TIEDI
Toronto Immigrant Employment
DATA INITIATIVE

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Continuity of Employment for Immigrants during the First Four Years in Canada

By

Valerie Preston, Marshia Akbar, Mai Phan, Stella Park, Philip Kelly

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KEY POINTS:

• Immigrants with a university degree are more likely than less educated immigrants to be employed throughout their first 4 years in Canada.

• Female immigrants are more likely to be unemployed than male immigrants during the first 4 years after arrival in Canada.

• Visible minority immigrants are more likely to experience disrupted labour market experiences than white immigrants in the first 4 years in Canada.

• Skilled immigrants are more likely to be employed than other classes of immigrants throughout the first 4 years in Canada.

• Fluent language skills and credential recognition enhanced the chances of being employed continuously during the first 4 years in Canada.

• Immigrants who are employed continuously are slightly less likely to report work place discrimination.

INTRODUCTION TO TIEDI

The Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative (TIEDI) seeks to assist organizations whose mandate includes the better integration of immigrants into Toronto's labour force. Such partner organizations include immigrant service agencies and advocacy groups, labour organizations, regulatory bodies, professional associations, training organizations, and credential assessment agencies.

The purpose of the project is to provide organizations with free access to statistical data and analysis on various aspects of immigrant labour market integration. The goal is to help organizations access the quantitative data they need in order to: identify priorities, develop programs and services, compose proposals and reports, and carrying out advocacy and public education endeavours.

TIEDI provides a unique service in which community organizations' data needs are met by a team of academic researchers and student analysts. Our partners define the data that they need - the project is thus driven by their agendas and not by academic research priorities.

TIEDI is based at York University, with a team of academic researchers drawn from York, the University of Toronto, and Ryerson University. Core members of the project team also include representatives of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) and World Education Services. The project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada under its Knowledge Impact in Society program, and by York University.

The datasets used by the project include a range of large-scale surveys such as the Census, the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, the Ethnic Diversity Survey, the Workplace and Employee Survey, the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, the Labour Force Survey and the Permanent Residents Data System.

TIEDI Analytical Reports provide tabulations of data, some brief analysis and contextualization, and some necessary caveats about the limitations of the data and analysis. Since the data presented have not been treated to detailed statistical analysis, any conclusions must be seen as preliminary and as starting points for further, more detailed, research.

For further information, contact the TIEDI Principal Investigator, Dr Philip Kelly (pfkelly@yorku.ca), or the TIEDI Project Coordinator, Stella Park (pstella@yorku.ca).

While the research and analysis are based on data from Statistics Canada, the opinions expressed do not represent the views of Statistics Canada.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do the employment histories of immigrants vary by demographic characteristics (i.e. gender, age at arrival in Canada, visible minority status), immigrant class and pre-migration occupations over time?

BACKGROUND

With the increased number of immigrants entering Canada, there has been growing interest in immigrants' labour market success. Studies suggest that entering the labour market is the hardest integration task (Reitz 2007: 17). Several scholars have attempted to identify the factors (such as demographic characteristics and human capital) that shape the employment trajectories of immigrants in Canada (Picot 2008). Demographic characteristics such as, gender, minority status and immigrant class significantly influence labour market outcomes. For example, immigrant women are more disadvantaged than immigrant men because they are concentrated in poorly-paid, part-time and irregular jobs (Preston and D'Addario 2008; Townson 2003: 27). Visible minority immigrants (regardless of their gender) have lower earnings than their counterparts with European origins or native-born Canadian workers (Galabuzi 2005: 53). Researchers have found that immigrant labour market success is associated with the ethnic, racial or national origins of immigrants (Reitz 2007: 13). Studies also show that the labour market success of skilled immigrants is higher than that of other immigrant classes (for example, family and refugee class) (Hiebert 2009).

The labour market performance of immigrants is also influenced by human capital. Researchers argue that human capital obtained outside Canada is devalued (Wald and Fang 2008: 459; Sweetman 2004). For immigrants, foreign credentials and professional experiences may provide little advantage in the Canadian employment market (Aydemir 2011). For example, findings from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) show that 52 percent of recent immigrants who had a university degree worked in a job that required only high school education at some point between 1993 and 2001 (Wald and Fang 2008: 458). However, immigrants who possess university degrees and have better skills in English or French are more likely to have a 'high-skilled'[1] job compared to immigrants with less education and little proficiency in either language (Hunjan 1997: 31; Statistics Canada 2005: 7).

