

Review Article

Gender-Based Disparities in the Income of Immigrants in Canada: A Descriptive Analysis

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Abstract

Canada has one of the world's best immigration policies. However, the poor integration of immigrants into the labour force has resulted in the underemployment of immigrants due to institutionalized discrimination. The discrimination amongst immigrants is likely to vary based on gender. Hence, this study aimed to examine the gender-based disparities in the employment rate and income of immigrants in Canada using secondary data from Canada statistics. Based on the findings from this study, there is a gap in the employment rate (11.0-11.7%) of male and female immigrants. It was also observed that female immigrants earned less than their male counterparts (gender pay gap of 13.5 - 49.5%) despite being from the same ethnic group, having similar academic qualifications, and working in similar industries. The findings from this study calls for policy reforms to address institutionalized discrimination against female immigrants in the Canadian labour force. The Childcare support systems in Canada should be enhanced and better flexible working arrangements should be implemented to enable female immigrants attain work-life balance. Lastly, policies that encourage fair hiring processes should be implemented to ensure that employers provide equal job opportunities to women and immigrants.

Keywords: Labour force; Gender pay gap; Gender inequality; Racial discrimination; Employment

Introduction

The concept of migration is as old as man as humans have been moving from place to place for centuries searching for greener pastures [1]. This movement is known as migration and is usually for social, economic or political purposes. The process of moving out of a region is known as emigration while the process of moving into a region is referred to as immigration. Immigration is the national (within the same country) or international (across countries) movement of people to from one region into a new region [2]. The choice of migrating could be due to conflict, economic hardship, lack of opportunities and the implementation of unfavourable policies in the home country or better job and academic prospects, security and higher standard of living in the destination country [2,3].

The factors that influence people's decision to migrate to a different region can be explained by the Aspirations-capabilities

framework described by De Haas [4]. Based on this framework, the migration choices of an individual depend on their aspirations and capabilities. A person's perception of the opportunities in a different location could stimulate migration and their economic, social and political capabilities could also stimulate migration to a geographical location with better opportunities [4]. The factors that stimulate migration could also be categorised as push and pull factors. Poverty, violence, terrorism and the lack of social freedoms could push people out of a country while the presence of better job prospects, quality education, scholarship opportunities, security, the lack of certain social constraints and friendly immigration policies could attract people into a new country [2,3,5].

The United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany, Saudi Arabia and Canada have the highest number of immigrants compared to other countries [6-9]. This is due to their friendly immigration policies that foster refugee resettlement, family reunification, employment-based immigration and study permits [7,9]. Unlike other countries, Canada also has less stringent regulations for issuing permanent residency to immigrants which

is a significant pull factor [10,11]. On the other hand, countries like Cuba, China, Japan and North Korea have significantly lower numbers of migrants due to their restrictive migration policies and stringent requirements for long-term residency [12-17].

Immigration policies and immigrant integration in Canada

Canada is one of the countries with the best immigration policies [18,19]. Based on an official document published by the Canadian government, the country has four immigration policies that attract immigrants into the country- temporary residency, permanent residence, family reunification and humanitarian considerations. The temporary foreign worker program, international mobility program and the International Experience Canada programs provide opportunities for tourists, workers and students to stay in the country temporarily [18]. Immigrants can become permanent residents through the express entry system, provincial nomination, Quebec-selected skilled workers, start-up visa and caregiver programs. The family and dependents of permanent residents and Canadian citizens can migrate to Canada through family reunification programs while individuals seeking refuge and asylum can be allowed to reside permanently in Canada based on humanitarian considerations [18].

Despite the friendly immigration policies in Canada, studies have shown that most immigrants are not properly integrated into the country's labour force. In a study conducted by Lu and Hou [20], it was observed that there is a mismatch between immigrants' qualifications and job requirements as most immigrants in Canada are underemployed. According to Raihan *et al.* [21], racism, discrimination, the devaluation of foreign credentials and lack of Canadian work experience significantly impede the successful integration of immigrants into the Canadian labour force. The review of immigrant studies in Canada conducted by Nazari [22] also revealed that immigrants encounter discrimination in hiring processes leading to lower employment rates, job-education mismatches and lower earnings. According to Nazari [22], skilled female immigrants face additional challenges in the labour market as they are constrained by family responsibilities and limited access to childcare, which hinders their full participation in the labour market.

