, Douglas College, ISSofBC

Table 16: Nine themes with descriptions, examples and organizations offering them

5.2.1 Barrier targeted employment support

Barrier targeted employment support refers to support provided to alleviate situations that may prevent immigrants from accessing the support they need to secure employment. This type of support is not directly related to employment seeking activities, but helps immigrants utilize other supports. Examples include child minding services for parents and caregivers who need to attend

training or professional development programs, as well as transit passes to alleviate transportation costs for those who need to travel to participate in employment programs.

5.2.2 Self-employment/entrepreneurship services

These services enable immigrants to set up their own businesses. Such services include the provision of information related to industry research, market trends, funding, creating business plans, registering a business and understanding the Canadian business operation environment. Entrepreneurship programs exist for immigrants who have a clear idea of what kind of business they are interested in, as well as those who want to explore entrepreneurship to see if it is a suitable path for them. Various options exist to access entrepreneurship services. These include one-on-one consultations, classes and workshops. All or most of the entrepreneurship programs require people to be permanent residents or naturalized citizens to be eligible.

5.2.3 Experiential job search help

This category includes employment support that leads to the acquisition of experience about a position or industry of interest, or the process of securing work in Canada. By this I mean services that require newcomers to not only show up to listen and receive information, but to take active steps towards their employment inclusion. Services in this category include those that directly place immigrants in or in close proximity to a job to gain temporary work experience in their field of interest. This includes volunteering, job shadowing and interning, or learning from employees who do the jobs they are interested in.

5.2.4 Programs for employers

While employers do not constitute the population of interest for this research, I wanted to point out that there is existing support for employers to hire newcomers. Some of these services include

information about accessing the immigrant pool, diversity and inclusion training and help with recruiting and onboarding.

5.2.5 Customized employment help

Customized employment help refers to employment support that is targeted to specific demographics, such as gender, language, profession and immigration status. Examples include:

- **Profession:** This includes support provided to help newcomers enter certain professions, e.g., skilled trades and technology careers. Such information could include requirements for those professions and the labour market outlook.

- **Age***:* While the majority of services are targeted towards adults, others are tailored to mature workers (45 years or above) or youth. Youth employment services target teens and young adults. "Young adult" may range from 19 to 30 years old.

- **Immigration status:** There are employment supports for refugees, landed immigrants, temporary residents, and naturalized citizens. The greatest amount of support is available to landed immigrants and refugees. An example is the Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants.

- **Gender:** The majority of the gender-based employment support is tailored to women, such programs for women who want to operate a sewing business and programs for women in technology. These programs recognize the added challenge of caring for the home and children while working outside the house.

- **Language***:* Employment support is offered in English, Hindi, Punjabi, Arabic and Mandarin. Languages offered often represents the population that the organization is serving, or the most probable beneficiaries of such services. For example, services offered in Richmond, BC have Mandarin and Cantonese options because of the high Chinese population in Richmond (City of Richmond, 2019), while services offered in Surrey have

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Punjabi and Hindi options due to the large South Asian population in Surrey (NewtoBC, 2018).

5.2.6 Workplace preparation support and training

Employment support in this category provides information and training to newcomers about Canadian workplaces without incorporating experiential elements. Some services in this category are: job readiness training, personal privacy and security while job searching, health and safety training, personal protection, workplace rights and safety, workplace culture, and awareness of social benefits such as Employment Insurance (EI) and Canada Pension Plan (CPP). These services are helpful beyond the job search stage to helping immigrants success when they do secure a job.

5.2.7 Resource based job search help

This type of employment support provides employment related resources to immigrants in digital and/or print formats. Resources include: employment guides to different professions; industry related information; information about the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS); re-credentialing information; job search resources; employment standards; general employment information/orientation; market research reports; access to job postings/job boards; and guides to alternative careers.

5.2.8 Financing

Newcomers receive funding for various employment related activities. This includes micro loans to start a small business, financial support for re-credentialing or obtaining professional qualifications, and tuition assistance.

5.2.9 Activity based job search help

These supports help immigrants participate in employment related activities that do not involve acquiring on the job experience for particular industries or positions of interest. Rather, these activities prepare immigrants for entry into different kinds of job. Support services in this category include job fairs where employers set up a booth and immigrants are invited. Some job fairs feature on-the-spot interviews and hiring. Immigrants are often encouraged to come to job fairs with a well-presented resume and be prepared for interviews. Immigrants may receive advance information about what employers are coming and what positions they are recruiting for; this helps immigrants prepare and increases their chances of success when they meet with employers.

Other services in this category are cover letter and resume preparation services where immigrants receive help to build a Canadian style resume and cover letter to suit employer demands. Job search help is also a popular service offered under this category. This includes teaching immigrants job search strategies and techniques, helping them prepare for interviews, e.g. practice interviewing, introducing them to job search resources, and helping them access the Canadian Job Bank, a government of Canada repository of job postings. Career counselling and career action plan development are another set of services offered. Employment counsellors help immigrants to map out their career goals and the steps needed to achieve those goals.

5.3 How participants utilized available employment supports

In the preceding section, I discussed available employment support for immigrants which I obtained from the document analysis. In this and subsequent sections, I discuss employment supports that participants mentioned at the interviews. I map these services into the same nine

categories as the document analysis. Seven services stood out in the interviews, which fell into four of the nine categories identified in the document analysis:

1) Supports that prepared participants for the workplace, such as courses and workshops

2) Resource-based supports that provided employment information such as job search strategies

3) Financial support to obtain Canadian certifications and purchase tools, and

4) Activity based job search help, such as mock interviews, networking and help with creating resumes and cover letters.

Specifically, these services included: courses (N=4), financial support (N=5), interview preparation (N=3), job search skills (N=3), resume and cover letter creation (N=6), networking (N=4), and referrals (N=6). Resume and cover letter creation, along with referrals from employment agencies, were the top listed employment support accessed by participants. Moreover, many participants utilized more than one service from the agencies. Participants did not report using self-employment, experiential, barrier targeted or customized employment help. More detailed descriptions of employment support accessed by participants are presented next.

5.3.1 Workplace preparation services and training: Courses

Participants took courses or training programs with the immigrant employment agencies. The courses varied in length and content; some were workshops while others led to certification. Michael, who had been in Canada for about 3 weeks at the time of interview, relayed how he was looking forward to starting a re-certification program a few days after our interview. Employed in a survival job at the time of the interview, Michael described his delight at taking such a program that would afford him the opportunity to obtain a Canadian certification and gain Canadian work

experience through the internship integrated into the course. Michael felt that it would be easier for him to "integrate" after he had finished the course and associated internship. Tao had recently completed a short certificate course to work in the retail industry when I interviewed him. Tao's 6-week program was fully paid for by the government. For Tao, obtaining this retail certificate was a temporary plan to enable him to secure jobs and feed his family while he pursued his long-term plan to school for a Master's degree in his pre-arrival profession. At the time of the interview, Tao had secured admission to a university and was looking forward to resuming in a few months.

5.3.2 Resource based job search help: Job search skills

Some participants reported using immigrant employment agencies to search for jobs in Canada. This included learning how to use different job search tools, such as LinkedIn and the Indeed job site; job search strategies, such as navigating the hidden job market and networking to get jobs; and meeting with guest speakers who provided more tips on searching for jobs. Emy for example reported that he got some job tips from an agency, while Dammy was taught how to use LinkedIn for job search, and how to go about the job search generally.

5.3.3 Financial support

A service agency reimbursed Dad for "a good part of the cost of certification courses" he took upon arrival in Canada, while another agency purchased "work tools and protection equipment" for Emy. Dad and Emy both reported that the financial assistance was of immense value to their employment situation.

5.3.4 Activity based job search help

Services used included interview preparation, networking, referrals, cover letter and resume preparation. More detailed descriptions follow.

5.3.4.1 Interview preparation

Some participants, such as Dammy, participated in mock interviews to help them prepare for actual interviews. For some participants, such mock interviews were their first opportunity for interviews of any kind in Canada. Mock interviews included employment agency staff sharing common interview questions and engaging in practice interviews with participants.

5.3.4.2 Networking

Networking took on different forms for participants, from formal mentoring programs to being connected to employers or other immigrants. Agencies operate formal mentoring programs in which newcomers are connected to mentors who are well established in their professions. Mentors were often selected from the industry of interest to participants. The mentors committed to a period of time in which they provided information and guidance to newcomers to help them integrate into the industry and secure jobs. Participants reported that the mentorship program was valuable because they got to learn from industry professionals about job prospects and requirements of an industry of interest. Dad, who had a background in the IT sector, was connected to a mentor in the same industry who helped him understand the professional IT landscape in Canada. Dammy, who had a professional background in the fishing and marine industry, was still unemployed at the time of the interview, but relayed that the mentoring program was valuable. Examples of the kinds of advice that Dammy received included how to achieve professional growth and development in the industry, what mistakes to avoid, and how to approach her job search in the industry. Dammy further shared that this program was particularly helpful for her because "at the end of the day in Canada we've come to understand that networking is actually the best way to get jobs" (Dammy).

In addition to the formal mentoring, some agencies sent participants' resumes to organizations for employment consideration and connected participants to staff of such organizations. While participants did not report that a job resulted from this, they appreciated that it was done. Michael, who was working in a survival job and still seeking more meaningful employment, conveyed his appreciation for his case manager who gave him the contact information of an individual who worked in an industry of interest. This individual contacted Michael and invited him to be in touch if he needed any help. The knowledge that he had a person to contact who was open to questions was comforting to Michael.

Tao reported a different kind of networking: a group program that connected newcomers to other newcomers and longer established immigrants. Tao, who had only been in Canada for about one year at the time of interview, was still getting familiar with his physical environment and trying to learn more about his new country. He relayed that the group program was the first avenue for him to interact with "people of Canada." According to Tao, the experience of interacting with longer established immigrants helped him to settle because he saw immigrants "who had been in Canada for 12 years and they still came for that retail program because they couldn't get into their field after 12 years". Sharing the impact of this knowledge on his employment decisions, Tao further said:

> "This made me make my decision quickly that without a degree or certificate in one of these Canadian institutions it will be almost impossible for me to practice with a foreign degree."

The experiences of others who had been in Canada for over a decade but still unable to return to their pre-arrival professions due to lack of Canadian education prompted Tao to quickly seek and secure admission to pursue a graduate degree in Canada.

5.3.4.3 Referral

Referral was one of the two most popular services among the interview participants. Agencies referred participants to other places they thought were better suited to meet participant's needs, such as other agencies and educational institutions where participants could pursue schooling. In some cases, agencies went beyond referrals and actually contacted other sources on behalf of immigrants. Philanta experienced multiple inter-agency referrals. She arrived to join her spouse in Canada and had a fair network of friends and instructors through her certificate program. Very quickly, Philanta was connected to one agency, from which she got referrals to others. In her words, "Work BC referred me to MOSAIC then I got to hear about AVIA from MOSAIC so it was like a circle" (Philanta). Dammy connected with the Vancouver branch of an agency, which then referred her to the Surrey location where she lived. From the Surrey branch, Dammy was again referred to the Langley branch because she lived in a part of Surrey that was closer to the agency's Langley office.

5.3.4.4 Resume and cover letter creation

Resume and cover letter creation were mentioned by six participants. Many participants came from countries where cover letters were not required, and resumes had a different format from the Canadian norm. Many participants reported finding resume creation and cover letter services valuable. Judy confidently created a resume based on her country of origin's resume format and was ready to send this out to employers. The services she interacted with taught her to do it the "Canadian way".

5.3.5 Multiple services

Often times participant received more than one service from a particular agency. Judy for example wanted to change careers from banking, which she had done in her home country, to health care in Canada. She wanted to work or return to school, depending on what each entailed and if she could fit them around her life and family. Judy started with one agency where she got help to create a Canadian resume and cover letter. The agency then connected Judy to a school where she could obtain free certification as a healthcare aide. Other kinds of support that immigrants utilized concurrently were cover letter and resume creation, and job posting alert and interview preparation.

5.4 What participants found helpful about services used

Participants who reported that support used was valuable listed two reasons for this. They found the services humane, and evaluate the information provided as factual.

5.4.1 Humane Service

Participants appreciated situations in which they were treated as individuals, and not just "another client" or "another immigrant". They talked about personalized services that checked in with them after the program they attended had concluded. Philanta appreciated that the agency she utilized still sent her job postings, even though this service automatically emailed people when jobs matching their profiles were posted. Oorloochy, who demonstrated a clear dissatisfaction with the employment services she received, did appreciate that the agency checked on her from time to time. Participants also appreciated services that demonstrated interest in their situations. Dad valued the dedication of staff at an agency who went above and beyond to ensure his success in his job search:

"I just found out that the way they take you they make you their own responsibility they make your success their responsibility. Even when I had interviews, I tend to go there even that morning. You know it was really awesome because they took it as if it was like their relative you know, they just wanted to see your success" (Dad)

Dad liked that his situation was taken seriously, and that the agency demonstrated genuine interest in his case as well as a desire to see him succeed as an outcome of the program.

5.4.2 Factual information about employment realities in Canada

Participants frequently noted that the information received pre-arrival did not match the reality on ground as existing information painted a rosy picture of life as a newcomer in Canada. In this picture, the harsh realities of an immigrant's life were downplayed, while the welcoming nature of Canada was emphasized. This type of information led participants to expect an easier transition than what they met. Participants therefore appreciated when employment information provided to them addressed the realities of life as a Canadian immigrant regardless of whether this information was positive or negative. NI, a medical doctor from her country who had wished to return to the medical profession, gathered employment information pre-arrival and also used agency services upon arrival in Canada. NI spent a lot of time and energy taking resume and cover letter lessons yet was not told early on that she could not secure a job as a physician without Canadian education and/or work experience. She created and re-created cover letters that amounted to no jobs. NI then attended a talk about the Canadian job landscape for immigrants. NI shared that the speaker bluntly painted the situation *as is*, which was very bleak. Despite the news being unpleasant, she gave "kudos to the job developer for making it that bleak like- I'm sorry we are doubtful Thomases and we find it difficult to believe that you have anything to offer *ab initio*". For NI, being armed with such factual information early on would have saved her time and helped her decide on a different course of action. She said:

"I wouldn't have gotten excited writing resumes and all of that. Just tell me as it is like you know, we have difficulty employing you as immigrants so maybe you should settle for something mundane and then see how you can prosper from there maybe go back to school and then show us those excellent grades and then we will believe you better you know… those could have helped" (NI)

Similarly, Oge, who lived in Ontario briefly upon arrival before moving to British Columbia, was given a clear picture of the employment landscape for immigrants earlier in her arrival than NI, which helped her plan her career path. A speaker invited by the agency where Oge was receiving services advised the immigrants to be open to jobs outside their previous careers.

Participants also valued learning what they were doing "wrong" with their job applications, according to Canadian norms and practices. Most participants had never needed to create a cover letter prior to arriving in Canada. The majority also used the Curriculum Vitae that allowed them to list all their qualifications without a page limit, rather than the two-page resumes preferred by Canadian employers outside academia. Due to the unfamiliarity of the job application requirements, participants appreciated such candidness and could speculate about why they had not received many interview invites.

5.5 Participants who used employment support but reported limited impact

Some participants reported using employment support but not finding it helpful to their employment situation. Some of the reasons cited were a mismatch between expectations and service received, and participants having more relevant information than the agency staff assisting them.

5.5.1 Unmet expectations

Participants had expectations of their questions being satisfactorily answered and their needs being met when accessing employment support. However, many needs and expectations remained unmet

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after service utilization. Judy was counting on the immigrant settlement agency to give her a job. With her professed inadequate technology skills, Judy hoped that signing up for an employment program would be the end of her employment travails and a "good job" would be the outcome. At the end of the employment program, Judy was released into the job market to search for jobs on her own. Her expectation had been that she would be given a good job, or at least placed on a waitlist and called when a job became available.

NI, a medical doctor in her country, was facing numerous barriers to integrating into the Canadian labour market. NI could not practice as a medical doctor in Canada until she had completed the required re-certification process. In the interim, NI hoped to work in customer service, or a medical related job. She accepted the fact that she could not practice as a doctor or a nurse but hoped that the immigrant service agency could connect her directly to employers and speak to her soft and transferable skills. As with Judy, NI had to go through her job search by herself after receiving resume and cover letter help from the agency. Overall, NI did not obtain the benefits she had hoped to receive from signing up with an immigrant settlement agency.

Miss A, who held a master's degree from the United States (US) wanted a job commensurate with her qualifications and past job in the US. Her expectation was not out of place since many qualifications are seamlessly transferable between Canada and the US. Miss A serendipitously found an employment agency, signed up for their services and was subsequently notified when a job became available. However, it was a cleaning job and Miss A considered it a "menial" job that was below her professional aspirations and qualifications. Miss A therefore rejected the offer and opted to search for a job on her own, subsequently securing a position closer to her professional goals. Okey had over ten years of professional experience in IT compliance and was baffled by the agency's emphasis on changing careers and being willing to start afresh:

"They emphasised on you being willing to make a career change and if you have a specialized skill and path you should be willing to make a deviation and take something not particularly tailored to your skill, exposure and experience. I for one I'm into IT compliance and I didn't want to go applying for jobs in system analysis or networking just because I understand technology. I wanted to stick to my path and do what I've been doing for the past 10 years. And also, there was a lot of emphasis on you being willing to start afresh, start from scratch and have experience. I mean someone was asking me to go and apply for internship" (Okey)

5.5.2 Agency staff perceived as "not knowing enough"

Some participants reported that agency staff who attended to them did not appear to have helpful information. In some cases, participants perceived themselves to have more relevant information than the staff who was helping them. Participants were reluctant to return to such places, as they anticipated the outcome to be the same. NI was an avid information seeker, well-educated and well-versed with technology. For her, the inability to secure meaningful employment was therefore not due to inadequate access to information but that the information amassed did not yield the desired employment. NI sought further help from agencies but was frustrated by the lack of valuable information she received. Ooloochy, another avid information seeker, shared a similar sentiment, reporting that she sensed "having more information than the employment agent". Both NI and Oorloochy were from the health industry. According to Oorloochy, agencies were more familiar with helping people in business, computer sciences and engineering than helping medical doctors and dentists. Oorloochy relayed that the agency staff seemed taken aback to learn that she was a dentist and exhibited some difficulty in trying to help her.

5.5.3 Characteristics of information provided

Participants described instances where information received was insufficient to solve their need. Some participants reported that information was too generic to be useful. Ney, who wanted to learn

about occupations in high demand in Canada, was referred from one staff to another and had to search for more information on her own. Moreover, while the resume and cover letter writing supports were helpful to many of the participants, NI did not find them as valuable. Her inability to secure meaningful employment was not due to an improper resume or cover letter, but due to her lack of Canadian education and work experience, which the information providers did not convey. As an avid information seeker, NI had already created a "Canadian" resume and cover letter on her own but was still required to go through this service regardless:

> "So, the job search agency I used they weren't exactly helpful because they didn't know much. They kept on hammering on resume preparation and all of that and so we had a full one or 2 weeks of looking for jobs, how to do a resume cover letter writing and all of that which was fantastic but it wasn't just about writing the resume; it was also about putting out what needed to be put out and sadly realizing that in healthcare practically all the jobs need local certifications which obviously I didn't have at that time " (NI)

In NI's case, all the cover letter and resume returned no interview invites because she was "showcasing qualifications that were not backed by Canadian certification" and experience. A more beneficial service according to NI would have been a career action plan and advice on how to navigate the employment landscape without Canadian qualifications.

5.6 Why some participants did not use employment support

There is undoubtedly an abundance of employment support for immigrants. Despite the myriad of employment services available and the benefits that they bring to the employment search process, some participants still reported not using them. Participants gave an assortment of reasons for their non-use, including the availability of alternatives, confidence in their own skills, lack of information about available services, immigration status, and perceptions of employment service agencies. These are elaborated below.

Formal employment support provided by agencies in Canada was not the only option for participants with regards to employment seeking. They sometimes drew on alternatives, including internet search and asking other people. Eto's husband provided her with all the information she needed. Eto's husband had searched for a job in Canada himself, and was therefore able to guide her through the process, thereby eliminating the need for her to seek formal employment support. Eto was therefore unaware of what employment supports existed for a long time, and never felt she had to use any. Ewura, who schooled in Canada, received valuable information from her instructor that led to her current job. She started as an intern and was retained after the internship ended.

Participants also described having strong confidence in their skills and ability to secure needed employment information as a reason for not seeking support from agencies. Ifedi, who held a master's degree and had several years of work experience in the information technology sector, frequently used online information sources and was convinced that with his qualification, he should get a job "if there really is equality". Ifedi hinted that "equality" was a larger problem to securing meaningful employment for himself and other African immigrants rather than inability to access information given that they considered themselves skilled at acquiring information, and that there was no shortage of employment information in Canada.

Participants were also largely unaware of the existence of employment support services and therefore did not benefit from them. In addition, some participants who were aware of the services did not possess a full understanding of their purpose and if they met the eligibility criteria. Mr A., who had successfully secured a job that was close to his ideal job after completing a Canadian post-secondary degree, "had no idea that those people helped" so he had gone about "looking for a job using the internet". Ignace, who schooled in Canada as an international student, stated that

he assumed such services were for refugees. It was only during my interview with him that he became aware that non-refugees were also eligible for employment support:

> "To be honest, you are telling me right now but I thought it's for refugees seriously so I didn't even know that we can just walk in there, seriously I didn't know" (Ignace)

Lack of awareness of the existence of services, and misconceptions about eligibility requirements cut across participants who had arrived through different immigration streams, including streams that have immediate access to support upon arrival in Canada. Ignace, who knew about the services, had a misconception of the eligibility requirements, while Mr. A., who had a Canadian university degree, was equally unaware of such services.

