

Higher education as lifelong learning for adult newcomers in  
Canada in the process of immigration: A case study of a  
community college in Nova Scotia, Canada

Hanseung Kim

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in Education

Lifelong Learning  
Mount Saint Vincent University

© Copyright by Hanseung Kim (2022)

## **Abstract**

The residency in the last decade in order to attract foreign skilled workers into the Canadian labour market. As immigration programs made it advantageous for the candidates to have Canadian educational credential and work experience, many potential immigrants prefer to enroll in higher education institutions in Canada as a strategy to obtain permanent resident status. This study aims to identify the influence of higher education as lifelong learning for adult newcomers in the process of settlement and integration in Canada. This qualitative case study explores the immigration journey of ten adult immigrants from an East Asian region who studied in the Nova Scotia Community College. This study unveils how their higher education experience affected their life transitions after graduation in terms of study-work transition, quality of life and sociocultural identity. This thesis contributes to the Canadian discourse on lifelong learning of immigrants through exploration of the transition experiences of adult immigrants within a Canadian community college.

## **Acknowledgments**

My sincerest gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr. Susan Brigham, who has provided me with valuable guidance and instructive suggestions during the journey of my thesis. Her respectful attitude and encouragement helped me concentrate on my work and complete my thesis. I am honoured and privileged to have had her guidance and direction. In addition, I would like to thank my thesis committee member, Dr. Fernando Nunes, for his insightful advice and comments for my thesis.

program student.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge my family my wife and my daughter to be born soon. This work could not have been achieved without Conversations with her has provided me with inspiration of new ideas for my thesis. I sincerely appreciate the significant support and encouragement of my wife. Moreover, my daughter, although she is not born yet, has given me power to go through and complete my study.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all those who have helped me make this thesis possible and better.

# Table of Contents

## Contents

### Table of Contents

### List of Tables

dd i kfe e ekie kfe c kl ek  
kl pd i kfeg kn pf ekie kfe c kl ek e e  
fed e fi kl pe e e

α e ekie kfe c kl ek  
l g g f i k e im f i l kfe e kkl kfe  
kf l kfe c i ek c fi dd i ek

de c iee fi dd i ek  
de c iee e i l kfe

i i i c k kfi  
f c kfi  
l d d i c kfi

## List of Tables

**Table 1:**

**40**

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background of the Study

Labour shortage from an increasing aging population and a declining birth rate in Canada has been attracting permanent migrants from non-western countries in the last decades (Johnstone & Lee, 2014; She & Wotherspoon, 2013). New permanent residents have occupied in the last five years, and the Canadian government is determined to accept more newcomers than ever before in 2022 to 2024 in order to meet the decline in the inflow of immigrants due to the impact of the pandemic (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC], 2021).

Nova Scotia has actively accepted a number of permanent migrants from all over the world in the past decade, in order to solve the shortage of local skilled workers. Although newcomers arriving in Nova Scotia occupy the small proportion of all recent immigrants throughout Canada, the province accepted the highest number of new immigrants (9,020) of all time in 2021 (Labour, Skills and Immigration, 2022). It recorded three times as many landed newcomers as those in 2010 (Statistics Canada, 2011). The Nova Scotia provincial government has recently worked to attract permanent migrants for economic and population growth with the ultimate goal of 25,000 newcomers per year. It started to run the *Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program* under which the applicants were eligible to obtain permanent resident status if they had a job offer from local employers designated under the program (Government of Canada, 2018a). Also, the government has promoted *EduNo* to support the retention of international students studying at a higher education institution in the Atlantic provinces. It includes employment and immigration supports and connections with employers (Government of

Canada, 2018b). A relatively high immigration potential in Nova Scotia aroused the potential

According to Statistics Canada (2022), the unemployment rate of landed immigrants was similar with that of Canadian-born persons. However, immigrants in Canada undergo underemployment in terms of education level, field of employment, salaries, and permanence of the job in tandem with the underutilization of their skills (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2010). Many recent immigrants, especially highly educated immigrants, tend to work in low-wage and low-skilled jobs, not utilizing their previous skills and experiences in the workplace. A lack of recognition of foreign credentials was a primary cause for newcomers to struggle in the Canadian labour market (Nourpanah, 2019). It is common that their work experience and educational qualification from their countries of origin are not recognized by Canadian employers. Accordingly, their strong preference to local credentials leads many immigrants to enroll in retention as a strategy to expand the pool of high skilled workers, immigration programs made it advantageous for the candidates to have Canadian educational credentials (Government of Canada, 2019). For these reasons, many newcomers prepare long-term settlement plans in Canada by engaging in Canadian higher education as an immigration strategy.

## **Research Purpose and Questions**

The purpose of this study is to identify the influence of higher education for adult newcomers in the process of settlement and integration in Canada. To achieve the purpose above, this qualitative case study explores the immigration journey of 10 adult newcomers who studied in higher education under the study-migration pathway within the particular community college context of Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), in Nova Scotia, Canada. The lived

experience of adult immigrants from East-Asian countries is extensively influenced by the push and pull factors. These factors influence their decision-making for studying and immigrating after graduating from college. This study, therefore, strives to understand the role of higher education in these 10 s.

The study is guided by the following three questions:

1. How are Canadian immigration programs associated with adult immigrants' decision-making process?
2. How do adult immigrants describe their educational experience in the community college as international students?
3. How does their higher education experience affect life transition after graduation in terms of study-work transition, quality of life, and sociocultural identity?

## **Researcher's Positioning**

In this study, I position myself as both an educator and an adult immigrant who studied as an international student in higher education. I have experienced numerous changes during my transition to Canada as an adult immigrant. According to Pease (2010), individuals in privileged groups do not perceive themselves as a member of dominant groups, being unaware of the discrimination and inequity the oppressed suffer from in their daily lives. In my country of origin, Korea, I was an educated, middle-class, employed male in the dominant ethnic group whose first language accorded with the official language. However, my status extremely shifted from the dominant to the minority group often referred to as u not until immigrating to Canada that I realized I had lived as a member of the privileged group in my home country and started to recognize the experience of oppressed people, right after

arriving in Canada. I acquired permanent resident status in a different way from the participants in this study, but my higher education experience definitely played a large part in integrating into Canada, as well as adjusting to my workplace.

My work and educational experience as an educator and student enabled me to be well aware of the importance of higher education as a big part of my entire life. I taught English reading to the high school students who prepared the Korean) in was also a consultant for high school students in university preparation programs on the college admissions process, acquisition of study skills, academic and career opportunities. My admission consulting experience made me realize that higher education experience might influence the direction in life although I disagree with the assertion that their academic degree can determine the rest of their lives. In addition, young adults could benefit from a higher education experience by being exposed to diverse experiences in a new environment as well as enhancing academic knowledge and skills.

While I worked as a teacher at private academies in Korea, I studied in an online ram in a university, to improve my professional skills. My participation in higher education as a lifelong learner enhanced my academic and professional knowledge related to my job, leading to the improvement of my performance in the workplace. In addition, it broadened my perspective on education, building social network with other educators. My previous experience in the field of education encouraged me learning in Canada.

My students who prepared to attend higher education as young adults are somehow

in the way to prepare their first step into the new world. Given my lifelong learning experience in higher education, I became interested in the process of immigration. As a researcher, my personal experience narrowed my focus of inquiry to the topic of the influence of higher education as lifelong learning for adult newcomers in the process of settlement and integration in Canada.

## **Significance of the Study**

This qualitative case study explores the lived experiences of adult immigrants who studied as international students in higher education for the purpose of immigrating to Canada. It attended to the subjective voice of the mature international students from East Asian countries in the pursuit of immigration in a community college located at Nova Scotia, Canada. Cook-Sather (2006) presented that student voice in educational research offers legitimate perspective and opinion in the implication of educational practice and policy. This study emphasizes the importance for higher education practitioners and policy makers to value the voices of diverse students in university or college.

According to Arthur and Flynn (2011), much research on international students in higher education narrowed the focus to the initial stage of their programs such as their decision-making or cross-cultural adjustment including culture shock or stress problems. To have a deeper immigration journey of international students from decision-making process to life transition after graduation. In addition, many scholars in educational research draw attention to an aspect of employment after graduation for international students who wish to immigrate to Canada (Arthur & Flynn, 2013; Covell, Neiterman, Atanackovic, Owusu, & Bourgeault, 2015; Lu & Hou, 2019, Nunes & Arthur, 2013; Reichert &

(Bourdieu, 1977) as a critical lens to analyze the data, this research adopts the holistic approach

and a quality of life as well as study-work transition. Moreover, with the focus on the lifelong learning experience of adult newcomers through higher education in the process of acquiring permanent resident status, this study extends the understanding of international students in the pursuit of immigration. This expansive approach should enrich the literature in the way that international students in higher education are interconnected with immigrants as lifelong learners in post secondary institutions. It would contribute to the Canadian discourse on lifelong learning of immigrants through exploration of the transition experiences of adult immigrants within the context of the Nova Scotia Community College.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **International Students who Wish to Immigrate to Canada under the Study-migration Pathway**

#### **Immigration and International students**

In the age of globalization, Canada, as one of the major immigrant-receiving countries in the world, views immigration as a part of nation-building in the future (Guo, 2013b; Johnstone & [redacted] a means to support population, economic, and cultural growth in Canada (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC], 2020, p.5). The inflow of permanent migrants has an important role in addressing aging population and shortage of labour force from declining growth rate in population (Akbari & Haider, 2018; Guo, 2013a). [redacted] g cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity into Canada (IRCC, 2020). With the economic and social benefits of immigration, Canadian government has been attracting more and more permanent migrants from other countries. The 2016 Canadian Census reported more than one-fifth of the total Canadian population was foreign-born populations (Statistics Canada, 2017a). The federal government accepted about 341,000 permanent immigrants including over 30,000 refugees in 2019 (IRCC, 2020), which was the fifth-highest number in permanent immigrant inflow among the OECD countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020).

Significant literature on international education demonstrated that international students represented ideal immigrants with clear advantages over other immigrants (Al-Haque, 2017; Canadian Bureau of International Education [CBIE], 2016; Dam, Chan, & Wayland, 2018; Lu & Zong, 2016; Nunes & Arthur, 2012; Scott, Safdar, Trilokekar, & Masri, 2015). International students are relatively young and proficient in an official language, English or French. Also, their

post-secondary credentials are better acknowledged to local employers, and their educational experience equips them to acquire the knowledge of Canadian culture and society as well as professional skills. Furthermore, some international students have Canadian work experience and build some social networks with local communities. There is no doubt that international students are well-prepared for socio-economic integration into Canadian society (Lu & Hou, 2019).

With the merit of international students as immigrants, the recent trend of immigrant selection placed more weight on international students with Canadian experience than foreign-educated skilled worker (Lu & Zong, 2016). Canadian government has focused on international

workers into the Canadian labour market. In 2011, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada issued *International Education Marketing Action Plan* in collaboration with provincial ministers of immigration (The Council of the Federation, 2011). The plan focused on the increase of international students in Canada and the retention of international students after

*International Education Strategy* was released in January 2014 by the government of Canada. the advisory panel on the rep to play in creating jobs, economic growth and long- (Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, 2014, p.6). Under the strategy, the government aimed to attract over 450,000 international students to Canada by 2022 doubling the number of international students

Provincial governments also have been in alignment with the federal government to increase the inflow of permanent migrants. Smaller provinces have been struggling with demographic issues caused by low population growth and youth emigration, including labour

shortage (Akbari & Haider, 2018). To address this, provincial governments have made effort to encourage international students to choose to remain in Canada after graduation (Chira, 2017). In *Atlantic Growth Strategy* released in July 2016 by the federal and Atlantic provincial governments, attracting more skilled immigrants to the regions was selected as a one of the five goals in this strategy for economic growth (Government of Canada, 2018a). Under this strategy, Atlantic provinces have supported the retention of international students in collaborations with higher education institutions and local employers. According to One Nova Scotia (2021), the retention rate of international students in Nova Scotia has risen from 5.4% in 2010 to 12.9% in 2020. This has linked international education policy with immigration policy over the past ten years (Trilokekar & Masri, 2019).

### **Study-migration pathway of international students in Canada**

It is indispensable to clarify what is meant by study-migration pathway. According to Hawthorne (2010), study-migration pathway is defined as an immigration process for individuals to study in higher education as international students and remain as skilled migrants after graduation in the host country. Starting with the United States, many OECD countries including Canada have operated immigration programs to prioritise international students as skilled workers (Hawthorne, 2018). Australia and New Zealand in need of labour force have actively attracted former international students through study-migration pathway (Hawthorne, 2018; Shaw, 2014).

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has continued to develop immigration systems to attract competent skilled workers from all over the world for the purpose of economic benefits to Canada (IRCC, 2020). Also, the government has consistently implemented changes in

immigration policy to give former international students the comparative advantages to becoming permanent residents (Lu & Hou, 2019; She & Wotherspoon, 2013; Wang, 2018). The Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) program, introduced in 2007, allowed international students in a post-secondary institution to remain working in Canada after graduation (Chira, 2017; Dam et al., 2018). Over the past decade, PGWP program has been expanded to provide international graduates with more possibility of being permanent residents by extending the work permit up to three years and deleting the regulation allowing a job only in their field of study (CBIE, 2016). In 2008, Canadian government introduced the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) program, which gave priority to the candidates who already have Canadian work experience (Chen, 2017; Wang, 2018). Former international students who gained full-time work experience in Canada during the PGWP are in the advantageous position in the CEC program.

The Express Entry system was newly launched in 2015 for effective management of immigration applications (Wang, 2018). The applicant who meets the requirement of an immigration program uploads their own profile on Express Entry pool (Dam et al., 2018; Wang, 2018). The total points of the candidate are calculated under the Express Entry system, considering the requisite elements such as age, the level of academic degree, and work experience. The government announces the number of invitations to apply for permanent residency on the regular basis, and these invitations are granted to the highest-ranking applicants in the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS), which ranks the applicants according to the total points. Only the applicants with the invitations could obtain the qualification to apply for the permanent residency.

As the number of immigrants have increased in Canada over the past decades, uneven distribution of immigrant population has occurred over the provinces in Canada (Guo, 2013b).

a gradual shift from a centralized model of immigrant selection toward devolution of federal authority to provinces (Baglary, 2012, p.123). Under the regionalization of immigration, provincial governments established Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs) to meet their needs of labour force (Baglary, 2012; Flynn & Bauder, 2013). Manitoba starting in 1998, all provinces including two territories implemented provincial nominee programs in 2011. Also, Atlantic provinces have actively promoted international students to retain in the provinces with relatively low requirement for permanent residency through Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program (AIPP) launched in 2016 (House of Commons, 2017). The pursuit of the regional immigration led to the demographic change of immigrants and international students across Canada. Traditionally over 80% of the newcomers in Canada had tended to settle in Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec, but the rapid growth of international students and immigrants has appeared in smaller provinces over the last ten years (Akbari & Haider, 2018; CBIE, 2016).

In immigrant selection, federal and provincial jurisdiction have shown a preference for the candidates who were international students with Canadian work experience (Al-Haque, 2017; Lu & Hou, 2019). The pursuit of the study-migration pathway in Canada had an influence on decision-making process of international students who wish to immigrate to Canada.

### **Decision-making for studying in Canada**

Previous research on international education has proposed the frameworks on

-making process. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) suggested a model

influencing the decision process in selecti

In this model, international students pass through three stages making a final study decision: deciding to study abroad instead in their home countries at first, choosing which country they study in, and selecting an institution. Cubillo, Sanchez, and Cervino (2006) proposed a

Regarding international students as the customers of education service, the model aimed to analyze the intention of the students showing

In general, higher quality of education in the host country and the reputation of the institution are the strong factors in the selection of a country or an institution to international students (Al-Haque, 2017; Covell et al, 2015; Kim & Sondhi, 2019; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). How -making indicated that the push-pull factors of international students who wish to immigrate reflected the general characteristics of international migration. Many interview participants in a study (Covell et al., 2015) revealed that the higher possibility of being permanent residents was the strong pull factor to select Canada for international students. Also, in another research (Al-Haque, 2017), an interviewer, when an international student selects a country they are going to study in, the (p.6). In addition, international students in study-migration pathway mainly focused on quality of life, safe environment, or freedom in the

selection of a study destination rather than quality of education unlike other international students (Arthur & Flynn, 2011; Chen, 2017).

