



Understanding Chinese Immigrants' Perceptions and Attitudes on Indigenous People in Saskatchewan, Canada: A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract

This study investigates the perceptions and attitudes of Chinese immigrants towards Indigenous people in Saskatchewan, Canada in a mixed-method inquiry centralizing qualitative approaches. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach is utilized to guide the qualitative process. A survey methodology also is employed to guide the quantitative part. In-depth interviews with ten participants identify specific insights and understandings in historical issues, the relationship with Indigenous people, the current policies and actions, and the impact of Chinese cultural background. Also, sixteen participants including the interviewees participate in the online survey with more details relating to interview questions. Special recommendations for effective change for cross-cultural understandings and the policies and actions on Indigenous people are discussed.

Key words: Chinese new immigrants, Indigenous people, perceptions

Introduction

Indigenous people, as host people in Canada, refer to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. According to the 2016 census data, there were approximately 1.6 million people who identify as Indigenous, accounting for almost five percent of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2017). Unequivocally, Indigenous people, intangible Indigenous culture, language, and social systems have positively contributed to the development of Canada. However, under the drive of colonial forces, Indigenous cultures have severely been threatened and even extinguished in some regions. In particular, Indigenous people have been extremely stigmatized and marginalized as an ethnic group with low-quality education, sexual, drug, alcohol abuse, high unemployment, and high rates of crime.

In the past few decades, for encouraging the development of Indigenous cultures and the reconciliation with Indigenous people, a large body of literature in Canada has been focusing on this group to discover coping and healing strategies to address their oppression and colonialization. This body of research mainly concentrates on anti-systemic racism (e.g., Canadian Heritage, 2019), social integration (e.g., Burke, 2018), education (Government of Canada, 2019; Mccue, 2018), and physical and mental health (e.g., Richmond & Cook, 2016). In recent years, public opinion studies focusing on Indigenous people have been attracting the attention of scholars. As Gandy (2003) mentioned, from a policy angle, public opinion surveys about specific social issues have played an imperative role in promoting the debate among policymakers, impacting public attitudes, and accelerating social solidarity and integration. For example, The Environics Institute for Survey Research (2016) made a survey focusing on non-Indigenous perspectives on Indigenous peoples in Canada. This survey aimed to learn about how non-Indigenous Canadians living in different regions viewed Indigenous people from multiple aspects. However, in the existing public opinion studies, researchers usually consider the

differences in regions and social demography of informants. The cultural and ethnic differences of informants rarely are considered.

The Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions and attitudes of Chinese new immigrants on Indigenous people in Canada in a mixed-method inquiry centralizing qualitative approaches. Specifically, the researchers attempted to conduct this public opinion study in the cross-cultural situation to examine intercultural cognition. Arguably, this research might not only serve to advance the reconciliation with Indigenous people but also facilitate the social integration of both Indigenous people and Chinese new immigrants in Canada.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. What extent do Chinese new immigrants know about Indigenous peoples such as their history (e.g., residential schools and reconciliation) and their adversity and challenges?
2. How do they view Indigenous people in today's Canada?
3. How do they regard the relationships between them and Indigenous people?
4. How do they comment on the current policies and actions of Indigenous people in Canada?
5. How were their opinions shaped (e.g., social media, and cultural and educational contexts)?

Literature Review

There is a significant body of literature on Indigenous people in Canada and it mainly focuses on four aspects, namely, anti-systemic racism, social integration, inclusive education, and physical and mental health. In recent years, public opinion studies concerning Indigenous people have been attracting attention but most of these are conducted as institutional rather than as an individual. In this literature review, we reviewed the relevant studies in the past five years making a new and demonstrably significant contribution to this field.