On the other hand, Oghazi who knew about the services and eligibility criteria, was limited by his temporary resident status as temporary residents are not eligible for some employment supports[12]. Oghazi demonstrated a keen awareness of resources and support. He relayed how he had visited a Work BC office to seek employment support but was denied help:

> "When I was not having a permanent resident status and I went to work BC office I was told that if I were a PR or Canadian citizen, they could help but because of my status they cannot help that much" (Oghazi)

Oghazi was a permanent resident at the time of this interview and no longer needed employment support; he had drawn upon alternative sources to search for and secure employment.

Participants were also reluctant to allow for-profit employment agencies[13] to take part of their

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[12] Eligibility for some employment supports is based on immigration status, and temporary residents are ineligible for some supports, such as the career paths for skilled immigrants (ISSofBC, 2020).

[13] It appeared to me that participants assumed that they had to pay for all employment support, which left me wondering if some participants knew about free government funded employment support.

already insufficient income as a commission for securing jobs for them, especially when they had the skills to get the jobs themselves. Ignace did not think he should share his wages with these agencies: "at the end of the day if you use those agencies, you know, if your employer is paying you maybe $20 per hour then they will pay you may be $10 or $15. So I'm like this money is not even enough already". Saviour, who had worked in several survival jobs, shared the same view. According to Saviour, "I believe you are not disabled; you have knowledge to use your computer except people who don't have knowledge of using their laptop and all that will face such issues". Saviour believed that an immigrant can apply for jobs on their own provided they were digitally literate and had no disabilities.

Moreover, previous failure by some participants to secure satisfactory services from immigrant support agencies discouraged such participants from continuing to seek support as they anticipated more failures. Oorlochy, a dentist in her home country, explained that she had enthusiastically gone to an immigrant settlement agency for help, but was dissatisfied because the agency did not seem to know how to help a medical professional. Hence Oorloochy did not continue to seek support after as she anticipated similar experience, based on agencies' limited support for immigrants in her profession.

5.6.1 Service was not used by participants because they actively declined the service

Eligibility requirements prevented participants from using some services. It would appear that people either met or did not meet eligibility criteria for any service. However, with regards to employment support, eligibility criteria appeared to be a barrier to even eligible immigrants. Agencies often had specific requirements that immigrants must meet prior to being offered service. For some programs, it was mandatory for immigrants to undergo English Language courses and testing, regardless of their fluency in language. Emy, an English Language speaker from childhood

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who also obtained his education in English, lamented about being asked to take basic English Language courses prior to receiving services:

> "They were not helpful in anyway because they said I should go and do English classes. I've been speaking English for several years so that was not what I needed. What I needed was a job and not just going for English class. So, I left them" (Emy)

Emy added that not all immigrants arrive Canada with low English language abilities and emphasized that immigrants should not be subjected to learning basic English if they arrived with advanced proficiencies in the language. He likened the situation to having completed elementary education all the way to post-secondary schooling, and then being asked to return to re-take elementary school classes. In his opinion, it was a waste of time. Immigrants were made to take English language courses and a test as a prerequisite for service. However, those who arrived through economic classes, wrote English Language tests and were granted permanent residence based partially on high test scores (Government of Canada, 2019). Thus, some form of waiver of this requirement would seem in order as it was a barrier to participants accessing this service.

In Table 18, I summarize the foregoing data about use and non-use of services, including the reasons that participants offered for each option.

Service Factors		
Why service used was helpful	**Why service used had limited impact**	**Why service was not used**

Humane services that treated participants as unique information seekers.	Unmet expectations: Participants expectations and needs remained unmet after using service	Formal employment support provided by agencies was not participant's only option to get help. Alternatives such as spouses and the internet were used.
Factual information about employment realities in Canada, rather than generic information that did not appropriately convey the challenges of integrating into the Canadian workforce.	Participants perceived that agency staff did not have adequate knowledge of their requests and therefore did not provide valuable information. Characteristics of the information provided: Information provided was either too generic to be useful or did not address the actual challenge that participants faced.	Participants felt confident in their ability to secure the required information on their own without support from employment agencies. Some participants were unaware that employment supports existed. Some employment supports are restricted to only immigrants with certain immigration statuses. Participants who did not hold such immigration statuses could not access the required support. Perceptions of employment service agencies: An unsatisfactory experience at a service agency prevented participants from seeking further support from agencies Misconceptions about employment supports: Some participants thought that they needed to pay to receive service, while some others assumed that the services were being offered to immigration statuses that the did not

		belong to and therefore considered themselves ineligible. Pre-requisites for receiving employment support prevented some participants from accessing such support them.

Table 17: Use and non-use of support, rationale and opportunities for improvement

When participants utilized employment support, they valued timely and accurate information as well as being treated as unique individuals rather than as general clients. At other times, participants did not access available support, either by choice or due to requirements that excluded them. Yet in other cases when they accessed support, they derived limited impact due to their needs not being met, inadequate knowledge by staff helping them, or qualities of the information provided to them. In the next session I present how employment support could be enhanced for the study participants.

5.7 Opportunities to improve employment support for African immigrants

Interview participants made suggestions to help make agency services more relevant to them. This included hiring and training staff with various cultural and professional backgrounds, providing more opportunities for immigrants to gain professional work experience, quicker integration of professionals, more effective support and follow up, practical information that works and truly recognizing evaluated credentials.

5.7.1 Staff training and diversity

Participants desired immigrant employment support agencies to hire a more professionally and culturally diverse staff to assist immigrants of various cultures and professions. Ney encouraged

organizations to employ professionals in different occupations on the front lines to improve the relevance of information being provided to immigrant employment information seekers:

> "I would say that because they deal with all kinds of career and jobs they should put professionals on this specific categories and then that person will be able to explain in detail and "grab" all the information so that the immigrant will be clear about what they're looking at instead of going to other places to look for the information when they didn't get exactly what they're looking for [from the agency] (Ney)

According to Ney, the staff who handled her case seemed to be general customer service staff who did not provide much helpful information and did not demonstrate adequate understanding of the career she was interested in.

NI suggested that staff of immigrant support agencies did not understand the value that Africans bring and perhaps might support them better if they had this understanding:

> "Maybe they should employ more Blacks so that when I come in and I see a fellow Black face I know that you understand where I'm coming from and you understand what I have to offer. Secondly, they need to know more. Like I said, if they knew that for practically everything, I mean from the care aide up you need certifications they could have just told us that from the get-go" (NI)

As with Ney, NI also encouraged staff training to enable agency staff to be more knowledgeable in the services they were providing for immigrants and be able to offer timely and relevant advice. Dammy, a skilled immigrant, also spoke about staff training "on what is required" so that they were better equipped to support all categories of immigrants that seek their support.

5.7.2 More opportunities to gain professional work experience

Participants, both those who arrived as permanent residents and those who schooled in Canada as international students, repeatedly expressed the desire for more opportunities to gain Canadian work experience. They did not feel that there were enough opportunities to acquire this experience. Some participants, such as Ewura, reported that they graduated from programs without the

Cooperative Work experience (Co-Op), a university program that supports paid work experience as part of the program of study and in which their courses were so intense that there was no room to secure outside employment. Upon graduation, these students faced a similar situation as new arrivals as they had no Canadian work experience. Ignace encouraged Co-op opportunities for students in all post-secondary departments.

Some participants also encouraged the exploration of options to reduce the impact of lack of Canadian work experience. Their rationale was that people needed to be in Canada to obtain Canadian work experience, and yet once in Canada, not having this experience became a barrier to acquiring it. It was clear that participants desired for agencies to provide employment support for gaining work experience in specific professions in which they were interested.

5.7.3 Quicker integration of professionals

Participants also expressed displeasure at the employment situation that has become their reality; being employed in survival jobs outside their original professional training. They desired for employers to be willing to give them a chance by offering them positions related to their professions even if they are entry level roles. According to some participants such as Oorloochy, they would be happy to accept less payment in a profession related to their training than to accept a higher paying job in a profession outside their training. They relayed that working in a related professional role would contribute to a sense of self-actualization, as they would see themselves working towards their professional goals. NI explained that immigrants had a life prior to migration, and these should be recognized in their integration:

> "It really doesn't make sense if you are going to bring people who are over 30 years old, have learned so much in the journey of life both in the classroom and outside of the classroom and yet cannot use their skills. Let there be a way for them to start making use of this already. It doesn't make sense bringing people who you know where "bubbling",

had a social life and then you bring them to a place where they are isolated, they're in their homes or trying to more or less beg for jobs. You know you end up being psychologically burdened, psychologically down, financially worried and all of that. If you want immigrants, make it more seamless for them to progress into something related to their career. Make a short course, like a 2-month quick course, not necessarily that I have to go back to school and start doing courses I have done about 15 years ago. So, help me to go further, don't take me backwards. I don't need that. I need to move forward" (NI).

NI further advocated for having a structure in place for different job categories to provide a pathway for skilled professionals to quickly integrate into their professions in Canada. Both NI and Emy raised the issue of taking well-educated and skilled immigrants back to "basic" programs, e.g English language learning and basic computer classes.

5.7.4 More effective support and follow up

While participants like Dad and Philanta commended employment agencies for following up with them after the service ended, other participants like Ney and Judy reported opposite experiences. According to the latter participants, agencies provided information and often, the information provided was not sufficient to meet immigrants' needs. Immigrants had to augment the provided information on their own with no additional support from the agencies. This is one of the reasons participants found "other people" more valuable than agencies as information sources; people consistently followed up to ensure that support received was effective and availed themselves to provide further direction should the need arise. Participants wished service providers would follow up more to ensure that support was effective or provide additional support if required.

Judy who possessed relatively lower technology savviness was hoping to secure a job through the immigrant settlement organization. However, Judy explained that after the resume and cover letter workshops, she was handed a business card of a staff in a different organization that might be hiring at the time. Judy was asked to send her resume to the contact on the card. This she did but

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never heard back. Judy wished that the agency would have followed up with her as she was clearly needing more support. In Judy's words:

> "They should follow up after the training and not leave their candidates like that. They should make sure the candidates are well settled before they leave them because they just gave me a card to submit my resume. I submitted but nobody called me, nobody checked on me" (Judy).

Oge, a skilled worker, said agencies should help immigrants more because there were many underemployed skilled immigrants. Oge felt that more help and follow up from employment agencies could prove beneficial to these skilled immigrants. Sule Jolomi, a skilled spouse of an international student shared similar views as Judy and Oge:

> "They [agencies] should help newcomers more because as a newcomer you need someone to tell you one or two things you don't know about the society. So, I think it's just to assist newcomers to navigate their way around" (Sule Jolomi)

These statements, regardless of how expressed, demonstrated a perceived deficit in the impact of services being provided. The services received did not appear to significantly improve the employment situation of the participants many of whom still went about searching for and securing jobs on their own after they had received agency support.

5.7.5 Practical information that works

When I asked participants how they would prefer information be delivered to them, they consistently said that the content of the information was more important than the medium of communication. Saviour desired direct factual information whether it was pleasant or not. NI stated:

> "It's not just about the way the information is provided it's about the content. I want relevance; I want practical advice that actually works. So, whether you put it on paper, online, in person.... I can receive it in all ways but most importantly I want to know that it works" (NI)

Many of the participants were fluent in English, literate and had technology skills to access information presented in different formats. However, the content of the communication appeared to be a challenge. Participants felt that some of the information they received did not adequately meet their needs.

5.7.6 Truly recognizing evaluated credentials

Immigrants are often asked to have their education credentials evaluated as part of the immigration process. Some immigrants are further evaluated by employment support agencies upon arrival in Canada. While some immigrants are required to take courses to obtain Canadian credentials in the same profession, others are equivalent upon the first evaluation and no augmentation is required. Yet, lack of Canadian credentials continues to be a barrier for newcomers. Participants were perplexed when told that they did not have a relevant Canadian credentials. They wished that their already evaluated credentials would be recognized.

5.8 Discussion

In this section I bring together the forgoing information about employment support. I present the discussion under two broad subsections. The first subsection discusses available supports and how they served participants. This included contrasting available support and support used by participants, the disproportionate distribution of employment support across professions, the impact of immigration status on service access, and the agency of immigrants in selecting employment support.

In the second subsection, I discuss opportunities to improve employment support. This included both suggestions from interview participants such as hiring and training a diverse staff pool and

more effective follow up, as well as opportunities recognized from my exploration of the websites of agencies during the document analysis, including gaps in service to certain demographics, and improving the accessibility of employment support.

5.8.1 Available supports and how they served participants

The analysis of employment offerings of immigrant support organizations in Metro Vancouver revealed a myriad of employment support being offered to immigrants. These were grouped into nine categories: Barrier targeted employment support; Self-employment; Experiential job search help; Programs for employers; Customized employment support; Workplace preparation supports and trainings; Resource based job search help; Financing; and Activity-based job search help. However, results of the interviews revealed that participants accessed support in four of these nine categories: those that prepared them for the workplace, such as courses and workshops; those that provided employment information such as job search strategies; financial support to obtain Canadian certifications and purchase tools; and activity based job search help, such as mock interviews, networking and help with creating resumes and cover letters. Participants held mixed feelings about these services used. For example, resume and cover letter help was the most frequently cited support accessed by participants. Yet, participants like NI felt that the length of time spent receiving this service was unjustified, especially since the impact was low due to the presence of a different barrier which the agency failed to address.

Resource based job search help and activity-based job search help were offered by most of the organizations (N=8). Although a number of organizations offered experiential support, participants still wished for more opportunities to gain professional work experience in their industries of interest. Two services were offered by the least number of organizations (N=2 for each): financial support and barrier targeted employment support. It appeared that the services offered by the least

organizations were those that participants said would make a significant impact to their employment situation.

Participants, such as Dad and Emy who received financial support described how valuable it was to their employment situation. Other participants like Oorloochy mentioned how taking re-certification was costly and some financial assistance was of value. There was also very little being offered in the barrier targeted employment support category. Interviews show that immigrants who have families (spouse and children) faced additional barriers to securing employment information and ultimately jobs. Yet very little support is available to help them utilize the more abundant support. More needs to be done in this category, such as free child minding to attend employment programs, and more alternate program delivery options such as online program delivery so people can access them without the need to be physically present.

While this study did not specifically explore programs for employers, it was interesting to note that only four organizations listed supports for employers. Yet interviews with participants demonstrated that employers are crucial to the employment integration of immigrants. Since this study did not directly interview employers or service providers, it is difficult to ascertain how supported employers feel to hire, develop and retain immigrant employees. It is also difficult to ascertain how well agencies feel they are supporting employers. Future research could explore the position of employers and agencies in more detail.

There appeared to be a disproportionately large number of supports for immigrants in the information technology (IT) professions, or immigrants wishing to enter the technology professions (e.g ISSofBC, 2020). Immigrants in the arts, humanities and medical sciences seemed to have less support when compared to those in IT professions. This trend was corroborated by participants' experiences reflected during the interviews. Participants, such as Dad who worked in

the technology sector pre-arrival and was returning to the technology sector in Canada, seemed to be faring better than immigrants in other professions when it came to securing jobs that recognized their qualifications. Oorloochy, a medical practitioner, consistently decried the limited support for people in her field and the uncertainty of agency staff about how to support immigrants from her profession. While some participants who are IT professionals were still on their way to their ideal jobs, they seemed not have started from very low paying survival jobs unrelated to their profession, which was the starting point for the majority of participants outside the IT profession.

Services are offered for all categories of immigrants. However, the majority of services required permanent residence or Canadian citizen status to be eligible, making other immigration statuses such as temporary residents ineligible. Examples are the Job Quest program at ISSofBC (ISSofBC, 2020), and the H.E.A.L. for Work Program for Women at DiverseCity Community Resources Society. Some employment support requires or prefer immigrants to be permanent residents within 5 years of arrival in Canada (ISSofBC, 2020; SUCCESS BC, 2020). A major challenge with such requirements is that some immigrants become ineligible for the services when they may need it most. Women participants, such as Oge, Judy, Ney, and Eto, stayed home as primary caregivers for their families while their husbands returned to school or secured employment. When such women are ready to seek employment, they may have exceeded the 5-year mark.

From the description of the services I obtained from the websites of the eight selected organizations, it appeared that newcomers could receive services across multiple themes identified in this study. For instance, newcomers could access support to create resumes and cover letters (activity-based job search help), while also receiving assistance with child minding which should enable them to attend the resume and cover letter creation sessions (barrier targeted employment support). Meanwhile, it did not appear that immigrants could choose which services they could

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receive. There was evidence of a consultation and counselling to help choose the right employment support (ISSofBC, 2020; RMCS, 2020), as well as for career planning. However, it was unclear from the websites whether immigrants had the opportunity to choose what support they received from an agency.

During the interview, Dammy talked about how her husband was referred to a service by the husband's career counsellor, and how she had thought that she would benefit from the same service but was referred to a different service by her career coach in the same organization. NI lamented how precious time was spent editing resumes and cover letters while the major limitation to her re-entry into her profession was lack of foreign qualifications rather than the appearance of her resume and cover letter. Were NI to have the liberty to choose, would she have spent the same amount of time editing job applications or would she have opted for a different service that would more directly and effectively address the barrier specific to her? It would be interesting to explore how much agency immigrants have in choosing the support they feel most appropriate for them once they are signed up to be helped by one agency.

5.8.2 Opportunities to improve employment services

Participants noted that while support was helpful in some instances, more could be done to make it better for African immigrants. This included hiring a more diverse staff pool, training existing staff to improve their cultural competence and knowledge of various professions, and following up with immigrants and not ending the engagement at the conclusion of the program. Participants criticized the provision of unclear information, the one-size-fits-all approach to serving immigrants who are very heterogenous even when they are from the same continent and share visible characteristics such as skin colour, and being more knowledgeable than the staff who are supposed to be helping them.

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Moreover, men were inadequately represented in the customized employment support category. There was an abundance of employment support targeted to different age groups, professions, languages and immigration statuses, all of which men belong to. However, there were fewer employment supports targeted specifically at men than there were for women. An exception is DIVERSEcity's S.A.H.A.R.A employment program for racialized men facing multiple barriers such as substance abuse or facing mental health challenges. However, I did not find any service specific to men whose only barrier was being a male immigrant.

The stress of finding and keeping employment generally impacts health (de Castro, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2008). Subedi and Rosenbaum, (2017) noted a positive correlation between poor employment and poor health. This is more so for immigrant men who work in survival jobs as low income is positively correlated with shorter life expectancy, and women tend to live longer than men on average (Greenberg & Normandin, 2011). Male immigrants are likely to work in more than one job as they struggle to make ends meet and are left with little to no time for self-care and nourishment (Subedi & Rosenberg, 2017). Employment support that recognizes the unique situation of male immigrants or that brings them together to share their frustrations, challenges and ways forward could be valuable.

Additionally, locating employment support online could be challenging for immigrants due to the unavailability of a comprehensive listing of employment support. Being new and having a limited understanding of the employment information landscape of Canada, locating employment information could generally prove daunting for immigrants (Lingel, 2011; Machet & Govender, 2012; Shoham & Strauss, 2007). This challenge could be further complicated by the lack of comprehensive database on existing employment support.

Some databases exist, but there are challenges with using them as I discovered in identifying materials for the document analysis. For example, the IRCC database did not allow me to effectively filter results by city when I searched for employment support. The NewToBC (2019) database did have effective filters but was not comprehensive. Moreover, some organizations offered more services based on their websites than what was listed in the NewToBC database. Examples include the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC) and the Richmond Public Library, which offered many employment related services for immigrants than listed. For this reason, I decided to explore the individual websites to get a richer picture of employment support for immigrants. It is noteworthy that my previous knowledge of such organizations and their services helped me to recognize that some of their services were not listed. This may not be the case for a newcomer who is unfamiliar with such organizations and their offerings.

Furthermore, some organizations that I personally knew that offered employment support to newcomers were missing from the database. Notable organizations included the Vancouver Immigration Partnership (VIP), Coquitlam Public Library, Surrey Public Library, City of Vancouver Mentorship Program, and Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia (AMSSAA). Immigrants are often unaware of existing support (EPL, 2014; Van der Linden, Bartlett, & Beheshti, 2014) and incomplete information could further create a gap in an immigrant's knowledge of and access to employment support. As an individual who is familiar with most of these services, I was quick to realize this gap. A comprehensive database of employment support that is updated frequently is needed to ease the process of acquiring employment related information for newcomers. As well, organizations listed on the database should have the complete listing of their services included, or a link to the entire job site of the organization rather than some services being left out.

5.9 Summary

There was an abundance of support to help immigrants integrate into the Canadian workforce. Some of the available support were specifically designed for immigrants, while others were general in nature and therefore accessible to both immigrants and Canadian citizens. Despite the seemingly robust support system available, my search on the website of the eight selected organizations did not reveal any service tailored specifically for [Black] African immigrants. A very small number of organizations listed Somali and Arabic as some of the languages they provide support in. However, Arabic is spoken both within and outside Africa, including in the Middle East. Somali was thus the only language represented that is spoken by Black Africans. Despite Black Africans representing an increasing number of skilled immigrants coming to Canada, this was not reflected in existing services, including the languages of service provision.

Responses from the interviewees suggested that participants did not always perceive information provided to them by agencies to make a significant improvement to their employment situations. Participants desired practical advice that worked, rather than generic information that did not recognize their unique circumstances. Participants wanted balanced information about job situations in Canada and did not appreciate how the challenges were downplayed and the benefits highlighted. There also appeared to be more focus on helping immigrants create resumes and cover letters and referring them to other agencies than providing them with relevant and empowering support such as those that would reduce the barriers they face to utilizing existing support. While creating a Canadian style resume and cover letter is crucial, participants expected that the programs where they learned these skills would lead to employment of some sort. Such mismatch between expectations and outcomes was frustrating for some participants.