## **Higher Education Experience in the Process of Immigration**

### **Challenges international students face**

Distinctive features of international students negotiating cultural differences from their home country differentiate from domestic students on the adjustment to higher education (Calder, Richter, Mao, Burns, Mogale, & Danko, 2016). A study on cross-cultural adaptation of international students (Scott et al., 2015) emphasized language barrier and socio-cultural adjustment as the common challenges international students face in transition process. Soetan (2020) classified the challenges international students experience in Canadian community

issues including academics, and challenges in the meso level include social networking and counselling in colleges. At the macro level, challenges are related to visa issues and involvement with local community.

Language barrier is perceived as a major factor for international students to challenge in higher education experience. Many interview participants in a study on international student issues commonly expressed that poor language proficiency is the major obstacle to adapting to new educational environment (Wintre, Dentakos, Chavoshi, Kandasamy, & Wright, 2019).

International students generally demonstrate English language proficiency by submitting a required score on an official English language test (i.e., TOEFL or IELTS) in the admission process, but the test score does not

higher education (Wintre et al., 2019). Also, many students studying outside their countries of

origin struggle with social belonging in universities or colleges. A student in a qualitative interview (Chira, 2017) stated that she often felt socially marginalized in class due to her lack of language. In a questionnaire of 266 international students in Canada (Wintre, et al., 2019), only 11.4 percent of participants responded that they had friendships with local students in class. Also, the researchers in the study analyzed that their friendships with Canadians tended to be more superficial than those with other foreign students.

As many immigration programs require a full-time offer or work experience in high-skilled workforce at least for a year in Canada in permanent residence application (Dam et al., 2018), it is imperative for international students to find suitable work to apply for permanent residency after graduation (Reichert & Bouajram, 2021). As stated previously, international students are generally perceived as ideal immigrants to fit in Canadian labour force, given that they are equipped with language proficiency, social network, the familiarity of culture through years of Canadian experience (CBIE, 2016), but these factors to make them attractive source of immigrants ironically correspond to the major barriers to employment for international students. Some scholars within the literature on Canadian international education identified the three obstructive factors in job search for international students: limited language proficiency, a lack of connections, and cultural barrier (Arthur & Flynn, 2011; Chira, 2017; Covell et al., 2015; Nunes & Arthur, 2013). Low confidence in language ability resulted in the passive participation of class activities, influencing academics and employment opportunities further (Scott et al., 2015). Their lack of networks may not lead to the opportunities to build their professional network, which could be a prominent barrier in the job search process (Arthur & Flynn, 2011). Cultural differences between their home countries and the host country caused international students to



international student advisors are expected to offer immigration-related information such as permanent residency pathway, post-graduation work permit, or employment opportunities. Many higher education institutions have offered various workshops or webinars about permanent residency programs, whereas stakeholders in institutions noted that they have had difficulty in meeting the growing demand for immigration support due to limited resources and a lack of experienced advisors (Goh, 2019). Reichert and Bouajram (2021) presented campus support number of international students attending universities

Moreover, Bozheva (2020) highlighted that the provision of immigration support in higher education institutions is unevenly widespread depending on the provinces in Canada.

Federal policies with regard to international student services influence the limitation of in actual practice. In *Bill C-35* passed by the House of Commons in December 2010, the government allowed only lawyers and Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultants (RCIC) to provide individuals with immigration-related advice (Library of parliament, 2011), and new legislation was added to *Bill-35* to authorize certified Registered International Student Immigrant Advisors (RISIA) to provide support for international students

advice and support about study permits or temporary resident visas, but are prohibited to give immigration-related advice, which is authorized to RCICs by law. As there is no regulation for higher education institutions to hire RCICs in tandem with the restricted capability of RISIAs about immigration support (Bozheva, 2020), universities and colleges in Canada struggle to respond to high demand for advice on transition to permanent residency. In addition, Goh (2019)

graduation. The researcher insisted that at the government level consideration should be given to who is responsible for providing settlement service to international students.

In 2017, only less than 25% of Canadian higher education institutions recruited registered immigrant expectation of settlement support in the process of immigration, universities and colleges should hire experienced and knowledgeable advisors with RCIC certifications (Goh, 2019).

immigration, the institutions should develop international student service to prepare international students to fit in Canadian job market and help the integration into Canadian society as immigrants (Lu & Zong, 2016). Moreover, staff in international centers are required to collaborate with local potential employers to develop career-focused services targeted at international students (Reichert & Bouajram, 2021; Scott et al., 2015).

### **The effect of educational credential for immigrants**

It was generally known that university or college experience would prepare international students to obtain language skills, sociocultural knowledge, and professional skills (Dam et al., 2018). On the contrary, it has been controversial issue within literature on international education how Canadian higher educational experience affects future employment and integration to the host society for permanent migrants.

International students studying in Canada held that their years of campus experience would positively influence their immigration life in the future. The students in a semi-structured interview (Chira, 2017) believed their university degrees would be advantageous to their

credentials would be of benefit to the local labour market due to the high trustability of the degrees to local employers. There are some empirical research findings on the positive correlation between educational degrees and annual incomes of immigrants. According to a government report on analysis of *Longitudinal Immigration Database* (Statistics Canada, 2021), median entry wage of immigrants who possessed both a work and study permit before immigration was the highest (\$44,000) among other categories of immigrants in the 2018 tax year. The finding analyzing *Labor Force Surveys 2006-2013* (Akbari and Haider, 2018) also noted that Canadian educational degrees of immigrants had statistically positive influence on their annual income. But in the smaller provinces, the academic degrees tend to have relatively less effects on immigr

On the other hand, much research on international students has questioned the benefits of Canadian educational credential for immigrants (Covell et al., 2015; Lu & Hou, 2019; Nourpanah, 2019; Nunes & Arthur; 2013). Many international students still suffer from a lack of language and cultural differences after years of education experience in university or college, failing to overcome their challenges faced in campus life. A detailed analysis of an ethnographic research (Nourpanah, 2019) re had no further impact on his subsequent struggles for professional recognition, workplace

seem

employment opportunities after graduation than they had expected. Nourpanah (2019)

residency.

It seems noteworthy that the post-immigration earnings of Canadian-educated immigrants correlate with Canadian work experience before permanent residency. Lu and Hou (2019) presented that residency was positively associated with their annual incomes after immigration. Governmental research analyzing *Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB)* (Statistics Canada, 2015) showed work experience in Canada before immigration was one of the positive factors in increasing the earning of immigrants in the first two years after immigration. In addition, according to Statistics Canada (2017b) comparing the earnings of immigrants who arrived in 1991 and 2006, immigrants who were former international students generally received higher incomes than foreign-educated immigrants, whereas the post-immigration earnings of Canadian-  
-paid job before immigration showed much less difference from those of the foreign-educated counterparts.

## **Immigrants as Lifelong Learners**

### **Lifelong learning for immigrants**

Migrating to a new country means that immigrants inevitably have significant changes in all aspects of their lives (Guo, 2013a). During and after immigration process, they should invest substantial time and energy in integrating into the new society, acquiring new language and adjusting to different workplace, negotiating cultural and social differences from their home countries. This resocialization process of immigrants provokes the needs for the involvement of

training and education in the host country. Merriam and Baumgartner (2020) stated that life transition such as immigration often led individuals to engage in formal and informal learning as adult learners. Adamuti-

and challenges in the process of immigration. Additionally, Brigham, Abidi and Zhang (2018) demonstrated how f settlement, emphasizing the importance of learning in immigration.

Learning experiences of adult immigrants have been addressed within lifelong learning discourse in the past two decades. The concept of lifelong learning is fundamentally based on (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2015, p.1), shifting a focus from social issues such as equity participation to economics and workforce in a neoliberal society (Slowey & Schuetze, 2012). The social and economic objectives of lifelong learning international policy. An UNESCO recommendation on lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2016) conveyed that governments should pay particular attention to the expansion of learning opportunities for immigrant workers. In addition, D !J !T emphasizing lifelong learning in a knowledge-based society (Human Resources Development Canada, 2002) featured that federal government should invest on training and education for the newcomers in Canada.

On the premise that adult learning and education is inextricably bound up with social context in a society (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020), the practice of lifelong learning for immigrants can be understood within the immigration integration framework. In the past,

cation,

host country. Guo (2015) presented that even the language programs for immigrants in Canada

immigrants to keep the strong ties with their country of origin unlike the past. The immigrants continue to have political, cultural, and social engagement in their home country even after immigration. They seek to acculturate to the new society for successful integration and settlement, but simultaneously refuse complete assimilation into the dominant culture, which was

experience within lifelong learning discourse. Guo (2013a) proposed the term transnational

approach to lifelong learning resists the assimilation of immigrants into the host country with respect to socio-cultural diversity among minor groups. In addition, Alfred (2010) stated that lifelong learning for immigrants should be addressed with consideration to social and cultural contexts of their own country.

### **Lifelong learning in higher education**

Many immigrants in Canada have been facing great challenges of underemployment and underutilization in local labour market (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2010). Numerous adult

immigrants have been employed on low wages in unskilled or low-skilled position. Also, Skilled immigrant workers have difficulty in finding employment opportunities related to their prior experience. According to Statistics Canada (2019), although almost half of immigrants who had arrived between in 2006 and 2016 already had at least bachel only 37.7 % of them could find jobs requiring a university degree. Ng and Shan (2010) stated that the employment challenges for immigrants have been attributed to the discounting of foreign credentials by local employers, which referred to the devaluation of university degrees or work experience from non-western countries. Accordingly, the skill-discounting motivates immigrants to participate in education or training in higher education institutions for Canadian credential (Scott et al., 2015). Also, many immigrants in the profession choose to attend professional degree programs in Canada for recertification (Ng & Shan, 2010). Adamuti-Trache and Sweet (2010) presented that educational participation of immigrants in Canada played a significant role as a major settlement strategy for employment opportunity and integration.

Non-traditional students such as immigrants in post-secondary education have distinct characteristics from typical students who have traditionally made up the majority in colleges and universities (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002). Although the definition of non-traditional students has been transformed over time in light of socio-cultural context in various research, Schuetze and Slowey (2002) suggested three main factors to feature non-

different stages of their life cycle with diverse motivation of learning, and their enrolment take place through multiple approaches unlike conventional admission process. Also, the preference of non-traditional students for mode of study is diversified such as part-time programs or non-degree program. Ambrocio, Araujo and Simoes (2014) stated that non-traditional students have

different social roles and responsibilities, not just the role as students. Generally, they tend to pursue higher education for career advancement or the extension of professional knowledge.

The increase of the non-traditional students such as immigrants in higher education has brought about significant change in universities and colleges in the past decades. The heterogeneous student composition has prepared higher education institutions to provide different types of programs and various modes of teaching (Slowey & Schuetze, 2012). As the development of technology consistently provoked individuals to continue to learn new knowledge and skills with the emergence of knowledge society, in addition, a wide range of age groups have increasingly participated in post-secondary education (Jarvis, 2001). The author that the demand for lifelong learning in higher education would certainly grow in the future. Ambrocio, Araujo and Simoes (2014) stated that higher education system should seek to

s noted previously, it is evident that the

concept of lifelong learning has been gradually adopted for the development of education in governments and international institutes. Nevertheless, many universities and colleges were still far behind national and international education policy in practice (Slowey & Schuetze, 2012).

In Canada, like other many countries, the rapid technological advancement has induced individuals to constantly acquire new knowledge and skills in changing labour market, which inevitably increased the demands on education and training related to employment and career advancement for adult workers (Cote & White, 2020). The increasing call for the extension of education and training in universities or colleges might spark a new wave of higher education system in Canada. In some provinces, some universities opened certificates and degree programs in language courses, management courses and technical education (McLean & Carter, 2013).

According to Cote and White (2020), Canadian universities and colleges seek to develop new types of programs and delivery models to meet the new demands of lifelong learners. However, the authors assessed that many post-secondary institutions in Canada were not prepared to proceed with lifelong learners although national education policies had already placed an emphasis on lifelong learning agenda in higher education.

Lifelong learning in higher education must be beneficial to social and economic success as well as personal development in the knowledge-driven society (Osborne, Rimmer & Houston, 2015). As noted above, it might positively influence social issues such as racial and ethnic inequality or benefit human capital development in era of knowledge society. Many educational researchers have recently explored the enhancement of lifelong learning in higher education institutions in line with the diversification of their student body. However, little research was

□

### Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

The purpose of my study is to unveil the role of post-secondary education experience in the process of immigration and integration for Canadian immigrants by drawing upon the theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977) as a critical lens to analyze the data. Pierre Bourdieu is a French sociologist who has contributed to diverse academic disciplines in social science in the last few decades (Dalal, 2016; Sullivan, 2016). His writings have played a major role as a theory to frame the relationship between social structure and education in the field of sociology of education.

His theory of practice focuses on cultural and social processes which perpetuate and reinforce social inequality that occurs between individuals (or groups),

the educational system to the reproduction of the structure of power relationships and symbolic capital. These processes are reproduced through education systems in capitalist societies, and educational institutions, particularly post-secondary institutions, play the prominent role in contributing to social inequality. Likewise, Pierre Bourdieu has generally paid attention to the analysis of hierarchical social structure. But he did not disregard the role of individuals to negotiate power dynamics in social construction. He appraised the relation between individuals and society by drawing on the concepts of capital, field and habitus.

In his work, *Forms of Capital* (1986), he criticized the economic perspective that

the economic perspective does not consider various aspects of

the profits from educational investment such as the acquisition of cultural and social assets beyond economic elements. In addition, it fails to provide sufficient explanation for the social background or social class.

society and education, this study will reveal higher education experience of East-Asian immigrants as a gate through Canadian society. His concepts of capital, field and habitus are appropriate to explain how immigrants acquire social, economic, cultural aspects of skills or assets necessary to adapt to new society in higher education institutions, spaces that, Bourdieu (1973) noted, reproduce and reinforce hierarchical social structures in modern societies.

In the following, I discuss the concepts of capital, field and habitus with which Bourdieu conceptualized the inequality of social structure in his sociological theory. Then, I connect adult immigrants studying higher education in the process of settlement and integration with

## **Capital**

Bourdieu (1986) i the accumulated force that individuals possess in the social world. He defined capital as:

when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor. (p. 241)

Capital could be explained as various forms of assets or resources acquired by individuals, serving as social energy or power within their society. According to Bourdieu (1986), capital is classified into three categories, which are convertible into one another: economic capital

(material possessions such as cash), cultural capital (education, language, knowledge, etc.), and social capital (resources related to human relationship).

immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of capitals, can be converted into other forms of capitals such as cultural capital or social capital. In capitalist society, individuals could achieve the superiority over others by acquiring financial goods or services from economic capitals or transforming it into other capitals.

Cultural capital is defined as the kinds of knowledge, ideas, behaviors, and preferences that individuals possess as a member of a specific social class or group. Bourdieu (1986) presented that cultural capital exists as an embodied (or fundamental), objectified, or institutionalized state. First, the embodied state is cultivated and assimilated unconsciously over

ange immediately.

piece 00095.2lied15.2um-3(fnta)4(l. )-11(ta)7(l ca)5(n b)-9(trls, csi)-31nd assble such ad uhG[(a5(n b)-9G[ble 15

reproduce social relationships that could be a social asset or are transmissible to other capitals as investment strategies.

These three forms of capitals are, consciously or unconsciously, accumulated in objectified or embodied forms (Bourdieu, 1986). It takes time to accumulate and functions as an advantage to gaining access to better position or higher class in a society. According to Dalal (2016), Bourdieu identifies power relation in a stratified society through the concept of capitals. Individuals are hierarchically located in the social structure according to their accumulated capitals. In this way, the distribution of capitals represents the power relationships among classes in the social structure. Also, Bourdieu noted that only one kind of capital is not possible to explain the complicated correlation between individuals and society, stressing the importance of Wacquant, 1992).

## **Habitus**

The notion of habitus is one of the main c accumulated from the whole past of experiences (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In his book (Bourdieu, 1977), he at

The word disposition seems particularly suited to express what is covered by the concept of habitus (defined as a system of dispositions). It expresses first the result of an organizing action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also

designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination. (p. 214)

The term disposition could be understood as a collection of the particular ways to act, speak, characteristics as the product of embodied history (Bourdieu, 1990).

tus is influenced by the social environments the one

within the home at an early stage, interacting with the family members. Then, subjective experience in school constantly restructures the habitus formed in the family. It is durable over

## **Field**

The notion of field encompasses all kinds of gathering or space emerging from social relationships between individuals. It could be any concrete or abstract space (or relation) where people interact, such as school, religion, institution or association. Bo

1992, p. 97). The position is granted to individuals in consideration of their present situation (the possession of power) in the structures of social relations. Capital or habitus that an individual possess determines the position in a field which the one gets involved in.