Theoretical frameworks

This research is premised on the labour segmentation theory and the gender stratification theory. The labour segmentation theory proposed by Doeringer and Piore [23] and Reich *et al.* [24], opines that the economic inequalities amongst the people in the labour market are not solely dependent on human capital such as

educational attainment but on institutional and social factors such as gender, age, race and religion [22,25]. This theory posits that the labour market is divided into two non-competing segments-primary and secondary labour market segments. The primary segment is characterised by good working conditions, job security, high income, income stability and social protection while the secondary segment is characterised by job insecurity, low income and poor working conditions.

The theory further posits that institutional and social barriers prevent the transition of individuals from the secondary segment to the primary segment [26]. Segmenting the labour market based on immigration status, studies have shown that immigrants are often relegated to the secondary segment due to barriers such as language proficiency, failure to recognise foreign credentials and systemic racism [22,27,28]. Immigrants can transition from the secondary to the primary segment over time. However, this transition is dependent on factors such as acquiring permanent residency, the duration of permanent residency, gender, academic qualifications and the ethnicity of the immigrants [29,30]. Immigrants from Africa, China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Korea, the Philippines, Latin America and West and Southeast Asia often face more discrimination than Caucasian immigrants and are classified as visible minorities in Canada [31-33].

Due to the already existing gender inequalities in the workplace, being a female immigrant puts additional constraints on an individual's ability to transition into the primary labour segment. The effect of gender on the employment rate and income of immigrants is examined using the gender stratification theory proposed by Blumberg [34]. This theory describes how social structure and cultural norms drive gender inequalities in the society. Female immigrants are often from home countries with patriarchal norms where they are expected to take on less demanding jobs so they can care for the family [35]. This is further aggravated by the lack of flexible work arrangements and childcare services which further subjugate women to precarious jobs [35,36].

The gender stratification theory posits that the gender pay gap is often attributed to women being less educated than the male population and the refusal of women to take up high-paying jobs than men. However, some studies show that women are frequently paid lower wages than men for the same work even when they have similar academic qualities due to systemic prejudice [37,38]. Hence, this research explores the gender pay gap among immigrants based on factors such as ethnicity, residency status, academic qualification and industry.

Methodology

This study utilised immigrant data indexed on Statistics Canada [39]. The data extracted from the website were on the total populations of immigrants and non-immigrants, the employment rate of immigrants and the average income of male and female immigrants across ethnicity, industries and academic qualifications. The data on ethnicity focused on racialised populations in Canada. The visible minorities which refers to immigrants from Africa, China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Korea, the Philippines, Latin America and West and Southeast Asia were classified as racialised immigrants while Caucasian/White immigrants were classified as non-racialised immigrants. In cases where data for 2023 were available, trend analysis on the variations in the data from 2021-2023 was captured. However, most of the data used for this study were from national surveys conducted in 2021.

The data retrieved were already presented as mean and median scores as such the data analysis was restricted to descriptive statistics. New variables on pay gap were created using the available data on the income of immigrants in Canada. Where

applicable, independent t-tests and regression analysis were used to test the associations between gender-based disparities in the income of immigrants across ethnicity, academic qualifications, and industries using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS.

Results

Population and labour force characteristics of immigrants in Canada

The data in Table 1 presents statistics on Canadian immigrant and non-immigrant populations based on the national census conducted in 2021. As of 2021, the total population in Canada was 36,328,475. The population of women (50.6%) in Canada is slightly higher than men. This study also shows that 23.0% of the Canadian population are immigrants of which 88.9% of the immigrants were permanent residents as of 2021. As shown in Table 2, approximately 5,797,700 landed immigrants are part of the Canadian labour force as of 2023 (15 years and above). The data also shows that most of the landed immigrants have been in Canada for more than 10 years. The Canadian labour force also comprised of more male immigrants than female immigrants.

Total population				
	Men	Women	Total	Percentage
Total population	17,937,165	18,391,310	36,328,475	
Non-immigrants	13,461,515	13,580,610	27,042,120	74.4%
Immigrants	3,976,160	4,385,340	8,361,505	23.0%
Percentage population (gender)	49.4%	50.6%		
Immigrant population				
	Men	Woman	Total	Percentage
Non-permanent residents	499,490	425,365	924,850	11.1%
Permanent residents	3,476,670	3,959,975	7,436,655	88.9%
Percentage of immigrant population (Gender)	47.6%	52.4%		

Table 1: immigrant and non-immigrant populations in Canada as of the 2021 census.