Immigrant support and employment agencies were lauded by participants for their referrals. They often referred immigrants to other organizations where their needs could be best met, such as academic and vocational institutions where participants could obtain qualifications that were not offered within the agencies. These referrals suggested that immigrant employment support agencies worked together for the benefit of the newcomers, by making inter agency referrals. In addition, agencies often offered immigrants more than one service as they deemed necessary.

Participants arrived in Canada hoping to move forward with their lives and gain meaningful employment. Some of them had turned to agencies to receive services that will bring them closer to their dreams of a better life. However, their attempts to move forward were met by "basic" eligibility requirements that frustrated some of them and forced them to give up seeking relevant support. It might be worthwhile for necessary stakeholders to revisit some program eligibility requirements to ensure that they are not serving as barriers to people who need the services. Existing employment support services for immigrants are valuable and equally create opportunities for additional support to be conceived. A lot of very valuable support is being offered to immigrants, however, participants in this study utilized roughly half of them. Often times, they were unaware that the service existed, had misconceptions about the service, had alternatives, or trusted in their abilities to help themselves.

CHAPTER 6: EMPLOYMENT, IDENTITY AND INFORMATION [POVERTY]

6.0 Introduction

This chapter answers research question 4: How do African immigrants' identities influence their experience of acquiring employment and information in Greater Vancouver? I commence by examining the connections between information poverty, intersectionality and employment seeking, in relation to the theoretical concepts guiding this study. This study was guided by the concepts of information poverty and intersectionality. The study results do not clearly indicate that participants are information poor. However, there is evidence of a strong relationship between intersectionality and employment seeking, which will be examined in this chapter. Finally, I discuss the findings and summarize the chapter. All data presented in this chapter were obtained from the interviews.

6.1 Employment and information [poverty]

Participants predominantly held two views of the Canadian employment information landscape. There were those who reported that the information they needed was available in abundance (N=14), and those who had challenges accessing required employment information (N=11). Participants who reported no shortage of employment information described being able to access it without difficulty. However, they emphasized that despite information being readily available, they were aware of other people's difficulties in accessing them:

> "I don't really see any lack of information as such…Just that it's not available until you meet with the right people. So, unless you are actively searching for it you are not gonna get it" (Dammy)

Dammy elaborated that an accurate picture was not painted of the employment landscape for immigrants in Canada. As Dammy explained, preparation information that they received downplayed the job searching situation as she had experienced in Canada so far. The situation was made to look better than it truly was and that gave her false expectations of a less stressful employment integration process. Dammy did not encounter any challenges with securing employment information but was yet to secure a job when I interviewed her.

When I asked Ignace if there was a time that information related to employment was difficult or impossible for him to find, he responded that there was no such time. However, in response to a different question, Ignace cited an example of how information can be hidden:

> "There is this job I applied with the Government of Canada you won't see that job posting like everywhere unless you go there that's what I realized. So, I mean sometimes information is hidden so you need to really really look for it before you get it" (Ignace)

From this explanation, Ignace corroborated Dammy's point about information being potentially difficult to find unless one is actively searching or knows where to look. Challenges arose when immigrants had limited knowledge of information sources in Canada, no tacit information about where hidden information is or had no "people" to direct them appropriately. Dad shared a similar view:

> "Employment information in Canada… What I noticed is that it's mostly open at least for my industry you get to see a lot of openings you know. And there are so many ways and so many platforms you get to see all these things you understand… the important thing is if you are in that search mode you will find information as in you will really find information here" (Dad)

Judy agreed that employment information is abundant and emphasized the need for an immigrant to search for it. In addition to being in active search mode, Mr. A and Tao identified knowing what information to search for as crucial to accessing the abundant employment information available:

> "Information is out there is just I think the key is more of knowing what you are looking for. Sometimes it's not so much as information you kind of need to know what you're looking for so if you don't know what you don't know it becomes difficult" (Mr. A)

> "I am not just new to searching for things online so it wasn't so difficult for me to get what I wanted maybe I've been missing some things but since I don't even know they exist I don't know I'm missing them" (Tao)

Sometimes participants did not know they needed particular information until they found it and realized it would have helped them all along. Emy explained that he would have started his current career much earlier if he had received the information earlier on.

Participants who reported that employment information was abundant in the Canadian society seemed happy about having such abundance available to them and did not report feeling overloaded by available employment information. Many participants reported being confident in their information acquisition skills pre- arrival yet faced challenges in securing employment-related information after arrival in Canada. These challenges ranged from expired job postings to professional jargon on job postings. The challenges reported by participants fell into two broad categories: those associated with content and those associated with the process of acquiring employment information.

6.1.1 Content based challenges

Content based challenges were barriers related to the content of the employment information that participants desired. This included unhelpful information due to it being outdated or using unfamiliar professional jargon.

According to Saviour, an immigrant's time is wasted when they must sort through current and expired job postings on job boards. He applied to some jobs where it was not clear that the posting had expired, and the employers responded that the position had been filled. As participants have noted continuously, preparing even one application requires a lot of effort, as they may be working with resume and cover letter formats in which they are not yet proficient. Engaging in this work only to be told the posting had expired was considered a waste of time.

Okey found differences in professional jargons for describing posted positions between Canadian jobs and jobs in his country:

> "I'll give my first experience. The first job I got I wasn't particularly that exposed, that aware of ranks and grades in Canadian corporate environment. So, I actually saw a job advertisement that was like a senior role but it was actually an entry level role, just a little above entry level. I applied for it and it turned out it wasn't to my expectation, so I had to turn down the job. So, the job postings are not particularly...the language and the terminology are not particularly universal so someone from a different corporate background may not totally understand the words. The job role seemed like a more senior job role. They would do a lot of work that is senior person should do, but it was like entry level work and they will pay entry level salary" (Okey)

Okey had difficulty understanding the professional jargon of the job postings and consequently took a job posting at its face value, thereby assuming it was a senior position because the duties of the job were those of a senior level position. However, the compensation was that of an entry level position, which caused Okey to turn down the job offer after he had interviewed and been offered the job.

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6.1.2 Process based challenges

The challenges in this category relate to information seeking, where participants were actively involved in acquiring specific employment information. Examples of challenges reported in this category include inadequate digital literacy skills to secure information, the Canadian accent and limited knowledge of employment information sources due to being in an unfamiliar environment.

Participants reported having inadequate knowledge of information sources to help them in their employment search. Two major factors that contributed to the limited knowledge of information sources were: 1) being new to Canada and being unfamiliar with the physical and employment information landscape of Canada. 2) not having social network of friends and family, or the limited networks they have not having much information themselves. These two factors were not mutually exclusive. Being new also meant that some participants had limited social networks to draw upon for employment information acquisition.

Not knowing what kind of information was available about jobs, or where to find them was a challenge. For Emy, it was not knowing where to start his information search by virtue of being in a new and unfamiliar environment. Emy found it unhelpful to just Google "employment". He emphasized that an immigrant needs to have knowledge of what he is Googling, otherwise he will get a deluge of unhelpful information.

> "Yes, you see when you come in a new country it's quite different from where you are coming from. There is a lot of information here. We know that, but you don't know where to get it. You are handicapped because you don't know how to get it. You are just on your own except somebody comes to tell you what to do or where to get the information. Sometimes you may not know the information you want because you are confused" (Emy)

Emy added that prior to moving to Canada, his expectation from what he had heard was that jobs were abundant in Canada. However, upon arrival, he had no idea where to look for those jobs or

where to get helpful information. Emy shared that he would probably have started his current profession sooner had he gotten the information earlier on since his arrival. Other participants such as NI and Sule Jolomi shared the same sentiment. NI, a medical professional, reported not having a clue about the Canadian health care sector.

Being new also meant that participants often had limited knowledge of their physical surroundings and lacked social networks required for support. Sule Jolomi explained that "people are not open to non-White" and that was a barrier to acquiring information especially when he was new and had not built a social network. Summing up his experience of being new and lacking the environmental familiarity and social networks necessary to move him ahead in his career, Sule Jolomi said that "at the beginning you were new, ignorant about the environment and you don't really have people to talk to". He relayed during the interview that he had made friends and was more familiar with his environment since he was no longer as new as when he had initially arrived.

NI had gone through the immigration process with some of her friends. However, NI arrived in Canada before her friends and therefore lacked the social network that brought her information in her source country. Judy was also looking for human contacts to refer her to employment information sources as she equally had limited social networks upon arrival:

> "When I was looking for job, I was looking for referrals - maybe somebody to direct me to somebody. You know, back home we're not really used to this internet thing. Some of us we use big phones we carry iPad we just use them for "efizzy". So, we don't really know the use of it. We just carry them for fancy. It's when you come here you know the value of phones, you know the value of iPad, you know the value of your laptop, you know the value of all this stuff. So, when I came here, I had a good phone. I didn't know the value. I was looking for somebody to say, OK, Judy come take job here." (Judy)

When I asked Judy to tell me more about this comment, Judy explained that back in her country, people used expensive phones, tablets and laptops more for "efizzy," (fancy and ostentation) than

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for information seeking. Although she owned these devices, she knew next to nothing about how to use them to acquire information because she was not a tech savvy person, and information seeking in her country was more oral among social networks. She had expected a similar information environment in Canada but was met with a strong digital information world that challenged her digital literacy skills. Moreover, she lacked adequate network of friends and family to turn to for job referrals. Judy's limited computer and internet search skills caused her to adopt an information practice that matched her skills:

> "When I first arrived, even when I saw the job posting, I could read the content, but in terms of using the system I might not be too good there. So, for online it was difficult for me sometimes. I was then looking for jobs that have phone number that I could call. The ones that didn't have phone numbers required me to click on apply and I can't do that, so I'll be stuck. So, the ones that don't have phone numbers I leave them alone and contact only the ones that have number" (Judy)

Judy resorted to applying to job postings on Craigslist that had phone numbers associated with them. She did this because she perceived her ability to use the email option limited. As Judy explained, she had no challenges with accessing the content of job postings; however, navigating the email option was a challenge due to her reported low digital literacy skills.

The participants perceived themselves to have more information at the time I interviewed them than they did when they newly arrived. That was because they had built a network of friends and colleagues who shared information with them, and they had also become more familiar with the Canadian information landscape. Emy stated that not having the information when he arrived that he now had prevented him from making important career change decisions. He also was not sure if there was any information he could not find because, according to him, you do not know you need certain information until you find it, and then you realize you have needed it for a long time. Situations such as this reinforce the need to get relevant information to immigrants earlier on in

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their arrival because it facilitates decisions about their career path in Canada relatively quicker. This could pertain to returning to school or what professions to pursue, including evaluating the feasibility of a career change.

A third factor that proved challenging for one of the participants was inadequate understanding of the Canadian accent. Only one participant listed this factor as a barrier to securing employment information. For the other participants, foreign accent had directly impacted their ability to secure a job, but not necessarily information about jobs. The one participant who had difficulty understanding information provided by an individual speaking with a Canadian accent explained as follows:

> "I would prefer that I get information by email because I still find it very difficult to hear the way the Canadians speak. You know their accent is somehow so I have to be looking at their mouth before I can understand" (Michael)

Michael explained having to watch the mouths of Canadians as they spoke before he could understand them. This way he was able to watch them form and pronounce the words. As a result of this challenge, Michael reported that he preferred to receive information by email. However, emails could also be problematic due to the contextual use of words in emails. Other participants have also reported that Canadians are not direct in their communication, whereas communication in their countries is very direct, and no attempt is made to water down words to avoid offending the recipient. This made it challenging to understand written information communicated by Canadians.

In table 19, I map participants' employment information experiences to Britz's (2004) approaches to information poverty to determine how participants fared on Britz's information poverty

parameters. By doing this, I hoped to understand whether participants experienced information poverty, why, when and to what extent:

Britz's Approaches	Definition/ description	Participants' experiences	Mapping participants' experiences into Britz's information poverty framework
Information connectivity approach **Assumptions** Most important information is mainly available digitally. In most cases, poor people cannot afford the cost of ICTs and do not have requisite education to access digital information Poor people are therefore excluded from such digitized information	This approach focuses on the lack of access to modern information and communication technologies (ICTs), premised on the assumption of a causal relationship between economic status and access to information via ICTs.	Participants were not economically poor and did not experience limited access to ICTs. All participants had access to the modern technology such as the internet and mobile devices.	The framework does not account for situations where access to ICTs is freely available. In Canada for example, public libraries and some other agencies provide free access to computers and the internet, and also offer free education on how to use them. These were available to participants, whether they used them or not. The information connectivity approach was not applicable to participants.

Information content approach Assumptions Poor people do not always have the material means to access quality information.	This approach attributes information poverty to the unavailability of quality information and deficient access. It considers information poverty in the light of information availability, affordability, and suitability.	Participants faced challenges with outdated digital information and unfamiliar professional jargon. However, these did not limit participants' physical access to relevant information. Information provided by agencies sometimes did not meet participants' needs due to irrelevance. Participants found that some employment information was "hidden", and they needed to be seriously searching to locate it. Participants recognized when the content of information provided was inadequate to meet their needs, but Britz's information content approach did not account for this possibility.	This framework fails to consider situations in which quality information is provided for free. Many participants had access to free quality information through agencies in Canada. However, some participants reported limited access to information, although the limitation was not due to affordability or availability as many participants reported that the required information was available in abundance. It was due more to suitability, illiteracy about employment information sources and access limitations. The information content approach was therefore applicable to

			participants, but only partially.
Human approach **Assumptions** Human factors required to optimize information including Skills, Experience, Contextual factors, Being literate, Information literacy.	This approach asserts that access to information alone is not sufficient, but that people must also be able to derive maximum benefit from the information. It relates access to information to skills and education needed to harness information.	One participant did not possess adequate skills to navigate the digital employment information world of Canada. This may have cost them some jobs, but it is difficult to determine since people are not always offered every job they apply for. The participant's skills were however sufficient to navigate the information landscape of their source country. Their information practices were therefore culturally informed. Information provided with a Canadian accent was difficult to understand. Participant requested email conversations where he was more competent. As such, participant did not	One participant each faced digital literacy skills and Canadian accent challenges. These did not prevent the participants from accessing required information. Participants recognized this barrier and successfully adapted their information practices to suit the situation and obtain required information. Britz's framework also did not account for this adaptation, nor the cultural dimensions of people's information practices. Participants temporarily experienced limited access to information due to contextual factors such as limited

| | | miss out on pertinent information. | social networks and unfamiliarity of the physical geographic and information landscapes of the new country. |
| | | Participants had limited knowledge of employment information sources especially when they newly arrived, and this impacted the career trajectory for some. | The human approach was therefore applicable to some participants. |

Table 18: Mapping participants information seeking experiences to Britz's information poverty framework

The majority of participants in this study did not demonstrate information poverty as defined by Britz (2004). The information connectivity approach was not applicable to participants as participants had full access to the internet and technology devices. Britz created this framework when information technology infrastructure was less proliferated and affordable than it is now. The information content approach seemed applicable as participants encountered outdated information on websites as well as situations where information provided was inadequate to meet their needs. The human approach was also applicable because some participants' information practices and skills did not align with their new information world. For example, oral information seeking which was well used pre-arrival was less effective when participants newly arrived in Canada and had not built a robust social network. In addition, some participants reported not knowing where to find information when they newly arrived. However, I am uncertain whether these participants were temporarily information poor or not. This is because it is unclear how many

of Britz's approaches a participant must meet to be information poor. This lack of clarity characterizes other information poverty frameworks (e.g., Chatman, 1996).

Many of the participants reported that the information they needed to secure employment was available in abundance. However, the participants did experience challenges with accessing the information, although these were not related to affordability or unavailability of information infrastructure. In fact, most participants were confident in their well-developed and transferable information skills. What seemed to limit access to information was lack of awareness of available information, and systemic challenges such as eligibility criteria and family situation. The few participants such as Sule Jolomi and Emy who reported limited knowledge of employment information sources seemed to have experienced this situation temporarily. When I interviewed them, these participants had secured more social network and become familiar with their not so new environment. These participants had been in Canada for 2-5 years.

The one participant who described their online information acquisition skills as somewhat lacking, explained how this was due to differences in information worlds between Canada and their home country. In their home country, information acquisition was largely oral, through word of mouth or phone calls, mostly through people, including friends, family, colleagues, clients and acquaintances. As such, they had no need to secure daily life or employment information from the internet. They did own technological devices but until migration had used those for leisure, such as for playing games and ostentation purposes. Their online information acquisition skills were therefore limited and inadequate for the demands of employment seeking in Canada.

Faced with this situation, this participant shifted their information practice to where they had the most competence, which was a hybrid of online and offline information acquisition. For example, when looking for a job on Craigslist, this participant would focus more on job postings that had

the poster's phone number included. They were comfortable enough to search Craigslist for jobs, however found the additional steps to email the poster cumbersome and therefore disregarded any job posting that had no associated phone number. For those that came with phone numbers, they would call the phone number. In addition to this hybrid format of acquiring information, this participant successfully imported their oral information seeking skills to the Canadian information landscape and was able to acquire oral information from their limited social network. They secured employment from their oral employment information gathering.

Participants in the current study had well developed information practices in their source countries and successfully transferred and adapted these to the Canadian information landscape. However, they still faced challenges in accessing information attributable to situations in Canada. There is element of information poverty especially when participants newly arrived, which declined as they became more acquainted with their new information world and made friends. These were related to limited social networks and knowledge of employment information sources, inadequate skills to navigate the Canadian employment information landscape, not meeting eligibility to receive information. The concept of intersectionality proved to better explain the employment information seeking experiences of the African immigrants that constituted this study than did information poverty. This is due to the multifaceted identities and experiences of participants, the limitations of the framework such as technological advancements and proliferation that have occurred since its creation, and a lack of clarity about when people can be deemed information poor. In addition, the information poverty framework, like the Access Rainbow (Clement & Shade, 2000), has a heavy ICT focus. Participants in this study sought information from both online and offline sources. This finding indicates a need to revisit Library and Information Science frameworks for information access with a view to making them more inclusive of diverse populations seeking

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information online and offline. Information access frameworks that incorporate elements of intersectionality in online and offline information access would be valuable.

6.2 The role of intersectionality in employment seeking

The multiple identities of participants, which included immigration status, race and gender roles, impacted their access to information and jobs. Participants often faced multiple barriers at the same time as Oorloochy depicted (Figure 14).
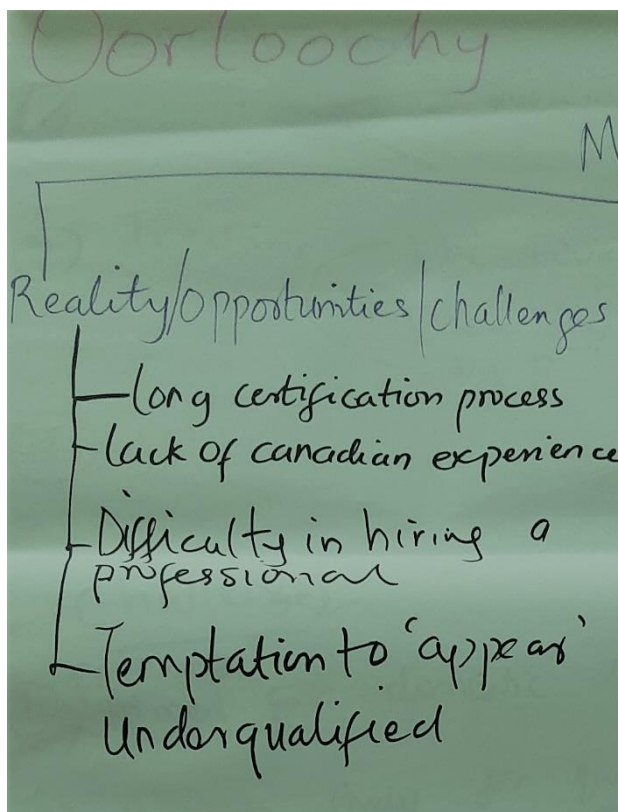
Figure 14: Oorloochy's employment information world map showing multiple challenges

Oorloochy lacked Canadian work experience and qualifications. Faced with a long re-certification process, Oorloochy was tempted to reduce the qualifications she displayed on her resume to be eligible for lower level jobs that she applied for. This was a familiar experience among many of

the participants. In the following sections, I describe in more details how participants intersectional identities influenced their employment seeking experiences.

6.2.1 Looking for jobs as an African

Participants held mixed views about the role that being a Black African played in their employment experiences. Twelve participants said that race was everything when looking for a job, while thirteen stated that their employment search and work had not been influenced by their racial identity. Of the thirteen who replied that race had not impacted their employment experiences did discuss how racial identity had been a barrier at some point. Moreover, participants who reported that their job experiences were not impacted by race were more recent arrivals or those who experienced less difficulty finding employment.

Interestingly, some people who answered "no" to being impacted by race explained that their reason was to have a positive outlook on life and their experiences, as well as a desire not to focus on their race as a potential barrier. Ignace experienced a situation that other people might interpret as racial discrimination, but he refused to consider it as such:

> "I'm the type of person who sometimes refuses to admit the reality. I remember when I was living in Vancouver on Prince Edward Street and there was this restaurant not far from my house. It was an Indian restaurant and I saw a post in front of the restaurant that they were hiring. It was in the summer and I had no job, so, I walked into that restaurant and I was like yeah, you guys are hiring right? And they looked at each other and they couldn't say anything. And then the boss came from the kitchen and he was like oh we just got someone. And I was like oh, but the post is still out there but I didn't say that to them. But I could feel the tension like I knew they were not going to hire me but at the same time I refused to think that it is because I am black since no one has said it to me point blank. I don't wanna think that I'm not getting hired because I'm African" (Ignace)

Ignace refused to admit that he was treated differently because of his racial identity even when the situation was very suggestive of that fact. He wanted to be told directly by an employer that he

was not being hired because he was Black, a statement he may very well never hear owing to laws against employment discrimination. That said, employment discrimination continues to be perpetuated covertly in Canada as more participants described.