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[1] 'High skilled' occupations include management or other positions requiring post-secondary education/training such as a university degree, college diploma or apprenticeship. These positions are related in general to management, scientific, professional and technical occupations and trades. According to the National Occupational Classification (NOC) coding system, these occupations are classified under the skill type 0 (management) and skill level A and B (HRSDC, http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/fwp_forms.shtml#H06).
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Recently, scholars have emphasized that the employment experiences of immigrants vary over time and by cohort of arrival (Statistics Canada 2003). By using the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants in Canada (LSIC), this report analyzes the employment trajectories of immigrants during the first four years in Canada, measuring their employment status at three different points in time (6 months, 2 years and 4 years after arrival in Canada). It illustrates the ways in which selected demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, visible minority status, and immigrant class) and various measures of human capital (i.e., language fluency, university degree, post-migration education, and pre-migration occupation) are associated with success in securing employment during the first four years of settlement in Canada. The analysis also illustrates how institutional barriers, such as credential recognition associated with specific occupations and workplace discrimination influence the employment histories of immigrants in the first four years after their arrival in Canada.

THE DATA: LONGITUDINAL SURVEY OF IMMIGRANTS TO CANADA

This report uses data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), which was a joint undertaking between Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada under the Policy Research Initiative.

The LSIC is a comprehensive survey designed to study the process by which new immigrants settle in Canadian society. As part of adapting to life in Canada, many immigrants face challenges such as finding suitable accommodation, learning or becoming more fluent in one or both of Canada's official languages, participating in the labour market, and accessing education and training opportunities. The results of this survey provide indicators of how immigrants are meeting these challenges and what resources are most helpful to their settlement in Canada. The survey also examines how the socio-economic characteristics of immigrants influence the process by which they integrate into Canadian society.

The topics covered by the survey include language proficiency, housing, education, foreign credential recognition, employment, health, values and attitudes, citizenship, the development and use of social networks, income, and impressions about life in Canada. The questions address respondents' situations before coming to Canada and since their arrival.

The survey involved a longitudinal design, with immigrants being interviewed at three different times: six months, two years, and four years after landing in Canada. The target population for the survey consisted of immigrants who arrived in Canada between October 1, 2000 and September 30, 2001, were age 15 years or older at the time of landing, and landed from abroad (i.e. they must have applied through a Canadian Mission Abroad). Individuals who applied and landed from within Canada are excluded from the survey (Statistics Canada 2007).

The LSIC was conducted from 2001 to 2005. This time period was marked by economic growth, strong employment gains, and earnings growth in Canada (Lin 2008). Economic conditions at the time of arrival (see table 1 for basic economic data) and government policies may affect the trajectories of respondents. The employment outcomes presented in this report may not be comparable to the experiences of immigrants who landed in different time periods. It is also

important to note that this report examines the relationship between immigrant class, gender, age, visible minority status, training in Canada and proficiency in official languages on the one hand, and employment outcomes on the other. Other variables may also affect such outcomes. Finally, it should be noted that the data presented in this report include only immigrants who had been in Canada for 4 years, and does not therefore capture their employment outcomes after four years.

Table 1: Economic Performance Indicators, Canada, 2001-2005

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Overall average
Growth in Real GNP	1.8 %	2.9 %	1.9 %	3.1 %	3.1 %	2.6 %
Unemployment Rate	7.2 %	7.6 %	7.6 %	7.2 %	6.8 %	7.3 %

Source: Maslove, 2008: 228

The sample design for LSIC used a "funnel-shaped" approach. Thus, only immigrants that responded to the Wave 1 interview (at six months) were traced for the Wave 2 interview (at two years) and only those that responded to the Wave 2 interview were traced for the Wave 3 interview (at four years) (Statistics Canada, 2007). Because of limited sample sizes, the data used in this report are for all of Canada.