The concept of field is closely intertwined with the theory. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), agents, as which Bourdieu referred to individuals taking up a position in a field, employ their capitals as a weapon in a game, a field

where agents struggle with power relation. They produce power in a field with their own capitals to survive a power game. To do so, they make effort to maintain or increase the capitals. Also, the value of capitals could be changed according to the field agents belong to. Bourdieu stated

1992, p. 101). In what follows

higher education experience for the process of immigration.

### **A Bourdieusian Analysis of Study Pathway to Permanent Residence**

Migrating to a new country for living permanently means to enter into a new field where different social and cultural practices function on the whole (Akkaymak, 2017). Immigrants leave behind their social capitals in their home country, and their cultural capitals would possibly be impractical in their new country. In addition, their original habitus, built throughout their lives in their country of origin, might not correspond with the dominant habitus of the host country (Bauder, 2005). They may suffer from a discontinuity of habitus in adjusting to the unfamiliar custom of the new society and its job market. Furthermore, in Canada, many immigrants from non-English speaking countries struggle with language barriers to communication, which is one of the major obstacles to them escaping from a low wage position. Bourdieu (1999) stated that racialized immigrants would experience the handicap in the new country due to the lack of dominant cultural capital, especially linguistic capital.

To understand the habitus deeply embedded in a field requires recognizing the social, cultural and economic practices existing throughout the field. So, many local employers have a tendency to favour the candidates who possess the dominant habitus of the society or the workplace (Akkaymak, 2017). The devaluation of university degrees or work experience from

non-western countries in Canada, stated in the pre recognition that immigrants would not have enough social and cultural knowledge related to Canada. Accordingly, immigrants recognize the necessity of acquiring the cultural capital of the new country in the pursuit of the career. Erel (2010) presented transforming their cultural capital was one of the important factors for immigrants in integrating to a new society and finding a job s linguistic proficiency, social customs, and professional and academic qualifications. In addition to cultural capital, immigrants should establish social capital in the new field for obtaining job opportunities, but it is very challenging for many newcomers to build up social networks all over again in a new society (Akkaymak, 2017).

Accordingly, immigrants choose to invest economic capital in a post-secondary education in their country of immigration mainly for the purpose of obtaining social and cultural capital as to overcome the challenges and barriers immigrants faced in the process of immigration. They gain cultural and social capitals by investing economic capital into higher education. Then, the cultural and social resources acquired by them would supposedly be beneficial to their economic activity, which could be transmitted to the larger amounts of economic capital. The mechanism of immigrants investing in capitals exemplifies the convertibility of the three forms of capitals which Bourdieu (1986) explained in his work.

How is a Canadian higher education institution understood as a field for immigrants? Bourdieu explained an analysis process of conducting the study of a field in his work (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), which is the following:

First, one must analyze the position of the field vis-à-vis the field of power. Second, one must map out the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents or institutions who compete for the legitimate form of specific authority of which this field in the site. And third, one must analyze the habitus of agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalizing a determinate type of social and economic condition. (p.104)

Firstly, university or college in modern capitalist societies including Canada basically functions as a field for students to enhance social, economic, cultural aspects of skills or assets (or capitals), possibly influencing the mobility of their social class. According to Bourdieu (1973), higher education institutions simultaneously reproduce class inequalities in the social stratification, passing down social and cultural capitals of dominant group. Secondly, Canadian universities and colleges are generally comprised of two different groups: Canadian-born students who are mainly white students and other minority groups, including racialized minorities, immigrants, international students, Indigenous people and refugee students, although the portion of the minority groups population varies according to institutions or programs. The first group of students are accustomed with the culture and knowledge of the dominant group in Canadian society, having spent childhood in the local school system. However, many students in the second group own the habitus from their own community, which is distant from the first group, with accumulated experience in the school system mostly outside of Canada. Some other students retain different family habitus shared by people with similar backgrounds although they were born in Canada. International students who prepare to immigrate to Canada, included in the second group, struggle to acquire the dominant cultural and social capitals in university or college for integrating into the mainstream society or entering the labour market in Canada.

This study will explore the immigration within higher education institution. It will investigate how higher education experience actually benefits international students on the study-migration pathway. Beyond the mere measurement of their capitals, how immigrants negotiate economic, social, and cultural capitals to fit the dominant habitus of Canadian society in the process of immigration will be analyzed in this study, focusing on the field, a higher education institution in the province of Nova Scotia in Canada.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

According to Creswell (2014), researchers need to consider three components of research design: a philosophical orientation which refers to the worldview that will guide the research design, a research methodology as a procedure to design the research in relation to the philosophical worldview, and specific research methods for data collection and analysis under the research methodology. To explore the lived experience of international students who had attended a Canadian community college and sought to immigrate to Canada, this study is positioned within a qualitative case study approach based on a constructivist worldview. In this study, the data are collected from online semi-structured interviews. All recordings were transcribed. The transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis method, which I explain below.

### **Qualitative Case Study Research**

Qualitative research aims to understand the complexity of social phenomena in our world and specify social interactions between individuals with a subjective lens (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative researchers in social science address the lived experience of individuals in interaction with their social world, collecting and analyzing verbal data from observations, interviews, and documents. This process is clearly differentiated from that of quantitative researchers who use numerical data for statistic analysis of determining causal relationships or finding patterns and averages. Interpretive qualitative researchers seek to focus on the subjective meanings that individuals interpret of their experiences in interaction with their social world (Creswell, 2014). The interpretive approach of qualitative research closely coincides with constructivists believing that their subjective meanings are developed from their socio-cultural backgrounds, giving attention to the social contexts in which they are involved. In contrast, positivists with

, in order to

find the true nature of a society.

The constructivist orientation, which focuses on the socio-cultural contexts in which individuals marginalized immigrants through higher education in the process of immigration. To interpret oned within an interpretive qualitative approach. According to Creswell (2014), the interpretive process of or backgrounds. My personal experience as an immigrant from a similar culture as the participants enables this study to analyze in depth the influence of higher education in the process of immigration and integration. It was helpful to understand their subtle emotions or thoughts that emerged from cultural differences in the process of settlement and integration by sharing the similar experiences with the participants in data collection.

This study is undertaken through a case study method in qualitative research methodology. The case study is a research method that involves an in-depth description and analysis of a particular context to understand a social phenomenon or human behaviours (Merriam, 2002; Stake, 1995). A particular context, referred to as a case, includes subjective real-life situation and lived experiences of people, which could be an institution, event, area, group or individual. The case, a single unit in a study, should have boundaries which make it distinct from other cases (Merriam, 2009). The uniqueness of the case makes the case study approach valuable in terms of the intensive analysis of a specific phenomenon.

According to Merriam (2009), a case study method in qualitative research has three distinguishing features: particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. Case study places a heavy

emphasis on a single unit bounded by time and space to facilitate the understanding of social phenomenon, which is referred to particularistic feature. Descriptive feature means that case study aims to have a rich, literal description of a phenomenon in tandem with a

subjective interpretation of the phenomenon, which creates some spaces for the readers to rethink their experiences or extend their understanding of the phenomenon. Accordingly, the knowledge generated from the distinction and subjectivity of a case is concrete and contextual in the way that it contains the lived experience of individuals within a specific context in which they live. The context-dependent knowledge formed from case study research helps qualitative researchers to deepen the theoretical understanding of the world (Flyvbjerg, 2006). While case study research can contain a single unit or multiple units, my study contains a single unit. Unlike the multiple case study which addresses several cases that are bounded by common characteristics of the phenomenon (Tellis, 1997) to examine the similarities and differences between each single case, a single case study focuses on a distinct, sole case of a particular phenomenon or context to represent the uniqueness of the case.

The single-case study has been criticized by some researchers on the premise that it is not possible for a single case to make generalization (Tellis, 1997). However, according to Merriam (2009), the main objective of the case study method is not to generalize the research data, but rather deeply describe a particular context or phenomenon individuals are involved in. The readers can have interpretation of the phenomenon. In addition, they are able to apply the knowledge from the generalization.

people.

Through the qualitative analysis of a single case, a community college in Canada, this study unveils how post-secondary education experience influences immigrants in the process of settlement and integration into Canada. I seek to deliver the vivid voice of East-Asian immigrants who were former international students in a college located in Nova Scotia by providing my subjective interpretation as an immigrant in the same position as the participants. This case study leaves space for the stakeholders including international students, institutions, and policymakers to create diverse interpretations of this study.

## **Research Design**

For this single case study, I address an institution as a single case, the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). This college is the only publicly chartered college in the province of Nova Scotia, Canada, educating over 20,000 students a year throughout the province (Nova Scotia Community College, n.d.-a) e. It offers more than 140 certificate or diploma programs designed for the purpose of entry-level employment and lifelong learning. Most international students in NSCC have a tendency to study with a specific objective of gaining permanent residency in Canada. The uniqueness of the students in the case would extend the sociocultural understanding of a certain group of immigrants in Nova Scotia. Baxter and Jack (2008) presented that novice researchers tend to select the research topic which is too broad or include too many different ideas. A bounded case, like this one, can help to narrow the focus on the study. For this reason, I chose to examine the NS community college as a single case, which has been most popular among adult immigrants under the study-migration pathway in Nova Scotia. Given the

lack of research in the area of international mature students in Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia community college is an appropriate case for such qualitative research.

## **Participants**

As seen in table 1, ten East-Asian immigrants over the age of 25, who attended Nova Scotia community college as international students, voluntarily participated in this research in order to convey how their educational experience influenced the process of settlement and integration into Canadian society. In the recruitment process, I aimed to enlist a broad range of participants to engage in this research in terms of ages and program of study at most in order to perform the enrichment analysis of the diverse experience. The research participants were primarily recruited in multiple ways. First, I contacted the teachers and parents in the Nova Scotia Korean School where I have volunteered over the last a few years in order to recruit the participants from South Korea. To contact the potential subjects from China and Japan, I posted recruitment information on ethnic online communities for Nova Scotia residents. Some interested participants contacted me via email or phone. Afterward, I performed the strategy of snowball sampling, in order to find a sufficient number of participants who fit the research criteria. Snowball sampling is a purposeful sampling technique where the initial participants assist in the recruitment of additional research subjects (Seidman, 2006). I asked the recruited participants to pass along the invitation to take part in this research to other immigrants around them.

Once potential participants showed interest in engaging in the research, I sent an email to them with a brief explanation of my research, identifying whether they met the recruitment criteria. Upon assessment of their suitability on the inclusion criteria, I arranged the date and time of an interview with the participants, attaching the detailed information of the research, consent form, and psychological counselling support information to the email. Also, I enabled

the participants to have sufficient time to reflect on the interview by sending the questions two weeks before the interview. Interested participants who did not meet the requirements got an email from me with the clear explanation of why they were not eligible to participate in my research with my apology and thank you for their consideration. The participants were given Tim Hortons gift card of \$10 by email as a token of my appreciation for their participation.

The selection of participants in this study focused on immigrants who had graduated from Nova Scotia community college as international students no more than ten years ago. The participants were required to have acquired permanent resident status through one of the federal and provincial immigration programs for skilled workers since this study focused on immigrants who enrolled in post-secondary institutions for the purpose of immigration. The participants who were in the application process of an immigration program were also included in this research. Moreover, the ethnic background of the participants was limited to countries in the East Asian region. This included South Korea, China and Japan, which are predominantly ideologically and culturally rooted in Confucian culture. Confucianism is a set of values which originated in ancient China that places a value on personal ethics and morality. Those three countries, known for highly competitive societies, have shared similar beliefs and values about education and work. The distinct sociocultural features of East Asian countries differentiate the participants in this research from immigrants from other different cultures. The last selection criterion was immigrants over the age of 25 who attended the college as mature international students. According to UNESCO (2015), the students who are over the age of 25 and several years after leaving high school are defined as mature or adult students. This criterion aimed to include the participants who pursued higher education as lifelong learners for the purpose of immigration,

excluding traditional students who first attended the college without work or family responsibilities.

Table 1:

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Country of Origin</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Marital Status</b> | <b>Educational history</b>                     | <b>Program of Study</b>           |
|-------------|--------------------------|---------------|------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Stella      | South Korea              | F             | 30-39      | S                     | B.A. in police administration                  | Culinary Management               |
| Allison     | South Korea              | F             | 40-49      | M (with children)     | M.A. in international studies                  | Office Administration             |
| Luke        | South Korea              | M             | 20-29      | S                     | B.A. in International relations                | CAD Technician Mechanical         |
| Etta        | China                    | F             | 20-29      | M (with children)     | Bachelor of Hospitality and Tourism management | Office Administration             |
| Chris       | China                    | M             | 30-39      | M                     | Master of Business Administration              | Electrical Engineering Technology |
| Theo        | South Korea              | M             | 40-49      | M (with children)     | B.S. in Mechanical Engineering                 | Auto Vehicle Body Repair          |
| Lucas       | South Korea              | M             | 30-39      | M (with children)     | B.S. in Electronic Engineering.                | Electronic Engineering Technician |
| Theo        | South Korea              | M             | 40-49      | M (with children)     | B.S. in Architectural Engineering.             | Carpentry                         |
| Lily        | South Korea              | F             | 40-49      | M (with children)     | Bachelor of Nursing                            | Early Childhood Education         |
| Jim         | China                    | M             | 30-39      | S                     | Bachelor of Financial management               | Electronic Engineering Technician |

To achieve diversity in this research, I sought to recruit the participants from a broad range of age groups and programs of study. The experiences of international students in eight different programs were explored in this research. The participants were comprised of two

students in their 20s, four in their 30s, and four in their 40s, with a median age of 36 years old. The age of the youngest participant was 28 years old while the oldest was 43 years old. All the participants had a variety of educational experience in post-secondary education. Six of them

other two participants had dropped out of their university in the middle of their degree programs for personal reasons. Also, the participants all had several years of previous work experience in their country of origin before immigrating to Canada.

Right before entering NSCC, seven of the participants had participated in English language courses for three to nine months in order to meet language requirements for applying for the college program. The other three of them directly enrolled in the diploma program by submitting the minimum score of IELTS academic test required by the college (6.0 on each band). Eight of ten participants received assistance from private immigration service agencies in the college application process.

The participants applied for the specific immigration programs for which only candidates in Nova Scotia are eligible to apply. Seven of the participants immigrated to Canada through one of the provincial nominee programs, *Nova Scotia Experience: Express Entry*, which requires at least 1 year of work experience in Nova Scotia. The other three applied for the *Atlantic International Graduate Program* eligible only for candidates with an educational credential from a post-secondary institution in one of the Atlantic provinces including Nova Scotia. All the participants were working full-time job in a company located in Nova Scotia at the time of research interview.

## **Data Collection Processes**

In this study, the data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the participants. Research interviewing is one of the most common strategies for collecting qualitative data in the field of social science (Brinkmann, 2014). Through qualitative interview, researchers gain in-perspective on the phenomenon. The forms of interview method are subdivided by the degree of structure in interview (Hobson & Townsend, 2010). In structured interviews, the interview normally produces quantitative data. On the other hand, unstructured interview strategy is informally conducted with interviewees with interview questions not arranged in advance, which is useful to obtain observational data.

The semi-structured interview conducted in this study is a mix of structured and unstructured interview. The loosely structured, open-ended questions are predetermined for the semi-structured interview with additional questions emerging from the conversation between researcher and participant during interview (Brinkmann, 2014). The interview deeply makes inquiries into the subjective lens of interviewees by providing more freedom to the interview. It also leaves room for the interviewer to interpret and analyze the interview data.

The data collection procedure in this research was deliberately designed on the basis of principles of his approach to qualitative interview in education, following the step-by-step process of in-depth interviewing. In this study, the semi-structured interview with individual participants was conducted online. Each interview was performed using Microsoft Teams, an online communication platform that enabled users to communicate through video-chatting on a

computer or mobile phone. Although face-to-face interview provides the researcher with much information such as body gestures, facial expressions (Brinkmann, 2014), conducting remote interviews with the participants using an online conferencing program was unavoidable due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The whole process of the qualitative interview in this research was carried out in the English language and Korean. All the documents including interview questions were delivered to the participants in English. There was not any language barrier in participating in this study because all the participants had already met English language requirements, in order to get admission to NSCC as international students. Interviews with participants from China were conducted in English, but South Korean participants were interviewed in Korean because using their first language allowed the interviewees to share their stories and voices clearly with no anxiety (Seidman, 2006).