6.2.2 Racial discrimination in employment seeking

Generally, participants felt that being Black was a disadvantage when looking for jobs because of the stereotyping of Blacks by Canadians and other non-Black skinned immigrants. Frank refused to take a re-certification program because it cost a lot of time and money and provided no guarantee of getting a job since he saw being Black as a barrier he could not overcome. Oghazi, who admitted that finding a job as an African has been "a bit of a challenge," shared that employers tended to think that Africans could not do a job the way that a Canadian or different colour skinned immigrant could do it. Saviour had faced several employment challenges as a Black African, both during his job search and after he was hired. Savior described being looked down upon in the workplace by people who were "white skinned":

> "White people, not just Canadians even people from other countries once they have the white skin color, they tend to look at you who is black skinned as less privileged. Like you are nothing and they are on top of you and they want to ride on you. They feel that where you come from you don't really have anything, so they feel you are not exposed" (Saviour)

Participants described specific instances where they were racially victimized in the workplace.

Emy, an apprentice reported, having been racially discriminated in two workplaces:

> "In my new job I think I've been racially victimised two times. The second site I worked in when I was employed as an apprentice the way I was being treated by my foreman I really didn't like it. He wasn't close to me because I'm a Black. He doesn't talk to me instead of talking to me he will send someone to go and talk to me, he didn't talk to me directly. At the end I was laid off from that job so that is the first victimization as a Black man" (Emy)

Emy moved to a second organization and was equally racially victimized:

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"The second one at the same profession was in another company where I was called one day by the Foreman and he said that people don't like working with me because they don't understand what I say and I was equally laid off and I left the company" (Emy)

Experiences of being singled out and victimized based on an identity that one has no control over can be overwhelming and discouraging. Despite the hardship and victimizations, none of the participants considered giving up on their dreams. Rather, they were focused on how to move forward and get ahead in their professions and life generally.

The effect of being Black was not limited to the job search process but continued to affect participants even after they secured jobs. In some workplaces, being Black meant being assigned undesirable duties that non-Black staff were excused from. In other cases, being Black invited negative treatment, namely a lack of respect by colleagues and clients alike, and the perpetuation of otherness. Participants were discriminated at points of hire, and for some who secured jobs, they were discriminated by clients, as Tina relayed:

"At some point, I gave up because most of the time everywhere I go I'm the only Black so sometimes when they see Black people they think we don't have anything upstairs they think we don't know what we're doing but it's not the case. Even at work till today people [clients] come in and they ask me questions and I tell them but they still doubt me because they feel like I'm dumb so they go right to the boss lady and they ask her and they still hear the same thing I told them so they all come back kind of feeling bad"

Frank was disrespected by pupils and parents at the independent elementary school where he taught temporarily:

"From my experience at the [school name removed for anonymity], I can say sometimes the kids don't even want you to talk to them. Some of the kids don't want you to even teach them though you are their teacher. So, all these things play a very significant role when you are a Black person. And you could even tell that some of the parents don't want you to teach their kids because they think you don't know anything because you are a Black person" (Frank).

Frank said he had a stressful time on that job until he left.

Other participants reported being pressured to achieve results that were not expected of others in similar positions. Saviour started a new job and, on his first day at work, his supervisor spoke very harshly to him in a raised voice demanding to know why he had not yet performed some of his assigned duties. Meanwhile, as Saviour explained, he had just resumed work that day and was still getting acquainted with the workplace, their processes and his job duties. Participants such as Saviour and Frank also felt that Canadians and immigrants of other nationalities tended to feel threatened that a Black employee would "take their jobs away from them".

Participants also spoke about the role of racial identity for African immigrants in Canada broadly beyond their own experiences. Ifedi felt disheartened that, despite the qualifications of Black Africans in Canada, very few that he knew of had made it into prestigious positions. Ifedi felt that there was no equality among the races with regards to employment:

> "I feel that it's not equal for everyone. Because you can have a White person that wants to be a pilot and he can easily fulfill his dreams and also more easily secure a position in the job market. But for us Africans when we come even as an accountant there is an issue of trust. People won't trust us to do their tax forms, some companies will feel that a background check will be difficult to conduct because you did not grow up in Canada. It becomes a problem of trust and based on that, the only job market that they require trust but at the same time they need people is nursing and that's why you find a lot of professionals coming here and becoming nurses or doing one small job to pay their bills. Some dreams get crushed in the process and instead of being a chartered accountant they become a *chartered nurse*" (Ifedi)

Here Ifedi highlighted the issue of trust and unequal opportunities based on being Black, rather than an indication that one profession is valued over another.

Another form of racial discrimination in the employment process that participants described was perpetuated by immigrants of other, often larger, ethnicities. This includes discriminatory hiring and firing, seeking candidates who spoke an additional language that were neither of Canada's official languages or preferring to hire people of their own nationalities. Africans who are fewer

in Metro Vancouver are at a disadvantage. Larger ethnic groups may have access to more resources and information due to their larger network, as Okey relayed:

> "Ethnicity assists in getting ahead. There are certain nationalities and ethnicities the have exposure and access to certain information and they are more open to sharing this information with people from the same cultural background as themselves. Nigerians and Black Africans are a serious minority, a great minority here in Canada so availability of information and referrals can be a bit challenging for Nigerians because they are very few in Canada" (Okey)

None of the immigrants I interviewed reported seeking assistance from any authority about being victimized and treated differently in the workplace. Saviour decided to stand up for himself in the workplace instead:

> "One thing I've learned about this country is to stand up for myself because when you don't speak out they tend to ride on you and treat you as if you are nobody once they see you are Black" (Saviour)

This comment suggested that being Black was an invitation to be disrespected and maltreated. Saviour tried to take an active stance against such discrimination. Taking legal action against employers who perpetrate discriminatory employment practices may not be viable. Blacks are among the poorest economically in Canada and may therefore be financially constrained in their ability to pursue legal action (Government of Canada, 2013; Keung, 2016). Although there are pro bono resources and support (Richmond Public Library, 2020), it cannot be assumed that participants are aware of these as other scholars have found that immigrants are often unaware of available services (Van der Linden, Bartlett, & Beheshti, 2014). Saviour also explained why some immigrants continued to endure such unbearable working conditions and victimization:

> "One other African man who is stranded because he's been working there for like 4 years now he's been tolerating the shit so his pay has increased to like $25 an hour. So him

quitting is like going back to square zero and starting with $16 and he will struggle so he really can't do it" (Saviour).

The need to pay bills may keep Black immigrants in such jobs where they are ill-treated, undercompensated and underappreciated.

6.2.3 African name and accent

Having an African name was a barrier to securing employment that participants desired. Participants noticed that employers who had difficulty pronouncing their names during an interview were less likely to offer them the job. Ifedi felt that he performed well at interviews but noticed that the interviewers repeatedly had a challenge pronouncing his name. When he did not hear from the employer long after the interview, he contacted the company and was told that though he was a strong candidate, the job had been offered to someone else. Some participants also suspected that their resumes were screened out because of their African names.

Ifedi's friend advised him to change his name to one that was easier to pronounce and more "English sounding". Ifedi was certain that doing so improved his employment situation. When I asked Ifedi how he came to the conclusion that his name was a problem, he explained that he changed his name and reapplied to a different department in the same organization where he previously could not get an interview. This time however, his new name fetched him an interview invitation. Ifedi also reapplied to some of the jobs he had previously applied to in other organizations. He reported receiving more interviews in these organizations than before he changed his name. Ifedi was still using his new name in the company he was working with when I interviewed him.

Research has shown that foreign sounding names are a barrier in the employment search process and it is not uncommon for immigrants with very foreign sounding names to change their name to one more familiar in the local community to improve their chances of employment (Guo, 2015; Oreopoulos, 2011). Saviour's name was not suggestive of his African identity. It was only at interviews where employers could see his skin colour that he felt racialized. He believed his skin colour had cost him more than one job: *"It's the interview aspect where they get to see you and that's like a no-no"*.

No participant reported a barrier with speaking English but speaking with an African accent was a challenge that participants faced especially at job interviews. Philanta enrolled in school shortly after arriving in Canada. Upon completing her schooling and entering the job market, she was consistently told that she was unintelligible because of her accent. She relayed that she prided herself in her ability to speak fluent English. Similarly, Oorloochy felt strongly that she was denied a job she interviewed for because of her African accent:

> "I remember one of the job interviews I went to. I believe I did very well but majorly I wasn't given that job because of my African accent. I could tell that it played a role" (Oorloochy)

Even after securing a job, accent continued to present as a barrier to effective teamwork. Ifedi, who obtained a post-secondary degree in Canada, found that his accent impeded effective communication with his teammates. Ifedi explained that his teammates and Manager constantly struggled to understand what he was saying, while he had no trouble understanding them. Ignace understands and speaks fluent English, French and African languages. In his search for a job that required French language fluency, Ignace encountered foreign accent discrimination which he summarised as follows:

"During the interview they asked me if I could speak French and I said yes, and I spoke French. Then the interviewer told me my French is good. And she asked me if I am sure a Quebecer will understand my French. I said I don't really know because sometimes I also don't understand them. So, I would say our accent is also a problem. Even in English sometimes when you speak in English and then you have an accent people might think you are dumb. Because you have an accent, they think you are dumb they think you don't understand English. But the thing is they are ignorant because they don't know there's a difference between someone who has an accent and someone who doesn't know the language. So, at the end of the day if you don't speak like "Canadian" it may have an impact on your job acquisition" (Ignace)

This is consistent with Creese's (2011) findings in her study with African immigrants in Metro Vancouver who reported being assumed to be "dumb" because they spoke the English language with an African accent.

6.2.4 The impact of family situation and gender roles

More women (*N*=7) than men (*N*=1) reported that their family situation influenced their ability to secure meaningful employment. In all cases for both genders, the family situation referred to involved having a spouse and/or child(ren). Raising a family impacted participants in different ways. While men can be impacted by having families to care for, women's careers were impacted by becoming pregnant or gender role expectations about caring for children.

NI had been eager to return to the workforce upon arrival in Canada. She quickly secured a survival job to support her family. NI had to take a break from work when she was seven months pregnant because her job involved bending and lifting, which she could not perform in the latter stages of her pregnancy. NI was at home caring for her five-months old baby when I interviewed her. She wished to return to work but needed to find suitable and affordable childcare. As she explained, after delivering her baby she had been offered a survival job in a different city, which she declined because the work hours did not allow her to drop off and pick up her older children from school.

Oorloochy had been seeking employment of any kind after arrival and continued to search while pregnant. At one of the employment agencies, Oorloochy felt discriminated against because of her gender. As she relayed, she was nicely told by the agency staff to deliver her baby before returning to her job search. She explained that the encounter was the first time she had felt "not taken seriously" because of her gender.

For Eto, getting pregnant caused her to quit an existing job due to the stress of combining a new job with the experience of first-time pregnancy. After delivery, Eto attempted to secure another job or go to school but found out she was expecting again shortly after the first child had been born. Eto postponed her schooling because her program involved a mandatory practicum and she felt that no employer would hire her with visible pregnancy. Two years after having her second child, Eto tried to secure employment again and was met with a new barrier of not having a driver's license. Eto needed to drive her children to a daycare but did not possess a driver license. Moreover, the jobs she was interested in required a driver's license, but Eto had been unable to take the driver's licensing test due to her family situation. Although Eto accepted a few jobs, she found them physically demanding and difficult to manage with the demands of caring for young children. Eto finally gave up searching for jobs and focused on caring for her family. Prior to arriving in Canada, Eto had expected to get help with childcare since this had been the case in her country. In Canada, Eto lacked the social networks of family and friends that she had back in her source country, and this made it difficult for her to raise children and work.

When I asked Judy why she did not search for job as soon as she arrived in Canada, she echoed Eto's problem of not having anyone to look after her son. Judy's son was barely 9 months old when she arrived, so she stayed home to care for him while her husband worked. Later in the

interview, Judy explained that she had quit a job because her son needed her, and the job did not allow her much time to care for him.

Two participants passed up advancement opportunities to care for their families. KD, who was not educated in Canada, declined a certification opportunity because she did not have childcare. Tao, who worked while his wife cared for the family, declined a higher paying job far from home in favour of a lower paying one closer to home so he could be there for his family.

While some participants declined or quit jobs due to their family situations, other participants, such as Oge and Ney, juggled the timing of getting a job or going to school with their spouse's need to do the same:

> "Well we wanted my husband to get a job so that we will know what exactly he will be doing and whether I need to work or not, because whatever it is I will need to work around his schedule" (Oge)
>
> "…I cannot go for study now because my husband is studying, And I have children and I felt it would be hard for both of us to be in school and take care of the kids then I said OK I will wait until my husband finish" (Ney)

Ney planned to return to school when she arrived in Canada. However, upon arrival, she gauged the hardship that the family would face if she schooled concurrently with her husband. Ney therefore opted to work and support the family financially and return to school after her husband completed his schooling. Ney further relayed that having kids impacted African immigrant women a lot because they did not have help as they did in their home countries. According to her, these women needed to find employment that fit around their children's schedules, which made professional positions a difficult option. NI suspended her return to re-certification and her original profession in favour of a survival job that provided her the opportunity to work night shifts. NI's

husband worked day shifts and they alternated caring for their children in the day and night based on their work schedules.

NI shared an interesting insight about women with children finding jobs:

> "So, at the job search agency we had this guy who was invited to talk to us about cover letters and resumes and he practically did a psychological surgery on all of us. In fact, one of the ladies who is Canadian walked out on him. She was practically upset that he kept on being so pessimistic and gloomy about the job outlook. We know its tough landing a job but constantly reminding us of that and actually making reference to people like us who have kids. I mean he was actually saying that the employers don't like to hire us because they're afraid that we will be unreliable. We arrived in December and this training was in January and he was already putting out this projection that... we really don't want you, perhaps we might want your husband because he's a man but not you the lady because if there's anything with the kid while you're at work and you receive a call that your kid is ill, you will have to leave work and go pick up your child. (NI)

NI felt that motherhood is a skill that should be appreciated as it speaks of strength and the ability to balance priorities while multitasking.

What stands out in these cases is the lack of childcare and social networks. Participants often cited not having the kind of childcare support they had back home from friends, family and neighbours. It would be interesting to know whether participants were aware of and eligible for the BC affordable childcare program which subsidises childcare cost for Canadian permanent residents and citizens. However, the root cause of the childcare challenges will need to be ascertained whether it be financial cost, finding a spot, getting timely and relevant information about childcare options, or gender role expectations.

6.2.5 Immigration status

Participants such as Ifedi, Oghazi and Saviour reported not being able to secure certain kinds of jobs because such jobs were reserved for Canadian citizens and permanent residents. In some

cases, it was due to the nature of the job, such as the sensitivity of projects handled. According to participants, some jobs required security checks which made them more suitable for permanent residents and Canadian citizens who have built some history in Canada so that their backgrounds can be more easily verified. Ifedi spent a lot of time applying to different job postings in a particular company that he was keen on working. Two years later he met someone who was acquainted with the company and explained to him that the company only hired permanent residents and Canadian citizens due to the sensitive nature of their projects.

For other participants like Oghazi, getting a full-time position in their field was dependent on becoming a permanent resident or Canadian citizen as he depicted in his employment information world map (Figure 15).
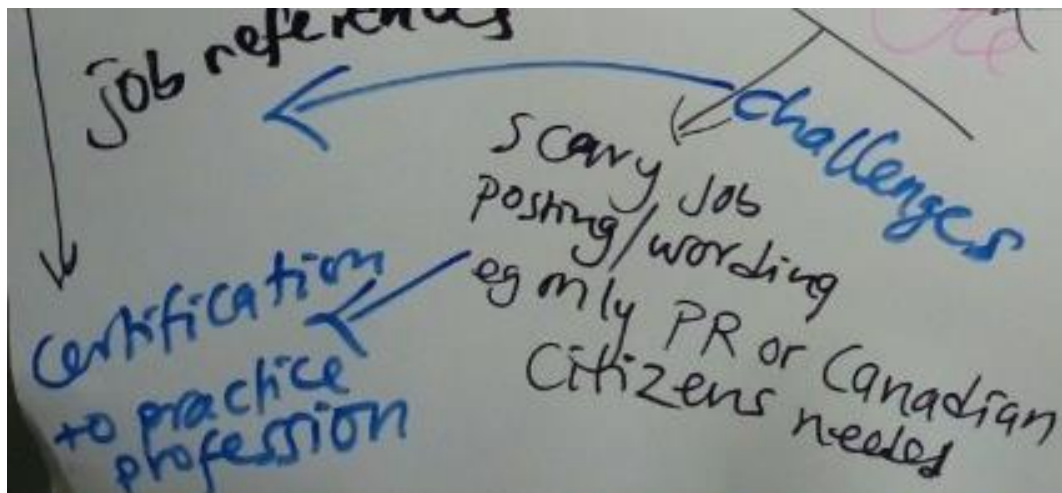
Figure 15: Oghazi's Information World Map showing challenges to securing employment

Ogazi worked "on call" for a long time after completing his post-secondary education in Canada and only started hoping for a full-time position when he became a permanent resident. He reported that during the interview for his current job, he was asked about his immigration status and told

that he would never secure a full that position in that organization without permanent residence status.

Oghazi stated that an additional reason why employers were wary of hiring temporary residents is that there was no guarantee of "return on investment" for such an employee. Time and money spent on employee training could be lost if employees left the country when their temporary status expired. Hence, hiring permanent residents and citizens was a safer option.

Some participants described not applying for jobs if they did not meet the explicitly stated immigration criteria. As participants explained, creating resumes and cover letters involved a significant time investment. Participants scanned the content of job postings for descriptions such as "Canadians or permanent residents will be given priority" and did not apply to such jobs if they were temporary residents.

Not having permanent resident status or being a Canadian citizen also limited participants' ability to access employment help and gain admission into Canadian education programs. Oghazi tried to access government funded support after completing his post-secondary education in Canada with his temporary residence status. The agency made it clear that they could not help him (much) with his temporary residence status. Ney was frustrated that information about eligible immigration statuses for school programs was not always posted on the program website, and she only found out in a phone call to the school while preparing her application.

Immigration status was a double-edged sword. While many participants reported being denied services, jobs and school programs for not being permanent residents, other participants like Philanta found that being a permanent resident was a barrier to securing admission into some education programs. Philanta shared that some Canadian educational institutions preferred to admit international students because they paid higher tuition fees.

6.2.6 Lack of Canadian qualifications

Not having Canadian work experience and education constituted a huge barrier to securing employment for participants. Interviewees such as Tina, KD, Oghazi, Philanta, Ifedi and Dammy stated that only Canadian work experience counted, and work experience from their home countries was not considered sufficient. Tina shared how employee referral did not work for her because she did not have Canadian work experience. According to Tina, employee referral is a situation where job applicants receive some consideration in the hiring process if they were referred by an existing employee:

> "Employee referral was negative for me because I didn't have Canadian work experience. Here in Canada, it's all about the Canadian work experience. Even if you have 100 years of work experience where you are coming from its considered as nothing" (Tina)

As KD explained, one must be in Canada to secure Canadian work experience. Yet when they arrived in Canada, employers did not give them the opportunity to get Canadian work experience because, ironically, they did not have Canadian work experience. KD wondered how she was expected to get the Canadian work experience if she was not given a chance.

Lack of Canadian work experience was not limited to only recent arrivals. Those participants who came as international students and obtained Canadian qualifications also faced this barrier. According to participants such as Ewura, employers may not understand or trust experience obtained from their countries, making them doubtful of immigrants' skills and ability to perform the job. This situation pushed many graduates of Canadian schools who did not obtain Canadian work experience while in school to take up survival jobs to pay their bills and obtain Canadian work experience.

Sometimes employers were forthcoming with the fact that lack of Canadian experience prevented

a candidate from getting a job:

> "OK when I got in into Canada the first job I applied for I went for the interview but the
> HR person made me understand that they picked another person over me because I did not
> have Canadian experience and Canadian education" (Michael)

Michael was a very recent immigrant who was applying to any job to pay his bills. Oorloochy had

been in Canada longer and had applied to several jobs over the years. Oorloochy was more

experienced with reading subtle meanings of Canadian communication both explicitly stated or

not:

> "You get to hear the popular lack of Canadian work experience. Nobody actually tells you
> that you lack Canadian experience but you can tell" (Oorloochy)

Lack of Canadian education was another barrier that participants faced. It was one of the two most

cited barriers especially for participants who arrived directly as permanent residents and had never

schooled in Canada. Judy for example had obtained all her education in her country. However,

these credentials were not recognised:

> When I came here, I realized that they don't value our certificate. You have to start all over
> again. So, coming with my results and everything they didn't even value it. They said I
> have to go and do English test. I told them I can speak English look at my result, they didn't
> even respect those, so I had to go and write their English test (Judy)

Participants explained that Canadian employers did not value the academic credentials they

brought from their home countries, despite having done a credential evaluation[14] that certified their

overseas qualification as equivalent to a Canadian one. Participants described instances of not

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[14] Credential evaluation is a way to compare academic qualifications earned in one country to those earned in another (WES, 2020).

being offered positions they interviewed for because a candidate who had Canadian education was preferred. NI, a medical doctor, applied for a hospital related job that required little to no certification. The job was given to a grade 12 graduate from a Canadian high school. NI felt that she was capable of doing the job but could not secure it because she did not have a Canadian certification. She described the experience as frustrating that a grade 12 graduate was rated higher than her due to certifications rather than skills, experience or ability to perform the job.