Labour force						
	2021			2023		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Landed immigrants	2,892,100	2,612,000	5,504,100	3,030,700	2,767,100	5,797,700
Landed immigrants ≤ 5years	443,900	349,900	793,900	497,500	449,000	946,500
Landed immigrants of 6 -10 years	495,000	449,200	944,200	509,000	455,000	964,000
Landed immigrant >10 years	1,953,100	1,812,900	3,766,000	2,024,100	1,863,100	3,887,200
Employment						
Landed immigrants	2,658,600	2,473,800	5,132,400	2,870,200	2,588,600	5,481,700
Landed immigrants ≤ 5years	413,200	404,600	817,800	463,700	422,900	886,600

Landed immigrants of 6 -10 years	447,300	403,000	850,300	481,000	400,000	903,900
Landed immigrant \geq 10 years	1,798,100	1,666,200	3,464,300	1,925,500	1,765,700	3,691,200
Unemployed immigrants						
Landed immigrants	233,400	238,300	471,700	160,400	178,500	338,900
Landed immigrants \leq 5 years	30,700	45,300	76,100	33,800	49,000	82,900
Landed immigrants of 6 -10 years	47,700	46,200	93,900	28,000	32,100	60,100
Landed immigrant \geq 10 years	155,100	146,700	301,800	98,600	97,300	195,900

Table 2: Labour force characteristics of immigrants in Canada in 2021 and 2023.

As observed from the data presented in Table 2, a significant proportion of the landed immigrants in Canada are employed. While the data does not capture the type of employment-full-time or part-time or if the immigrants were underemployed, it was observed that women had a lower employment rate than men. As shown in Figure 1, the employment rate for male and female immigrants with permanent residency was 65.8% and 56.8% respectively as of 2021 and this slightly increased to 68.8% and 57.1% respectively in 2023.

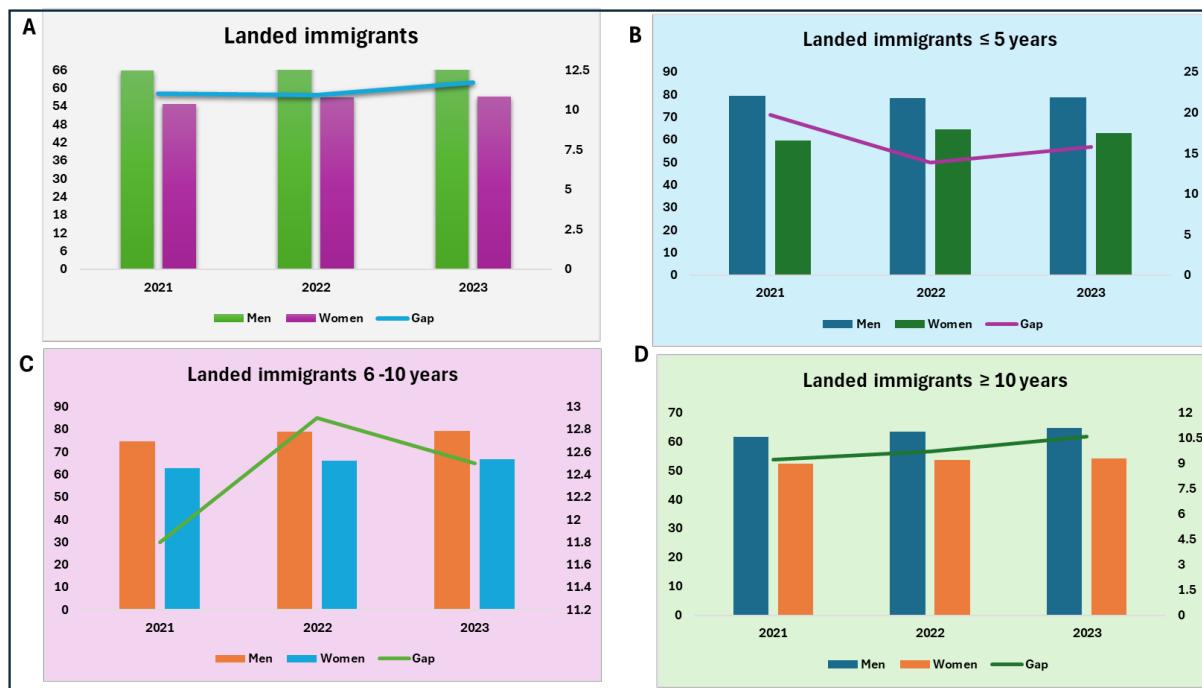


Figure 1: The employment rate of immigrants in Canada from 2021 – 2023.