The participants were given an advance notice that the interview would last approximately forty minutes, but all interviews was conducted actually for sixty to eighty minutes. I collected some demographic information of the participants using a closed questionnaire (Appendix A), and in-depth semi-structured interview (Appendix B) was conducted afterward. Voices and videos in the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants. I transcribed the interviews related to the topics verbatim in the language of the interviews, excluding the off-topic content in the interviews. The transcripts were sent to the interviewees by email in order to confirm the accuracy of their transcript. Some parts of the information that may identify them. None of the interviewees in this research objected to their transcripts after they reviewed their interview transcripts.

## Data analysis Procedures

According to Merriam (2009), data analysis in qualitative research is defined as a process of making meanings out of the non-numerical data collected through interview, observation, or documents. Data analysis process basically is to connect the collected data with the research begins by identifying segments in your data set that are responsive to your research question set of data through various analytical techniques such as comparison, contrast, consolidation, or elimination.

Thematic analysis is one of the qualitative data analysis methods to identify themes within a collected data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It produces meaningful patterns of the data organizing the data. A theme includes the prevalent segment within the whole data set in relation to the research question. A qualitative researcher can develop the themes in one of two major strategies. In a bottom up or inductive thematic analysis, the theme tends to be generated by the data itself, not s to deductive or top-down way, is a process of coding the data, driven by the specific research . I addressed the research question and sub-questions through the process of theoretical thematic analysis. Data analysis in this study was conducted from the perspective of theory of practice (1977) in order to analyze a complex and multifaceted influence of higher education as lifelong learning for immigrants in in capitalized societies helped to map the settlement and integration process of immigrants seeking to adjust to the dominant culture as a member of a minority group.

Data analysis in this study began simultaneously when conducting interviewing with the participants. Me without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed. 171). I kept track of my thoughts and ideas during the data collection as I sought to organize what the participants said related to my research question.

The data collected in interviews with participants were analyzed in two steps of coding methods. Initial (open) coding and axial coding technique (Theron, 2015) were employed to search for the potential themes in the process of analyzing the data in this study. First, while reviewing the transcripts, I generated initial codes by examining the similarities and differences relation to my research question. The hard copy of each interview transcript was color-coded according to the initial codes generated in the first step. Afterward, each color-coded content was copied and pasted in Microsoft Word files along with the memos I took in the middle of data collection.

An axial coding method was employed in the second step of data analysis to reassemble the data. Theron (2015) defined axial coding as a method to draw connection between the initial codes. The central category as the axis is created based on subcategories, initial codes created in the first stage of coding. Reading over the color-coded transcripts, three central codes were -making processes, the influence of higher education, and life transition after graduation. Some sub-categories generated in the initial coding were combined into a central category in the second stage process in order to illustrate the holistic meaning of the phenomenon. Three of the themes (central codes) generated through two steps of coding methods, were interconnected within the theoretical framework.

## **Ethical Consideration**

I started to recruit the participants for data collection after receiving ethical approval from the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) in Mount Saint Vincent University. Researchers who conduct research with human participants should be concerned with ethical issues which possibly occurs in the research process. Traianou (2014) asserted that it should be central in the preservation of privacy, a minimization of harm, and respect for individual autonomy (p. 62) for the protection of the human participants.

conducted in the secure process, following the appropriate procedure of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2). The data was anonymously collected by a single interviewer, the principal researcher. I clearly informed the participants of strict confidentiality on the document specifying this statement in advance. All data from the interview were anonymized to protect the

contact information of professional counselors that would be of no cost to them in advance via participants of their right to withdraw from the research throughout the study and that they were not required to answer every question during the interview. All the information above was delivered to the participants in the written form of computer file before they participated in the research.

## **Validity and Reliability**

There has been continuing debates about achieving scientific rigor in qualitative research transparency in research procedures (Noble & Smith, 2015). Qualitative research is constantly criticized for a lack of the standard measures to judge the trustworthiness in qualitative data, comparing with the rigor of quantitative research which employs scientific measure or test for the precision of data. Merriam (2009) presented the traditional concepts of validity and reliability to demonstrate rigor in qualitative research. Qualitative validity, also referred to authenticity or credibility, indicates the accuracy and truthfulness of the findings collected in qualitative research process. Qualitative reliability is the consistency and stability of the finding. In other words, it is about the extent to which the study produces consistent results if replicated. Qualitative researchers need to check the validity and reliability of the findings for rigor by evaluating the appropriateness of the research process.

I sought to achieve the trustworthiness of the findings in this qualitative research,

ty. Member

Checking, a common strategy for ensuring the validity, was employed in the process of data collection. As I noted above, after each interview, the transcript of the interview was sent to each

of the participants by email for checking the transcript. The interviewees were allowed to revise or remove their responses in the interview by checking the transcript, which could achieve the credibility of the transcript. Also, I sought to clarify the personal bias intrinsically shaped by my background in the data analysis process. I admit it is possible for my personal bias to have influenced the results of my study, since my social background as an East-Asian immigrant is equivalent to the participants. I sought to maintain objectivity without my personal bias in analyzing the experience of the participants. However, sharing social and cultural background perspective and experience.

To demonstrate the reliability of my findings, I sought to describe specifically as each step of the data collection and analysis process in my research as possible. The transparency and clarification of the whole research process enables other qualitative researchers to follow the same procedures in other research (Merriam, 2009). Also, the process of sorting the transcript was performed twice to avoid the mistake I could possibly make during the data analysis. After I colour-coded the paper copy of the transcript for the first step, I classified the interview transcripts in Microsoft Word files according to the colour-coded paper copy in order to double check the transcript.

## **Summary**

This study was conducted through the interpretive qualitative case study method based on a constructivist orientation, in order to explore the lifelong learning experience of immigrants through higher education in the process of settlement and integration. Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), the largest vocational and technical education institution in Nova Scotia, was addressed as a single case. Ten adult immigrants from East Asian region who attended higher

education as international students were involved in this qualitative research. Data was collected through one-on-one semi-structured interview and analyzed in thematic analysis method, following qualitative research guides (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Seidman, 2006). In the next chapter, I detail the results of the data analysis, starting with decision-making process, followed by the influence of higher education experience and life-transition after graduation.

## **Chapter 5: Findings**

in which they share their lived experiences of higher education in the process of immigration to Canada. The participants represent foreign skilled workers who immigrated to Canada through the study-migration pathway. This study draws attention to the Nova Scotia Community College, which many immigrants in Nova Scotia have chosen as a bridge to becoming permanent resident.

The thematic analysis reveals the role of post-secondary education in the process of immigration and integration for immigrants within the broad scope of study-to-work transition, quality of life, and sociocultural identity. I discuss three themes. In the first theme, the

-making process reveals the strong association between higher education and immigration. Then, the second demonstrates the influence of educational experience on the settlement and integration of immigrants within three contexts: career-related factors, social factors, cultural factors. The third theme observes the life transition of immigrants after graduating from a post-secondary institution.

### **Decision-making Process of Immigrants who are Former International Students.**

eals the interrelationship between post-secondary education and immigration. Previous research has shown that immigrants who want to become permanent residents in Canada as skilled workers see higher education as the major strategy to meet immigration program requirements (Arthur & Flynn, 2011; Covell et al, 2015; Hawthorne, 2010). They spend several years studying in a university or a college as international students and have at least a year of work experience after graduation in order to be eligible for permanent

residency, which is called the study-migration pathway (Hawthorne, 2010). Accordingly, international students in the pursuit of immigrating to Canada primarily map their decision-making onto the acquisition of permanent resident status (Covell et al., 2015). This is reflected in my study. The participants regarded enrolling in a post-secondary institution as a pathway to permanent residency in Canada. Most of the participants were acutely aware of the requirements of Canadian immigration programs, which apparently had considerable influence on their immigration strategy. Ted, the pseudonym of one participant, specified that he enrolled in a higher education institution for the purpose of acquiring permanent residency, noting:

The reason why I went to NSCC was not because I need the degree or learn something. Also, I was not going to go back to Korea with the degree after graduation. I studied in the college just because of immigration. I knew I could get three years of work permit if I graduated from the college, so, I could apply for immigration program after I worked for

That was the reason I got into the NSCC.

In a similar way, Stella acknowledged the necessity of Post-Graduation Work Permit [PGWP] in

Like Ted, Stella made decisions to study in a post-secondary institution in order to obtain three years of work permit. As they became eligible to work legally in Canada with a post graduation work permit, they could meet the minimum work experience requirement to apply for skilled-work immigration program.

Seven of the participants indicated that they would not have chosen to spend several years in higher education if they had not needed to study in the process of obtaining a permanent

college degree. But now that I think about it, I would not have chosen to study in college if I

Nevertheless, a few participants reflected that they would rather choose to study in higher education after attaining permanent residency if they had the option. For example, Lily noted:

I would not go to college if I had choice. College experience here was not bad for me, but I would not go, considering money, time, and effort I put into the college. I think I would go to NSCC after I got PR because I studied in NSCC only for immigration without thinking about my interest. With PR, I could get the job I want freely during college, and the tuition would be much cheaper.

Lily noted the advantages of attending a higher education institution as a permanent resident, not an international student. Similarly, Chris reflected that immigrants would need college education for their career p

The participants tended to center on immigration-related factors in selecting a study abroad destination. They recognized the study destination as where they would spend their entire lives after graduation rather than just where they study. Above all, the possibility of becoming permanent residents was the most significant factor in selecting a country for the participants to

nt thing for choosing the country

Some participants contemplated what country in which they should study abroad within the popular countries for immigration such as Canada, Australia and the U.S. Lily was attracted to the immigration-friendly countries in selecting a country to study overseas:

I chose Canada for immigration because Canada is very open to immigrants comparing with other English-speaking countries. At first, I thought about going to Australia because of nice weather, but I heard it was really hard to immigrate to Australia these days. So, I chose Canada.

searched many countries 792 0058011 0 0 1 196.73 590.38 Tea0 612 792 reW\*<sup>n</sup>BTo, I chose Canada.

society. We lost th dissatisfied with a quality of life in their home country due to a heavy workload. They recognized emigrating to Canada as a solution to recover their work-life balance, which that they would have a leisurely lifestyle with their children in Canada.

Other common factors in selecting Canada for studying overseas are related to the Canada by the reason that public schools are free for children to attend even if they are Canada even though I had study permit. So, I could cut down my immigration budget immigration because of my kid. And Canada is really good choice because they use French and st be a clear advantage in attracting immigrants from non-selection for a country to study in is closely related with the immigration decision-making process. Some participants who immigrated with their family, particularly, prioritized the quality of family life and the education for children in a country selection.

directly associated with immigration issue. Nine of the participants placed Nova Scotia at the top of the provinces in Canada for study destination since Nova Scotia provided the newcomers with a wider range of opportunities for becoming permanent resident compared with other provinces. Some of them intended at first to immigrate to one of the four largest provinces in Canada such as Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta, but it was inevitable to change their plans into the province which was

more possible to obtain permanent residency. A participant who did not have Nova Scotia as his first choice was Chris, who reflected that

I did a lot of research about provinces before I came to Canada. Finally, I chose Nova Scotia because I compared every province in Canada. It was very hard to immigrate to Toronto [Ontario] and Vancouver [British Columbia]. I had just Alberta and Nova Scotia [on my list]. But in Alberta, engineering is not on the immigration list. If I chose to study engineering, I was not a  
Nova Scotia was my only option.

Likewise, provincial immigration programs caused Lily to modify her initial plan for the

. I already had an

various immigration programs like AIPP. So, I chose here because I thought I could get PR

to Nova Scotia from another province due to

the probability of becoming permanent residents was the most important consideration in selecting a study destination province.

Private immigration service agencies played a vital role for the participants in their preparation of studying abroad. Eight of ten participants revealed that immigration service agencies assisted them in the entire planning process of immigration including study destination selection. Their decision-making in preparing for immigration was mostly based on the information acquired by the agencies. Stel

both Korea and China recommended Nova Scotia as the best destination to study in owing to the relatively higher

agency in Korea told me it was hard to immigrate to Toronto. They suggested Atlantic

at

The participants, the immigrants who chose post-secondary education for the purpose of immigration, tended to have a preference for one or two years of programs in college over

her in a

studied for [the purpose of] immigration, I would make the same decision [choosing college over

[specifi

immigration tended to focus on obtaining permanent resident card through higher education, not

because of academic reason. In addition, some participants stated that a vocational program in

college was more suitable for immigrants to settle in Canada than academic degree program in

university because they already possessed educational credentials and work experience in their

country of origin. Allison, ree, preferred the short-term programs in

or master program because I already had them. I wanted to get permanent resident card as fast as

I could. So, I searched for the shortest program in Canada. I found one-

rience. I

think they are not interested in getting a degree in university, so they want to study in college,

-term vocational programs in college since it was

not necessary for them to pursue academic qualification in university for the purpose of immigration.

Nonetheless, some participants stated that immigrants would choose to study in university if they considered returning to their home country in future. Etta reflected on the different concepts of university and college in China:

Chinese think university normally is better than college. But here some majors in college are even better than those in university for getting a job. But they [immigrants] did not see, especially young Chinese students, prefer to go to university if they had plan to go back to China.

with the diploma, it is not helpful for my career. But I think practical skills I learned in college

degree or higher in a university if they return home in the future because East Asian society regards academic background as being more important for a career pursuit than a vocational diploma.

As for the selection of programs, seven of ten participants chose a college program unrelated to their prior experience although they already had years of educational and job experience in their home country. The possibility of employment after graduation was the crucial factor in their choice of major in college, rather than the development of their previous career, due to Canadian work experience requirement in skilled-worker immigration programs. Luke

program because he said I could get a job easily in this field. I heard that it was prospective in immigration program. Lily also described her decision-making process honest, the immigration agency told me that this major [Early Childhood Education] was the easiest way to get permanent resident card. I was supposed to study culinary course, but the agency recommended this program rather than culinary. Immigration service agency had influenced her career direction as well as her destination selection.

In sum, the acquisition of a permanent resident card was central for the participants in the decision-making process for choosing their higher education in Canada. They determined to enroll in a post-secondary institution as an immigration strategy, in order to become Canadian permanent residents. Otherwise, seven of them did not see the necessity of higher education experience in the process of immigration. The possibility of applying for a permanent resident card also led the participants to select a specific region in which to study. The pull factors for choosing their study destination included having a better work-life balance, specifically being able to spend time with their children at home and less in the workplace, and having access to free education for their children. This specific motivation for higher education led them to choose the one or two years of diploma program in community college. In the same way, the participants had tendencies to choose the programs in college which they expected would guarantee more job opportunities for them, although they would not be able to continue their previous work and academic experience. Interestingly, immigration service agencies influenced decision-making from country selection to their career direction in the future.

## **Influence of Educational Experience on Immigration**

As described above, my participants chose to enroll in higher education institutions in order to meet immigration program requirements as part of their immigration strategy.

According to Lu and Hou (2019), immigrants who were former international students in a Canadian post-secondary institution have advantages in the settlement and integration process in terms of language proficiency, future employment opportunities, and having developed social networks. In the following, the question of

fulfill the needs in the process of immigrating to Canada is extensively explored in terms of three contexts: career-related factors, social factors, cultural factors. Also, this section examines the efforts of the college to cater to international students who are in the pursuit of their permanent residency.

campus life after in 2020.

### **Career-related factor**

The main objective of community college is to train students in technical skills and knowledge for their future employment, which matches the needs of international students who wish to acquire Canadian credentials and work experience for immigration (Teranishi, C Suarez-Orozco, & M Suarez-Orozco, 2011). For example, the Nova Scotia Community College (n.d.-b)

specialized, industry-

ding on the

mission concerning community development, community college in Canada offers career-

oriented programs addressing practical skills and knowledge that is applicable to work practice

and provides career support services towards future employment. The participants in this study

mostly felt a sense of satisfaction with career-related aspects of their college experience. Eight of

ten participants indicated their college experience had been useful for them, in preparing them for the labour market after  
could develop the skills related to my job [in college]. I am sure it would be helpful in the future  
seven other participants also admitted that they could reach their employment goals due to their college experience.

According to the participants, NSCC provided a broad range of support services for the  
ly, it provided the students with employment-related  
additional courses, to help improve job-seeking skills, such as how to write resumes and cover  
me a lot of things like how to write resume or cover letter once a week. Like how to do the  
interview in English. The instructor checked English grammar in my resume. Those things are  
The college offered extra  
career-related support to prepare her to enter the workforce after graduation.

Secondly, the college offered extracurricular activities, such as job fair events, to connect students with local employers. Lucas said that the job fair event assisted him in understanding the Canadian labour market:

There were some job fairs in school. HR department workers in some companies visited the job fairs in school. They introduced their companies to us and gave us some tips for writing resume. I remembered many opportunities I could join when I was in school. I  
the job from the job fair, but I got to know the process, how Canadian  
companies hire employees. That helped me a lot.