Michael experienced a similar situation as NI's. When I asked for more details about the required qualification for a job, Michael shared the following:

> "Funny enough it's just a high school certificate that was required. They didn't even require a bachelor's degree just high school. But because I didn't have that Canadian education, they gave the job to the other person. That was the genesis of me pushing to look for programs and go to school to help make me more marketable" (Michael)

Many participants like Michael were frustrated to find that people with high school qualifications were hired instead of them because those people had Canadian qualifications, despite the participants having more education and experience. In Canada however, a candidate that has more than the required qualification for a job is often considered overqualified and immigrants have a high prevalence of overqualification (Statistics Canada, 2009; 2016).

Many participants were also frustrated to find that they needed to reassess their credentials to work in certain professions. Credential evaluation required for the immigration process is different from credential evaluation required for employment in certain occupations in Canada and the type of evaluation required varies from one occupation to another (Government of Canada, 2017c). They had obtained an evaluation of their foreign degrees as part of the immigration process but had to obtain a different evaluation based on occupation of interest.

For participants who schooled in Canada as international students, lack of Canadian credential was not as much of a barrier. However, some still faced the barrier of specific industry-based certifications. Frank, a professional teacher in his country, wished to teach in Canada following the completion of his Canadian studies:

> "I would have gotten a job in my area of study because I'm a professional teacher back home before coming here. I taught in a college as a part time instructor in 2 private universities. But after graduating I was expecting to get even a teaching job but they said I have to go through certification. I brought all my documents, did credential evaluation but they said because the education system in [country name removed for anonymity] is different from that of Canada, I am supposed to take some familiarization programs and courses" (Frank)

Michael was able to work in any area of banking with his banking degree in his home country but found the situation different in Canada:

> "The way the banking sector is structured in Canada is that they have separate specializations. In [country name removed for anonymity], when you are a banker, you can work in all banking specializations. But in Canada, you have to major in a specialty and obtain the license for it like mortgage, sales, operations. So that's what I'm working on right now; I wanna get a license so I can fit back into the Canadian banking system" (Michael)

Michael realized that his banking degree and experience from his country were too generic to fit into the Canadian banking system. He had to first decide what area of banking he wanted to work in and obtain a license for it before he could practice. Such separate licensing was not required in his home country.

Tao participated in an employment program offered by one of the settlement organizations few weeks post arrival, and the information obtained helped him chart a course for his education in Canada:

> I saw people who have been in Canada for 12 years and they still come for that retail program because they couldn't get into their field after 12 years and that made me make

my decision quickly that without a degree or certificate in one of these Canadian institutions it will be almost impossible for me to practice with a foreign degree (Tao)

Many participants simultaneously faced the dual barriers of no Canadian work experience and education. This was especially so for people who arrived directly as permanent residents and had no opportunity to school or work in Canada. This shaped the next steps for some participants like KD. KD picked up a survival job to get Canadian experience and care for her family, and aimed to pursue a Canadian education in the near future. KD could not pursue Canadian work experience and education at the same time as she needed to care for her family. Michael was planning to return to school as soon as possible to get a Canadian degree while retaining his survival job, which was providing him with Canadian work experience.

Having realized the dual barrier of lack of Canadian experience and certifications, participants started to explore options to obtain both as these were crucial to their goal of returning to professional jobs. Strategies that they explored included working in survival jobs while schooling. In all cases where participants had families, they had to juggle this with their spouses' need to do the same. This included one spouse pursuing Canadian work experience and/or Canadian education, while the other cared for the family or sometimes combined family care and Canadian education or certification. There were no instances of both spouses pursuing Canadian work experience or education and caring for the family simultaneously.

Moreover, participants reported needing to prove themselves to employers perhaps more than Canadians. This included both during the job search process and after they were hired. Ewura, who was seeking an internship opportunity at a publishing firm, was made to undergo three interviews, which was not the norm for the organization; applicants normally had one to two interviews. According to her, the higher number of interviews were to further assess her skills as the

interviewers were unfamiliar with the education system of the African country where she had

obtained her degree. The interviewers were familiar with the content of equivalent qualifications

in Canada, especially since some of them were instructors in such schools. Ewura explained:

> "Throughout my 3 interviews I realized that they doubted the degree I had from [country
> name removed for anonymity]. They were asking me a lot of questions on the experience
> I have back home based on the course I studied. They wanted to know exactly what I knew
> and I noticed that they don't really do that to other people because they know what they
> teach in [name of school removed for anonymity]. Some of our employers actually teach
> in [name of school removed for anonymity] so they know the course outline, they know
> what the students know but with me they didn't know what I knew even though my CV
> stated it clearly. From the interviews, I sensed that they doubted my abilities because I
> didn't get that degree from Canada" (Ewura)

Participants also explained that employers doubted their ability to integrate into the workplace

because employers were unsure of the work culture in Africa and if the participants could integrate

into the workplace seamlessly. Responding to whether racial identity played a role in his job

search, Oghazi had the following to say:

> "[Race] is everything. Sometimes people think that people of colour cannot do a job as
> other people will do. So, finding a job as an African has been a bit of a challenge and even
> after getting a job it is still a challenge because people don't really think that you are able
> to do the job" (Ogazi)

When participants secured a job, they felt that because of their race they needed to work harder

than Canadians in the workplace to earn the trust of the employer and the respect of their

colleagues.

6.2.7 Overqualification

Participants in this study held a significant number of post graduate degrees which were very

beneficial in their countries of origin where a candidate with more relevant educational and

professional qualifications was considered a stronger applicant than a candidate who possessed only what was required for the job. However, in Canada, participants observed the reverse as they were deemed overqualified for positions that they applied for. This surprised them because they had ardently pursued more education and certification to improve their job prospects in their countries but found that these were detrimental to them in Canada.

Oorloochy applied to jobs that she was overqualified for and said, "you could see the look on their faces like are we sure we can pay this person?" When Ignace completed his Canadian Master's degree, he set out searching for jobs that would employ and compensate him at the graduate degree level. However, he found that jobs in his field preferred candidates with college diploma. Ignace stressed that the college degrees were an "added advantage" to those jobs and not a requirement, which meant that he was more than overqualified with a Master's degree. He agreed that employers would not "want to pay that much".

 A potential employer told Mr. A point blank that they had concerns about him staying with them for long due to his qualifications:

> "Well, the first job I got I was told at the interview that they were worried about me staying on the job because I seemed to be overqualified for it" (Mr. A)

When NI was searching for jobs, agencies that she received support from encouraged her to include on her resume all her qualifications that she felt would improve her chances. She was however not told that her high qualifications could easily cost her the jobs rather than secure them for her:

> "I was told to put everything that I felt would speak well for me on the resume. That is assuming the whoever is looking at the resume is thinking objectively like oh this candidate has so much experience and would be an asset to us. However, the caveat that I was not told was that the person reading the resume might also be worried that if this candidate is this qualified, will he/she stay? would this candidate be adaptable" (NI)?

This situation forced many participants to downplay their qualifications to be considered for positions. To improve his chances of securing a job, Ifedi stopped stating on his resume that he held a Master's degree, while Oorloochy started to "hide" some of her degrees and qualifications to appear under or just adequately qualified for the positions. NI, a trained medical doctor, lamented at having to hide the very qualification that would have distinguished her from other applicants in order to fit in and not be deemed overqualified. As Ignace explains from his numerous encounters of being overqualified for jobs he applied for:

> "You go to those companies, even your supervisor or your boss doesn't have a Masters degree. You go to a job site and even the people who are interviewing you have high school certificates. I mean how many people have Master's degree here in Canada? It's not something that is really important to them" (Ignace)

The participants also considered it necessary to not only downplay their qualifications in the job seeking process, but also on the job after they were hired. According to some of them, if employers and colleagues knew of their qualifications, unrealistic expectations would be made of them in the workplace and this may cause them challenges.

6.2.8 Time

When searching for meaningful employment, time posed a challenge to the participants in different ways. For some participants, it was the time required to re-certify, which they considered to be lengthy. As a result, some participants reported delaying their re-certification, as they were not prepared for the time investment required. For other participants who wanted to re-certify, they were required to take preliminary courses, such as high school and college level programs, before they could commence the re-certification process. Again, despite being willing to re-certify, they

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reported not having the time for the preliminary courses. Frank wanted to become a teacher in BC and was searching for certification programs:

"I went to [university name removed for anonymity] to make inquiries but they told me they have a full year teacher education program for international teachers but I have to take other courses from other colleges as a prerequisite for me to enroll in that particular program and I thought… I wouldn't have time to do that" (Frank)

A major factor that discouraged Frank from investing the time required was the uncertainty of securing a fulfilling job after the certification considering his race. As Frank explained, "maybe you go through the program and get your certificate but getting a job will also be another issue because you are a Black Person." While Frank gave up on pursuing the certification, Philanda opted for a diploma as she could not invest the time required to obtain another degree. Philanta explained how she had to "downgrade" because she "could not wait to get a degree again."

For other participants, it was the time spent submitting job applications, including customizing resume and cover letter to specific jobs, and the research involved in making sure they understood the organization well enough to appropriately tailor their cover letters. Participants explained that in their countries they could use one resume to apply to multiple jobs without the need to customize it to individual jobs. They cited that, in their countries, one resume was enough for every job. It contained a detailed description of every position they had ever held and employers would go through it to extract the work experiences that were relevant to the particular job posting. They found having to create multiple resumes and cover letters cumbersome and time consuming.

Moreover, many of the participants had never written a cover letter prior to arriving in Canada because cover letters were not required for job applications in their source countries. They found cover letters challenging to write and invested more time than they would like to do it properly. The desire to save time made participants more detailed oriented to ensure they applied to only

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jobs for which they were eligible or qualified. As hard as they tried, outdated information on job sites still constituted a waste of time. Saviour had run into many such jobs and lamented about how the "job posting is still up on the site even when the position has been filled". Saviour added that such situation is a waste of time for applicants.

6.2.9 Sector specific challenges

Some participants encountered challenges that were specific to entering a particular sector or occupation of interest. Some of these bordered around differences in the qualifications or requirements for entering those jobs. For example, Dad applied for positions similar to his previous position pre-migration before he realized that, although the positions were similar, the requirements were different from his home country. In Canada, he needed to learn new software applications to be eligible for the "advanced" position he had held in his country.

The nature of the job that some participants worked in pre-migration was a barrier to finding similar employment. Emy worked in a relationship building role pre-migration. However, upon arrival in Canada, Emy did not have the social network and environmental familiarity to build the kind of clientele base required for this kind of job. Moreover, Emy reported not seeing any job postings in Metro Vancouver for this specific occupation he had held but did see this kind of job in Toronto.

Some professions were perceived to have better job opportunities than others. Consequently, people in such professions were more easily able to return to their pre-migration jobs. The Information Technology profession was flagged as one such sector, while the medical sectors seemed to have fewer opportunities. Other sectors had more on-call and temporary opportunities rather than full-time permanent positions, according to Oghazi.

Table 20 summarizes the experiences of participants when seeking employment. This includes how their intersectional identities impacted their employment seeking.

Looking for jobs as an African immigrant in Metro- Vancouver	
Racial discrimination	▪ Racial discrimination by Canadians and non-Black immigrants ▪ On the job victimization for being African
African name and accent	▪ Less interview invitations with African name on a resume ▪ African name as a barrier to effective teamwork in the workplace ▪ Being assumed unintelligent for speaking English with an African accent
Family situation and gender roles	▪ Women delayed returning to work or school in order to care for their spouse and children ▪ Juggling family responsibilities with schooling or seeking employment
Immigration status	▪ Some jobs require Canadian citizenship or permanent residence status.
Lack of Canadian qualifications	▪ Lack of Canadian education: Employers do not understand foreign qualifications ▪ Lack of Canadian work experience: Difficulty obtaining Canadian work experience from overseas; employers are unsure or participants workplace culture from their countries
Overqualification	▪ Disadvantage in the job search process for having more than the required qualifications ▪ Removing some qualifications from resume to be eligible for jobs
Time	▪ Length of time required for re-certification ▪ Additional time required to take preliminary courses before being eligible for re-certification programs

	▪ Time to customize resumes and cover letters for different jobs ▪ Time to research companies and industries of interest
Sector specific challenges	▪ Qualifications for entering specific industries ▪ The nature of the job, such as if participants' pre-arrival jobs did not exist in their current location ▪ Some professions (e.g., the IT profession) enjoyed more job opportunities than did others (e.g., the medical profession).

Table 19: Intersectional factors associated with looking for jobs as an African immigrant in Metro- Vancouver

6.3 Discussion

I begin this section by discussing the forgoing results on the role of intersectionality in employment seeking. This includes the impact of racial identity on employment seeking, the mismatch of employment expectations and reality upon arrival and then foreign accent discrimination. Following this, I discuss the relationship between information and employment seeking, which includes the role of immigration status in accessing employment information.

6.3.1 The experience of Africans immigrants seeking employment in Metro Vancouver

From participants' experiences, being Black was costly in the job market. As participants described in different words, being Black was a minus, a lost point in the job search process. The participants were a group of mostly well-educated, midcareer African immigrants to Canada who had high hopes of their migration experience. At the time they were interviewed, 52% of the participants were employed in survival jobs that did not recognize their high levels of post-secondary education and overseas professional work experience. This situation was not what the majority of the participants had expected. Even those who expected that integrating and securing meaningful

employment would not be immediate indicated that the challenges were far worse than they had heard or read about prior to arriving in Canada.

Participants described that available information positions Canada as a country where people can realize their potential and contribute in meaningful ways through abundant job opportunities. What was not made clear was that the majority of the "abundant jobs" are low skilled, low wage positions that did not utilize the skills and professional experience the participants had acquired prior to coming to Canada. Participants found it disheartening to watch their skills go to waste while some struggled with re-certification processes to return to the type of jobs they held in their source countries.

Attempts to return to meaningful employment were often met by multiple and concurrent barriers, some common among all immigrant groups as previous researchers have found, such as lack of Canadian work experience and credentials (Buzdugan & Halli, 2009; Salaff, Greve, & Ping, 2002), while some were specific to them as Africans.

Time was one of the barriers to returning to professional positions. As with findings of previous research (Salaff, Greve, & Ping, 2002; Salaff & Greve, 2003), some participants felt that they did not have the time to undergo re-credentialing required to practice in their professions. Some of the participants reported being made to undergo more interview stages than applicants of other nationalities because their education and experience from Africa were not understood or trusted. For immigrants who held credentials from Canada, other North American countries, Europe or other western nations, it was easy to find and understand the content of their education or work experience, as Ewura explained. People from Africa are a minority compared to other immigrant groups. As a result, employers may not have had enough experience with them to understand their qualifications and value, and participants felt they had to prove themselves more than other

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applicants. Even after securing jobs, many participants felt a need to work harder than other immigrants or Canadian-born colleagues.

Skin colour was also a constant barrier to securing meaningful employment. Being Black was described as synonymous to being "dumb" according to Tina, Frank, and Ignace, which corroborates the experiences of participants in Creese and Wiebe's (2012) study with African immigrants in Metro Vancouver.

Stereotyping cost many immigrants meaningful job opportunities (Cocchiara, Bell & Casper, 2016; Subedi &Rosenberg, 2017; Wilkinson, et al., 2016). Participants explained that Africans were presumed to be poor, illiterate and unenlightened. However, NI emphasized that Africans are well-educated, resilient, resourceful, enlightened and well-travelled. Even their names constituted barriers to being invited for interviews and some participants (e.g., Ifedi) changed their names to sound more English in order to secure interviews.

Employment discrimination of participants was not perpetuated by Canadian born employers only, but also by employers of majority immigrant groups who preferred to hire applicants from their own ethnic groups. Saviour was interviewed for a long time and not offered a position. However, another applicant that he had chatted with on his way into the interview room was offered the position after a much shorter interview. Saviour explained that the successful applicant and the employer were from the same ethnic group and the interview was conducted in their shared local dialect. Because Africans are a very small minority, they do not have enough people among the African community who are entrepreneurs and understand the value that they bring. They are at a double disadvantage from Canadian and other immigrant employers.

African immigrants hold more post-secondary education than the general Canadian population

(Keung, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2016; Todd, 2018). They work hard and contribute to the socioeconomic fabric of Canada. The Canadian government will benefit from focusing on reducing skill wastages due to un/der employment of a well-qualified group, such as African immigrants. Bringing medical doctors, dentists, and engineers here to work in jobs that require no education, skill or experience is a loss for Canadian employers who continue to face labour shortages (Matti, 2019; The Conference Board of Canada, 2015), for the economy and for the immigrants who cannot afford a meaningful quality of life. Participants generally wanted their employment situation to improve. They hoped that relevant stakeholders will engage with the results of this research to learn about their qualifications and challenges and potentially make changes that will improve their employment situation. They recognized that they were a small minority but held high hopes that something would be done to improve their situations.

6.3.2 Employment reality was far below expectation

Participants reported being faced with employment situations that were far below their pre-migration expectations. According to participants, Canada has been positioned in the global space as a place where immigrants are sought by the Canadian Government to fill job vacancies and consequently, immigrants could secure jobs quickly upon arrival. As participants described, they were envied by their friends and families for being able to migrate to Canada, the land of opportunities. They set off for Canada with high hopes and expectations of a better life. Prior to migration, the participants had considered Canada as a place where they could find greener pastures and their dreams would be actualized. Greener pasture for some of the participants was an office job where they could work from 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday. For other participants, greener pasture meant jobs at the same status as the jobs they held in their source countries.

However, upon arrival in Canada, they quickly realized that positions commensurate with their qualifications were not as abundant as they had expected. Available jobs came with irregular and overnight hours, which they found strange. Participants explained that work hours were more regular in their countries, often 8am to 5pm. They relayed that the easiest jobs to secure were survival jobs that they employed others to do for them in their countries. They reported feeling uncomfortable sharing with their friends and families back home that they were engaged in these jobs. They feared that doing so could hurt their pride, since they were well-to-do in their countries and envied for relocating to Canada. Their hope for a better opportunity seemed far beyond their reach. Despite the bleak employment situation, participants refused to lose hope and remained resilient in their steady pursuit of a better life. Participants' major goals when coming to Canada were to work in a similar profession to their pre-arrival work experience, return to school to secure Canadian qualification, or both.

It appeared that participants' expectations were externally driven by others, sometimes, through misinformation and misrepresentation of life in Canada. People who live outside of Africa, including in Canada, showed off their affluence when they travelled back home and this behaviour enticed others to want to leave their comfortable lives and travel overseas to supposed greener pastures. Other times, it was positive information on the website of Canadian Government and agencies that people interpreted to be positively correlated with a good life once in Canada.

6.3.3 The language challenge: English language was not a barrier, the African accent was

That newcomers need to learn the language of the host country to foster their settlement is well established in the literature (Caidi, Allard & Dechief, 2008; Creese, 2011; Shoham & Strauss, 2007; Su & Conaway, 1995). As crucial as this is, it perpetuates the one-size-fits all approach to serving newcomers, where newcomers are assumed to be the same, or the needs of a more minority

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group is subsumed under the needs of other larger immigrant groups. Such approaches fail to recognize the intersectionality of newcomers, where each individual is unique in his or her circumstances and preferences. Such an approach also poses a barrier to service utilization for immigrants, as some participants in this research reported.

Participants had been speaking English all their lives. They completed all their education in English, including at the post-secondary level. Hence, they felt confident in their English language skills. Yet some were required to take basic English language tests in Canada as a prerequisite for receiving support. Some participants declined the support as it was not what they needed to move forward in their settlement and employment situations. Some participants described such requirement as a regression from their advanced engagement with and use of English language; merely learning the basics was a stage they had completed as children. Another major language related challenge they encountered in their job search was foreign accent discrimination. Participants, including Philanta and Oorloochy, reported that speaking with an African accent was a barrier in the job search process.

The impacts of foreign accent on employment have been reported in other studies (e.g., Bagnall, 2012; Creese, 2011). Participants in the current study reported several instances in which speaking with a foreign accent was a barrier to securing meaningful employment. Canada is a country composed of a significant proportion of newcomers, and a diversity of accents can be expected to be naturally present. Even people born in Canada may speak with an accent due to regional dialects. However, some accents are more acceptable than others (Timming, 2017). For minority groups like African immigrants in this study, they were at a dual disadvantage because their accent was neither Canadian, nor of a larger ethnic group. The implication of which was that they were not favoured by Canadian employers for employment, nor were they successful with employers

from the larger ethnic groups who preferred to hire people from their own countries, culture, language and accent.

This situation presents a huge opportunity for the Canadian government as well as settlement and employment service providers. However, what is mostly being provided and required are opportunities to learn and improve English Language skills, which was not helpful for participants in this study. Understandably, taking an English Language test to prove English Language abilities may be a condition to be met as part of the funding requirements of the support agencies. That said, if a condition continues to present as a barrier to the very group it should be alleviating challenges for, then the condition is in itself a challenge and should be examined for ways to improve it. In this case, a number of options could be explored to make the language services more valuable to some immigrant groups.

As part of the requirement for migrating through some immigration streams, people interested in coming to Canada undertake an English language test to demonstrate that they meet the acceptable level of English language abilities to migrate to Canada. The economic migration class is one such stream. When such immigrants arrive in Canada and wish to access employment support, some of them are asked to retake English Language classes and take tests similar to or perhaps more basic than the test they had to do to be eligible to migrate in the first place. Moreover, for other people who arrive as temporary residents but became permanent residents in Canada, they also have to take English tests and obtain certain pass marks to be eligible to apply to become permanent residents. Yet when some people seek employment support, they are asked to undergo English language testing again. Is there a possibility for some re-use of these tests, or a combination of English requirements so immigrants can take one test that meets the needs of the different agencies, including those of the Canadian Government?

In addition, language and cultural literacy programs for Canadians and employers may help them to understand the value and talents that newcomers bring, and how speaking with an accent does not translate to being incompetent on the job. How can support help necessary stakeholders to separate issues and tap into the skills that African immigrants bring?