The gender gap in the employment rate of all landed immigrants in Canada was 11.0% in 2021, this slightly increased to 11.7% in 2023. Gaps in employment rate were also observed across all three categories of landed immigrants. The landed immigrants who earned their permanent residence less than 5 years ago showed the widest gap in employment rate which declined from 19.7% in 2021 to 15.8% in 2023. In contrast, the gap in the employment rate of male and female immigrants who got their permanent residency more than 10 years ago widened from 9.2% to 10.6%. This suggests that men have a higher likelihood of being employed than women.

Annual income of immigrants in Canada

The annual income of immigrants in Canada as of 2021 was explored to identify possible inequalities amongst immigrants in the Canadian workforce. This was assessed based on ethnicity, gender, immigrant status and educational attainment (Table 3). Amongst immigrants with post-secondary certificates, people who migrated from Japan had the highest average annual income of 51,450 USD which was preceded by Chinese (50,320 USD) and South Asian (45,360 USD) immigrants while Black and Southeast Asian immigrants

had the lowest annual income of 39,240 USD and 39,600 USD respectively. In contrast, Korean and Japanese immigrants without any post-secondary certificate had the lowest annual income.

	Post-secondary certificate				No post-secondary certificate				Certificate pay gap		
	Men (\$)	Woman (\$)	Both sexes (\$)	Gender pay gap	Men (\$)	Women (\$)	Both sexes (\$)	Gender pay gap	Men	Women	Both sexes
South Asian	52,150	37,080	45,360	28.9%	28,800	20,440	25,120	29.0%	44.8%	44.9%	44.6%
Chinese	57,100	44,040	50,320	22.9%	23,280	19,020	21,080	18.3%	59.2%	56.8%	58.1%
Black	42,200	36,360	39,240	13.8%	25,920	19,120	22,920	26.2%	38.6%	47.4%	41.6%
Filipino	45,200	38,160	41,280	15.6%	24,660	18,600	22,020	24.6%	45.4%	51.3%	46.7%
Arab	48,880	32,560	42,080	33.4%	20,860	15,180	18,860	27.2%	57.3%	53.4%	55.2%
Latin American	48,480	34,840	41,760	28.1%	32,080	20,960	27,680	34.7%	33.8%	39.8%	33.7%
Southeast Asian	45,200	34,520	39,600	23.6%	33,080	22,660	27,760	31.5%	26.8%	34.4%	29.9%
West Asian	46,280	34,000	40,600	26.5%	24,100	17,400	21,460	27.8%	47.9%	48.8%	47.1%
Korean	48,600	35,520	41,840	26.9%	19,880	15,100	17,520	24.0%	59.1%	57.5%	58.1%
Japanese	65,800	41,080	51,450	37.6%	21,140	13,360	17,760	36.8%	67.9%	67.5%	65.5%
Non-permanent residents											
South Asian	30,440	24,080	28,040	20.9%	28,800	24,080	27,320	16.4%	5.4%	0.0%	2.6%
Chinese	31,480	25,300	28,240	19.6%	25,400	25,300	24,100	0.4%	19.3%	0.0%	14.7%
Black	28,160	22,860	25,640	18.8%	28,360	22,860	25,240	19.4%	-0.7%	0.0%	1.6%
Filipino	36,120	26,120	30,040	27.7%	39,600	26,120	30,000	34.0%	-9.6%	0.0%	0.1%
Arab	25,500	21,360	24,180	16.2%	23,920	21,360	22,560	10.7%	6.2%	0.0%	6.7%
Latin American	36,160	25,260	31,560	30.1%	30,160	25,260	28,160	16.2%	16.6%	0.0%	10.8%
Southeast Asian	26,240	21,600	23,680	17.7%	32,800	21,600	26,350	34.1%	-25.0%	0.0%	-11.3%
West Asian	22,960	18,980	21,180	17.3%	17,000	18,980	31,100	-11.6%	26.0%	0.0%	-46.8%
Korean	35,760	23,680	29,040	33.8%	26,800	23,680	19,400	11.6%	25.1%	0.0%	33.2%
Japanese	106,200	25,460	60,750	76.0%	38,000	25,460	23,000	33.0%	64.2%	0.0%	62.1%
Landed < 10 years											
South Asian	54,400	33,640	45,240	38.2%	25,560	16,160	21,100	36.8%	53.0%	52.0%	53.4%
Chinese	43,480	33,040	37,600	24.0%	16,840	14,600	15,620	13.3%	61.3%	55.8%	58.5%
Black	40,560	30,960	36,000	23.7%	25,880	17,460	22,180	32.5%	36.2%	43.6%	38.4%
Filipino	40,400	32,440	35,920	19.7%	19,840	15,920	18,180	19.8%	50.9%	50.9%	49.4%
Arab	37,200	24,760	32,400	33.4%	18,300	12,860	16,740	29.7%	50.8%	48.1%	48.3%
Latin American	50,440	32,160	41,320	36.2%	29,640	19,380	25,240	34.6%	41.2%	39.7%	38.9%
Southeast Asian	40,560	28,080	33,040	30.8%	25,420	16,760	20,120	34.1%	37.3%	40.3%	39.1%