RESULTS

The tables in this report show the employment status of a sample of immigrants, between ages 15 to 64 at the time of arrival, in relation to different demographic and human resource characteristics. The employment status of immigrants is presented in four categories: a) never employed, those who were unemployed during all three surveys at 6 months, 2 years and 4 years, b) employed one wave, those who were employed at the time of one of three surveys, c) employed in 2 waves, those who were employed in two survey periods, and d) employed throughout, those who were employed at the time of all three surveys.

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by employment history in Canada across the three waves of the survey. Immigrants who were employed throughout the first 4 years in Canada constitute the largest percentage (41.6%) followed by immigrants who were employed in two of the three waves (31.1%) and one of the three waves (19.1%), respectively. Immigrants who were unemployed throughout the first 4 years of settlement in Canada are the lowest percentage (8.2%) of immigrants in the survey. During their first four years in Canada, then, the vast majority of immigrants experienced periods of employment, but less than half (41.6%) were employed continuously.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Employment History, Canada

	Never employed in the first 4 years	Employed in 1 wave	Employed in 2 waves	Employed continuously
%	8.2	19.1	31.1	41.6
N (weighted)	10, 200	23, 840	38, 820	51, 810

a) Employment History of Immigrants in Canada by Average Age at Arrival, Language Ability and University Degree.

Table3: Average Age at Arrival, Language Ability and University Degree by Employment History at 6 Months, 2 Years and 4 Years After Arrival in Canada.

	Never employed in the first 4 years	Employed in 1 wave	Employed in 2 waves	Employed continuously
Average age at arrival	34.3	32.6	33.7	34.2
Average Language ability (at arrival, scale 0-5)*	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.3
University degree (%)	55.5	57.1	60.6	64.1
N (weighted)	10, 200	23, 840	38, 820	51, 810

* Language ability (how well they can speak either English or French): 0=cannot speak, 1= poorly, 2= fairly, 3= well, 4= very well, 5= fluent.

Table 3 shows immigrants' mean age at arrival, language abilities, and percent of immigrants with at least one university degree disaggregated by employment status. Average age at arrival is not related to continuity of employment. Immigrants who were employed throughout the first four years of settlement had slightly better language abilities than those who were never employed and those who had interrupted employment histories; however, the differences are small. Immigrants who were employed continuously in their first four years in Canada were more likely to be university degree-holders than those who experienced intermittent employment. Among immigrants who were employed in all three waves of the survey, 64.1 % had a university degree, compared to only 55.5 % of immigrants who were unemployed throughout the first four years in Canada.

b) Employment History of Immigrants in Canada by Gender and Visible Minority Status

Gender and visible minority status are related to immigrants' employment histories. Table 4 shows the percentages of female immigrants, white immigrants and five visible minority groups (i.e.; Chinese, South Asian, Black, Filipino and West Asian) by each category of employment history. The figures in Table 4 do, however, need to be read carefully. The distribution of visible minority groups

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with different employment characteristics in each column, for example, is primarily a reflection of the group's numerical size in the immigrant population. For example, there is a much larger percentage of Chinese immigrants than Blacks in each employment category, however, this is because the total number of Chinese immigrants in the survey is larger. The most appropriate way to read the data, then, is to examine the distribution of employment characteristics within a given group – e.g. noting that Filipino's are much more highly represented in the 'employed continuously' group, while Chinese had a higher percentage who were intermittently employed.

Table 4: Employment History of Female Migrants, and Visible and Non-visible Minority Group

	Never employed	Employed in one wave	Employed in 2 waves	Employed continuously
Female (%)	58.1	53.8	49.6	33.6
Male (%)	41.9	46.2	50.4	66.4
Total	100	100	100	100
Non-visible and Visible Minority Groups				
White (%)	16.1	18.4	20.4	24.7
Chinese (%)	23.4	27.9	22.5	15.0
South Asian (%)	22.0	20.4	24.6	30.0
Black (%)	4.3	5.0	5.7	4.8
Filipino (%)	NS	3.9	6.1	12.5
West Asian/Arab (%)	19.4	14.9	10.0	5.4