Anti-Systemic Racism

In the Canadian colonial context, European settlers through violence confiscated the land and resources of Indigenous people and infiltrated their white culture constructing a "white privilege." Scholars have been probing how anti-racism and anti-oppressive practices can work to heal the trauma of Indigenous people. For example, Allan and Smylie (2015) made an overview regarding systemic racism as historical and contemporary on Indigenous people in Canada. The authors examined how systemic racism resulted in the divide of health care between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH) (2020) presented three fact sheets including "understand racism", and "Indigenous experiences with racism and its impacts", and "policies, programs, and strategies to address anti-Indigenous racism: A Canadian perspective" (pg.2-4). McCauley and Matheson (2018) explored how social workers with different cultural backgrounds could be part of anti-racism practices based on an Indigenous model of foundational principles, promoting healing as "allies" and facilitating cultural diversity. Dhmoon (2016) attempted to carry out on Indigenous critiques of colonialism in order to challenge settler national narratives and boost more equitable relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Social Integration

Social integration can be defined as a process in which immigrants or minorities are integrated into the mainstream social structure (Alba & Nee, 1997). Because of the history of colonialism and oppression, topics such as social integration and assimilation are highly sensitive and volatile topics for Indigenous people. Hence, researchers have been committed to understanding the complexities of "social integration" of Indigenous people. As Burke (2018) presented, most of the Canadian social service organizations keep operating based on Western perspectives, ignoring the perspectives of the Indigenous social workers employed. The author examined the experiences of nine Indigenous social workers in British Columbia (BC) by a Métissage framework. The results displayed the pressures of social policy to fit both Indigenous and Western paradigms and create equitable workplace resources. Baskin (2016) believed that "Strong Helpers' Teachings" sought to encourage students in social work to understand the primary parts of Indigenous worldviews. Burke (2016) also promoted that the voices

of social workers involved in trans-racial adoption should be heard. John (2016) probed the Kwakwaka'wakw world from Indigenous conceptual lenses in British Columbia (BC) where Indigenous people have practiced their traditional teachings and culture. It is not so much that one culture needs to "integrate" but two cultures find a mechanism that maintains and supports Indigenous worldviews and culture.

Inclusive Education

Although Canadian education institutions and governments have been increasing Indigenous people's participation and success in education, the divide between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people remains apparent in national statistics of educational attainment (Pidgeon, 2016). In the existing literature, inclusive education with Indigenous people also has been given more attention (e.g., Government of Canada, 2019; Mccue, 2018). For instance, Toulouse (2016) presented an Indigenous approach to quality learning environments. The author expanded the approach by offering Indigenous perspectives and insights into the mainstream educational system. Pidgeon (2016) identified challenges facing by Indigenous students and examined how Indigenous knowledge(s) can be embraced as part of the higher educational structure. As well, Bartlett and Freeze (2019) offered a critical perspective on special education. Concretely, the behavior difference of Indigenous students often was viewed as disabled in Manitoba, Canada. These researchers attempted to dig into the exclusion to facilitate authentic inclusive education practices. Also, Gaywish and Mordoch (2018) explored how intergenerational trauma (IGT) was affecting the academic life of Indigenous students. They employed an Anishinabe (an Indigenous group in Canada) approach as a conceptual framework to guide their research. This approach included the "Four Lodges" (talking, planning, teaching, and healing). The above examples demonstrate the incorporation of Indigenous culture and values in both teaching and research.

Physical and Mental Health

In the Canadian context, Indigenous people's health needs and health equity have not been addressed by current policies and programs partly due to deeply embedded systemic racism (e.g., Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, 2018; McConkey & Wylie, 2019; Richmond & Cook, 2016). Richmond and Cook (2016) argued that health inequities are a direct result of racism in contemporary Canada. They argued that policy reform should lead to community-led and the self-determination of health care and research. McConkey and Wylie (2019) examined the perspectives of Indigenous peoples' experiences with health care providers and decision-makers in southern Ontario. They reported an unwelcoming environment, stereotyping and stigma, and racist practice as the serious challenge for Indigenous people. Fijal and Beagan (2019) explored how Indigenous perspectives on health and wellness could be incorporated into the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance and Engagement (CMOP-E) framework to make that model more inclusive.