The job fairs that the college offered did not directly lead to his employment but were valuable experiences for him, and presumably for other international students who lack access to employment information relevant to the Canadian or Nova Scotian context.

Six of the participants emphasized the importance of instructors at the community college for job employment. They stated that the instructors played an important role in finding a job

improve our resumes and write the strong cover letter. Also, we had the Facebook group. The teachers are sti

The instructors provided the students with a wide range of job-related support from the preparation process for job application to up-to-

the newcomer students seeking a job. Chris reflected on the usefulness of his instructors

the instructors effort on employment support for students.

opportunities of applying their learning in a workplace were one of the most valuable experiences in their college programs. Most programs in the college required the students to have had a certain period of work experience before graduation. Etta reflected that the work-term course, as a part of her program, made her prepare for her employment after graduation:

While I was in the NSCC program, I had a four-week work placement, directly working in the provincial government department. The office gave me a lot of training and let me learn office procedure and many skills or even how to work nice, the workload I cou

to my new job position in the apartment building.

For some participants, their temporary jobs in the co-op course led to their full-time permanent job after \_\_\_\_\_ -op course became

stated that his work-term course was helpful for him to understand the Canadian labour market system:

I got to know about local companies in Nova Scotia when I looked for my workplace for work-term. I thought there were not many job opportunities in NS when I searched internet. But, when I checked the company list I got from NSCC, I realized local employers hire people through professional network, not through Internet.

He became aware of the Canadian recruitment system and acquired detailed information about local companies in his work term course.

However, the work-term or co-op courses in the college were cancelled due to the COVID 19 pandemic. So, the recent graduates could not obtain the opportunities of work

op course for graduation. So, I ha

disappointment over the cancellation of the co-op course:

I started to look for a job just before the pandemic. Because of the COVID 19, I could not go to school and everything was cancelled. I could not get any benefit from co-op course. Job experience is very important for the technician job. To get job experience, I should do internship or co-

Co-op or a work-term course was an essential part of the programs as an opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge they acquired in classes in the workplace. The work experience led the students to acquire the practical skills for jobs and consequently helped obtain their employment after graduation. However, the pandemic situation of COVID 19 caused the recent graduated participants to struggle to find employment after graduation.

The participants pointed out the partnerships of the community college with local I know, many local companies in Nova Scotia find new employees among the graduates from on the preference of local employers for working at now mostly hires the students from NSCC. My job needs the high quality of job graduates from the college as very qualified candidates. Accordingly, educational credential from the college was tremendously useful for the participants to seek employment after graduation. The participants demonstrated that the diploma or certificate itself was worthwhile for t The owner I worked for hired me because I studied culinary course in NSCC. Otherwise, he would not hire me because I did not

Most programs in community college generally focus on teaching students the practical skills demanded in workplace, but to some of the participants, it was not clear whether the knowledge and skills they acquired were beneficial in their workspace in practice. Three of the participants felt that what they learned in classes was directly applicable to their jobs. Allison stated that computer program skills she developed in classes were closely linked to her current

t, what I learned in NSCC was really useful. The classes helped improve my MS Office skills from intermediate level to advanced level. Also, I

system between Korea and Canada:

Korean immigrants just start to work in daycare in Canada with Korean ECE certificate.

the college, I learned about Canada education system and Canadian law. It was much better to start to work with that knowledge.

It was very beneficial for her to acquire the knowledge about the early childhood education system in Canada since she had no experience with the daycare systems in Canada.

On the other hand, four participants were discontented with the curriculum in their college program at NSCC. Stella noted that knowledge from the classes she took was not directly connected with her workspace:

very different. Other friends told me the same thing. Instead, I could learn much more [on the

addres

but they only teach very basic skills for beginner level workers. I think we could not learn deeply

because it was only a one- dvanced level of skills and

knowledge in his class, but his classes failed to fulfill his desires to develop professional skills

further.

In summary, the participation in higher education had highly beneficial effects on career-related aspects in the part career support activities offered by the college prepared them to enter the workforce after graduation. Specifically, they were -op course in programs helped the international students to adjust to the Canadian labour market. Seven of the participants revealed that the educational credential from the college was significantly influential in finding employment after graduation. Yet, Stella and Theo felt that more advanced knowledge and skills should be addressed in classes for practical application to the workplace.

### **Social factor**

It is apparent that having a social network is fairly significant for immigrants to integrate into a new society, in various aspects, including future employment. Indeed, the necessity of building a social network motivates the adult immigrants to engage in post-secondary education (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2010). However, immigrants as international students face the challenges of establishing the social relationship with classmates for different reasons such as a lack of language skills or cultural difference (Soetan, 2020). Likewise, many participants in this study, although to different extents, had difficulty in developing social relationships with classmates in college. The college offered some opportunities of social gatherings for international students who newly arrived in Canada, but, due to some personal reasons, the participants could not take advantage of the opportunities to build social connections in college.

remarked that they had not been involved in social activities outside of the class because they had to

home after class. I had some chances to hang out with classmates like going to pub, but I

to stay focused in college due to their family

responsibilities and their financial burdens.

All the participants were keenly aware of the importance of social network in the process of immigration. While they were not involved in social events or activities outside of the classroom, they made effort to build social relationships with classmates in class. However, some of them showed the difficulties in keeping company especially with Canadian-born students. The most challenging part of building the relationship with local students is a communication problem caused by different language. Chris felt isolated among Canadian students in his class because of a

barrier, Allison suggested the significance of communication skills in building social relationships with local students:

. We came to Canada when

we were old. Our English is never going to be perfect. You know that. So, immigrants should learn the communication skills. We should improve the skills about how we should react when we talk with local people in English. That would be very helpful for immigrants.

Allison suggested that in interacting with Canadians, immigrants should enhance the communication skills, the ability to communicate with effectively with others, rather than struggle to be perfect in their non-native language.

Moreover, some participants made references to the large age difference between Canadian-born students and international students as a major reason for the challenge of social in the early twenties. Some students are even under twenty. I was trying to make friends with them, but i big age gap between local students and him. Lily felt confused about the reason why she failed to build relationship with local students:

Most international students are quite old like over thirty, but Canadian students are very or the age gap. I guess the big age gap was more serious than the language problem in making friends.

Some participants managed to socially interact with Canadian students in their class, but they revealed that their interaction with local students did not lead to the formation of close friendship between them. Lucas reflected on the language boundaries in building social English skill, I could not go beyond the short conversation with them. Also, at that time, my English was worse than now. I was not confident in class, so I did not actively try to make relationship with native English speakers.

Although many participants tended to struggle to make the relationship with classmates in college, some other participants revealed that the social network they built in class contributed to the settlement and integration to Canadian society in the process of immigration. Allison commente

They recommended some jobs to me. And we exchanged some information about jobs even after  
could receive some  
help from them for job-seeking. Also, Etta shared her story of finding her job with assistance  
other. She helped me find my job in the apartm  
addition to job-related assistance, it was apparent that social network built in college was  
valuable in the whole extent of immigration life for some of the participants. Lucas illustrated  
messages with my friends I made in class, my English got better. Also, I  
got to understand Canadian people when I talked with my friends. This experience in college  
contributed to the enhancement of his language competence. Moreover, his social experience  
with classmates was helpful for him to adjust to his work after graduation.

Accordingly, the recently graduated participants expressed their feelings of  
disappointment that most social events or activities in college were cancelled during the  
pandemic. Lily reflected that she missed many opportunities of building social network in

but I had to take online courses after the pandemic. After that, I could not have any chance to  
nts in college, Ted could barely  
have conversation with his classmates in class:

I often participated in some social events for international students at the beginning of my  
program. But I could not enjoy the campus life any more because of COVID 19. There

were in-person courses and online courses mixed in my program, but we had to follow the social distancing even inside class. There were not chances to talk with classmates.

The COVID 19 pandemic caused the students to take online courses, which deprived them of the opportunities of engaging in social activities or interacting with classmates.

Before the pandemic, the college had actively promoted the engagement of international students in social events in college. However, some participants showed little interest in

like watching hockey game or going to farm. But I have never joined the event like them. It was just for recreation. So, I thought it was not helpful for me. I came to the college for living with

was not useful for his immigration process.

Some participants pointed out the absence of the social events connecting international

local students did not participate in those events. It was

association, suggested that not only international students but also local students need to take part in the social activities in college.

international students like watching sport games, watching movie together, playing bowling. There were some good events for making friends. Students can make friends or learn English through these social events. But these were not about making friends with Canadian students. It was just between international students. These events were not

meant to be only for international students. Local students could join the events. But I could not see local students in these events. I think local students should join the association as a member. They can organize the events for every student in college.

The international student association plays an important role in helping international students build social relationship in college. He suggested the association should make effort to create the opportunities to socialize with local students, not only between international students.

To summarize this theme, a majority of participants had difficulty in building social relationships in college mainly due to a lack of language competence and a perceived age gap between them and the local students; but those who participated in social events said that the social network built on campus was helpful in the process of immigration. Luke, Ted, Lucas and Theo did not actively participate in the social events or activities organized by the institution due to personal reasons such as a financial burden and family care. But they felt a sense of frustration at the missed opportunities to build a social network due to the pandemic. It was suggested that the institution organize the social gatherings to connect international students with local students.

### **Cultural factor**

As noted above, the higher education institution functions as a space for immigrants to have a cross-cultural experience as well as build a cultural knowledge of the host country. To meet their demands, community colleges in Canada have organized multicultural activities for international students to engage in (Soetan, 2020). Despite the effort of institutions, many international students struggle to adjust to cultural differences on campus, due to a lack of their cultural knowledge (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2010). The majority of immigrants in this study remarked that they did not have negative experiences such as cultural conflict, which often

happens to minority students in college. Some of them stated that they occasionally encountered minor cultural differences in class, but the differences did not bother them during college. For example, Stella commented:

There were some differences in classroom, comparing to classroom in Korea. Instructors talk with students a lot during class. And they actively try to receive feedback from students. Canadian students also actively participated in the class and asked many questions to the instructors. It was different from lectures in Korean universities. But the conflict at NSCC.

Stella was unfamiliar with different class environment from the one in her country of origin but managed to handle minor cultural differences in her classes.

Some participants revealed that they experienced some minor cultural conflicts in the relationship with other students in class, but they viewed the conflicts that they encountered in different ways. Allison identified her negative experience with Canadian students in class at an they were different from Korean people. They did not care about other students. But I think it

Allison pointed out that the cultural conflicts that she experienced in her class arose from individual difference, not from cultural difference. Also, Lucas reflected on some

conflic

He did not regard the conflict with his classmates as racism or discrimination.

The participants mostly felt satisfied with the effort of the institution in addressing cultural diversity on campus. The international center took care of international students well. They tried to protect students from different backgrounds feel comfortable and safe in studying on campus. In addition, it offered a variety of opportunities for international students to become familiar with Canadian culture or have multicultural experience in college. Allison made references to some multicultural events organized by the center. Some events. They introduced us [to] various countries and gave us some food from different culturally diverse environments in college. Furthermore, Etta has fond memories of some cultural events in her class:

I experienced Canadian culture in school many times. We had a potluck after our first

ha

Canada. On Christmas, the senior teachers working in library made a lot of hats for the people newly coming over because Canada has really cold winter. The hats hang in the Christmas tree to show their support and welcoming for the refugees. I think that really

as

quite unique. I spent only one year in school, but I learned a lot about Canadian culture.

These events in college not only play a role as a space for international students to develop cultural knowledge of Canada, an appreciation of other cultures and feeling a sense of belonging, but also help the students to understand the concept of Canadian identity.

However, some participants who recently graduated missed the chances to have the cross-cultural experience, including learning Canadian culture, as cultural events were cancelled due to the pandemic. Lily remarked that all events in college were replaced with online activities were some events like going to hockey game, but after that, the school events were cancelled or -person events over online ones she could engage in during the pandemic.

The participants were, in general, content with their college experience in that they became familiar with Canadian society by having the chances to interact with local people in

the opportunities to interact with local people during her college. In a similar way, Theo became accustomed with being with Canadian people themselves elt I

chances to talk with Canadians outside of the college, but the college gave me the chance to have understand cultural differences

between Canada and his country of Western culture. Like how they think. I got to understand their different lifestyles. When I came to

Canada at first, there were many things I could not understand about Canadians. But now I am

competence, meaning he feels0.41-8-9(a)sth

In sum, while the participants faced minor cultural differences in class during college, they could make a successful adaptation to different learning environments without undergoing significant cultural conflict. Some of them regarded some cultural clash with local students to be the result of individual difference, age gap, or a misunderstanding due to a lack of language proficiency. The college offered international students a variety of opportunities to have multicultural experiences, including Canadian cultural experiences, although not all participated in these activities due to family obligations or because they thought these activities were not directly relevant to finding employment. Consequently, the immigrants could become familiar with Canadian culture, having the chances to interact with local people during college. Allison and Chris benefitted from the opportunity to interact with Canadians off campus such as church and through

### **Life Transition of Immigrants after Graduation**

After graduation, the participants prepared to step up to the next phase of study-migration pathway, employment, for Canadian permanent residency. The post graduation work permit gained after completing their program enabled the participants to be legally employed in Canada. However, the college diploma and work permit did not guarantee the immigrants satisfactory job offers. The participants confessed that the most challenging part in the entire process of immigration was to find employment in a job position eligible for the immigration program. Jim struggled to search for a full-time job offer necessary to apply for most difficult part was about finding a job. My first job was not a full-time job. I could not immigrate to Can non-profit organization for my work term course. I got a job offer there, but I could not work

-time job

offer since she needed a permanent job position for immigration.

Nonetheless, all but one participant in this study managed to find a full-time employment in the fields directly related to their programs after graduating from the college. Consequently, all the participants, including the one working in a different field, expressed deep satisfaction with their investment in higher education for immigration in terms of employment after graduation. Ted

apply for permanent resident card. If you want to start over your career or learn something now,

sful job

employment owing to his educational experience in college, which could lead him to apply for the immigration program. In addition, Lucas made references to his English competency

udied in college. My English

exposure to English language in and outside of class during college developed his language competency, which was enormously helpful to get his desired job after graduation.

While the participants were able to improve their language skills to some degree during the college years, they were still under pressure in communicating with colleagues in the workplace. Lucas regarded the language barrier as the most significant stressor in his work:

I guess most immigrants would be agree with me. Language was the most difficult. It is not just about communication problem. Causes of my stress in Canada life was all about English. I got stressful more because of English at work than in school. In class, I could read the textbook again when I did not understand, or I could ask the instructor about that

later. But, in work I should immediately answer and act. I always think I can do much better in work if I speak English well.

He had been exposed to an English-speaking environment in college for years, which made him confident in communicating in English by the time he graduated. However, the workplace demanded a higher level of his English fluency than in college. He attributed his difficulties in work to his limited English proficiency. Similarly, Ted made references to slow progress in his much better than three years ago. I am worried that my English would be the same like this after he had expected even though he had spent two years studying in college. The participants still encountered difficulties in communicating in English in their workplace.

Most participants achieved their immigration goals as they managed to find a decent job after graduating from the college but doubted they were contented with their quality of life afterward in Canada as immigrants. For the participants who arrived in Canada at a relatively older age, immigrating to a new country nearly indicated that they should start all over in life my chose to abandon all their previous assets they had built up in their home country such as work experience, social network, educational qualification, and so on. Accordingly, some participants were not contented with their lives as immigrants in Canada, compared with life in their home country before immigration. Theo felt frustrated at his low quality of life in Canada:

I am not satisfied with myself in Canada. In Korea, my job was fine, and I had a good salary. I think I was in a middle class in Korea, but here it was like I dropped to the floor.

Maybe immigrants in my age would have the same mind with me. When I did dishwasher in a restaurant in Canada at the beginning, I felt shame. Maybe living in Canada would be better for my children, but for me, I do not know.

He made an effort to study in college for two years and start over in a new career for a better quality of his family. But his life quality in Canada did not accord closely with his hopes and goals of life in Canada.

Some participants still struggled to adapt to their socioeconomic mobility as immigrants in Canada, whereas others continuously had the positive expectations for better quality of life in Canada in future. Stella has a hope for her future life in Canada:

Life quality? My life in Korea was much better than now in Canada for sure. But, I believe it will get better and better living in Canada. Actually, I prefer living in Canada now. I do not have to rush my life in Canada unlike in Korea. I expect I could live more freely here. I think Canada gives me a lot of chances. In Korea, I have limitation to start something in my age, but here I can start again.