West Asian	41,920	30,920	36,880	26.2%	21,440	14,680	18,900	31.5%	48.9%	52.5%	48.8%
Korean	43,520	28,160	35,160	35.3%	18,000	11,840	14,600	34.2%	58.6%	58.0%	58.5%
Japanese	57,400	28,320	35,720	50.7%	12,000	12,600	12,400	-5.0%	79.1%	55.5%	65.3%
Landed ≥ 10 years											
South Asian	59,700	40,960	50,920	31.4%	33,400	24,340	29,400	27.1%	44.1%	40.6%	42.3%
Chinese	61,250	47,400	54,100	22.6%	26,720	22,220	24,420	16.8%	56.4%	53.1%	54.9%
Black	50,240	43,760	46,840	12.9%	31,960	25,060	28,760	21.6%	36.4%	42.7%	38.6%
Filipino	51,300	44,280	47,280	13.7%	35,880	26,080	31,520	27.3%	30.1%	41.1%	33.3%
Arab	62,100	37,680	51,700	39.3%	26,400	18,440	23,200	30.2%	57.5%	51.1%	55.1%
Latin American	54,600	39,320	46,880	28.0%	36,480	23,680	31,120	35.1%	33.2%	39.8%	33.6%
Southeast Asian	51,400	37,600	44,320	26.8%	36,960	24,920	30,800	32.6%	28.1%	33.7%	30.5%
West Asian	54,250	39,360	47,400	27.4%	28,440	18,820	24,620	33.8%	47.6%	52.2%	48.1%
Korean	51,800	39,360	45,520	24.0%	26,500	23,300	24,960	12.1%	48.8%	40.8%	45.2%
Japanese	58,300	37,680	43,560	35.4%	25,600	18,000	22,200	29.7%	56.1%	52.2%	49.0%

Table 3: Average income of all immigrants in Canada based on ethnicity, gender and educational attainment.

Aside from Japanese males with non-permanent residency who had the highest annual income of 106,200 USD. The income of permanent residents was significantly higher than non-permanent residents. It was also observed that the pay gap between non-permanent female residents with post-secondary certificates and those with any certificate was quite narrow across the different ethnic groups. Interestingly, it was observed that the 2021 annual income of Blacks (-0.7%), Filipino (-9.6%) and Southeast Asian male non-permanent residents with post-secondary certificates was lower than males from the same ethnicity with no post-secondary certificates. As shown in Table 3, there is a wide gap between male and female permanent resident immigrants irrespective of their ethnicity and academic qualification (13.6% - 50.0%). Japanese male with no post-secondary certificate who were granted permanent residency less than 10 years ago earned less than their female counterparts (-5%).