With these caveats in mind, several features of the data are noteworthy. More immigrant women than men were unemployed throughout the first four years in Canada. The differences are substantial. Of those employed continuously for the first four years, only 33.6 % are women, whereas of those who were never employed, 58.1 % are women. White immigrants are more likely than visible minority immigrants to have employment success during the first four years in Canada. Only 16.1 % of those who were never employed were white. Among those employed throughout the first four years of settlement, 30.0 % are South Asian, while they account for only 22.0 % of those who never worked during the first four years of settlement. Filipinos are equally successful. Of those employed throughout the four year period, 12.5 % were Filipinos and the number of those who were never employed was so small, it could not be reported. For Chinese and West Asian immigrants, the trends are reversed. The percentages of those who were never employed in the first four years are higher than the percentages of those who were continuously employed. Black immigrants are equally represented across the four possible employment histories, accounting for 5.7% to 4.3 % of each group.

c) Immigrant Class by Employment History in Canada

Table 5: Immigrant Class by Employment History in Canada

	Never employed	Employed in one wave	Employed in 2 waves	Employed continuously
Immigrant class				
Family class (%)	23.2	21.5	22.2	21.9
Skilled (%)	62.4	64.8	66.0	70.1
Business class (%)	5.8	5.2	5.5	4.1
Refugee (%)	8.6	8.5	6.3	4.0
Total	100	100	100	100
N (weighted)	10, 200	23, 840	38, 820	51, 810

Note: 'Business' class immigrants include entrepreneurs, investors and self-employed categories. 'Refugees' refer mostly to government-assisted refugees and privately sponsored refugees. LSIC excludes refugees who made claims in Canada.

Table 5 shows employment history according to immigrant class, although the same caveats noted earlier still apply. The higher percentage of skilled worker class immigrants in all employment categories reflects their larger numbers in immigration flows. We see from the table that the majority of immigrants who had employment throughout their first four years were skilled workers (70.1%). Skilled workers are a lower percentage of those who have been continuously unemployed (62.4%) and who have disrupted employment (64.8% and 66.0%, respectively). While the small number of business class immigrants means that they account for only 4.1 % of immigrants who are continuously employed, they are 5.8 % of those who have never had a job. The economic difficulties of refugees are readily apparent. They are only 4.0 % of those continuously employed, yet they account for 8.6 % of those who never found a job during the first four years in Canada.

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d) Employment History of Immigrants in Canada by Pre-migration Occupation

Table 6 compares the pre-migration occupations of immigrants according to their employment histories in Canada. There is little correlation between previous employment in professional occupations and continuity of employment in Canada – this group represents 57.1% of those who were never employed, and 59.1% of those who were continuously employed. Immigrants with skilled trades are 11.5% of those employed continuously but only 7.3% of immigrants who have not been employed at all during the first four years of settlement. Indeed, a comparison of the different immigrant classes suggests that those in skilled trades are most likely to be continuously employed.

Table 6: Employment History in Canada by Pre-migration Occupation at 6 Months, 2 Years and 4 Years After Arrival in Canada

	Never employed	Employed in one wave	Employed in 2 waves	Employed continuously
Pre-migration Occupation				
Manual labourer (%)	4.2	3.6	4.5	4.2
Skilled trades (%)	7.3	7.5	8.3	11.5
Sales, services (%)	6.7	6.9	6.0	5.9
Technical/clerical (%)	24.6	17.7	21.1	19.3
Professional/management (%)	57.1	64.4	60.1	59.1
Total(%)	99.9	101.1	100	100
N (weighted)	10, 200	23, 840	38, 820	51, 810

*Some figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

e) Odds Ratio of Being Employed After Arrival in Canada

Table 7 shows the odds[2] of being employed throughout the first four years, holding other factors constant. An odds ratio of 1 indicates the chance of being employed for a woman is the same as the chance of being employed for a man during all 3 waves of the survey. The analysis shows that women are half as likely as men to be employed continuously during all three waves. Immigrants with better language skills were also more likely to be employed continuously. Those speaking English or French well were 2.53 times more likely than immigrants with poor or no language skills in English or French to be employed continuously. Immigrants who spoke an official language very

[2] The odds are a way of representing probability, especially familiar for betting. For example, the odds that a single throw of a die will produce a six are 1 to 5, or 1/5. The odds is the ratio of the probability that the event of interest occurs to the probability that it does not. This is often estimated by the ratio of the number of times that the event of interest occurs to the number of times that it does not (Bland and Altman 2000)

well or fluently were 3.17 times more likely to be employed continuously in the first four years in Canada.