She was unsatisfied with a quality of her life in Canada, comparing with in Korea, but had a strong belief that her overall experience would be enhanced in Canada over time as she would be away from the competitive life in Korea. Also, she felt content in expectation that she could be free from social stereotypes of a certain age that she experienced in Korean society, such as the best age for marriage or the proper age for attending university.

Some participants considered returning to college or university afterwards in order to raise their low socioeconomic status in Canada. Theo had a plan to enrol next year in the same college where

## The immigration

issue had been the main reason for his program selection in college when he just had a work permit, so he chose a program in which it was relatively easy to get a job after graduation. Yet, a higher salary and better work environment became the major considerations in his selection of a college program for him as a permanent resident. The participants drew up a long-term plan to enhance a quality of life once they became permanent residents in Canada.

While some participants wish to continue to study in higher education for better employment options and higher salaries, they hesitated to enroll in a higher level of academic degree in university or college due to a lack of a nurse certification from Korea. I tried to work as a nurse here, but I gave up. My English was not good enough to continue her previous career built in her country of origin due to a lack of her language proficiency. In addition, some high level of professional programs in higher education such as nursing required the top score of English proficiency test and extra admission assessment, which inevitably led to her career change in the process of immigration. Similarly, a language barrier also discouraged Ted from pursuing his previous career in Canada. He commented that

I could not do architectural design in Canada because of my English. I should have

work as a architect here, but I do not think I can do it with my English.

He was not confident communicating with clients in English in the workplace. He unavoidably decided to start a career in physical labour job instead of continuing his previous career as an architect.

Participants negatively anticipated that it is unrealizable to achieve the complete integration into Canadian local society as adult newcomers. Theo pointed out his agedness in

Canada and work in a local company now. But I realized my value or belief cannot change easily. I am not sure what happens after t

He had a difficulty in accepting new social value and belief different from the ones he had built up in his entire life, which commonly occurred to immigrants who made the effort to adapt to a new society at a comparatively older age. Likewise, Allison had a negative expectation that she

I got Canadian citizenship. I am the one who just live in Canada

herself as a Korean living in Canada. For the participants, acquiring Canadian citizenship does not correspond with becoming an accepted member of Canadian society. Lucas defined

learn about new culture and society lifetime, not accept them. Studying in college was just the

of Canadian culture and society rather than assimilate Canadian beliefs and values.

The participants still struggled to feel a sense of belonging to Canadian society in cultural and social aspects even though they had spent several years studying in a post-secondary institution and working with local employees in a Canadian company. They anticipated that it seemed impenetrable to be a thoroughly accepted member of Canadian society as immigrants.

Luke pointed out the feature of Canadian society that he learned through his years of college and

possible to allow of the mix of different ethnic groups in a society, but the participants, as immigrants in a minority group, pointed that there was limitation of integrating into the dominant culture in a mosaic society.

In summary, the participants struggled to seek job employment eligible to apply for permanent residency after graduation, but eventually ended up being employed in an acceptable job directly related to their college program. Their educational experience in college was beneficial in the entire process of immigration, including job-related opportunities, building a social network, and learning Canadian cultural knowledge. However, they still suffered from a lack of their language proficiency in the workplace even though they had been exposed to an English-speaking environment for years in their Canadian college. The quality of their lives in Canada after graduation did not satisfy their expectation about life in Canada, particularly in terms of a career. So, some of them considered returning to a post-secondary institution for the purpose of bettering their quality of life and a higher salary. They also had a negative expectation that it would be hard to entirely integrate into Canadian society despite their study experience in a Canadian college.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

This qualitative research study aimed to identify the role of higher education in the process of settlement and integration for immigrants to Canada. The findings showed how the educational experiences of my research participants, who were ten adult immigrants from East Asian countries within the context of the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), affected their life transitions after graduation within the broad scope of study-to-work transition, quality of life, and sociocultural identity. This chapter addresses the findings and practical and theoretical implications for higher education stakeholders, policymakers, and educational researchers. Limitations of this study and recommendations for future research are provided afterward.

### **Summary of the Findings**

As Canadian immigration policy in the last decade has given Canadian-educated international students the comparative advantages to obtaining a permanent resident card (Lu & Hou, 2019), recent immigrants have shown a marked preference for the study-migration pathway under which individuals apply for permanent resident programs as skilled migrants after graduating from a post-secondary institution (Hawthorne, 2010). This recent trend of immigration reflects the immigration journey of the participants in this research. They enrolled in a community college in order to obtain educational credentials and work experience necessary to meet immigration program requirements.

International students generally regard the quality of education in the country and the reputation of the institution as the significant factors in their decision-making process for studying abroad (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). However, all the participants in this study revealed that the eligibility requirements for the immigration program steered their decision-making

process in studying abroad. The possibility of applying for permanent residency was central in the decision-making process. For example, Stella, who needed a year of work experience for applying for permanent resident program, enrolled in the Nova Scotia Community College to obtain an open work permit in Canada, remarking,

permanent residency

Moreover, Canada was

merited as one of the well-known immigration friendly countries in the world for the study destination of the participants. Nine of the participants selected Nova Scotia as a destination in which they study due to a wide range of immigration programs including Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs) and Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program (AIPP). They recognized the study destination as a place for a long-term settlement rather than just where they studied. This is consistent with previous research on international students under the study-migration pathway (Covell et al, 2015) where the immigration policy was the important factor influencing the

am.

According to Teranishi et al (2011), community college as a career-focused institution is an attractive option for immigrants who want affordable higher education and preparation for employment. The participants preferred one or two years of vocational programs in community college over academic degree programs in university in terms of future employability. Eight of the participants who already held a bachelor level of academic qualification were not interested in acquiring more academic knowledge in university, so they pursued the short-term courses in vocationally orientated higher education. Allison

shortest program in

As Adamuti-Trache and Sweet (2010) demonstrated that participation in education and training is a part of their settlement strategy, enrolling in Nova

Scotia Community College was well suited to meeting the needs of the participants who wanted to acquire Canadian educational credential and work experience for immigration. As noted by the participants, the differential features of international students who pursued to immigrate in Canada identified the strong relationship between post-secondary education and immigration.

-making process was related to the pull factors for immigration. Etta reflected that young international students from China chose to study in a four-year university rather than a college in case they choose to go back to China after graduation. Many international students from East-Asian countries, especially those who study in Canada for academic reasons, have a preference to return to their home countries because they recognize they would have better economic and job opportunities in their home countries compared to in Canada. However, the immigrants in this study preferred to stay in Canada after graduation because -life balance. Some participants chose Canada because public schools are free for children to attend. Also, some participants expected that they would have better work-life balance in Canada and have a more leisurely lifestyle with their children in Canada.

As previously stated in chapter two, migrating to a new country means to undergo the resocialization process of integrating into a new society (Guo, 2013a). The process includes negotiating cultural and social differences from their country of origin, acquiring a new language, building a new social network, and adapting to a different labour market. The life transition process in a new environment leads the immigrants to engage in education and training (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2010). The participants were well aware of the need to engage in post-secondary education for adjusting to tremendous changes in the process of immigration. Ted strongly recommended enrolling in higher education for immigration especially in order to

prepare for the new labour market. Also, Theo and Luke found it useful to have Canadian educational experience in the way that they became accustomed with Canadian culture during their college years. This is consistent with the concept of lifelong learning defined by UNESCO

Although the ter

education as lifelong learners in an attempt to achieve the long-term settlement in a new country.

Slowey and Schuetze (2012) included immigrants as part of equity groups in the classification of lifelong learners in post-secondary education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The participants in this study reflected the distinguishing features of lifelong learners in higher education. The distinction of the participants is consistent with existing literature on lifelong learning in higher education (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Jarvis, 2001) where non-traditional students in higher education as lifelong learners are characterised as coming from various age groups, pursuing a career-focused education, and the preference for shorter courses. All the participants over the age of twenty-five already possessed a four-year university degree. Also, economic and social advancement for long-term settlement in the country was the significant motivational factor for the participants. Furthermore, the adult immigrants with work and family responsibility favoured one or two year of diploma programs in vocational institutions for the major purpose of securing future employment.

to develop economic, cultural, and social capital in order to survive a power game for a better position in a field. Education, particularly higher education, contributes to the distribution of those capitals in a social structure. The value of the capitals is changeable according to the field

a hierarchical social

structure explains the life transition of adult immigrants who struggle to adapt to a new field, the host country, through higher education. Bourdieu (1999) stated that racialized immigrants would suffer from the lack of dominant cultural capital in the new field. T

throughout their lives for decades in their home country is disconnected with the dominant habitus of Canada. The participants were well aware of the need to build social and cultural capital of the dominant group for a long-term settlement.

Participating in post-secondary education is an effective settlement strategy for employment opportunities and integration for adult immigrants (Adamuti-Trache and Sweet, 2010). The participants illustrated that their educational experience was clearly beneficial for them in the process of fitting into the new field in terms of career-related factors, social factors, cultural factors. All the participants felt satisfied with their economic investment in higher education for immigration in terms of career advancement. Especially, the participants found it the most useful in the Canadian labour market to have job references from instructors and had work experience from work-term course. The job reference and local work experience are linked to the importance of local credentials in future employability for immigrants. The cultural capital of the dominant group, including academic credentials, could be the determining factor over professional success within a hierarchical society (Bourdieu, 1986; Nash, 1990). Hence, the participants recognized the necessity of higher education experience for job employment in the process of immigration. For example, Ted attributed his employment success to his educational experienc

to start over your career or learn something now, going to college would be good choice for

In addition to career development, post-secondary institutions in Canada sought to help the newcomer students fulfill their varied needs in integrating into Canadian society such as building a social network or filling cultural gaps (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2010). The participants had opportunities to develop social and cultural capital by participating in multicultural events or social activities organized by the institution, although some participants did not actively engage in extracurricular activities outside classes due to family responsibilities or part-time jobs. In addition, the cancellation of social and cultural events in college due to the pandemic deprived the recent graduates of the chances to experience the dominant culture of Canada. However, the participants revealed that the social interaction with Canadian students in class was of much help building social and cultural capital even though they were not able to participate in campus events.

I could study with Canadian people in a classroom. I could talk with them. If I did not go to school, I did not have many chances to talk with

The benefits to accrue from college experience placed the participants in a better position among immigrants in terms of future employment and integration. This is consistent international students comparative advantages over foreign-educated immigrants.

After graduation, nine of the participants achieved full-time employment in fields directly related to their college education, by developing social and cultural capital through their college experience. All the participants who did not have financial difficulties, were able to invest their economic capital brought from home in post-secondary training. Their cultural and social capitals acquired through higher education experience, including the formal educational credentials, could be converted to the larger amounts of economic capital by finding employment

convertibility of capitals which Bourdieu (1986) explained in his work.

According to Covell et al (2015), an educational experience in higher education does not guarantee that international students will overcome cultural barriers they would experience in the process of immigration. The participants remarked that they were not well prepared for integrating into Canadian society even after graduation. The participants still struggled with the sociocultural adjustments to Canadian dominant society although they achieved their immigration goals which was that they found a satisfactory job after graduation. Many of them had been exposed to an English-speaking environment during the college program, including language learning programs for several months before they started college. But their communication problems emerged from a lack of English language proficiency, which was still the major barrier in their workplace.

Canada life was all about English. I got stressful more because of English at work than in

Some participants believed that it would be unrealizable for them to achieve the complete integration in the dominant society of Canada as immigrants. They made efforts to adjust to social and cultural differences by studying in higher education in order to overcome the challenges they could face as racial minority immigrants in Canadian society. Higher education experience was the strategic process they opted for to assimilate the dominant cultural capital for the purpose of surviving power game in the field. Nonetheless, so far, they are finding it challenging to be thoroughly accepted as a member of Canadian society due to the discontinuity of their habitus accumulated in a lifetime in different field. They assumed that it would be impossible to accept new values and beliefs different from the ones they had developed in their

home countries. Lucas

As I stated in chapter three, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) asserted that the habitus of an individual, which is (133), it is possible to be transformed by formal educational experience. The participants assumed that their age made it difficult to feel a sense of belonging to Canadian society despite their educational experience in a post-secondary institution. a

Some participants struggled to adapt to their socioeconomic mobility as immigrants although they achieved their immigration goals. Some of the struggles were related to their age.

Some participants used to live middle-class lives in a dominant group of their country of origin who owned a home, and worked in high-skilled occupations. As they started over their career and education again in Canada, they experienced a decrease in social status and income after immigration. However, the participants had the positive expectations for better quality of their lives in future. Stella reflected on her age gives me a lot of chances. In Korea, I have limitation to start something in my age, but here I can rather than in Korea due to social stereotypes of a certain age in Confucian culture.

The participants stated that they enrolled in post-secondary education for the purpose of obtaining a permanent resident card. Seven of the participants commented that they would not have enrolled in Nova Scotia Community College if they had been eligible to apply for immigration program without going to college. However, three of them noted that they would study in the college after becoming permanent residents. They recognized that higher education

was highly beneficial in entering the Canadian labour market. Also, Lily remarked that she would rather choose the program based on her interests and passions, not just on the possibility of obtaining permanent residency. In addition, one participant considered applying for another program in the same community college even though he had already obtained a permanent resident card after graduation. The participants in this study were obviously aware of the need for post-secondary education as a way to the settlement and integration into a new country as immigrants. This is consistent with lifelong learning in higher education (Osborne et al, 2015)

-secondary institutions must be of benefit to human capital development and positively influence social issues such as ethnic inequality.

## **Implications**

This study illustrates the immigration journey of adult immigrants under the study-migration pathway within the context of the Nova Scotia Community College. I now present some practical and theoretical implications for higher education stakeholders, researchers, and policy makers.

This implication requires attention from Canadian post-secondary institutions and policy makers regarding the distinguishing features of adult immigrants who enroll in higher education institution as international students. According to Nourpanah (2019), a participation in education and training had been viewed as convenient drive- (p. 996) to acquire permanent resident card for a long-term settlement in Canada. All the participants enrolled in Nova Scotia Community College for the purpose of acquiring the educational credentials and work experience necessary to meet immigration program requirements. These examples are indicative of the instrumental role of post-secondary education as a means to facilitating permanent residency in Canada. Higher education stakeholders and policy makers

must understand that adult immigrants in higher education institutions are differentiated from other international students who focus on academic attainment over immigration-related issues (Al-Haque, 2017).

Canadian post-secondary institutions could support international students who are under study-migration pathways in meeting their needs in the process of immigration such as building a social network or filling cultural gaps as well as future employment. For examples, most of the participants still struggled for communication with local people due to a lack of their language proficiency even after graduation, although they had spent several years in the English-speaking environment during their college program and language school course. The participants' challenges suggest that the institutions develop extracurricular courses in which language is taught and also organize a language exchange community as a place to practice and learn foreign languages with native speakers. The language exchange must be beneficial for both local and international students, in order to provide a cross-cultural experience on campus in tandem with extending their social network. Particularly, it would be useful for international students to make the sociocultural adjustment to Canadian society by having a social and cultural experience with association [ISA] should create the chances to socialize with local students. As he commented in chapter five, it is common that local students barely take part in events or activities organized by ISA. He further suggested that local students as well as international students should be involved

n.

Although all participants were well aware of how social networking with local students positively influenced the settlement and integration including future employment, some participants did not actively participate in social events outside of classes due to their personal

reasons such as family responsibilities or financial burdens. The participants' examples suggest that higher education practitioners offer more flexible, online events and activities the students were able to have free access to. For instance, they could develop an online community platform such as a mobile app where all students could freely take part in on evenings and weekends. Online-based language exchange or multicultural clubs might encourage local students who are interested in different cultures to actively engage in cross-cultural activities for international interactions with students from a variety of backgrounds. According to King, McQuarrie, and Brigham (2021), extracurricular activities are useful for students to have diverse cultural experiences and build social relationships, which could have a positive influence on employment after graduation. Online out-of-class events and activities will provide considerable opportunities for working-age lifelong learners to develop social and cultural capitals during their programs. Furthermore, some recently graduated participants felt disappointed that on-campus events and activities were cancelled due to the COVID 19. Online-based activities could be an alternative to overcome unprecedented challenges for higher education institutions such requiring online learning because of the pandemic.