The independent T-tests presented in Table 4 using the 2021 annual income of immigrants in Canada show that the variations observed in the annual income of immigrants are significant across gender ($F = 11.74$, $t = 4.66$, $p = 0.001$), educational attainment ($F = 16.07$, $t = 7.30$, $p = 0.001$), residency status ($F = 6.62$, $t = 1.60$, $p = 0.011$). The multiple regression analysis presented in Table 5, further confirms that being a female immigrant, having no post-secondary certificates and being a permanent resident in Canada for less than 5 years negatively influences annual earnings ($R^2 = 0.88$, F statistic = 191.66, $p = 0.001$). This implies that 88% of the variations in annual income can be explained by gender, educational attainment and duration of residency.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	t	sig.
Gender					
Male	36599.00	15590.76	11.74	4.66	0.001
Female	25940.00	8398.70			
Educational attainment					
Post-secondary certificate	38807.00	14545.78	16.07	7.30	0.001
None	23732.00	6651.80			
Residency status					
Permanent residency	32663.50	13398.15	6.62	1.60	0.15

Non-permanent residency	28481.50	13647.30			
Duration of permanent residency					
Landed < 10 years	27938.50	12196.52	0.26	3.35	0.001
Landed ≥ 10 years	37388.50	13002.79			

Table 4: Independent t-test between income and immigrant characteristics.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.	
0.94	0.88	0.88	191.66	.000b	
Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	t
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	93916.000	2761.301		34.012	0.000
Educational attainment	-20408.00	1043.67	-0.77	-19.554	0.000
Gender	-10977.00	1043.67	-0.41	-10.518	0.000
Duration of residency	-9450.00	1043.67	-0.35	-9.055	0.000

Table 5: Regression analysis on the determinants of pay gaps amongst immigrants in Canada (2021).

Gender variations in the annual income of immigrants in Canada based on academic qualifications and Industry

The data presented in Tables 6 and 7, shows that there is a wide gender pay gap in the annual earnings of male and female immigrants having similar academic qualifications and working in the same industry. The study also reveals that non-racialized male and female immigrants with similar certificates earn 4.1-25.1% more than racialised immigrants. However, as seen in Table 6, the gender gap across the different academic qualifications in both racialised immigrants (26.5% - 33.9%) and non-racialised immigrants (23.9% - 49.5%). The gender gap in the annual income of non-racialised immigrants was wider than that of racialised immigrants which suggests that the gender pay gap amongst immigrants is likely due to institutional barriers rather than the cultural norms of the immigrants' home country which seemingly prevents women from acquiring higher academic qualifications or taking up high-paying jobs. For instance, the highest gender pay gap for both racialised immigrants (33.9%) and racialised immigrants (38.9%) was observed in immigrants with Master's degrees.

Academic qualifications	Racialised immigrants				Non-racialised immigrants				Racial pay Gap	
	Men	Women	Pay Gap	% Pay Gap	Men	Women	Pay Gap	% Pay Gap	Men	Women
High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate	37,840	27,440	10,400	27.5%	46,040	31,240	14,800	32.1%	17.8%	12.2%
Postsecondary certificate or diploma below bachelor level	49,440	36,360	13,080	26.5%	54,950	38,080	16,870	30.7%	10.0%	4.5%
Non-apprenticeship trades certificate or diploma	41,560	30,120	11,440	27.5%	44,440	28,320	16,120	36.3%	6.5%	-6.4%
Apprenticeship certificate	49,640	27,200	22,440	45.2%	52,000	26,280	25,720	49.5%	4.5%	-3.5%

College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	50,960	37,400	13,560	26.6%	57,750	39,560	18,190	31.5%	11.8%	5.5%
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	51,160	38,520	12,640	24.7%	61,350	42,160	19,190	31.3%	16.6%	8.6%
Bachelor's degree	69,500	48,440	21,060	30.3%	88,600	55,650	32,950	37.2%	21.6%	13.0%
University certificate or diploma above bachelor level	68,700	51,120	17,580	25.6%	80,600	56,850	23,750	29.5%	14.8%	10.1%
Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry	102,000	70,400	31,600	31.0%	129,400	94,000	35,400	27.4%	21.2%	25.1%
Master's degree	89,000	58,800	30,200	33.9%	108,400	66,600	41,800	38.6%	17.9%	11.7%
Earned doctorate	103,500	79,600	23,900	23.1%	115,100	87,600	27,500	23.9%	10.1%	9.1%

Table 6: Annual income of immigrants based on academic qualifications.