Visible minorities were less likely than whites to be employed continuously. Visible minority status and perceived discrimination slightly reduced the likelihood of continuous employment. While being a skilled worker immigrant had no impact on the likelihood of being employed continuously, business class immigrants and refugees were less likely than family class immigrants to have continuous employment. Pursuing post-migration education also reduces the odds of continuous employment because immigrants leave the paid labour market to complete their studies.

The second column in Table 7 shows the odds of being unemployed in wave 2 and/or wave 3 for those who had been successful in finding employment during the first six months in Canada[3]. Women who were employed in the first 6 months were 1.85 times more likely to experience subsequent unemployment than men. Visible minority immigrants were 1.41 times more likely to have disrupted labour market experiences than white immigrants in the first four years in Canada. Immigrants who reported discrimination in the labour market were 1.32 times more likely to experience unemployment than those who did not report labour market discrimination in the first four years in Canada. As we would expect, immigrants who returned to school after immigration were 2.09 times more likely to experience disrupted employment than those who did not return to a school. The findings indicate that negative labour market experiences reduce the likelihood of being employed continuously; however, additional research is required at an individual level to isolate the effects of discrimination. Is discrimination perceived when immigrants lose jobs or do experiences of discrimination contribute to job losses and discontinuities in employment?

Table 7: Odds Ratio of Being Employed Continuously After Arrival in Canada

	Employed continuously	**Disrupted labour market experiences**
Age (in years)	0.99	0.99
Female (compared to male)	0.48	1.85
Language fluency in English or French (compared to immigrants with none/poor lang. skills)		
Fairly well	1.41	0.71
Well	2.53	0.40
Very well or fluent	3.17	0.29
Immigration class (compared to family class immigrants)		
Skilled (principal and dependant)	0.96	0.91
Business class	0.75	0.70
Refugee	0.57	0.73
Visible minority status	0.78	1.41
Experienced discrimination	0.82	1.32
Returning to school following immigration	0.52	2.09

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[3] The analysis of Table 7 does not include immigrants who were unemployed for the entire four year period.

f) Employment History of Immigrants in Canada by Average Annual Family Income and Average Jobless Days per Month

Table 8 shows the average annual family income per person and average number of jobless days per month for immigrants with different employment histories. Immigrants who were employed throughout the first four years after arrival in Canada had much higher average annual family income by their fourth year than immigrants who were employed discontinuously. As expected, those who were unemployed throughout the four year period had the lowest average family income per person. Trends in average family income are consistent with the trends in the average number of days per month that immigrants were jobless. Average jobless days per month are higher for those who were unemployed during any wave of the survey and they increase with the persistence of unemployment. Being employed in two waves of the survey is associated with fewer jobless days per month than being employed for only one wave.

Table 8: Employment History by Annual Family Income and Jobless Days per Month

	Never employed	Employed in one wave	Employed in 2 waves	Employed continuously
Annual labour force income of economic family (2005 dollars) *	$ 28, 000	$ 39, 900	$ 50, 600	$ 61, 800
Average number of jobless days per month **	19.5	12.9	5.0	0.9
N (weighted)	10, 200	23, 840	38, 820	51, 810

* The average labour force income in 2005 dollars for the households of immigrants (This includes the earnings of all members of the economic family, not just the respondent).
** The data do not represent actual days of unemployment in any given month, but is calculated from the total number of jobless days accumulated between the second and fourth years after landing, divided by the number of months in that period (i.e. 24 months).

g) Employment History by Post-migration Education and Credential Recognition for Immigrants

Table 9 shows the involvement in post migration education and experience of credential recognition disaggregated by immigrants' employment histories. Immigrants with continuous employment were less likely to have engaged in post-migration education (45.8%), compared with those with discontinuous employment (59.7% and 55.7%), or no employment (57.6%) during their first 4 years in Canada. Immigrants who had continuous employment were more likely to have had their credentials recognized in Canada, compared to those who had no employment success.