Public Opinion Study on Indigenous People

As mentioned above, the Environics Institute for Survey Research (2016) completed a survey focusing on non-Indigenous perspectives on Indigenous peoples in Canada. This survey aimed to find the perspectives of non-Indigenous Canadians living in different regions of Canada towards the issues facing Indigenous people. Also, Abacus Data (2017) conducted a survey about Indigenous rights from the perspectives of non-Indigenous people. Fifty-three percent of the informants felt that Canada had sufficiently apologized for the hurt of residential schools, and they thought Indigenous peoples should be integrated into Canadian society removing their status under the federal *Indian Act*. The Canadian newspaper, the Globe and Mail (2016), completed a survey on the reconciliation with Indigenous people in Canada. Thirteen percent of respondents deemed that Indigenous people had garnered special treatment from governments and they were abusing their "privileges." Reconciliation Canada (2017) conducted an online national public-opinion survey to gauge the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians on reconciliation, identifying areas of alignment and divergence based on representative samples of Indigenous Peoples (N=521) and non-Indigenous Canadians (N=1,529). The results reflected the importance of carrying out reconciliation and how to put reconciliation into action. They stated that reconciliation must be done and seen to be done. Angus Reid (2018) released a survey on how Canadians were feeling about treaties, government attention to Indigenous issues, and

funding for Indigenous issues. Most informants thought that the federal government had done more than enough.

However, as mentioned above, the majority of the research-based literature in this field incorporates anti-systemic racism, social integrations, inclusive education, and physical and mental health. These public opinion studies demonstrate that more education and promotion of Indigenous issues need to be done to combat this ignorance. What is more, in the existing public opinion studies, researchers pointed out the differences in regions and social-economic factors of the participants. The cultural backgrounds of informants were rarely considered. Moreover, most of these studies are quantitative inquiries and few attempts are given on qualitative or mixed-method research. As Husserl (1952/1980) critiqued, human issues cannot be probed by a purely quantitative approach, because humans as living subjects are not simply reacting to external stimuli in an automatic manner. Researchers may miss important variables and create an unauthentic situation (Jones, 1975). The purpose of the present study is to explore the perceptions and attitudes of Chinese new immigrants on Indigenous people in Canada in a mixed-method inquiry centralizing qualitative approaches. In 2016, almost half (48.1%) of the foreign-born population were from Asia (Statistics Canada, 2017). Currently, China is the main source of immigrants to Canada (Zhang, 2011). This allows us (the researchers) to conduct this public opinion study in the cross-cultural situation to reveal intercultural cognition. This study can serve to fill some of the gaps in the existing research and further extend this field of knowledge.

Methodology and Methods

Theoretical Framework

As stated, this study used mixed methods (positioning qualitative methods as primary and quantitative methods as secondary). Therefore, this study employed hermeneutics as a theoretical framework to guide the process of qualitative research. At a philosophical level, hermeneutics is linked closely to existential phenomenology. Situated meaning should be mediated and apprehended so language is critical to understanding. Here, human understanding is historical, linguistic, and cultural (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In the present study, hermeneutics allows the researchers to interpret further Chinese newcomers' perceptions and attitudes on Indigenous people with the consideration of participants' cultural contexts. It takes a holistic approach that is concurrent with Indigenous culture.

Methodology

Methodologically, a hermeneutic phenomenological approach endows the researcher as a conduit to the taken-for-granted experiences in creating meaning and developing an understanding of those who live it (van Manen, 1990). In the present study, the researchers expected to fully understand the narratives of these informants and how extent their narratives are impacted by their background, social identities, and social discourses. Meanwhile, a survey methodology also was employed to guide the quantitative component. Researchers also expected to survey Chinese newcomers' attitudes with questionnaire construction with relevant close-ended questions and associated scales for improving the accuracy of responses to the survey (Groves et al., 2009). Arguably, the researchers sought to generate a dialogue between the qualitative interpretation and the quantitative survey, promoting the validity and reliability of this study.

Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured and unstructured interviews were employed to collect data from the participants. On the grounds of the pandemic, all the ten 30-minute interviews (time varied depending on how the dialogue progressed) were conducted in Chinese via WeChat or Zoom and recorded by an audio recorder. After verification for accuracy by the participants, the transcripts were translated into English. After in-depth interviews, the designed and more detailed online questionnaire including 24 close-ended questions was respectively emailed to sixteen participants (ten interviewees and other six participants) for responses to corroborate and enrich the findings of the interviews. The standardized survey was developed as a web survey and conducted on Survey Monkey.

Data Analysis Methods

After the interview process, the participants' responses to the open-ended questions were transcribed verbatim, then filed and labeled systematically. Specifically, the six steps that were used to analyze the data include:

Step One: Initial Coding.

Step Two: Revisiting initial coding.