Post-secondary institutions need to strive to meet the needs of international students who pursue integrating into Canadian society, but institution stakeholders related to international education should learn cautions from Austral education. The Australian government, which had developed international education prior to Canada, rapidly increased the number of international students by combining immigration and higher education (Shaw, 2014). As many students enrolled in post-secondary institutions as a cheaper and easier way to become permanent residents, in Australia, private vocational colleges began to regard international students as *cash cows*. Some of the colleges provided international

students with a poor quality of education and consistently raised tuition fees for international students. Given the lesson from the case of Australia, Canadian higher education institutions should make the effort to maintain the standard of education provided to international students as well as endeavor to support adult immigrants

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) asserted that individuals should accept the cultural and social capitals of the dominant group in order to take up better position in a field. His sociological theory is connected with the criticism of educational researchers (Alfred, 2010; Guo, 2013a; Ng & Shan, 2010) on lifelong learning for adult immigrants. According to the literature, lifelong learning has played a role as a means to assimilate adult immigrants into the dominant values and beliefs of the country to which they immigrate. Also, immigrants have been forced to canadianize their original habitus through local education and training in order to fit in to the Canadian labour market. The findings identified that the participants tended to take it for granted that they should assimilate the values and beliefs of the Canadian dominant group in their settlement and integration as immigrant. For example, Allison felt disappointed by her realization that she will never become accepted as a member of Canadian local society even if she resides a lifetime in Canada with Canadian citizenship. All the participants agreed that they should make efforts to accept the dominant values and beliefs in order to blend in with Canadian society as immigrants although they did not directly make mention of that in the interview. Their participation in higher education was part of a settlement strategy to overcome the limitation on the integration into dominant society.

However, their assimilation approach that immigrants should be canadianized to be thoroughly accepted as a member of Canadian society might worsen discrimination or inequity in the process of integrating to Canada as racialized minorities. Guo (2013a) presented that the

assimilation perspective caused experiences of minority groups to be considered deficits and deficiencies, leading to oppression and inequality. Adult immigrants need to maintain their original habitus built up over a lifetime instead of negating their backgrounds. This is consistent with Alfred (2010) assertion that immigrants should acculturate to the new society which they immigrate to while sustaining the strong ties with their cultures of origin. In order for change to occur, Guo (2013a) suggested that lifelong learning for immigrants should be in line with recognitive justice that respects for the social and cultural differences of different minority groups. Canadian higher education stakeholders should make efforts to provide students with inclusive learning experience that values diverse culture and background. It is connected with

be

International, 2022, p.4).

According to Akkaymak (2017), t

Canadian labour market compels immigrants to assimilate Canadian cultural capital through higher education. Although Canada is well known as one of the most welcoming countries for immigrants in the world, the deskilling and non-recognition of foreign work and educational credentials have been a debated issue in the literature (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2010; English & Mayo, 2019; Guo, 2009; Ng & Shan, 2010; Nourpanah, 2019; Walsh, Brigham, & Wang, 2010).

for local credentials leads many immigrants to work in low-wage and unskilled jobs without opportunities for them to utilize their prior skills and experiences in the workplace. The participants in this study found that their college degrees and work experience during work-term period had a decisive effect on their employment after graduation. Lucas chose to enroll in the engineering diploma program in the college to obtain local credentials even though he already had a bachelor's degree in the same major. Guo (2009)

pointed out the devaluation of foreign credentials was attributed to the negative attitudes toward difference. The misperception that differences are deficit and deficiency leads to the hierarchy and racialization of knowledge and skill. According to Statistics Canada (2020), much more immigrants from Third World countries worked in lower-skilled job than their educational background, comparing with others from English-speaking countries or Western Europe.

The Canadian government has been attracting many permanent migrants from all over the world in order to address labour shortages due to the increasing aging population and declining birth rate (She & Wotherspoon, 2013). However, as stated in chapter two, the government tends to train newcomers to become Canadianized by requiring Canadian work and educational experience in skilled-worker immigration programs, rather than utilizing the value of foreign prior skills and knowledge (Lu & Hou, 2019; Wang, 2018). This discussion has important implications for policy makers. They previous education and work experience in the eligibility requirements for skilled-worker immigration programs. Also, they are required to develop the assessment system including objective, fair criteria to evaluate foreign credentials. There are some assessment systems for foreign academic qualification including Educational credential assessment (ECA) in the purpose of admission to post-secondary institutions or applying for permanent resident programs (Government of Canada, n.d.). But the inclusive assessment system needs to be developed for foreign work experience as well as educational credentials. Private companies in Canada might make a fair estimation in hiring skilled workers from different countries who have foreign work and educational experience without distrust. The participants in this study would have not risked their whole career built up over a lifetime if they were able to apply their prior knowledge and experience to the Canadian labour force. The economic, social and cultural resources immigrants

brought from their home country would substantially contribute to the economic growth in Canada. In addition, knowledge and experience of different ethnic groups would expand Canadian society and culture as a more multicultural country.

In summary, education in the process of immigration to practical and policy implications for higher education practitioners and policy makers. They must understand the distinct features of adult newcomers who enrolled in higher education institutions as a strategy to settle and integrate into Canada. As described in the findings section, it is recommended that higher education stakeholders develop social and cultural activities to allow international students to interact with local students in, for example, a language exchange community. Moreover, online-based community platforms to increase accessibility of time and place would be useful particularly for working-aged students who have family and work responsibilities. Also, the institutions need to maintain the quality of

Adult immigrants should be critically aware that their attempts to assimilate the dominant culture would provoke social marginalization and inequity in the integration process. Higher education practitioners must pursue inclusive education that values the social and cultural differences of racialized minorities. In addition, in addressing foreign credentials, policy makers are required to give more credit to foreign work and educational experiences in permanent resident programs. Also, this study suggests the inclusive assessment system that possibly mak

## **Limitations of the study**

Considering the credibility and reliability of this qualitative study, four limitations in terms of the recruitment of the participants and the influence of COVID 19 pandemic were found during the research process. Firstly, this research focuses on adult immigrants from the specific ethnic background. East Asia region, represented by South Korea, China and Japan, was addressed in this research since three countries in this region share the same cultural roots, life transition because my cultural background was the same as the participants. However, it was not possible to find the participant from Japan in the recruitment process despite my best efforts. Two Japanese immigrants showed interest in participating in this research but were excluded in the assessment process of their suitability on the inclusion criteria because they had not yet graduated from the college. There were no differences between South Korean immigrants and Chinese immigrants in the findings, but it is possible to have some variation in reflection and experience of Japanese immigrants.

Secondly, the selection of the participants in this study was limited to the immigrants who had graduated less than ten years prior to the recruitment process, but all the participants graduated from the college in the last three years. As a part of this study, I intended to conduct comparative analysis on the differences between the recent graduates and immigrants more than five years after graduation in terms of a quality of life, a sense of belonging or language proficiency. This study would have been more valuable if I had been able to trace how the influence of higher education was changed for several years after graduation.

Thirdly, Nova Scotia Community College is known to offer international students a variety of extracurricular activities, but many social and cultural events on campus were

cancelled due to the COVID 19 pandemic. In addition, many of the in-person courses were switched to online courses. Furthermore, some participants were not able to take co-op or work-term courses due to the pandemic. So, some recently graduated participants missed the opportunities to experience Canadian culture on campus or build social relationships with classmates. Consequently, there was limitation to have a rich description of their campus experience especially in terms of out of class activities.

Lastly, the University Research Ethics Board did not permit in-person interviews for data collection in this research due to the pandemic. It is apparent that online interview in qualitative research takes the researcher less time to collect the data, but there was a limitation in gaining more in-depth responses from the interviewee in an online interview. I wished I could have shared emotions with the interviewees in face-to-face interviews because I was also an immigrant from the same background and some participants showed nervousness at the beginning of the interview owing to the unfamiliarity of online interviewing.

## **Future Research**

There are some future and further research opportunities which emerged from this research process, which might be of benefit to qualitative and perhaps quantitative research in the area of lifelong learning and higher education. This qualitative study focused on adult immigrants from East Asian countries in order to have a rich description of the distinct characteristics of immigrants from a specific region in various aspects of their life transition such as a quality of life, a sense of belonging, or career advancement. To have a deep understanding of the racialized immigrants living in Canada, I suggest comparative analysis research to collate the data on adult immigrants from different regions. It could add more varieties to the study so that educational researchers would be able to have more resources to make comparisons among

the immigrants. Wang (2008) presented country of origin were one of the influential factors in the sociocultural adjustment of international students. In a comparative analysis, researchers could gain more extensive data from the participants and further develop a general framework for life transition of international students under study-migration pathway by identifying different background variables in the adjustment process of adult immigrants through higher education.

Secondly, the literature on international students demonstrates that immigrants are encouraged to study in higher education in the process of immigrating through skilled-worker permanent resident program (Al-Haque, 2017; Arthur & Flynn, 2013; Chen, 2017; Chira, 2017; Dam, Chan, & Wayland, 2018; Flynn & Bauder, 2013; Shaw, 2014; She & Wotherspoon, 2013; Trilokekar, 2019; Wang, 2018), which was the major motivational factor for the participants in this study to enroll in a post-secondary institution. Bourdieu (1973) explained that social and cultural capitals of the dominant group were reproduced through education systems in capitalist societies, and particularly post-secondary institutions played the vital role in contributing to social inequality. It is assumed that Canadian immigration programs leads immigrants to acquire the dominant cultural capitals through higher education experience in Canada. I suggest

migration pathway to further policy analysis research. It might reveal how hierarchical positioning of adult immigrants has been shaped by Canadian immigration policy.

Thirdly, a policy paper for Ontario post-secondary leaders and policymakers (Cote & White, 2020) documented the necessity of accelerating the transition to lifelong learning in universities and colleges in order to meet the changing needs of society. The pandemic-led shift to large-scale online learning promoted higher education institutions in Canada to develop a

variety of delivery models such as online or blended learning. Also, rapidly changing Canadian labour markets and skills demands in a knowledge-based economy require the expansion of lifelong learning opportunities for adult-age workers in higher education. The participants in this study engaged in a post-secondary education in order to enter the Canadian labour market as adult-age workers. It was observed in the finding that some participants were discontented with the disconnection between the curriculum in college and their workplace and the absence of online activities. Given the changing post-secondary education, it would be valuable to explore in lifelong learning research how the shift towards lifelong learning in higher education can be connected with adult immigrants in a work-aging population. Furthermore, the researchers in the area of higher education can consider how post-secondary institutions help adult immigrants to achieve sustainable professional development beyond novice professional.

## References

- Adamuti-Trache, M., & Sweet, R. (2010). Adult immigrants' participation in Canadian education and training. *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, 22(2), 1-26.  
<https://cjsae.library.dal.ca/index.php/cjsae>
- Akbari, A. H., & Haider, A. (2018). Impact of immigration on economic growth in Canada and in its smaller provinces. *Journal of International Migration & Integration*, 19(1), 129-142. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-017-0530-4>
- Akkaymak, G. (2017). A Bourdieuan analysis of job search experiences of immigrants in Canada. *Journal of International Migration & Integration*, 18(2), 657-674.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-016-0490-0>
- Alfred, M. (2010). Transnational migration, social capital, and lifelong learning in the USA. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 29(2), 219-235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601371003616632>
- Al-Haque, R. (2017). University internationalization, immigration, and the Canadian dream: How federal citizenship immigration legislation marginalizes international graduate students. *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education*, 9(3), 5-9.  
<https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jcihe/index>
- Ambrosio, S., Araujo, M. H., & Simoes, A. R. (2014). Lifelong learning in higher education: The development of non-*Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116(21), 3798-3804.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.844>

- Arthur, N., & Flynn, S. (2013). I  
immigration. *The Canadian Journal of Career Development*, 12(1), 28-37. <https://cjcd-rcdc.ceric.ca/index.php/cjcd>
- Arthur, N., & Flynn, S. (2011). Career development influences of international students who pursue permanent immigration to Canada. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 11(3), 221–237. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-011-9212-5>
- Baglay, S. (2012). Provincial nominee programs: A note on policy implications and future research needs. *Journal of International Migration & Integration*, 13(1), 121–141. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-011-0190-8>
- Bauder, H. (2005). Habitus, rules of the labour market and employment strategies of immigrants in Vancouver, Canada. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 6(1), 81–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464936052000335982>
- Bourdieu, P. (1999). *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society*. Stanford University Press. <https://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=1275>
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. D. (1992). *An Invitation to reflexive sociology*. The University of Chicago Press. <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/I/bo3649674.html>
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Stanford University Press. <https://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=2478>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Eds.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood. <https://www.socialcapitalgateway.org/sites/socialcapitalgateway.org/files/data/paper/2016/10/18/rbasicsbourdieu1986-theformsofcapital.pdf>

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511812507>

Bourdieu, P. (1973). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In R. Brown (Eds.), *Knowledge, education, and cultural change: Papers in the sociology of education* (pp. 56-68). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351018142>

Bozheva, A. M. (2020). Geographic embeddedness of higher education institutions in the migration policy domain. *Journal of International Students, 10*(2), 443-465.

<https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jis/index>

Brigham, S. M., Abidi, C. B., & Zhang, Y. (2018). What participatory photography can tell us about immigrant and refugee women's learning in Atlantic Canada. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 37*(2), 234-254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2017.1422044>

Brigham, S. (2008). Seeing straight ahead with Pierre Bourdieu: Female immigrant teachers in *Proceedings of the 27th annual conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education* (pp. 42-48). University of British Columbia.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237781969\\_Seeing\\_straight\\_ahead\\_with\\_Pierre\\_Bourdieu\\_Female\\_immigrant\\_teachers\\_in\\_an\\_arts-informed\\_research\\_inquiry](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237781969_Seeing_straight_ahead_with_Pierre_Bourdieu_Female_immigrant_teachers_in_an_arts-informed_research_inquiry)

Calder, M. J., Richter, S., Mao, Y., Burns, K. K., Mogale, R. S., & Danko, M. (2016).

International students attending Canadian universities: Their experiences with housing, finances, and other issues. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 46*(2), 92-110.

<https://journals.sfu.ca/cjhe/index.php/cjhe>

Canadian Bureau of International Education. (2016). *Building a World of Learning: International students and their performance and potential in international education*. <https://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/A-World-of-Learning-HI-RES-2016.pdf>

Chen, J. M. (2017). Three levels of push-decision to study abroad in the Canadian context. *Journal of International Students*, 7(1), 113-135. <https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jis/index>

Chira, S. (2017). Learning opportunities: International students and lessons about education, immigration and cultural diversity on and off the (Atlantic) Canadian campus. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 49(3), 133-152. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2017.0025>

Cook-Sather, A. (2006). Learning and reform. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 36(2006), 359-390. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2006.00363.x>

Cote, A., & White, A. (2020, Dec. 17). Higher education for lifelong learners: A roadmap for Ontario post-secondary leaders and policymakers. *Ontario 360: the University of Waterloo IN IT ! !H !B ! !Q !Q*. [https://on360.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ON360\\_HigherEducation\\_v3.pdf](https://on360.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ON360_HigherEducation_v3.pdf)

Covell, L. C., Neiterman, E., Atanackovic, J., Owusu, Y., & Bourgeault, I. L. (2015). *The study-migration pathway: Understanding the factors that influence the employment and retention of international students as regulated health professionals in Canada*. Pathways to Prosperity. <https://p2pcanada.ca/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2016/02/Study-Migration-Pathway.pdf>

decision-making

process. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 20(2), 101-115.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540610646091>

Dalal, J. (2016). Pierre Bourdieu: The sociologist of education. *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, 13(2), 231-250. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973184916640406>

Dam, H., Chan, J., & Wayland, S. (2018). Missed opportunity: International students in Canada face barriers to permanent residence. *Journal of International Migration & Integration*, 19(4), 891-903. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-0576-y>

Erel, U. (2010). Migrating cultural capital: Bourdieu in migration studies. *Sociology*, 44(4) pp. 642-660. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038510369363>

Flynn, E., & Bauder, H. (2013). The private sector, institutions of higher education, and immigrant settlement in Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 16(3), 539-556. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-014-0369-x>

Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada. (2014). *Diversity, Innovation, Prosperity: Strategy: Harnessing our knowledge advantage to drive innovation and prosperity*. <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/overview-apercu-eng.pdf>

perspective of available supports in Guelph-wellington. *University of Guelph*.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10214/16245>

