



Double Jeopardy: An Exploratory Study of Youth from Immigrant Families Entering the Job Market

Key Details

KEY WORDS

Youth unemployment, youth employment, immigrant, social capital, second generation

POPULATION GROUP

Racialized Youth; Newcomer Youth

STEPPING UP THEMES

Employment & Entrepreneurship;
Strong Supportive Friends and Families;
Diversity, Social Inclusion and Safety

RESEARCH ORIGIN

Canada

SOURCE

Academic article (peer-reviewed)

“For immigrants to a new society, their social capital is always limited to a handful of family, relatives, and friends. Their limited social capital may restrict the social resources that they can mobilize not only in their own job search but also in their attempts to help their children gain access to the labour market.”

1. What is the research about?

As a result of changing immigration policies, more and more youth in Canada are from ethno-racial minority immigrant communities (racialized newcomer youth). With Asia and the Middle East replacing Europe as the primary source of immigrants, a new generation of racially diverse youth are now an important group of the Canadian labour force. While the economic struggles and social disparities ethno-racial minority immigrants experience is well documented, very few studies have examined the job search experiences of racialized newcomer youth in Canada. Despite having higher levels of education, these youth experience lower incomes and less desirable jobs when compared to their non-racialized peers.

This study explores the job search experiences of racialized newcomer youth and argues that they experience a “double jeopardy” when entering the competitive job force. This research identifies strategies and resources racialized newcomer youth utilize for navigating the inequitable terrain of the job market and provides recommendations for how to create more access to job opportunities for these youth.

2. Where did the research take place?

The research took place in British Columbia, Canada.

3. Who is this research about?

This research focuses specifically on racialized newcomer youth. The researchers categorized study participants according to first, second, and third generation status. The sample consisted of recent university graduates.

4. How was the research done?

The researchers collected data at three points in time using an online self-administered survey that examined two main areas: social capital and immigrant generation. They also conducted 16 in-depth semi-structured interviews focused on job search process and the youth’s perception on the usefulness of their social capital.

5. What are the key findings?

Racialized newcomer youth:

- Are more likely to be involved in clubs and organizations with peers of a similar background as a means to build social capital than non-ethno racial youth.
- Use more formal job search strategies like wanted ads, cold calls, and employment agencies and were less likely to secure jobs through family members.
- Are more likely to use friends to access job opportunities than family members. Friends provided advice on the job search rather than actual access to concrete job opportunities.
- Are less likely to find work that is relevant to their field and were less fairly compensated, while youth with both parents born in Canada were more likely to find work that was in line with their interest and training.

6. Why does this research matter for youth work?

Current studies of youth unemployment in Canada seldom take into account the impact immigrant family status can have on an individual's ability to successfully contribute to and benefit from the Canadian labour market. Immigrant families in Canada tend to have limited access to social capital and resources that will help their children successfully navigate the job market. Given these limitations, there is a great need to provide more employment supports to immigrant families and ethno-racial minority immigrant youth when they enter the job market.

Based on these findings, we make the following recommendations for youth work:

- Provide immigrant families with access to more professional and social networking opportunities to help build their social capital.
- Create spaces where ethno-racial minority youth and their immigrant families can create and foster new friendships, which can be a protective factor for ethno-racial minority youth dealing with job seeking disadvantages.
- Implement accessible employment programs specific to the needs of immigrant youth and their families.
- Advocate for structural changes to employment practices in order to provide ethno-racial minority groups with more access to fairly compensated employment opportunities.



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