S/n	Industries	Men (\$)	Woman (\$)	Gap
1	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	40,480	26,040	14,440
2	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	140,400	98,500	41,900
3	Utilities	112,500	91,000	21,500
4	Construction	50,680	41,960	8,720
5	Manufacturing	62,750	44,040	18,710
6	Wholesale trade	73,000	53,550	19,450
7	Retail trade	46,560	31,040	15,520
8	Transportation and warehousing	44,560	40,440	4,120
9	Information and cultural industries	94,000	64,600	29,400
10	Finance and insurance	107,000	69,400	37,600
11	Real estate and rental and leasing	58,050	45,360	12,690
12	Professional, scientific and technical services	84,100	55,050	29,050
13	Management of companies and enterprises	142,600	82,100	60,500
14	Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	39,240	27,840	11,400
15	Educational services	67,300	46,040	21,260
16	Health care and social assistance	74,300	48,880	25,420
17	Arts, entertainment and recreation	33,280	24,140	9,140
18	Accommodation and food services	27,080	20,740	6,340
19	Other services (except public administration)	41,640	27,160	14,480
20	Public administration	82,700	68,100	14,600

Table 7: Annual earnings of male and female immigrants in 2021 across different industries.

This study probed further into possible gender inequalities amongst immigrants in the Canadian workplace using relevant data on annual income across 20 different industries. As shown in Table 7, there is a wide gap in the annual income of male and female immigrants in all the 20 industries analyzed with the maximum annual earnings of men and women being 142,600 USD and 98,500 USD respectively. The Gap in the earnings for men and women range from 4,120 in the warehousing industry to 60,500 USD in the management and enterprise industry. The data presented in Figure 2 provides better insights into the gender pay gap between immigrants working in different industries in Canada.

The average gap in the annual income of male and female immigrants across the 20 industries listed in Table 7 was 28.2% as of 2021. As shown in Figure 2, the following industries had a gender gap higher than 30%: management of companies and enterprises (42.4%), agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (35.7%), finance and insurance (35.1%), other services except for public administration (34.8%), professional, scientific and technical services (34.5%), Health care and social assistance (34.2%), retail trade (33.3%) and educational services (31.6%).

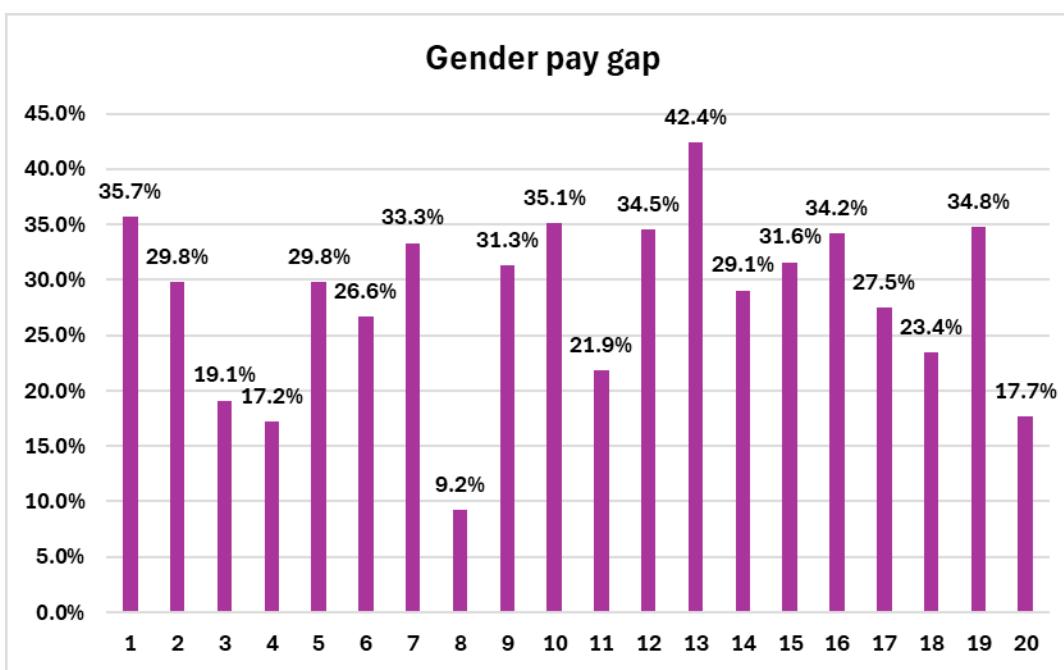


Figure 2: Gender pay gap amongst immigrants in Canada across different industries.