Step Three: Developing an initial list of categories or central ideas.

Step Four: Modifying your initial list based upon rereading.

Step Five: Revisiting your categories and subcategories; and

Step Six: Moving from categories into concepts (Lichtman, 2008, p.168).

Chinese recent immigrants' attitudes on Indigenous people were measured from Indigenous history, the impression of Indigenous people, and the relationship with Indigenous people, and the channels that affect their perceptions.

To substantiate the data extrapolated from the online interviews, the result of the web survey was analysed with Survey Monkey, using thematic coding analysis. All answers of sixteen respondents were analysed regarding similarities and differences and consequently recoded into categories.

By the mutual verification between qualitative and quantitative data, the researchers obtained the major findings of this study.

Study Participants

Sixteen Chinese recent immigrants were participating in this study. The researchers selected ten Chinese newcomers to interview who have immigrated to Canada in less than ten years, have lived in Saskatchewan, and range from 20 to 50 years of age (Table 1). The male and female ratio was even. In the Covid times, it was difficult to recruit participants on-site, so a *snowball sampling* strategy was used. As such, the researchers allowed participants to invite their friends to participate via virtual social networks (Creswell & Roth, 2018), in agreement with the current social distancing and physical distancing recommendations.

Table 1

Characteristics of Participants Interviewed

The Order of Participants (in an Order of Online Interviews)	Occupation in Canada	Age	Education Level	Gender	The number of years to immigrate to Canada
1	Trainer	48	Bachelor	Male	Ten years
2	Government Worker	28	Bachelor	Female	Five years
3	Government Worker	25	Bachelor	Female	Four years
4	Businessman	30	Junior College	Male	Five years
5	Program Analyst	40	Master	Male	Eight years
6	Banker	39	Master	Male	Eight years
7	Government Worker	30	Bachelor	Male	Six years
8	Government Worker	35	Doctor	Female	Five years
9	Self-employment	32	Bachelor	Female	Two years
10	Self-employment	37	Bachelor	Female	Two years

The other six participants (three females and three males) who were introduced by the interviewees only participated in the online survey. The researchers did not learn more about their personal information except for the prescribed criteria, i.e., Chinese newcomers who are 20-50 years old and have recently immigrated to Saskatchewan.

Limitations

This study is limited by several conditions. First, this study's sampling is not broad enough to generalize to other parts of Canada. Besides, as this study had to use the Chinese language to gather research data and translate all data into English in the qualitative component, some information may be omitted or misunderstood by English speakers. Moreover, a mixed method used in this study was a challenge to the researchers. A clear integration of qualitative and quantitative findings from disparate frameworks presented difficulties that are beyond those studies employing a pure qualitative or quantitative methodology.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers adopted ethical safeguards in guaranteeing their research subjects would suffer no harm (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The researchers applied for Behavioural Research Ethics Review with the University of Regina and were approved. Participant consent forms were emailed for signing. During the investigation, it was emphasized that all participation was voluntary and withdrawal from the study could happen at any stage. Care was taken to protect the confidentiality and privacy of each participant. All participants' names were reported as pseudonyms. Strategies to protect data included keeping the tape recordings and other written transcripts relating to the study secure. The informed consent form highlighted the purpose of the research, confidentiality, research methodology, and information making it clear how participants could withdraw from the study.

Findings

As mentioned above, the data was obtained from the online interview transcripts and an online survey. The data was then analyzed and coded, organizing information into relevant themes. Through constant comparison, a complete data set was confirmed. Findings were corroborated, as corresponding with the overarching research questions framed ahead.

Findings from the Online Interviews

Marked Changes in Perceptions of Indigenous people before and after Immigration

In the interviews, most of the participants expressed they had not known much about Indigenous people in Canada before immigration. Only blurring impressions about the ethnic group were from Chinese textbooks and TV shows. They imagined Indigenous people had been living in those places close to nature with special costumes and culture. However, after living in Canada, their impressions of Indigenous people have gotten worse in various aspects such as social identities, living conditions, life habits, and mindset through what they were seeing and hearing from social media, the locals, and their experiences. For example, Fang (female) responded:

Before I came to Canada, I learned a little bit about Indigenous culture from a textbook. The high school I attended was an international school, so I learned Canadian high school social studies in my Grade 10 and 11. My perceptions of Indigenous have changed after I came to Canada. In the textbook, I was reading their culture and history and what happened to them. But when I came here, they weren't as strong-minded as I thought. I've heard the locals about Indigenous refused to leave their reserve and their lifestyles are far behind other people.