Table 9: Employment History by Post-migration Education and Credential Recognition for Immigrants

	Never employed	Employed in one wave	Employed in 2 waves	Employed continuously
Undertook post-migration education (%)	57.6	59.7	55.7	45.8
Credentials recognized (%)	39.6	46.2	46.4	52.2
N (weighted)	10, 200	23, 840	38, 820	51, 810

CONCLUSIONS

Clearly, only tentative conclusions can be reached from the data compiled in this report. In part this is because many factors may influence the employment histories of immigrants, and only selected immigrant characteristics have been used here to examine this relationship. It is also worth bearing in mind that the data presented here represent a very specific cohort of immigrants – arriving in a narrow window of time and within a particular set of macro-economic circumstances. Nevertheless, in terms of the specific labour market outcomes that we examined, the following conclusions emerge:

- The majority of immigrants arriving in Canada in 2000 were employed in the first four years in Canada, but less than half were employed continuously during this period.

- Immigrants who were employed in all three waves of the survey were more likely to have at least one university degree.

- Female migrants are more likely than male migrants to be unemployed throughout the first four years of settlement in Canada. Women who found employment within 6 months of landing were 1.85 times more likely than men to experience unemployment in subsequent waves.

- Visible minority immigrants are 1.41 times more likely than white immigrants to have disrupted employment histories. Whites are more likely than visible minority immigrants to be employed continuously during the first four years of settlement in Canada.

- Family class immigrants and skilled workers are more likely than other immigrant classes to be employed throughout the first four years of settlement. Immigrants with better language skills are also more likely to be employed continuously. Finally, immigrants whose credentials were recognized are more likely to be employed throughout the first four years in Canada.

- As expected, immigrants who returned to school after immigration were 2.09 times more likely to have disrupted employment histories than those who did not return to school.

- Immigrants who worked continuously during the first four years of settlement in Canada were less likely to perceive discrimination at the workplace than those who were unemployed or employed for only part of the four-year period. Immigrants who reported discrimination in the workplace were 1.32 times more likely to experience disrupted employment than those who did not report discrimination. The causal direction of this relationship warrants more investigation. Are people quitting jobs because of perceived discrimination or do perceptions of discrimination discourage people from searching for work?

APPENDIX

RELEVANT QUESTIONS FROM LSIC SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE :

1. Gender – from CIC immigration records

2. Immigrant class – from CIC immigration records

3. In what month and year did you arrive in Canada as a landed immigrant, a refugee or other type of immigrant? (wave 1)

4. When did you start working for (the) employer? (waves 1-3)

5. Are you still working for (the) employer? (waves 1-3)

6. When did you stop working for (the) employer? (waves 1-3)

7. How many hours per week do you usually work? (waves 1-3)

8. Since you came to Canada, how much income in total, have "you and your family" received from all sources? (Both inside and outside Canada if applicable.) (wave 1)

9. What kind of education or training was/is this course? (wave 1)

10. Since your last interview, have you taken "any/any other" education or training, excluding language instruction? (wave 2-3)

11. Did/does this education/training lead to the completion of a certificate, diploma or degree? (waves 1-3)

12. "Is/Was" this job related to any education or training you have taken or are currently taking? (wave 2-3)

13. Since you came to Canada, how much income in total, have "you and your family" received from all sources? (Both inside and outside Canada if applicable.) (wave 1)

14. Could you give me an estimate of the total income that "you/you and your family" received before taxes and deductions from all sources inside and outside Canada in the last 12 months? (waves 2-3)

15. How well can you speak English? (waves 1-3)

16. How well can you speak French? (waves 1-3)

Questionnaire (wave 1): http://www.statcan.gc.ca/imdb-bmdi/instrument/4422_Q1_V1-eng.pdf

Questionnaire (wave 2): http://www.statcan.gc.ca/imdb-bmdi/instrument/4422_Q1_V2-eng.pdf

Questionnaire (wave 3): http://www.statcan.gc.ca/imdb-bmdi/instrument/4422_Q1_V3-eng.pdf

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