- Government of Canada. (2019). *Building on success: International education strategy 2019-2024*. <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/strategy-2019-2024-strategie.aspx?lang=eng>
- Government of Canada. (2018a). *Atlantic growth strategy: Year 2 Report*. [https://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/ags-sca/assets/AGS-update\\_EN\\_web.pdf](https://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/ags-sca/assets/AGS-update_EN_web.pdf)
- Government of Canada. (2018b). *Study and stay program*. [https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/news/2018/02/study\\_and\\_stay\\_program.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/news/2018/02/study_and_stay_program.html)
- Guo, S. (2013a). Citizenship, immigration, and lifelong learning: Toward recognitive justice. In T. Nesbit, S. M. Brigham, N. Taber, & T. Gibb (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 319-329). Thompson Educational Publishing. <http://thompsonbooks.com/higher-ed/adult-education/building-critical-traditions-adult-education-9781550772296>
- Guo, S. (2013b). Economic integration of recent Chinese immigrants in second-tier cities: The triple glass effect and its impact on downward social mobility. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 45(3), 95-115. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2013.0047>
- Guo, S. (2009). Difference, deficiency, and devaluation: Tracing the roots of non-recognition of foreign credentials for immigrant professionals in Canada. *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, 22(1), 37-52. <https://cjsae.library.dal.ca/index.php/cjsae/article/view/1002>
- Guo, Y. (2015). Language policies and programs for adult immigrants in Canada: Deconstructing discourses of integration. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 146, 41-51. <https://10.1002/ace.20130>

international student migrants to Australia. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 19(1), 5-36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/011719681001900102>

Hawthorne, L. (2018). Attracting and retaining international students as skilled migrants. In M. Czaika (Ed.), *High-skilled migration: Drivers, dynamics and policies* (pp. 195-221). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198815273.003.0010>

House of Commons. (20127). *Immigration to Atlantic Canada: Moving to the future*. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/CIMM/Reports/RP9204222/cimmrp14/cimmrp14-e.pdf>

Human Resources Development Canada. (2002). *Knowledge matters: Skills and learning for Canadians*. <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.698298/publication.html>

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. (2021). 2021 annual report to parliament on immigration. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/annual-report-parliament-immigration-2021.html>

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2020). *2020 Annual report to parliament on immigration*. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/annual-report-2020-en.pdf>

Jarvis, P. (2001). Lifelong learning: Universities and adult education. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 2(2), 28-34. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03026288>

- Johnstone, M., & Lee, E. (2014). Branded: international education and 21st-century Canadian immigration, education policy, and the welfare state. *International Social Work*, 57(3), 209–221. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872813508572>
- Kim, A. H., & Sondhi, G. (2019). Explaining international student mobility to Canada: A review. In A. H. Kim & M. Kwak (Eds.), *Outward and upward mobilities: International students in Canada, their families, and structuring institutions* (pp. 56-75). University of Toronto Press. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487530563-006>
- King, A. E., McQuarrie F. A.E., & Brigham, S. M. (2021). Exploring the relationship between student success and participation in extracurricular activities. *A Journal of Leisure Studies and Recreation Education*, 36(1-2), 42-58. <http://doi.org/10.1080/1937156X.2020.1760751>
- Labour, Skills and Immigration. (2022, February 18). *New record for highest number of landed immigrants in a year*. Nova Scotia. <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20220218005>
- Library of Parliament. (2011). *Bill C-35: An act to amend the immigration and refugee protection act*. <https://lop.parl.ca/staticfiles/PublicWebsite/Home/ResearchPublications/LegislativeSummaries/PDF/40-3/c35-e%20.pdf>
- Lu, Y., & Hou, F. (2019). Student transitions: Earnings of former international students in *Outward and upward mobilities: International students in Canada, their families, and structuring institutions* (pp. 219-245). University of Toronto Press. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487530563-014>

international student to permanent resident. In S. Guo & Y. Guo (Eds.) *Spotlight on China: Chinese education in the globalized world* (pp. 285-300). Sense Publishers.  
[https://doi.org/10.1163/9789463006699\\_018](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789463006699_018)

destination choice. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 16, 82-90. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540210418403>

McLean, S., & Carter, L. (2013). University continuing education for adult learners: History and key trends. In T. Nesbit, S. M. Brigham, N. Taber, & T. Gibb (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 283-293). Thompson Educational Publishing. <http://thompsonbooks.com/higher-ed/adult-education/building-critical-traditions-adult-education-9781550772296>

Merriam, S. B., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2020). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide (4th ed.)*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://www.wiley.com/en-ca/Learning+in+Adulthood%3A+A+Comprehensive+Guide%2C+4th+Edition-p-9781119490494>

Nash, R. (1990). Bourdieu on education and social and cultural reproduction. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 11(4), 431-447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569900110405>

Ng, R., & Shan, H. (2010). Lifelong learning as ideological practice: An analysis from the perspective of immigrant women in Canada. *International Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 29(2), 169-184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601371003616574>

Nourpanah, S. (2019). Drive-by education: The role of vocational courses in the migration projects of foreign nurses in Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 20(4), 995-1011. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-00641-0>

Nova Scotia Community College. (n.d.-a). *Don Bureaux, NSCC president*.  
[https://www.nsc.ca/about\\_nsc/president/index.asp](https://www.nsc.ca/about_nsc/president/index.asp)

Nova Scotia Community College. (n.d.-b). *Mission, vision & values*.  
[https://www.nsc.ca/about\\_nsc/publications/strategic\\_plan/mission-vision-values/index.asp](https://www.nsc.ca/about_nsc/publications/strategic_plan/mission-vision-values/index.asp)

NSCC International. (2022). *Results report 2021*. [https://www.nsc.ca/docs/about\\_nsc/publications/nsc-international-results-report.pdf](https://www.nsc.ca/docs/about_nsc/publications/nsc-international-results-report.pdf)

Nunes, S., & Nancy, A. (2013)  
workforce. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 50(1), 34-45.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.2013.00023.x>

One Nova Scotia. (2021, April). *Retention of International Students*.  
<https://www.onens.ca/goals/goal-3-retention-international-students>

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2020). *International migration outlook 2020*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/ec98f531-en>

Osborne, M., Rimmer, R., & Houston, M. (2015). Adult access to higher education: An international overview. In J. Yang, C. Schneller, & S. Roche (Eds.), *The role of higher education in promoting lifelong learning* (pp. 17-39). UNESCO Institute for Lifelong

Learning. <https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/policies-database/role-higher-education-promoting-lifelong-learning>

Pease, B. (2010). *Undoing privilege: Unearned advantage in a divided world*. Zed Books.  
<https://www.zedbooks.co.uk>

Reichert, P. N., & Bouajram, R. (2021). Beyond recruitment: Career navigation and support of international students in Canada. In V. Tavares (ed.), *Multidisciplinary perspectives on international student experience in Canadian higher education* (pp. 308-327). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-5030-4.ch016>

Schuetze, H., & Slowey, M. (2002). Participation and exclusion. *Higher Education*, 44, 309-327.  
<https://www.springer.com/journal/10734>

deal

experiences of international students. *Comparative and International Education*, 43(3).  
<http://doi.org/10.5206/cie-eci.v43i3.9261>

Shaw, K. (2014). Internationalization in Australia and Canada: Lessons for the future. *College Quarterly*, 17(1). <http://collegequarterly.ca>

She, Q., & Wotherspoon, T. (2013). International student mobility and highly skilled migration: A comparative study of Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. *SpringerPlus*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/2193-1801-2-132>

Slowey, M., & Schuetze, H. (2012). All change no change? lifelong learners and higher education revisited. In M. Slowey & H. Schuetze (Eds.), *Global perspectives on higher*

*education and lifelong learners* (pp. 1-34). Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203122495>

Soetan, T. O. (2019, November). *Impact of support areas on the perceived academic success of international students in community colleges in Canada*. Paper presented at NAFSA Research Symposium: A Critical Discussion of Theories, Methodologies, and Practices in International Education, Washington, DC. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Taiwo-Soetan/publication/342212400\\_Impact\\_of\\_support\\_areas\\_on\\_the\\_perceived\\_academic\\_success\\_of\\_international\\_students\\_in\\_community\\_colleges\\_in\\_Canada/links/5ee8f89692851ce9e7e82ede/Impact-of-support-areas-on-the-perceived-academic-success-of-international-students-in-community-colleges-in-Canada.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Taiwo-Soetan/publication/342212400_Impact_of_support_areas_on_the_perceived_academic_success_of_international_students_in_community_colleges_in_Canada/links/5ee8f89692851ce9e7e82ede/Impact-of-support-areas-on-the-perceived-academic-success-of-international-students-in-community-colleges-in-Canada.pdf)

Statistics Canada. (2022). *Labour force characteristics by immigrant status, annual* (No. 14-10-0083-01). <https://doi.org/10.25318/1410008301-eng>

Statistics Canada. (2021). *Income and mobility of immigrants, 2018* (No. 11-001-X). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210201/dq210201a-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada. (2019). *Recent trends in over-education by immigration status* (No. 11F0019M No. 436). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2019024-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada. (2017a). *Immigration and ethnocultural diversity: Key results from the 2016 Census* (No. 11-001-X). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025b-eng.pdf?st=i2sSNFxQ>

Statistics Canada. (2017b). *International students, immigration, and earnings growth: The effect of a pre-immigration Canadian university education* (No. 11F0019M No. 395).

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2017395-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada. (2015). *Which human capital characteristics best predict the earnings of economic immigrants?* (No. 11F0019M No. 368).

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2015368-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada. (2011). *Population growth: Canada, provinces and territories, 2010*. (No. 91-209-X). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-209-x/2011001/article/11508-eng.htm>

Sullivan, A. (2002). Bourdieu and

*U IO !K ! !T !T -!49(2), 144-166.*

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283919595>

Teranishi, R., Suarez-Orozco, C., & Suarez-Orozco, M. (2011). Immigrants in community colleges. *The Future of Children*, 21(Spring 2011), 153-169. <http://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2011.0009>

changing policy contexts, approaches, and national peculiarities in attracting international students as future immigrants. In A. H. Kim & M. Kwak (Eds.), *Outward and upward mobilities: International students in Canada, their families, and structuring institutions* (pp. 25-55). University of Toronto Press. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487530563-005>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2016). *Recommendation on adult learning and education*. <https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/unesco-recommendation/unesco-recommendation-adult-learning-and-education-2015>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2015). *UNESCO institute for lifelong learning technical note: Lifelong learning.*

<https://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/keydocuments/LifelongLearning/en/UNESCOTechNotesLLL.pdf>

permanent

residency? *Journal of International Students*, 8(2), 1059-1078.

<https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jis/index>

Wash, S. C., Brigham, S. M., & Wang, Y. (2011). Internationally educated female teachers in the neoliberal context: Their labour market and teacher certification experiences in Canada.

*Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2011), 657-665.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.11.004>

Wintre, M. G., Dentakos, S., Chavoshi, S., Kandasamy, A. R., & Wright, L. (2019). The international undergraduate experience through the lens of developmental psychology. In A. H. Kim & M. Kwak (Eds.), *Outward and upward mobilities: International students in Canada, their families, and structuring institutions* (pp. 95-120).

<https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487530563-008>

## **Appendix A: Questionnaire (Background Information)**

### **- Personal information**

1. What is your name?
2. What gender do you identify as?
3. What is your age?
4. What is your nationality?
5. When did you come to Canada?
6. Do you have any family in Canada? If yes, please explain.

### **- Education background**

7. Please specify the program you studied at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) and the NSCC campus on which you studied.
8. When did you graduate from your program?

admission into NSCC?

10. Did you attend college or university in your home country before arriving in Canada? If so, please, explain.

### **- Work and visa information**

11. When did you get permanent resident status in Canada?
12. Through what immigration program did you obtain Canadian permanent residency?
13. Are you currently employed?
14. If you are employed now, is your current job related to the program you studied in NSCC?

## **Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Questions**

### **- Decision-making for immigration**

1. What are the reasons why you decided to immigrate to Canada?
2. What made you choose to study in Nova Scotia, Canada?
3. Did immigration programs (e.g., The Canadian Experience Class, Atlantic Immigration Pilot program etc.) influence your decisions for immigration? If yes, please explain.
4. What made you select the Nova Scotia Community College?
5. What are the reasons why you chose that program? Is it related to your prior experience?
6. If you did not need to study in college or university in the process of immigration, do you think you would have still chosen to study at NSCC?

### **- Influence of educational experience on immigration**

7. If you are currently employed, has what you learned at NSCC been beneficial in your workplace?
8. Did the college diploma you obtained from NSCC help you find a job in Nova Scotia?
9. Did you receive any career support services at NSCC? If yes, can you please describe any experiences you had? If no, why did you not go to career services?
10. How was your relationships with your classmates at NSCC? Did you encounter any barriers in making relationships/friendships with local Canadian students in college? If yes, please explain.
11. Have the social relationships you developed at NSCC helped you integrate in life in Canada? Please, explain.
12. Was there any support in NSCC for international students to socially network on campus? If yes, please explain.

13. Did you have opportunities to learn about Canadian culture while you were studying at NSCC?

14. Have you ever experienced a cultural conflict (e.g., different teaching style or relationships between students and instructors) at NSCC? If yes, please explain.

15. Do you think your experiences as a student at NSCC have been helpful to you to integrate into Canadian society as an immigrant?

16. Do you feel you belong to Canadian society? Please explain your answer.

17. What is the most challenging aspect of the process of immigrating to Canada?

18. Do you think your educational experience at NSCC helped you in the process of immigration? Please explain your answer.

## **Appendix C: Letter of Information**

### **Title of the study:**

The value of higher education for Asian immigrants in Canada

### **Researcher:**

Hanseung Kim, Graduate student, Faculty of Education, Mount Saint Vincent University

### **Introduction:**

You are invited to participate in a research study about the value of higher education experience in the process of immigration and integration (adjusting to Canadian society) for immigrants in Canada. Specifically, I am doing research on immigrants from East Asian backgrounds living in Nova Scotia who graduated from the Nova Scotia Community College. The research data will be used for my Master of Education thesis at Mount Saint Vincent University and may be used in community presentations, academic journals, and conferences. After the completion, the research will be available in the library of Mount Saint Vincent University.

### **Purpose of the Research:**

-making for studying at NSCC and how their college life affects their settlement and integration in Canadian society. The main purpose of this research is to find out the role of higher education in the process of immigration for immigrants. This research will contribute to the understanding of how education affects on lifelong learning of immigrants in a multicultural society. University or college administrators may use the results of this study in assisting internati

### **Participation Criteria:**

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are an East Asian immigrant (originally from South Korea, China, or Japan) currently living in Nova Scotia who graduated from one of the full-time programs at Nova Scotia Community College as an international student in the last ten years. You must be over the age of 25.

### **What Your Participation Involves:**

You will be interviewed in a one-to-one interview. The interview will take place online using Microsoft Teams due to the Pandemic. The interview will last approximately 40 minutes. Once you agree to participate in the research, we will schedule the interview appointment. You will get questions in advance by email a week before the interview to give you time to think about the answers.

With your consent, the interview will be recorded. I will transcribe all the audio and video recorded interview. The video will not be directly used for this research but will be recorded for me to have the better understanding of your interview. However, you do not need to turn on the camera during the interview. The password-protected transcript will be sent to you by email two weeks after interview with the password sent in a different email in order for you to check the accuracy of the transcript.

In my thesis I will not share personal information about you that would make it easy for the reader to identify you. I will use a pseudonym (fake name) to keep your identity secret in my research write up. So, when people read my thesis, they will not know it is about you.

### **Privacy:**

All data from the interview will be unidentified and saved on a password-protected personal computer and on a password-accessible to me, the researcher of this study and my thesis supervisor, Dr. Susan Brigham. The data will be saved for five years. After 5 years, I will delete the data. If you withdraw from this study, all your interview data will be deleted from the database.

**Potential Harms:**

You may possibly experience emotional or psychological discomfort as you share your personal experience in this research. If you feel uncomfortable or upset or worried during the participation, you can simply say you would like to stop the interview. If you would like to speak with a professional counsellor because of the emotional or psychological discomfort (e.g. feeling sad, confused thinking, or fears) that happens because of participating in this study, I will provide you with a name and contact information of a counselor that will be of no cost to you.

**Potential Benefits:**

There is no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, but your participation might help new immigrants or international students better understand Canadian immigration process through this research. In addition, higher education administrators and government officials may find this useful for addressing the settlement of immigrants and international students.

**Compensation:**

In  
will be sent by email right after interview.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not need to answer all the questions. You may decline to answer any question by requesting to skip questions during the interview. You may choose to withdraw from this participation for any reason. You may withdraw up to two weeks after you receive the transcript of your interview for review. If you do this, the information you shared will be removed from the study.

**Contacts for Further Information**

If you require further information about this research, you can contact the researcher, Hanseung Kim at [phone number] or via e-mail at hanseung.kim3@msvu.ca or Dr. Susan Brigham (thesis supervisor) at susan.brigham@msvu.ca.

This study has been approved by the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) of Mount Saint Vincent University. If have any further questions about your participation or the conduct of this study, you may contact the University Research Ethics Board (902) 457-6350 or via reserach@msvu.ca.

Thank you for considering participating in this research.

Sincerely,

Hanseung Kim

## **Appendix D: Statement of Consent**