Chen (female) also mentioned:

Before coming here, I learn about Indigenous people to some extent. I regarded them as nomadic groups like Chinese minority ethnic groups. They were living in those places close to nature. They wore special dresses and had special a culture. After coming here, the status quo of Indigenous people subverted my previous perceptions. No matter their social status, income, living conditions, educational level, and mentality, it is relatively inferior.

Zhao (male) noted that:

Before coming here, I knew nothing about Indigenous people in Canada. I had no interest in that, so I felt we impossibly have any connection to them. I learned a few from some documentaries focusing on their history and culture. After coming here, I distinguished them by their appearance and accent. Overall, they have relatively a low educational level and lack politeness.

Ocean (male) said as well:

I learned about just a few Eskimos in the book. They are diligent and kind. My perception changed worse such as their life habits after coming here. It is mainly due to social media. Social media is awash of lots of negative messages.

Understandings of Indigenous People's History and Culture

Understanding the culture and history of an ethnic group is the foundation of intercultural understandings. Holding a respectful and open mind is the start of intercultural understandings (Perry & Southwell, 2011). In this study, two participants learned well about Indigenous history in Canada. Fang (female) said:

I know quite well about their history because of the high school social studies. I knew the history of residential schools and what happened to them and the current reconciliation plan. In the university, I read someone's study about the impact of reconciliation and people's opinions towards this. Most people are resistant towards this and the Indigenous group still couldn't get past the trauma suffered in residential schools.

Chen (female) also expressed:

I learned some about Indigenous history in my master's degree. Residential schools had more than 100 year's history. It was abolished completely a couple of decades ago. Indigenous children had to leave their parents and be sent to residential schools at a young age. They lacked the protection of parents and were bullied and suffered from sexual harassment and were discriminated against. After graduation, they did not have the necessary skills to make a living. So, in their childhood, they did not have parenting and they were not able to offer good parenting to their kids. This is a vicious cycle from generation to generation. They were used to live in a group but now this living habit was cut off in full. The accumulative trauma resulted in their drugging and violence and drinking. They thought these were ways to forget trauma.

Six participants also expressed they learned some about Indigenous history, but they did not have an interest in a further understanding. For example, Zhao (male) noted that "I learned some about their history. Indigenous people should be from Asia. European settlers occupied their places with indiscriminate killing." Ocean (male) said that "In Canada, they were not colonized, and the government has treaties with some tribes. But it used to be a sin to force Indigenous children to assimilate." Wang (male) responded that "I almost knew nothing about their history except for the fact that Hudson Bay was originated from the fur trade with Indigenous people."

Two participants knew nothing about Indigenous people's history. As they said, few Chinese immigrants care about Canadian politics and history.

Relationships with Indigenous People

In the current study, the relationship between Chinese immigrants and Indigenous people was inclined to alienate. All of them thought they did not have any intersections with Indigenous people and even felt fearful to have contact with them. As Fang (female) said:

I rarely need to build a relationship with Indigenous people in my daily life. So, there won't be any occasions that need me to communicate or start a relationship with them. Some of the events I attended are employer-sponsored, so those are mainly business networking events.

Chen (female) mentioned, "I have few Indigenous friends. Honestly, I feel fearful to meet them and I worry they hit me and grab my money." Zhao (female) also said, "I feel worried a bit to communicate with them. For example, I tried to avoid delivering (services) to them because I worried, they had no pay for that or hit me." Ocean (male) thought that "the well water does not invade the river. Basically, there is no intersection in daily life." Wang (male) strongly expressed he was reluctant to build a relationship with Indigenous people. He was willing to live in communities away from Indigenous living areas.