Moreover, while it is difficult for an adult to change their accent, more of the support could focus on helping the immigrants improve their accents and learn Canadian expressions which may be different from American, British and indeed African English language expressions. Some support exists around accent improvement and learning workplace English (Richmond Public Library, 2019; Toronto Public Library, 2010), yet more can be done in this area, as well as enlightening the Canadian community to understand that integrating immigrants into the labour market and society necessitates Canadian employers recognizing that they can listen to the content of speech, rather than the accent of the speaker, because adults cannot completely discard an accent that they have used from birth. Such education will contribute to adjusting expectations that native English speakers have of non-native English speakers, as well as help focus on what people have to offer instead of their accent.

6.3.4 Employment and access to information

Being in a new environment where the physical and information environment is unfamiliar is a well cited challenge to securing information (Lingel, 2011; Oh, Butler & Lee, 2014). An immigrant is on average well versed in acquiring information in their pre-arrival countries. However, upon arrival in a new country, access to information may assume a new shape. Many participants faced an information disjuncture and had inadequate literacy about employment information sources especially when they newly arrived. Research with other immigrants have reported similar findings (Kennan, 2011; Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016). For participants in

this study access to information in Canada is further impacted by immigration status in addition to the unfamiliarity of spaces cited by previous researchers (Lingel, 2011; Machet & Govender, 2012).

In Canada, naturalized citizens, permanent residents and refugees have more access to information and resources than do temporary residents (see ISSofBC, 2020; RMCS, 2020). Moreover, immigrants who are invited to immigrate to Canada as permanent residents also receive information about support in Canada pre-arrival. As I heard from some participants, the Canadian Government links them up with immigrant support agencies in Canada who connect with them before they depart for Canada to offer them information and support. Such support is not available to temporary residents. For participants who arrived as temporary residents, such as international students, they did not utilize government funded support as they were ineligible. By the time they secured permanent residence status, they had been able to navigate the Canadian employment landscape to secure jobs and no longer needed such services. It was not uncommon to see limited knowledge of the availability of such support among this latter group, as well as conceptions of such services being offered with other motives, such as charging a percentage of the immigrants' salary after securing jobs for them. While examples of this were cited by interwiewees, it appeared to have been with private employment agencies and not with immigrant employment support funded by the Canadian Government. However, such participants could not tell the difference between private and government funded services, or thought government funded services were only for a certain class of immigrants such as refugees. One participant who did know about government funded employment support and attempted to utilize the service was turned away due to his temporary resident status which made him ineligible. The experiences of participants with acquiring employment information calls to question how supportive the Canadian employment

information landscape is for immigrants who do not know exactly what employment information exists and where they should be searching for it. More contextualized information provision could be valuable. Such information support will provide not just the information, but better account for why, when, who, and explain how things are done.

6.4 Summary

Participants in this study found themselves playing in an unlevel employment landscape lined with challenges. Some of these challenges were associated with obtaining employment related information, while others were directly related to securing jobs. Some of the job-related challenges were general in nature and applicable to other immigrant groups, while others were specific to them as Africans.

The challenges that participants encountered with acquiring employment information included those associated with the content of the employment information, such as differences in the professional jargon, as well as those encountered with the process of securing the information such as having inadequate social networks to draw on, and geographic unfamiliarity. The participants explained that not having anyone to refer them to appropriate job information sources was a significant challenge. They stressed the importance of people as a guide and starting point for employment information search.

Participants were generally impacted by their family situation, especially women who balanced their time around their husbands' work and children's school schedules while seeking meaningful employment themselves. Often, they could not have it all and meaningful employment was dropped in favour of caring for the family. This resulted in delays for some female participants in returning to school or professional employment. Immigrant women, and in fact, all women with

children would benefit from professional jobs with flexible schedules as challenging childcare situations in Metro Vancouver are well documented (Fumano, 2019).

Participants also felt that employers found it difficult to trust the experience and overseas qualifications of Black Africans due to employers' unfamiliarity with the education system and workplace culture in Africa. As a result, participants were made to undergo discriminatory employment practices and perceived they had to work harder to prove to employers that they could perform the job as required. Meanwhile, participants arrived highly educated and found that they were overqualified for the jobs they were interested in.

Though African immigrants speak English Language, they do so with an accent that has failed to obtain the favour of employers. Participants felt they were assumed to be ignorant due to their accents. Moreover, racial identity was a huge determinant of employment integration for participants, since African immigrants are a very small minority in Metro Vancouver, and therefore have limited social networks and community of people of their kind. They are mostly not able to hire one another since most of them do not own businesses and are thus at the mercy of business owners of other nationalities who often prefer to hire people of their own kind. When they do secure jobs, many participants reported being disrespected and discriminated by colleagues and clients for being Black.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes this research. I begin with an overview of the research conducted, including the research questions, frameworks and research methods adopted, and the results. Thereafter I summarize answers to each research question and discuss the contributions of the research to Library and Information Science theory, information professionals' practice, and research methods. Finally, I discuss the limitations of the research and conclude the chapter with directions for future research.

7.1 Overview of the research

This dissertation sought to answer four research questions: 1) What kinds of information do African immigrants in Metro Vancouver value when seeking employment? 2) How do they obtain employment related information? 3) What information services are available to support immigrant labour integration, how are African immigrants utilizing these and what opportunities are there to improve these services? and 4) How do African immigrants' identities influence their experience of acquiring employment and information in Greater Vancouver? The study was guided by the theory of information poverty and concept of intersectionality.

Data collection began with a qualitative analysis of information available on the websites of employment and settlement provider organizations. This was done to understand the kinds of employment support being offered to immigrants generally and determine if there were any tailored specifically to African immigrants. This was followed by semi-structured interviews with twenty-five African immigrants in Metro Vancouver. Information world mapping was employed

during the interviews as an ice breaker and to provide participants additional options to express their views. Eighteen participants completed the information world maps.

Results of the study showed that participants valued three kinds of employment information and demonstrated an assortment of information practices to obtain information. This is consistent with other studies that have investigated information behaviour in the settlement process, although those were not focused specifically on employment (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Lingel, 2011). The document analysis showed an abundance of employment support being offered to immigrants, however, none was tailored specifically to Black African immigrants. Participants made suggestions that would make current support services more valuable to them. Finally, participants' multifaceted identities had a significant impact on their ability to secure employment related information and ultimately, meaningful jobs.

7.1.1   Answering the research questions

RQ1. What kinds of information do African immigrants value when seeking meaningful employment?

Interview participants demonstrated value for three types of employment related information: job opportunities, industry and company information, and location information. Participants wanted to know where to find job postings. They also researched the industries they were interested in to determine what qualifications were required. In addition, they sought information about companies they were applying to, to both ascertain fit and prepare for interviews if invited. They browsed company websites and read online reviews about the companies to obtain such information. Information gathered provided them with insights about how organizations treated their employees, the interview process and what to expect working for such employers. Information

about the location of companies and industries informed their decisions about where to settle upon arrival in Canada, in some cases.

RQ2. How do African immigrants in Canada access employment information?

Participants secured employment information through purposeful strategies that included drawing on nine information sources. I grouped the nine sources into three larger themes:

- Institutions, including Canadian government, agencies in Canada, Canadian educational institutions, and religious institutions.
- Other people, such as friends and professors.
- Online sources, such as Indeed jobsite, Craigslist, Internet, LinkedIn, and online information communities.

Participants preferred to obtain information from other people, rather than from the internet or institutions. They explained that people provided information that was contextualized for them; explained how process worked and followed up to see if the information was used successfully. Participants described people as reliable and "willing to go the extra mile" to help them. This corroborates the findings of many other studies that have explored the information sources utilized by immigrants during settlement (Lingel, 2011; Caidi & Allard, 2005; Fisher et. al., 2004). Despite these other studies not focusing on employment specifically, "other people" remained the preferred source for immigrants, and the internet often ranked next to other people in priority, as it did with participants in the current study. The implication is that immigrants draw on people and the internet to secure information for most dimensions of their settlement, whether employment or everyday life.

RQ3. What information services are available to support immigrant labour integration, how are African immigrants utilizing these and what opportunities are there to improve?

The document analysis revealed a wealth of employment information being offered for immigrants. These included support to help immigrants utilize other support, support to help immigrants start their own business, support that helped immigrants gain experience in their sector of interest, support for employers hiring immigrants, support targeted to different demographics, including different gender and age groups, finance, and the provision of employment information and resources. There was more employment support available for immigrants in some professions than others, and no support targeted specifically at African immigrants.

Participants utilized roughly half of the types of support identified in the document analysis. Barriers to optimizing these supports included participants' expectation not matching services received, agency staff being perceived as not knowing enough or not having adequate relevant information to be useful to the participants, information provided deemed unclear, and eligibility criteria which kept some participants away from required support.

Participants made the following suggestions to help make existing services more relevant to them:

- Hiring staff of diverse cultural and professional backgrounds and training existing staff to improve their professional and cultural competence.

- More opportunities for participants to gain professional work experience in their industries of interest.

- Provision of support to integrate professionals more quickly into their chosen professions.

- More effective support and follow up after the duration of support provision.

- Practical information that works when applied.

Moreover, some participants were unaware of existing supports while some that knew about them were unclear as to their purpose. Promotion strategies that recognize the strengths and limitations of African immigrants could more effectively bridge this gap.

RQ4. 4. How do African immigrants' identities influence their experience of acquiring employment and information in Greater Vancouver?

Relationships were found among identity, information and employment in the experiences of participants. Participants reported that employment information was available in abundance, however, they equally reported facing challenges when attempting to obtain the wealth of information. These challenges included those associated with the content of the information, such as outdated information on websites and the use of unfamiliar professional jargon on job postings. Another set of challenges were associated with the process of acquiring the employment information when they were actively searching for it. These included being new and unfamiliar with their physical geography and information landscape, limited knowledge of employment information sources, and inadequate social networks to draw on for direction and support.

Participants experienced challenges to securing meaningful employment, including racial discrimination, the barrier of having an African name, employer discrimination of applicants that speak with a foreign accent, discrimination by immigrants of larger ethnicities, family situations such as caring for a spouse or children, immigration status challenges, lack of Canadian work experience and education, being overqualified for positions of interest, the time required for re-certifications, and challenges associated with securing employment in specific sectors.

Three elements of identity each simultaneously impacted access to information services and employment. These were immigration status, family situation and racial identity.

Participants who were temporary residents or had been temporary residents initially described having limited access to information and support due to their immigration status. Some information services and support were limited to immigrants who were permanent residents, naturalized citizens or refugees. Some of these services also specified preference for permanent residents within five years of arrival in Canada. These requirements effectively made some participants ineligible for the support they needed. As well, having a temporary residence status was detrimental to securing meaningful jobs. Some job postings specified preference for Canadian citizens and permanent residents, while others did not explicitly specify and yet did not hire temporary residents. Participants reported that this was in part due to the sensitive nature of such jobs which necessitated background checks. They added that it was easier to obtain background checks on Canadian citizens and permanent residents than it was on temporary residents hence their difficulty in securing such jobs.

Having a spouse and/or child impacted participants' ability to access employment support and jobs. Female participants reported having to stay home and care for the family while their husbands returned to school or employment. As such, they could not access available employment information and support. Moreover, being pregnant cost female participants opportunities for meaningful employment, while some male participants declined better paying jobs far from home to be at hand and support their wives and children. Overall, female participants were more impacted by their family situation and gender roles than male participants.

Racial identity played a significant role in participants ability to secure required information and employment. Because Black Africans are a racial minority in Canada whose numbers are still

small despite being on the rise, they are not a large community in Metro Vancouver. Interviewee Okey noted that information about jobs flowed within the communities of larger immigrant ethnicities. Being a racial outsider to such communities, he did not have access to such information which placed him at a disadvantage.

Participants' racial identity manifested substantially when seeking meaningful employment. This included their skin colour, African accent, African name and racial stereotyping. Some participants relayed that employers were taken aback when they arrived for interviews in Black skin. They described that being Black and speaking with an African accent cost them jobs that they felt well qualified for because some employers did not want a Black staff occupying certain positions. Some participants described not receiving interview invitations based on their African names. Ifedi for example described how changing his name to a more "English" sounding one improved his access to interviews and jobs. Ewura was interviewed more times than her Canadian counterparts because the employer did not understand the content of her foreign education. Moreover, participants described having even more streamlined opportunities to secure jobs because they were discriminated by both Canadian employers and employers of larger racial groups.

When participants secured jobs, they were discriminated on the job by colleagues and clients alike. Emy reported being fired from two jobs because colleagues did not understand his accent or did not want to work with a Black person. These reasons were not explicitly stated when participants were fired; however, Emy's description of events leading up to the layoff spoke volumes. Tina described not being taken seriously by clients because she is Black. She relayed that clients often went above her to her boss to confirm information that she provided them. Frank perceived that the disrespectful treatment he received from parents of the pupils in the class he taught was because he was Black. Saviour faced unhealthy work situations and expectations because he was Black.

Figure 16 summarizes participants information practices when seeking employment. It includes the information sources that participants utilized as well as the intersectional and contextual factors that influenced their employment information seeking.
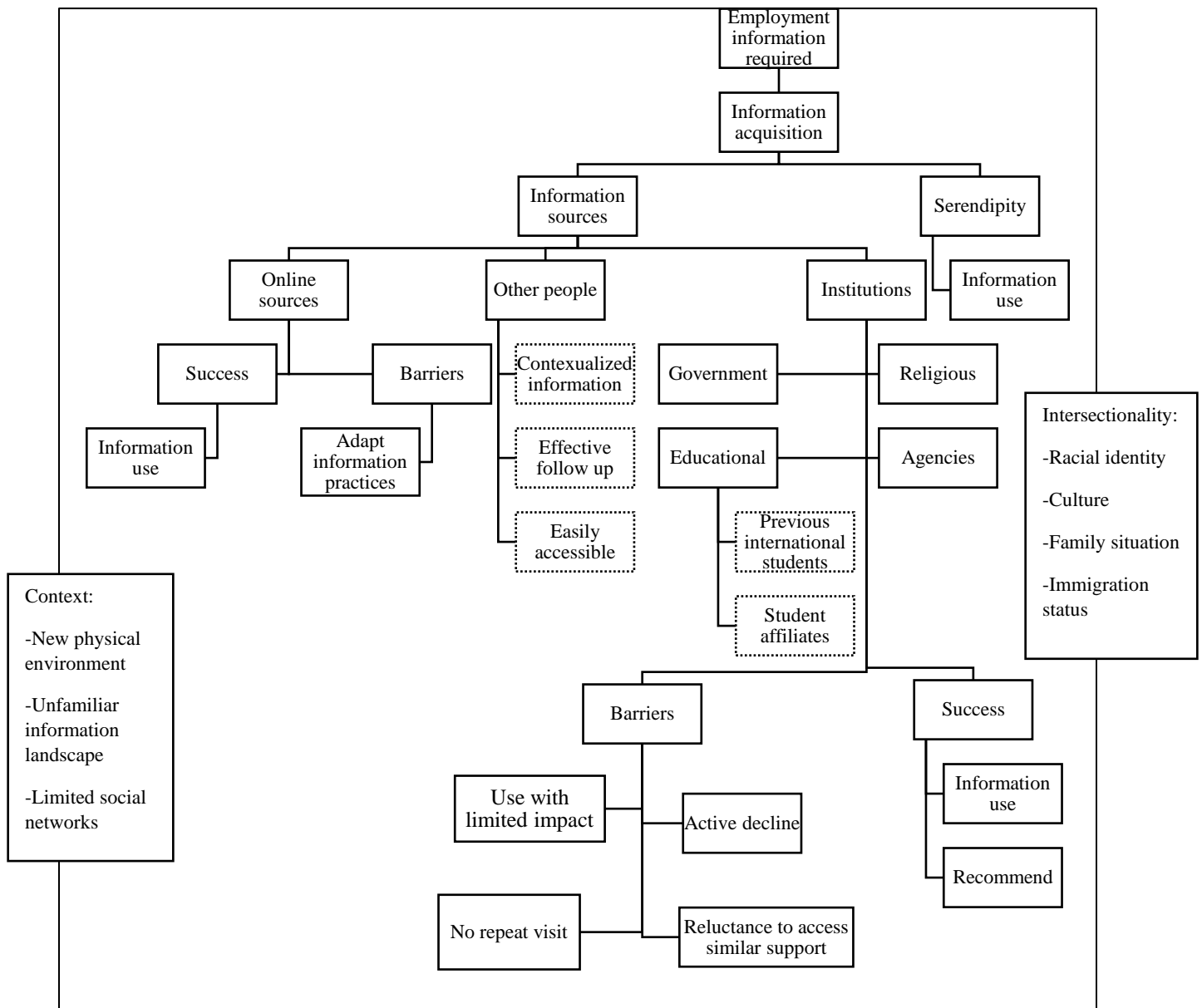
Figure 16: Model of participants employment information practices

Participants mostly sought information actively, although a few participants did obtain information serendipitously. Participants who secured information serendipitously put the information to immediate use, such as by signing up for services of the agencies that they encountered. When participants actively sought information, they utilized three sources, including online sources, other people and Canadian institutions. When searching online, participants used information gathered if it was useful. This included applying to positions that they found through their online searches. When they faced barriers in their online information acquisition, participants adapted their information practices to suit their current information world. As participants utilized the services of institutions in Canada, they were similarly faced with barriers and successes. When participants encountered barriers, they either declined the service, or utilized it but derived limited impact, and often did not return to the agencies, and were reluctant to use the services of similar agencies. When they experienced success with services provided by institutions, they used the information, such as by modifying their resume and cover letter according to the new information received, and also recommended the agencies to their friends. Participants who accessed support from Canadian educational institutions were often affiliated with such institutions either as international students or spouses of international students. Participants sought information from other people because interpersonal sources proactively provided contextual information, followed up to ensure successful use of information, referred participants appropriately and were easily reachable.

7.2 Contribution of the study

In chapter one of this dissertation, I anticipated several contributions of this research. I projected that the research would make contributions to the Library and Information Science (LIS) knowledge and theory. I also expected the results to have direct implications for the Canadian

government, who would benefit from more information about this less understood population. This could inform its policies to support better economic integration for African immigrants and program related funding. Additionally, I estimated that immigrant settlement, employment, and information service organizations in Metro Vancouver would find the results valuable for evaluating the match between services provided and the requirements of African immigrants seeking employment. This could lead to modifications in policy and information delivery practices. I further projected that the work could more broadly inform employment information provision across and beyond Canada as African immigrants continue to constitute an increasing number of migrants generally. I hoped that the study would achieve this by providing knowledge of what employment related information African immigrants valued, the information sources they utilized, and how they navigated information in origin and destination countries. Results of the study presented in chapters 4 to 6 met these expectations. Below I present the contributions of this research to theory, practice and research methods.

7.2.1 Contribution to knowledge and theory

The information behaviour of immigrants seeking employment remains less explored. Although employment is a component of immigrant settlement on which there has been significant research, very little research has focused on specifics of information in employment seeking. The current study makes an important contribution in this regard. Results of the study shed light on the employment related information behaviour of African immigrants to Metro Vancouver, including needs, sources and challenges. More so, this research focused on a racial minority group whose voices have been traditionally underrepresented in immigrant information behaviour research. This study is therefore significant by bringing forward the experiences of an inadequately understood racial minority group on an inadequately understood phenomenon.

The findings of this research confirm the results of previous research. This includes those that have reported preference for interpersonal information sources by immigrants during the settlement process e.g., (Lingel, 2011; Fisher et. al., 2004), and those that indicated the affective benefits of cultivating social networks such as the provision of emotional support for immigrants (Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin, 2016). The information requirements of participants in this study also mirrored most of the information needs of participants in Rayes, Martin-Hammond, Komlodi, Caidi, & Sundin's (2016) research, including the need for licencing information and career opportunities. Participants in the current study did not seek residency information or information about research developments in the medical field as did participants in Rayes et al.'s (2016) study. This is because the current study did not focus specifically on medical professionals as did Rayes et.al.'s. Although two medical practitioners were interviewed as part of the current study, they did not report seeking such information.

Beyond the LIS domain, results of the study also confirmed challenges encountered by immigrants seeking to integrate into the workforce of the host country, while pointing to additional challenges. It confirmed the presence of racial discrimination and stereotyping (Cocchiara, Bell & Casper, 2016; Subedi & Rosenberg, 2017), foreign accent discrimination (Creese, 2011; Wilkinson, et al., 2016), lack of recognition of foreign work experience and credentials (Buzdugan & Halli, 2009; Salaff, Greve, & Ping, 2002), and time as a barrier (Salaff, Greve, & Ping, 2002; Salaff & Greve, 2003).

This research was guided by the theory of information poverty (Britz 2004), and the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2016). Participants in this study were not information poor as defined by Britz (2004). They reported having an abundance of employment related information, although available information was unsuitable for them in many instances, due largely to their intersectional

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identities. This finding is important to how we understand and describe the relationship between immigrants and information poverty. Information poverty stance tends to view people as lacking with regards to information (Chatman, 1985, 1987; 1996; 1999), while an intersectionality lens helps to view people as enriched and multifaceted in their information practices. In this study, participants faced limited access to information due to factors associated with their identities. This included coming to Canada from a country with different information practices that were not fully applicable to the Canadian information landscape, having immigration statuses that made them ineligible to receive some information and supports, caring for family members that left them little time to pursue information and lack of social networks to connect them to information. There is room to consider a cultural component in information access as different information practices in different countries can be a barrier to information access.