Discussion

The findings from this study show that male immigrants have higher employment rates than female immigrants and the gap in employment rates has slightly increased from 11.0% in 2021 to 11.7% in 2023. This finding suggests that male immigrants have a higher likelihood of being employed than female immigrants. This finding correlates with the study conducted by Liao and Villarreal [40], which revealed that women face lower employment rates and lower full-time employment compared to their male counterparts. The employment rate is worse in Hispanic and Black women with young children [40]. A Canadian study conducted by Singh *et al.* [41] also suggests that female immigrants experience lower employment rates and lower wages compared to their male counterparts and native-born women. Women in Canada, especially those in part-time, low-income jobs and higher levels of job insecurity than men [41]. This could explain why the gap in the employment rate of male and female immigrants widened by 0.7% from 2021 to 2023.

The finding from this study also revealed that the gender disparities in the employment rate of immigrants in Canada varied based on the duration of permanent residency. Between 2021 and 2023, there was a 3.9% decline in the gap in the employment rate of male and female immigrants who became permanent residents for less than 5 years. On the other hand, the gender gap in the employment rate of immigrants who have become permanent residents for more than 10 years increased by 1.4% from 2021 to 2023. Based on the labour segmentation theory, immigrants often enter the labour market through the secondary segment due to institutional barriers such as

lack of work experience in the host country, language proficiency, discrimination and refusal to recognise foreign qualifications by employers [22,25]. Immigrants gradually transition into the primary segment as they begin to gain work experience and acquire academic qualifications in the host country. This could explain why the gap in the employment rate of immigrants who became permanent residents less than 5 years ago reduced as both male and female immigrants focused on improving their human capital. However, due to gender discrimination in the workplace, more women than men are likely to be trapped in the secondary segment which could explain why the gender gap in the employment rate of immigrants who have been permanent residents in Canada for more than 10 years widened from 2021-2023.

It is also worth noting that gender disparities in annual income were observed across all ethnicities evaluated- Black, Latin American, Korean, Chinese, and Southeast Asian, Japanese, Arab West Asian and Filipino immigrants. The widest gap was observed amongst the Japanese immigrants (37.6%) while the lowest gender pay gap was observed amongst Black immigrants (16.8%). Japan is a conservative nation governed by patriarchal norms [42]. Men are traditionally breadwinners, while women are naturally expected to be homemakers [43,44]. Japanese are protective of their cultural heritage as such patriarchal norms are likely to be upheld by Japanese even when in a foreign country [45]. This suggests that the wide gender pay Gap amongst Japanese could be due to Japanese women taking up less demanding jobs so they can attend to family responsibilities resulting in low income. On the other hand, Blacks have overcome patriarchal norms due to the economic hardships experienced in their home country which has fostered their participation in the labour force [46-48]. The active participation of black women in the labour force explains why the gender pay gap amongst Blacks was narrower than other ethnic groups.

While studies have reported that the gender pay gap exists because women are less educated or take up low-paying jobs than their male counterparts [35,49]. The findings from this study revealed that female immigrants with similar certificates working in the same industry as their male counterparts still earn less than men even in a developed country like Canada. While male immigrants with degrees in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and optometry earned between 102,000 to 129, 400 USD annually depending on their ethnicity, women with the same academic certificate earned between 70, 400 to 94, 000 USD. Similarly, the gender pay gap of immigrants with bachelor's degree and master's degrees was as wide as ranged between 30.3-38.6%. This finding aligns with a plethora of research which reveals that women in fact earn less even when they have similar or higher academic qualifications than their male counterparts [37,38,49-51].

Conclusion

This research identified a significant gender-based disparity in the income and employment rates of immigrants in Canada. Despite the progressive immigration policies in Canada, racialised immigrants are not properly integrated into the labour force as a wide pay gap exists between racialised and non-racialised immigrants. The burden of Canada's failed immigrant-labour force-integration system lies heavier on the women as female immigrants earn significantly less than their male counterparts despite being from the same ethnic group, having similar academic qualifications and working in the same industry. The findings from this study call for policy reforms to address institutionalised discrimination against female immigrants in the Canadian labour force. Also, childcare support systems and flexible working arrangements should be enhanced to encourage women's participation in the labour force. Lastly, policies that encourage fair hiring processes should be implemented to ensure that employers provide equal job opportunities to women and immigrants.

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Data Availability

All data used are available on Statistics Canada

Declarations

The author declares that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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