Insights in Current Policies and Actions

The respondents expressed sympathy for Indigenous Canadians' experiences, although the alienated relationship with Indigenous people and negative impressions to them. Almost all participants commented on the current policies and actions of Indigenous people in Canada and positively offered advice on promoting reconciliation with Indigenous people such as treating them as equal as other citizens, offering training programs for their employment, and more positive messages from social media. The participants wished Indigenous people could independently create a better life instead of only depending on government relief funds. For example, Fang (female) narrated:

In my opinion, if the Indigenous person is willing to learn, get educated, and have higher achievement, they can do it relatively easier than others. This is because they have more support and resources from the government. Even in university, a lot of scholarships are for the Indigenous group, so this will help them to do well in school and not worry about money expenses. But there are very few Indigenous people that are willing to learn, being educated.

Chen (female) mentioned:

I did not agree with their policies and actions. They (government) always blindly offered money to them and viewed them as passive recipients. There were not more policies that concentrate on improving Indigenous communities. Teaching people how to fish is better than giving people fish. The Canadian government should add conditions before offering benefits. For example, they should register for training lessons and programs. They should have records of part-time or full-time jobs. As such, they are used to working and making money. But, at present, there were not more training programs focusing on Indigenous people and changing their life. They always think social assistance and relief are enough for them to live so they do not need to work hard to make a better life.

Wang (male) deemed that Canadian governments should treat them as other citizens and reduce welfare funding. Yu (male) thought current welfare policies did not work well and made them more dependent on further government benefits.

Wen (female) mentioned that:

Social media should offer a more positive message. Indigenous people do not have more thirstiness to accept higher education. Indigenous students should be mixed with other students instead of having such a clear divide. Indigenous people should learn more about their language instead of only English. In public schools, more programs should be conducted to help them to learn their culture and language.

Only one participant said that Chinese immigrants were outsiders and not qualified to judge the local people. Each nation had its path of life and development.

The Impact of Chinese Cultural Background

In cross-cultural understandings, people with different cultural backgrounds tend to have prejudices and stereotypes in the specific process of communication due to their different cultural concepts (Perry & Southwell, 2011). In this study, Chinese cultural concepts have impacted the participants' thinking and knowing to some extent. For example, Ocean (male) said that "In the Chinese old saying, strong twisted melon is not sweet. It's better to save trouble. Therefore, it is not necessary for me to actively build a relationship with Indigenous people." Wang responded that "our education culture stresses working hard to get rich and studying changes one's fate. So, I cannot understand why Indigenous people were unwilling to work hard and make money for a better life. They should overcome adversity rather than waiting for help."

Findings from the Online Survey

The online survey including 24 questions was released to the ten interviewees and other six participants and examined more detailed attitudes toward Indigenous people such as residential schools, the definition of Indigenous people, the number of historical treaties, reconciliation, rating the impression on Indigenous people, the relationship with Indigenous people, and current policies and actions. All sixteen participants submitted their completed responses (average completion rate was 100%). The findings from the online survey not only corroborated the findings of interviews but also offered more concrete and quantitative data for further research in this field.

Historical Issues on Indigenous People in Canada

In terms of residential schools, 50% of respondents thought residential schools have been operated for over 150 years. Forty percent (40%) of them deemed it was fewer than 100 years. Ten percent (10%) of them considered it was 150 years. Eighty percent (80%) of participants could define who "Indigenous" was and 20% of them did not know how to define Indigenous people. Sixty percent (60%) of them could not give a correct answer about how many historical treaties were signed with Indigenous people in Canadian history. Fifty percent (50%) of respondents thought there was a need for reconciliation between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people in Canada. The other half were neutral or held a negative attitude.

Fifty percent (50%) of participants deemed residential schools were the main reason resulting in the trauma and challenges suffered by Indigenous people in Canada. Fifty percent (50%) of participants expressed interest in learning further about the history of Indigenous people in the recent future. The other half did not have an interest in it.

The Impression on Indigenous People

Eighty percent (80%) of participants used negative adjectives describing their impression of Indigenous people such as lazy, uneducated, and poor. In contrast, only 10% of participants used positive adjectives such as strong, involved, generous, and creative.

The Relationship with Indigenous People

Sixty percent (60%) of participants were not interested if Indigenous people were living in their community, neighborhood, and even next door. Sixty percent (60%) of them were willing to make friends with Indigenous people but they were unwilling to let their children make friends with Indigenous people. However, 80% of them would accept working and studying with Indigenous people in universities and workplaces.