In addition, information frameworks that incorporate "cultural humility" could be valuable for understanding the experiences of information seekers. Cultural humility involves self-reflection and openness to learning and understanding the lived experiences and cultures of others (First Nations Health Authority, 2020; Gallagher, 2016). Clement and Shade (2000), who advocated for information access for all members of a community, encouraged the creation of information models that encompass the multiple dimensions of information access, including the technical and social. Considering the foregoing, perhaps a more appropriate concept for describing participants experiences with securing employment information would be "information inequity". I define information inequity as the provision of information through strategies that do not account for the intersectional identities and experiences of the information recipient. In an information inequity situation, individuals and communities do not access available information optimally due to circumstances arising from their intersectional identities, the information landscape to be

navigated and the qualities of the information. An "information equity" model would seek to provide information in ways that recognize the multifaceted identities of the information users in online and offline information seeking situations. Such a model could alleviate the inequity faced by participants and help make information provided more relevant and valuable to them.

7.2.2 Contributions to policy and information professionals' practice

Results of this research showed that a lot of support was being offered to support immigrant labour integration. However, participants faced barriers that prevented them from using these services, including their spousal and parental responsibilities. More support in the barrier targeted category to alleviate challenges to using other support would be valuable. This could include child minding and alternate delivery options that fit into participants' schedules.

In addition, this group of immigrants faced unique barriers associated with their racial identity and could benefit from targeted services that address their unique situations. Results of this research revealed that there were no services tailored to the unique situations of this growing immigrant demographic.

Results also showed an abundance of support for immigrants in some professions such as Information Technology, and limited supports for other professions such as the medical professions. This is an important contribution that helps service providers identify gaps in service provision and to better support a broader range of professionals.

Participants made a range of recommendations to help make employment support more relevant and impactful for them. These have shed light on perceptions of employment support by recipients of such services and will be valuable for agencies that desire to view their services through the lens of the recipients in order to make support more effective. Some of those recommendations

included hiring a more culturally and professionally diverse staff, providing practical and factual information about employment realities in Canada, providing more opportunities for immigrants to gain professional work experience in their fields of interest, and more effective follow up to ensure that support provided has meaningful impact on the employment experiences and outcomes.

Participants also suggested the creation of pathways to more quickly integrate professionals into their fields once in Canada. They explained that the process to return to their professions was cumbersome and time intensive. This is an area that could benefit from government policy making. In addition, language and cultural literacy programs for Canadians and employers may help them understand the value and talents that African immigrants bring. For example, by facilitating an understanding that speaking with an accent does not translate to being incompetent on the job. More of the support could focus on helping the immigrants improve their accents and learn Canadian expressions which may be different from American, British and indeed African English language expressions. Some support exists around accent improvement and learning workplace English (Richmond Public Library, 2019), yet more could be done in this area. Cultural literacy sessions for immigrants and the host communities driven through government policy and professional practice could be beneficial to achieving the understanding required to improve the socioeconomic integration of African immigrants.

The results suggest that the marketing and outreach strategies of public libraries have still not reached some racial minorities. None of the participants reported using employment services at public libraries despite the abundance being offered. Public libraries who are interested in including underserved populations may wish to further explore opportunities to reach out to such populations to better support them.

Although this study did not focus specifically on support provided for employers, it highlighted that only few agencies provide support to help employers hire and retain immigrants. Results of this study showed that employers are crucial to employment integration of immigrants. More supports for employers to hire, develop and retain immigrants will be valuable to the overall strategy of helping African and indeed all immigrants secure meaningful employment.

7.2.3 Methodological contribution

This research is the first known application of Information World Mapping technique (Greyson, 2013), a visual elicitation of information worlds, with African immigrants living in Canada, with the exception of Shankar, O'Brien, How, Lu, Mabi, and Rose' (2016) application with a refuge student in Canada. It is also one of the few applications of the technique with immigrants in general. Studies that utilize Information World Mapping have been concentrated in North America (e.g., Greyson, 2013; Greyson, O'Brien, & Shoveller, 2017; Dalmar, 2017; and Greyson, O'Brien & Shankar, 2019) and often not focused on immigrants with the exception of a few such as Lingel (2014). More recently, Information World Mapping has been applied in Taiwan (see Tsai, Chen, Tai, & Chen, 2019).

This research provided a premiere opportunity for participants to engage with the Information World Mapping method. Sixteen participants participated in the mapping, while nine participants (five males, four females) opted not to participate. Participants demonstrated a clear preference for verbal conversations to drawing. Some of the participants wrote lengthy notes on the flip charts in response to the prompts. This demonstrated that some participants were not enthusiastic about expressing their views artistically, and reaffirmed their preference for verbal communication.

All 16 participants were unfamiliar with the method and required examples and assistance to complete the mapping. Although it is not recommended to provide research participants with samples of information world maps so that they do not feel pressured into drawing their maps in a certain way, I discovered during the pilot interviews that I needed to provide examples to help participants understand the method. I provided several examples from the literature as well as a mock map that I drew for this purpose. Most participants felt comfortable following one of the examples presented. In addition, the majority of participants fared better with concrete prompts that asked them to represent specific aspects of their employment information worlds than with more open-ended questions. Employing the Information Worlds Mapping method with African immigrant participants in this study provided additional perspectives on this research method.

7.3 Limitations of the study

This study was limited to Black African immigrants in Metro Vancouver, Canada. Other immigrant groups who may share similar experiences with this population were not captured. In addition, children born in Canada to African immigrant parents are also not included in this study. This group is unique because they are at the intersection of two worlds, their parents', and that of the country of residence. However, they have not migrated to Canada themselves and I was interested in Africans who migrated to Canada within 15 years of the study.

The experiences of other stakeholders such as employers, caseworkers, and service providers were not directly captured in an interview. This could position the interview data as one-sided and based solely on self-reported data from participants. However, the document analysis provided a snapshot of service provider offerings. This included their statement about themselves and their services, although not specifically for this research. More direct engagement with these stakeholders could be an interest for future research.

Member checking was done during and immediately after the interviews, with an invitation for participants to contact me should they desire to review their interviews. However, I did not send transcribed interview transcripts back to participants for their review. Some participants contacted me to review their transcripts and anonymize names of people or institutions; however, sending the transcripts to all participants would have provided all participants an opportunity to review their transcript and eliminate the need to ask me individually.

7.4 Future Work

This research reported an abundance of employment information and supports being offered to participants. However, such supports did not seem to make much impact on participants' employment situations. Reasons for the discrepancy bordered around misconception of support, eligibility criteria, staff factors, and irrelevance of information provided. Research that further explores how employment information and support provision can better incorporate intersectionality in content and delivery could be valuable. Such research could provide pathways to making available information more readily accessible to those who need it most and when they need it.

In addition, results indicated an opportunity for the continuous examination and enhancement of information access frameworks. Britz's (2004) information poverty was limited in explaining the range of participants' experiences with information access. Participants in this study sought information from both online and offline sources, and their access to information was impacted by their multifaceted identities. Future research could focus on building and testing more robust information inclusion frameworks that incorporate elements of intersectionality in online and offline information access.

Data reported in this research were collected directly from research participants and websites of employment and settlement organizations. Participants made many references to employers and service providers as crucial to their successful employment integration. Both parties were not interviewed directly in this research. Future research that solicits the perspectives of both employers and immigrant employment service providers on the employment and support of African immigrants to Metro Vancouver will be a valuable addition to the literature on immigrant settlement.

Experiences of participants in this study with regards to racial and foreign accent discrimination resemble those reported by African participants in Creese' (2011) study, also conducted in Vancouver. This suggests that in the nine years following Creese's study, the lived experiences of people who speak with an African accent in metro Vancouver have not witnessed a positive shift. Societies might benefit from cultural and accent literacy programs. Such programs could improve people's understanding of different non-local accents, as well as promote a shift from accent discrimination to more cultural advocacy and accent accommodation. Future research could explore the role that information can play in abating racial and foreign accent discrimination in Metro Vancouver and Canada, to help the society to more fully enjoy the benefits that racial minorities bring to the country, and help the immigrants live a more fulfilled life.

This study was the first experience that participants had with the Information World Mapping technique. Nine of 25 participants opted not to participate. The information world mapping technique is valuable for data triangulation and provides participants with alternatives to present their views. This could increase comfort for some research participants and improve the richness of the data collected. Perspectives from diverse cultures and demographics could be valuable for the Information World Mapping technique as it continues to evolve. Future work could experiment

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the Information World Mapping method with more African participants in Africa and diaspora, as well as other cultures more broadly. This could reveal cultural implications for the Information World Mapping technique, such as why research participants may participate in the method or not, as well as any cultural dimensions that could improve its applicability for culturally diverse individuals.

There were indications from participants' responses that information gathered informally pre-migration influenced their expectations of life and employment in Canada. This suggests that information has a role in the desire to migrate and possibly prompted some of the participants to migrate. Future research could explore the place of information in migration, and how pre-migration information can be harnessed to present the realities of life after migration to potential migrants.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent to participate in semi-structured interview and information world mapping

Title	Viewing immigrant labour integration through an intersectional lens: Information and identity in the settlement of African immigrants to Vancouver, British Columbia
Investigator	Millicent Mabi *millicent.mabi@alumni.ubc.ca*
Supervisor	*Dr. Heather O'Brien h.obrien@ubc.ca*
Introduction	Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. This work is affiliated with my doctoral research at the iSchool, University of British Columbia. I am seeking a participant who is of African descent, has immigrated to Canada within the past 15 years, and is able to be interviewed in the English Language.
Purpose	The overall purpose of this research is to explore how African immigrants who have been in Canada for less than 15 years look for employment information.
What you will be asked to do	After you have read this document, I will respond to any questions or concerns that you may have. Once you have signed this consent form, we will proceed to the interview. The interview will last for one to two hours depending on how much you would like to share with me.

You will be asked to draw your employment information world on a flip chart sheet. I will provide instructions to guide you through this part. Thereafter I will ask some general demographic questions and questions about your experience looking for employment related information. Your participation is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. I will take notes as you speak and, with your permission audio record your responses to help me remember our conversation.

Risks/Benefits There are no major risks anticipated, but you will be asked to share your experiences of seeking job-related information in Canada and this may recall unpleasant occurrences for you. On the other hand, you may enjoy reflecting on how much you have achieved since coming to Canada. In terms of employment, it is my hope that the Canadian government, employment agencies, and employment information providers will use the results of the study to support African immigrants.

Compensation You will receive an honorarium to thank you for your time and contribution.

Confidentiality & Anonymity The results of your interview will be reported without any reference to you specifically if you choose to remain anonymous. All the information that you provide will be treated confidentially and your identity will not be revealed in reporting the study results.

Use of Data A focus group will be scheduled after the interviews to explore in more depth relevant issues that arise from the interviews. I may bring some drawings to the focus group and would like your permission to bring your drawing to the

focus group, and to publish it with the other results of the study. No

identifying information will be on your drawing. You can give me this

permission by signing at the end of this form.

Results of this study will culminate in a dissertation, and some journal

publications. I would like to use some of your drawings in these publications.

No identifying information will be included so your contribution will remain

confidential.

I, _____, have read the

explanation about this study. I have been given the opportunity to discuss it and my questions

have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby consent to take part in this interview. However,

I realize that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any

time.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please circle/underline one of the following answers:

I consent to have my drawings used in the focus groups with other participants   Yes   No

I consent to have my drawings used in the aforementioned publications   Yes   No

I want to be referred to with a pseudonym: _____   Yes   No

I want to be referred to with my real name: Yes   No

In the event that you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant you may call

the UBC Research Subject Information Office of Research Services at 604.822.8598.

Appendix B: Nine themes and 69 initial codes from the document analysis

Theme	Description and example	Codes
Self-employment	Services to help immigrants to establish their own businesses or make informed decisions not to. Examples include workshops and information sections to explore and understand the requirements for starting a business in Canada.	- Small business - Startup information
Resource based job search help	This type of employment support provides employment related resources to immigrants in digital and/or print formats	- Alternative career guides - Job boards - Job postings - Market research - Information/orientation - Newsletters - Employment standards - Job search resources - Re-credentialing information - North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) - Industry information - Employment guides

Barrier targeted employment support	Supports that remove or reduce barriers to accessing other supports	Transportation support Child minding
Workplace preparation/Training	This support provides information to newcomers about Canadian workplaces without participatory or experiential elements	▪ Personal protection ▪ Workplace right s and responsibilities ▪ Personal privacy and security while job searching ▪ Health and safety training ▪ Preparing for the workplace ▪ Workplace culture ▪ Job readiness training

Customized employment support	Employment support that is targeted to specific demographics and professions	- Technology careers - Information on skilled trades - Youth employment 45+ employment - Mature worker employment - Career paths for skilled immigrants - Tech women - Employment help in specific languages such as Hindi and Punjabi - Sewing business program for women - Women - Immigrant youth employment - Youth - Awareness of social benefits - Case worker - IT professionals - Immigration status

Experiential job search help	Employment support that leads to the acquisition of experience about a position or industry of interest.	- Networking - Connection to potential employers - Practice networking - Coaching - Job shadow opportunities - Internship - Work experience placement - Volunteering - Mentoring
Programs for employers	Services to help employers to successfully hire and include immigrants into their workplaces	Codes under this theme are not listed as this does not constitute the focus of the current study.

Activity-based job search	Supports to help immigrants participate in employment related activities that do not involve acquiring on the job experience for particular industries or positions of interest	- Job fair - Job search tour - Job search; - job search help; - job search techniques/strategies - Follow up appointments for future job prospects - Cover letter help - Credential evaluation - Referrals - Live introduction to resources - Access to job bank - Counselling and action plan development - Workplace English learning - Help selecting the right employment support - Interview preparation - Resume creation - Career portfolio development - One-on one customized career counselling
Financing	Funding for employment related activities	Micro loans Loans

Appendix C: Invitation letter

iSchool (School of Library, Archival and Information Studies) – The University of British Columbia

Invitation to participate in research

About the research: I wish to invite you to participate in study about African immigrants seeking jobs in Canada. More specifically, the research seeks to explore how African immigrants look for information to secure the job they want. I hope that the research results will inform information service provision to facilitate equitable access to information for African immigrants so that they can move on quickly from survival jobs to the ideal jobs they want.

Who can participate: African immigrants who are 19 years or older, have been in Canada for 0 to 15 years and can complete the conversation in the English language.

What would you be asked to do: Participate in an interview that will last about 1-2 hours. The interview will involve some writing or drawing.

Who is conducting the research?

Millicent Mabi
Ph.D. Candidate
iSchool (Library, Archival and
Information Studies)
470 - 1961 East Mall
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z1
Tel 604 822 2404
Email: millicent.mabi@alumni.ubc.ca

Dr. Heather L. O'Brien MLIS PhD
Associate Professor
Chair, Doctoral Studies
iSchool (Library, Archival and
Information Studies)
470 - 1961 East Mall
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z1
Tel 604-827-5842
Email: h.obrien@ubc.ca

Who do I contact if I have questions or to participate?

Please contact Millicent Mabi with the contact information listed above. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and your input is highly esteemed. If you have any questions, I would be happy to discuss them with you. Thank you in advance of your contributions.

Appendix D: Advertisement flyer for recruiting research participants

iSchool@UBC
SCHOOL OF LIBRARY, ARCHIVAL & INFORMATION STUDIES

UBC a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Would you like to chat about your employment experience in Canada?

Volunteer as a research participant and help us learn about how African immigrants obtain employment

Who do we need?

We are recruiting research participants who are adult Africans, have been in Canada for 0-15 years, speak English Language, are not international students and live or work in Metro Vancouver.

What will you be doing?

You will be asked to participate in an interview, fill out brief demographic questionnaire, and if you like, participate in a focus group.

For more information about this study, or to participate, please contact:
Millicent Mabi (millicent.mabi@alumni.ubc.ca)
School of Library, Archives and Information Studies, UBC

This research has been reviewed by and received ethics approval from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board, UBC. Millicent Mabi is working under the supervision of Dr. Heather O'Brien.

Appendix E: Interview questions and rationale

	Questions	Rationale
A	**Employment history**	
1	Please tell me about your employment history before you came to Canada, including whether you were employed or not. *Prompts:* a) What kind of job did you do in your country? b) What was your title or position? c) What was the required qualification for that job?	This is to obtain participants' employment background and as a prerequisite for the next question. a) To determine the kinds of jobs and positions that immigrants held prior to migrating to Canada.
2	Can you tell me about your employment history so far in Canada, including if you are still searching for a job? *Prompts:* a) How long were you in Canada before you secured your first job? b) What kind of job was this? – Job title, duties, professional, non-professional, etc c) How did you feel about this job? How did it compare to	a) A lot of immigrants get their first job shortly after arriving in Canada. However, those are most often survival jobs, which some end up working in longer than desired, and others may not move on from it. In essence, for most African immigrants, their first job is not equitable with their qualifications but act as placeholders as they pursue the job they want. b) This is to determine if their first job was a survival job. c) To determine whether immigrants have secured the jobs they expected pre-migration. Sometimes, immigrants may have a different picture of what traveling abroad entails than the reality upon arrival. With this question, I hope to find out the

	the kind of job you aspired to get in Canada? d) What is your current job? e) How do you feel about your current job? f) What were your expectations when you were coming to Canada in terms of the kinds of jobs you will do and the kind of life you will live? g) How does this expectation compare to the reality on ground since you have been in Canada?	kinds of jobs people had hoped to get in Canada before they migrated. The responses could point to misinformation from sources or information poverty on the part of immigrants. d) To get an idea of the current job situation.
B	**Looking for job information in Canada**	

3	Think about when you have looked for jobs in Canada. Where did you find information about open jobs and training? Did you look for particular kinds of information? What questions did you have?	There are only a few studies that have focused on immigrants' employment information seeking, and none so far for African immigrants in Canada. This question will add to what is known about the kinds of employment information that immigrants seek and add perspective from a group whose information behaviour is poorly understood. In addition, this will contribute to determining their information sources with regards to employment. Being in a new environment which is sometimes unfamiliar could mean that people are less familiar with places to go to for information (Caidi & Allard, 2005).
4	Can you recall a time where having access to information made a difference in your employment situation? Tell me about that.	Basically, I am checking for the role of information in employment.
5	Can you recall a time when information related to employment in Canada has been difficult or impossible to find? Can you tell me about it?	Barriers I am looking for here are not limited to information sources, but with the entire information seeking or non-seeking process.

6	What has your experience been like as an African looking for job in Canada/Metro Vancouver. Prompt: a) Do you think that your racial identity influenced your ability to get or not get employment information, or influenced your ability to find or not find work? b) Did any other factor such as your gender or family situation influence your ability to get jobs?	Here I am asking for how intersecting factors may influence access to employment information.
C	**Information service perception**	
7	In your map, you have identified some people and organizations that provide information. Can you tell me about the kind of information they have provided? Was it helpful? Why or why not?	Viewing information provision from the lens of the recipients. Information service providers may already be doing this by some form of evaluation after service, but I have no information as to which service providers are doing this and to what extent.
	Can you share with me your experience of looking for employment information? This could be recent or in the past. a) What are the preferred ways that you would like to receive	Here I am seeking to dig deeper into barriers that this group faces to accessing information. In discussing what will make it easier, they are likely to mention why it challenging to obtain information. In addition, they may make specific suggestions to improve specific challenging situations. It is always valuable to have input

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		from recipients of a service when seeking to modify that service. Moreover, participants may express challenges and suggestions more freely as they know that I am not affiliated with any information service organization and therefore their responses will not bring discomfort when accessing services they discussed with me. a) This question aims to match preferences for receiving information to the ways information has been delivered to this group. Responses here may help to improve information provision by pointing to gaps between the groups information practices and service providers' practices of information delivery.
	employment information? Format? Language, etc	
8	What do you like about employment support and information you have received so far, and what would you change if you could?	This is asking participants' perceptions of employment support and possibilities for improvement if any. Individuals, scholars and service organizations can all sit to brainstorm on how to do this, but insight from the group being served will be invaluable. I must note however that service providers are under no obligation to implement resulting suggestions if any.
9	Is there anything you would like to add about this topic that I have not asked?	In this question, I am acknowledging the participants as experts in their own need, and myself a willing learner and us working together for a mutual benefit.
D	**Demographic information**	**Rationale**
10	When did you come to Canada? Year and month?	To determine whether there are differences in employment information needs, sources and experiences within different years following arrival e.g 0-5 years, 6-10 years and 11-15 years.

11	From which country did you arrive in Canada?
	
	   a) Is this your country of origin?
	
	If no, what is your country of origin?
		Some people may have lived in countries other than their countries of birth before coming to Canada. Existing research suggests that previous migration experience is beneficial for current migratory experiences. This question will elicit the influence of previous migration experience on current job seeking.
		
		This question will also include people who arrived from a country they were visiting.
		
		   a) Africa has 54 countries that share similarities and differences. Characteristics of the country of origin may play a role in employment information seeking in Canada.