The Channels Affecting Their Attitudes

Fifty percent (50%) of participants thought social media played a key role in affecting their attitudes toward Indigenous people. Twenty percent (20%) of respondents regarded education as the main channel to understand Indigenous people. Only 10% of them had direct contact with Indigenous leaders such as Indigenous lawyers, treat Chiefs or leaders, and politicians.

Current Policies and Actions

Ninety percent (90%) of the participants thought the current policies and actions remained ineffective and the biggest obstacle to achieving equality for Indigenous people should be attributed to themselves. The respondents felt that Indigenous people needed to push governments to improve policies and programs. Government policies and actions were not improving the lives of Indigenous people and address poverty and generations of trauma. The respondents felt that many people on reserve were unemployed and living by social relief. They needed to have strong leaders to push for improved policies and programs.

Discussion and Conclusion

Drawing on the findings from interviews and the online survey, it is clear that the perceptions and attitudes of Chinese new immigrants on Indigenous people in Canada are mixed and dynamic in a changing social context.

First, in the Chinese context, Indigenous people always were described as positive and brave, living in America (Baidupedia, n.d). The bravery and good fighting of the Indigenous people were praised. Especially, those who were living on the plains and making a living by hunting had the brave and good fighting spirit. They relied on their heroism to hunt bison. They used bison hide and tendons to build houses, made clothes and shoes, used bison dung as fuel, used the bladder and bones for cooking and eating utensils. They prayed for the protection of the spirits to protect them from the ravages of nature. Moreover, Indigenous people are living geographically far from China so most Chinese people have not had opportunities to learn about Indigenous people's sufferings and hardships. Therefore, from the findings of the online survey, 90 % of Chinese new immigrants did not understand the issues and

impacts of racism and colonialism. From the findings of interviews, most of the interviewees learned a little about Indigenous people, and some only viewed Indigenous territories as attractive spots to visit.

Second, as Parker (1992) said, “when there is attention to the dynamics of discourse linked to social structures this reflexivity can be grounded so issues of ideology and value become explicit” (p.40). After immigrating to Canada, the previous perceptions of Indigenous people unavoidably were subverted by social discourses. These newcomers have been bombarded with negative stereotypes and overt racism towards Indigenous people. Sadly, 80% of the participants used negative words to describe Indigenous people.

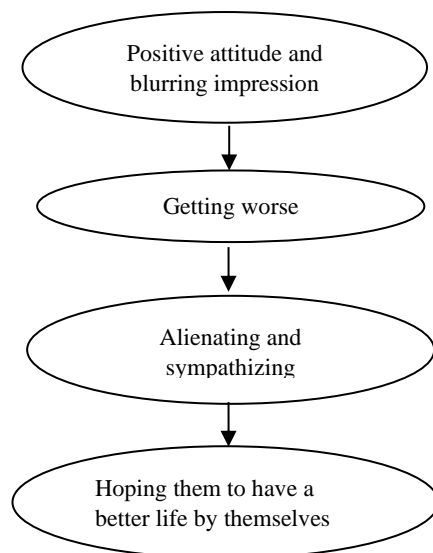


Figure 1: The Trajectory of Attitude Change

Furthermore, cumulative, and devastating trauma’s impact can last from generation to generation (Levine & Kline, 2007). As Chen (female) offered some insight:

Indigenous children had to leave their parents and be sent to residential schools at a young age. They lacked the protection of parents and were bullied and suffered from sexual harassment and were discriminated against. After graduation, they did not have the necessary skills to make a living. So, in their childhood, they did not have parenting and they were not able to offer good parenting to their kids. This is a vicious cycle from generation to generation. They were used to live in a group but now this living habit was cut off in full. The accumulative trauma resulted in their drugging and violence and drinking. They thought these were ways to forget trauma.

Accordingly, some participants experienced the negative behaviors of Indigenous people in Canada such as drinking and taking drugs. During Chen’s internship, most of those in the homeless shelter were Indigenous people.

Besides, the participants felt that government relief had resulted in increasing dependence and undermined their culture. The respondents believed that most Indigenous people in Canada were living in a state of almost total dependence on government support and relief. Close to three-quarters of Indigenous people did not have credentials beyond high school and only 3% of them had a university degree (Wotherspoon, 2014). As Chen mentioned, “about 90% of them need to apply for income assistance.”