12	What is your current immigration status: Permanent resident, citizen, protected person or temporary resident, other?	The immigration status of an immigrant determines their access to information. Permanent residents, protected refugees, and naturalized citizens have the most access to information and resources than temporary immigrants.
13	Which immigration category did you come through?: skilled worker; skilled trade; international student; family sponsorship, including to join your spouse, other?	The immigration category that one arrives through could point to their demographics and abilities. Skilled workers, for example, undergo language proficiency tests, which means that they arrive with strong skills in Canada's official languages, which is supposed to give them an edge in the labour market; this also applies to international students. Skilled workers and international students are also very healthy due to the medical tests involved where the less healthy are screened out. Good health means that they are physically eligible for most jobs. In addition, the immigration stream one arrives through could determine their settlement experience. For example, some immigration categories such as family

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		sponsorship will immediately provide people with social networks, which are good for information and support, while others may not.
14	a) What is your highest level of education obtained outside Canada? - High school completion - Some college or university - College or university diploma or degree - Professional certification - Other: please specify b) Which country did you obtain this degree from?	a) African immigrants to Canada are reportedly highly educated. Responses to this question will be helpful in the analysis to support that assertion or introduce a different perspective. Moreover, the education level of African immigrants pre-migration has also been reported not to translate into commensurate jobs as Canadian employers demand Canadian qualification and experience. This question will be used to compare the response to the kinds of jobs immigrants are engaged in to determine whether the qualification-education mismatch persists. b) To determine whether getting a degree from an African country is a demerit against people.
15	Have you obtained any education in Canada? If yes, which? - High school completion - Some college or university - College or university diploma or degree - Professional certification - Other: please specify	Many African immigrants, like immigrants of other ethnicities, return to school once in Canada as a prerequisite to obtaining their desired jobs. This question is to determine whether their highest level of education was obtained inside or outside Canada. Some African immigrants who return to school go for certificate and diploma courses that are shorter in duration, but less than their degrees from outside Canada.
16	What is your gender?	Immigration and securing employment in destination country can be gendered (Caidi and Allard, 2005). For example, many women tend to stay home and care for the

		family while the men pursue employment. Such women start to search for employment much later than the men.
		This question will, therefore, provide more context into the length of time to secure desired jobs, for example, if some people were not seeking jobs at all or just gathering employment information without actively looking for jobs for some years following arrival. It will also add to the literature on gendered perspectives of immigration.
17	What is your age? 18-24; 25-29; 30-34; 35-39; 40-44; 45-49; 50-55; 55-59; 60-64	
18	What is your marital status? Single, married, separated/divorced, common law, widowed, other	
19	Do you have dependents? Spouse, children, parents, grandparents	

Appendix F- Protocol for the interview session, including the information world mapping, semi-structured interviews, and demographic questions

Thank you for meeting with me today. As I mentioned during the invitation, I am hoping to explore how African immigrants look for information to secure the job they want, and how information service providers can facilitate this process. I would like to remind you that this research is part of my doctoral research at the University of British Columbia. In this interview session, we will start with you visually representing yourself when you are looking for jobs. The drawing is an additional way for you to tell your story. Thereafter we will chat about your map and some questions that I have. You are also welcome to ask me questions as we go along. Everything you share with me today will be kept confidential and with your permission, I will like to record this conversation to help me remember what you said when we have finished the interview. Would you be okay with me recording?

Information world mapping session:

Here is a flip chart sheet and some coloured markers. I would like you to represent yourself and how you get information about job and career in Canada. You could draw, write, or represent in any way you are comfortable with. When you have finished, I would appreciate it if you could explain what you represented.

If the participant is not sure what to represent, I will use the following prompts:

- Recall a time that you were looking for a job in Canada.

      o Can you represent yourself and what you did? For example, who did you talk to? Where did you go? What did you find? What had you hoped to find but did not? Did you encounter any challenges? What was helpful? What was not helpful?

After the participant has finished the mapping:

Thank you for taking the time to represent your information world when looking for jobs. Please help me to understand your representation: do you mind explaining what you represented on this sheet?

After the explanation:

Thank you for walking me through your representation. It was very helpful.

Now we will move into the interview session where I will be asking you questions and you will be responding.

Questions relating to employment history:

1) Please tell me about your employment history before you came to Canada, including whether you were employed or not.

Prompts:

- What kind of job did you do in your country?
- What was your title or position?
- What was the required qualification for that job?

2) Can you tell me about your employment history so far in Canada, including if you are still searching for a job?

Prompts:

If you already have a job:

a)   How long were you in Canada before you secured your first job?

b)   What kind of job was this? – Job title, duties, professional, non-professional, etc

c)   How did you feel about this job? / How did it compare to the kind of job you aspired to get in Canada?

d)   What is your current job?

e)   How do you feel about your current job?

3) What were your expectations when you were coming to Canada in terms of the kinds of jobs you will do and the kind of life you will live?

   a) How does this expectation compare to the reality on ground since you have been in Canada?

Questions about looking for job information in Canada

   1) Think about when you have looked for jobs in Canada. Where did you find information about open jobs and training?

      a. Did you look for particular kinds of information? What questions did you have?

   2) Can you recall a time where having access to information made a difference in your employment situation? Tell me about that.

   3) Can you recall a time when information related to employment in Canada has been difficult or impossible to find? Can you tell me about it?

4) Do you think that your gender, age, family situation or racial identity influenced your ability to get or not get employment information, or influenced your ability to find or not find work?

Questions about information service perception

1) What employment support and information that you have received so far? What has been most helpful? What would you change if you could?

2) What are the preferred ways that you would like to receive employment support and information? Format? Language, etc

3) In your map, you have identified some people and organizations that provide information. Can you tell me about the kind of information they have provided? Was it helpful? Why or why not?

4) What do you like about employment support and information you have received so far, and what would you change if you could?

5) Is there anything you would like to add about this topic that I have not asked?

6) Will you like to be contacted for a focus group to discuss these issues further in a group?

Thank you for making time to speak with me. I would like to ask you some questions about yourself:

Demographic questions

1) When did you come to Canada? Year and month?

2) From which country did you arrive to Canada?

    a. Is this your country of origin?

    b. If no, what is your country of origin?

3) What is your current immigration status: Permanent resident, citizen, protected person or temporary resident, other?

4) Which immigration category did you come through?: skilled worker; skilled trade; international student; family sponsorship, including to join your spouse, other?

5) a. What is your highest level of education obtained outside Canada?

- High school completion

- Some college or university

- College or university diploma or degree

- Professional certification

- Other: please specify

b. Which country did you obtain this degree from?

6) Have you obtained any education in Canada? If yes, which?

- High school completion

- Some college or university

- College or university diploma or degree

- Professional certification

- Other: please specify

7) What is your gender?

8) What is your age?? 18-24; 25-29; 30-34; 35-39; 40-44; 45-49; 50-55; 55-59; 60-64

9) What is your marital status? Single, married, separated/divorced, common law, widowed, other

10) Do you have dependents? Spouse, children, parents, grandparents

Would you like to receive the outcome of this research? If yes, how can I contact you?

Appendix G: Interview codebook

Code No	Code Name	Description	Examples
A	Challenges with getting and keeping employment in Canada	This includes challenges/barriers that participants cite for their inability to secure jobs commensurate with their qualifications. There are child nodes aggregated into this, as well as challenges that do not belong into any child node and are cited too few times to have a node of their own.	Example: Philanta: "Ok, I notice that one of the challenges with getting my job was driver's license; a class 5 driver's license. After my practical and I was retained I couldn't work for months until I could obtain my driver's license".
A1	Differences in priority	This refers to differences in what is prioritized in Canada vs in countries where immigrants are coming from. This impacts their job seeking.	Example: Ignace- "… you know back home we have too much focus on education… you don't really care about the job experience that much. So when you move here … their focus is on experience so I would say that has been a kind of challenge too because when you write your CV it's all about schooling …"

A2	Limited information from employers	When immigrants apply for jobs, they do not hear back from the employers.	Example: Dammy:..."what I wanted to say the fact that I applied to like thousands of jobs sites and none of them could reply me at all. I could have gotten a Response that I'm so sorry we couldn't employ you because we have someone better qualified or because your resume is not properly done...."
A3	Family situation	How conditions and composition of the family affects ability to secure or keep jobs in Canada.	Example: Eto: "I tried to look for jobs again you know when I had my first baby I got pregnant immediately after 6 months so there was no way I could work"
A4	Finance	This involves all costs associated with getting back into the workforce, such as tuition for degrees, certifications and cost of credential evaluation. As well as reports of such costs being a barrier to the employment process.	Example: Ignace-"...Hey you have to start everything from the scratch again you know it's money intensive right you need to pay for it and everything..."
A5	Foreign accent discrimination	Discrimination based on speaking with a foreign accent. Specifically, African accent. This could be during the job search or on the job.	Example: Oorloochy- "...I remember one of the job interviews I went to I believe I did very well but probably not properly majorly I wasn't given that job because of my African accent..."

A6	Getting interview invite is a challenge	Expressions of challenge getting interviews, delight at being invited for interviews, or expressions that suggest difficulty getting interviews.	Example: Dad- "Some challenges you might face is how to actually get invited for the interview"
A7	Immigration status	Where a person reports that their immigration status in Canada had a role to play in their employment situation or experience.	Example: Ogazi- "Ok there is one thing I need to check in. Because I was not having a permanent resident status I was not getting a job which is a professional job in my field."
A8	Lack of Canadian credentials	Descriptions of where not having a Canadian certification was a barrier in the job search process, or where participants' foreign credentials were not sufficient to give them jobs in Canada that are similar to what they did in their countries pre-migration.	Example: Judy: "...but when I came here they don't value our certificate you have to start all over again so coming with my results and everything they didn't even value it..."
A9	Lack of Canadian work experience	Reports of not having Canadian work experience being a challenge when looking for jobs.	Example: Dammy: "All of this discrimination because of the fact that we don't have Canadian work experience and blah blah blah"
A10	Limited knowledge of	Any reported cases of not having adequate information	Example: Emy: "I thought when I come here I will get jobs anywhere

	employment information sources	to support the job process, or not knowing where or how to obtain employment related information.	but in the first place where do you get the job, where does it come from? I don't have any information at all, I don't know where to go "
A11	Overqualification	Participants are perceived as overqualified for positions they apply for	Example: Ifedi: "Second one was the information that they require on your resume. Back in my country we felt you have to list all your experiences but here I discovered that that's not what they want; they want you to have specific skill for that particular job so even if you have your Masters degree, you have a lot of certifications at some point they deem you over qualified and you won't even get the job"
A12	Sector specific challenges	This includes challenges specific to the sector of interest, such as different requirements to do similar jobs, size of the sector.	Example: Oorluchi: "Basically a challenge I will say I met simply because of the profession I'm involved in..."
A13	Time	Time required for re-certification, job search and other processes involved in getting back to the kinds of jobs that participants were doing in their home countries.	Example: Ignace- "When you see the number of years you have to spend again sometimes you still want to do it but you just not ready you know just because um the path takes too long"

A14	Trust	Participant reports of needing to prove themselves, maybe more than Canadians need. Also explicit statements of employers not trusting Africans, their qualifications and abilities.	Example: Dad: "For them to trust Africans that yes you are who you say you are even though your resume speaks it maybe you have the certificate they want to know if you can blend into the culture of the workplace"
B	The role of being African on employment seeking	Situations were participants perceived that their race had an impact on their employment situation or employment information seeking.	Example: Ifedi- ... first of all one of the biggest issues I had was my name. I discovered that most times some employers don't know how to pronounce my name ... so I had that challenge for a while until I met a friend that told me that instead of me using ...(name removed for anonymity) I should just use CJ. And I will say that really helped.
B1	No	Outright statements of not having faced racial discrimination.	Example: Dammy: "I have not experienced any form of discrimination against me that I'm an African."
B2	Yes	When participants perceived that being Black had an impact on their employment situation.	Example: Frank- "And being Black even sometimes when you are employed they look at you in a certain way Sometimes if they want to get somebody to do a certain kind of job they want you always to be doing like those kinds of jobs you know"

	Differences in priority	This refers to differences in what is prioritized in Canada vs in countries where immigrants are coming from. This impacts their job seeking.	Example: Ignace- "… you know back home we have too much focus an education… you don't really care about the job experience that much. So when you move here you … their focus is on experience so I would say that has been a kind of challenge too because when you write you a CV it's all about schooling …"
	Racial discrimination	All forms of discrimination based on participants' race during the job search, and on the job.	Example: Emy: "Second one in the same profession was in another company where I was called one day by the foreman and he said that people don't like working with me because they don't understand what I say and I was equally laid off and I left the company"
B2C	Employment history in Canada	The jobs that participants have done since arriving in Canada.	Example: Emy: "Like I said it's not a job that one will be proud of I haven't done that kind of job where I'm coming from but I had to do it because I need to put food on my table ".
C	Current employment situation	The current employment situation of the participants at the time of the interview. Were they working, were they not, if working was it in professional job, survival job,	Example: Frank: "Yeah my current job for me it's ok for me because it's not all that difficult because I have done a couple of job in Canada and some of them are very difficult for

		the kind of job they always wanted be it survival or not?	example you work outside under the mercy of the sun and the rain".
	Optimally employed in jobs that match their qualifications	Participant is working in jobs they self-reported as equivalent to their skills and qualifications.	Example: Mr. A: "This is exactly what I envisioned".
	Self employed	Participant owns a business, consults or other things that do not require being employed by someone else.	Example: Dad- "What happened is my current job now I'm actually incorporated".
	Under-employed	Participant is working in survival job, or job that is lower in pay and status than their pre-arrival and or current qualifications. Jobs that the immigrants did when they arrived in Canada that were not professional, not in their previous fields of study and which they expressly described or insinuated that was something they did while they waited or hoped to secure their ideal jobs. Some immigrants may have left those survival jobs, other immigrants may still be doing them.	Example: Frank: "I have not secured a job that matches my qualifications".

	Unemployed	Participant was not working at the time of the interview regardless of why. That is, it does not matter if they are unemployed by a personal choice they made or due to circumstances.	Example: Oorloochy- "I am still searching for a job. Employment history zero. I've never been employed. Still searching".
D	Employment support	Support provided by employment and settlement agencies in Canada to support immigrants with their job search.	
D1	Did not use employment support	Participants who reported that they did not use the services and support provided by employment agencies.	Example: ETO- "No I didn't use any of those places".
	Why service was not used	Reasons that participants gave for not using employment support.	Example: ETO- "No I didn't use any of those places. You know when I came to Canada I didn't have to use any social worker or anything because my husband was like a social worker to me. So, I didn't go to those places I didn't even know about work BC".
D2	Services provided by agencies	Types of services that employment agencies provided to the participants.	

	Courses	Courses taken through agencies to help immigrants further their career. This is different from workshops. Workshops focus more on information provision and hands on activities to support the job search process.	Example: Dammy- "I needed to take some workshops to help to prepare me for what the workforce in Canada looks like so I just finished the 2 weeks preparation program with work BC".
	Employment information	This refers to advise given, information provided regarding getting jobs and working successfully in Canada. Does not go beyond information and is therefore different from resume creation and interview practice.	Example: Dammy: "We were even told about the fact that our qualifications might not be relevant and we might need to be introduced into the Canadian workforce through bridging programs".
	Financial support	Agencies provide financial support to help immigrants register for relevant programs and certifications.	Example: Dad- "A good part of the cost of these courses were reimbursed by skills connect".
	Interview practice or preparation	Helping immigrants to practice being interviewed in Canada.	Example: Dammy- "Even interview we did interview preparation likely questions".
	Job search skills	Training on how to use different tools to search for jobs in Canada, job posting	Example: Dammy: "LinkedIn for job search how to go about your job search".

		and tips on getting employment.	
	Networking	This includes programs from agencies that help immigrants to build networks in Canada. Also includes mentoring and networking as part of workshops or programs.	Example: Tao- "We landed just in May last year. That was the first avenue for me to get a kind of interaction with people of Canada".
	Referral	Agencies or individuals refer immigrants to relevant agencies, individuals, information or places.	Example: Philanta: "My husband told me about Work BC then Work BC referred me to MOSAIC then I got to hear about AVIA from MOSAIC so it was like a circle".
	Resume and cover letter creation	Services that help people design their resumes in the Canadian format	Example: Judy: "They helped me to improve or increase the standard of my resume".
D3	Suggestions to help agencies improve services	Suggestions that participants offered to make employment support more valuable to them.	Example: Dammy- "I wish probably they do more training for their staff on what is required."
D4	Support had limited impact	This includes self-reports of support received not being helpful, having limited benefits and why participants felt the way they did about the	Example: NI- "So the job search agency I used they weren't exactly helpful they didn't know much really".

		employment support they used.	
D5	Support was helpful	Reports of benefitting from using employment support, or what participants liked about the support they used.	Example: Dammy- "It's been helpful because now I could understand why the millions of resume I've sent in the past 3 weeks have not gotten any response because I'm probably not preparing it the way the Canadians want to see it".
E	Pre arrival work experience	Participants work experiences before they came to Canada, including if they had not worked	
E1	Did not work	Participants who reported that they had not worked at all before moving to Canada	
E2	Job title	Job titles of positions they had held in their countries pre-arrival.	Example: Ifedi- "Before I came to Canada I was a network specialist".
E3	Professional position	This has to do with whether participants were employed in positions that were equivalent to their qualifications back in their countries. I did not ask a specific question to determine this, but I am extrapolating from participants' job	Example: Judy- "Back in Nigeria I was a banker".

		descriptions and qualifications.	
E4	Required qualification	Qualifications required for the jobs that participants did back in their countries.	Example: NI- "Post graduate training so this is six to seven years of education then after two years of internship youth service and then I went back for post graduate training in microbiology and infectious diseases".
	Bachelor's degree	Participants who reported that the minimum qualification for the positions they held in their countries pre-migration was bachelor's degree or equivalent.	Example: KD- "Basically I think minimum was any degree maybe HND or bachelor's degree in mass communication I had a bachelor's degree".
E5	Sector	The sector that participant sobtained their pre-arrival work experience from.	Example: Dad- "Maritime company".
E6	Years of work experience	Years of work experience that participants had pre-migration.	Example: Ignace- " I started working in 2009 and then came here in 2015 so basically I worked for 6 years".
F	Pre-migration dreams and expectations	The kinds of jobs that people had pictured themselves doing in Canada before they migrated, other plans that they	Example: Eto- "I thought Canada will be paradise, everything will be easy, job will be easy, going to school will be easy, I can have

		may have had such as to return to school.	someone look after my kids like back home".
F1	Return to school	Participants who had set their minds to return to school to obtain further education. Code here if this decision was made before they left their countries for Canada.	Example: Finda- "The first expectation I had for me to achieve when I get here is to go to school".
F2	Secure similar job to one done pre-migration	Participants who had hoped to return to the kinds of job they were doing in their countries upon arrival in Canada.	Example: Dad- "Wow the main expectation was for me to be doing what I was doing in Nigeria to be in my field in my IT field"
G	Employment information acquisition	Participants' experiences of looking for employment related information	
G1	Challenges with information	This could be with the content or medium of communication, or other challenges encountered in the process of securing employment related information.	Example: Michael- "I would prefer that I get information by email because I still find it very difficult to hear the way the Canadians speak so you know their accent is somehow so I have to be looking at your mouth before I can understand".
G2	Employment Information source	Where people obtain information from	

	Agencies in Canada	These are settlement and employment support organizations that provide information to help immigrants settle down and get jobs. The Canadian Government connects some immigrants to these agencies, while other immigrants find them on their own.	Example: Miss A- "Ok this is me and right here are government employment agency that's because it was just one of those places I visited just to make inquiries about job opportunities".
	Canadian educational institutions	Schools in Canada where participants obtained employment information while they obtained a Canadian education.	Example: Ney- "So I was looking for the credentials criteria and then I went through different sources mainly UBC...".
	Canadian government	This includes information provided by the government before immigrants departed their countries. This information is intended to help with their settlement upon arrival in Canada. This is regardless of the medium of communication, whether it be email, website link or others. And this is different from settlement and employment agencies in Canada, even though the Government of Canada my connect pre-	Example: Tao: "Coming to Canada as a resident permit holder seems a little bit um …we have some already prepared kind of help by the government".

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		arrival immigrants to agencies. I am treating them as separate.	
	Craigslist	Craigslist is an advertisement website that provides local classifieds for housing, jobs, selling and buying of various items, and many others. It can be accessed from https://vancouver.craigslist.org/.	Example: Frank- "Yeah normally for me I go online, and I try to especially I use Craigslist".
	Indeed.ca	Indeed is a job search engine that aggregates job postings from other job boards.	Example: Dad- "Indeed has been helpful to me. Indeed has been really helpful".
	Internet	This includes general internet search through Google, or without specific reference to a website used, or online social communities.	Example: Dammy- "I used the Internet as much as possible".
	LinkedIn	LinkedIn is a professional website that helps people connect with other professionals.	Example: Ignace- "My current job I got it through LinkedIn".
	People	This includes friends, colleagues, professors, acquaintances. This is different from religious	Example: Finda- "It was a client that I was doing hair at home she was the one that told me there was a vacancy somewhere".

		gatherings because even though religious organizations are made up of people, I am taking the entity in the case of the institutions, not just the individual in the entity. People are stand-alone without referring to their social or professional affiliation.	
	Religious gatherings	Acquiring employment related information from churches, mosques, temples and other places of worship.	Example: Judy- "Yeah I got the referral from my church".
	Serendipity	Acquiring employment information where and when participants were not specifically looking for such information. Information encountering (Erdelez, 1999).	Example: Miss A- "I went for my child immunization and the office was in the same complex so I just decided to go in there and have a conversation with them".
G3	No challenge with getting information	Participants who reported no facing no barriers to information acquisition. This is different from the "no shortage of information" code.	Example: Dad- "For me there has not been any challenge with getting employment information".
G4	No shortage of job information in Canada	Participants who reported that there was enough employment related information out there for them and who did not feel any shortage of information.	Example: Dammy- "I don't really see that there is a lack of information".

G5	Pre-arrival information behaviour	How people obtained employment information about jobs in Canada while they were still in their home countries.	Example: Oge: "You know right from Nigeria when you get your permanent residency they add you to a group and this group gives you a lot of information".
G6	Types of employment information sought	This refers to the kinds of employment-related information that participants have looked for either on websites, at agencies and therefore this will includes all formats such as print, oral or digital information. This is different from employment support.	Example: Dad- "Yes you know in addition to job postings I tried to see what my skills is worth at the same time".
H	Suggestions to improve job prospects for Africans	Any ideas that participants thought would help to improve the employment situation of African immigrants in Metro Vancouver. This could have been directed to African immigrants, agencies in Canada or the Canadian government.	Example: Dad- "I think basically when you get into Canada if it's possible for you not to rush just try to mix try to blend try to make friends get yourself familiar with understand that way is gonna help you better".