Third, from the findings, the alienated relationship between Chinese new immigrants and Indigenous people is due to the negative impression and experience on Indigenous people in Canada, insufficient cross-cultural understandings, and the impact of Chinese cultural background. For example, Wang (male) said Indigenous people were not welcome to rent from his properties because he had a previous negative experience. Cross-cultural understanding refers to learning to recognize the otherness of other cultural groups and obtain an appreciation, respect, and knowledge of other cultures

(Toastmasters International, 2016). In this study, most participants were not interested in learning further about Indigenous people's history and culture. Therefore, they have not a method to improve their cross-cultural understanding. Moreover, Chinese cultural traditions have ingrained in them the importance of hard work and financial independence. As such, it is hard for Chinese new immigrants to understand the difficulties Indigenous people face every day.

On a more positive, some participants expressed sympathy for Indigenous people. Belongingness refers to one's feeling of being recognized and accepted by others or by a group (*Kelly-Ann, 2020*). As far as Chinese newcomers are concerned, it is difficult for them to adapt to Western culture and society, and they lack a sense of belonging in Canada. Therefore, they can hold sympathy and empathy for Indigenous people to some degree. Historically, China underwent colonialism, oppression, and racism from European colonists. Chang (male) narrated:

Last time, I met an Indigenous staff member in Service Canada when I accompanied my friend to apply for SIN for his child. He was very good and kind to people. He was very competent in his work. I hope the government can help them more.

Chen (female) also mentioned that in a restaurant, an Indigenous man paid the bill for the other poorer Indigenous man. She thought Indigenous should possess a better life.

Fourth, out of sympathy and the Chinese traditional notion ([earning one's living](#)), Chinese newcomers wish for improvements in the quality of life for Indigenous people and see these improvements through hard work. As Chen mentioned, "At present, insufficient training programs are focusing on Indigenous people and changing their life." From the findings of the online survey, it can be indicated that 90% of participants deemed current policies and actions should be changed to more training programs for their employment.

Recommendations

Given the empirical nature of this study and the findings from interviews and the online survey, possible recommendations can be made. The focus remains upon facilitating Chinese newcomers' cross-cultural and cross-racial understandings on Indigenous people and improving the policies and actions in adding Indigenous content to the training programs of Chinese newcomers. One important place to start is the federal materials supplied to newcomers who have applied for Canadian citizenship. Applicants are required to pass a citizenship test that demonstrates their knowledge on Canada's history, culture, and ethics. The study guide, *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*, was written in 2009 and modestly updated in 2012. It is basically "a distillation of how the government wants the nation to be seen and of the foundation touch points it wants immigrants to understand" (Kulha, 2021). It remains woefully out of date colouring the nation with rose coloured lens. It glosses over the many broken treaties and the horrors of the residential schools. A new study guide has been promised and consultation with Indigenous groups has been undertaken. These steps are included as the 93rd Call to Action in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation, released in 2015 (Kulha, 2021). The 94th recommendation includes the observing and honouring the Treaties of Indigenous Peoples. Hopefully, it will provide a far more realistic and honest understanding of the Indigenous people of Canada.

The first recommendation is for cross-cultural empathy and understanding amongst Chinese newcomers and newcomers in general. Linkages must be personal as well as public, emotive as well as rational (Ogden, 2006). More programs and activities should be conducted to boost Chinese newcomers to grasp a deeper understanding about Indigenous culture and history to enhance cross-cultural understandings of each other. The education should reach the newcomers, and much more could be done by universities, schools, settlement agencies, and other government agencies. Specifically, the hegemonic story of Indigenous people created in North America should be involved in training curriculum. Indigenous knowledge keepers must be invited to lead in teaching and share their stories with the newcomers.

Secondly, the media (print, social, television, and radio) should be active to present more positive stories of successful Indigenous people and reduce the racism and biases in many media stories. All levels of Canadian governments should approach reconciliation more thoughtfully. Quite simply, there needs to be a more concerted effort to tell the stories of Indigenous peoples that reach newcomers. These efforts can go a long way in the healing journey of Indigenous people. As a Chinese old saying goes, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." ("A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, Lao zi" appreciation comments, 2019, para. 6)

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