

University Experience and Identity of Second-Generation Immigrant Students from an Ethnic Minority

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BACKGROUND

As of 2016, there are **6.1 million Canadians** who are second-generation immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2019).

Second-generation immigrants have an **intersectional identity** where they maintain their own cultural heritage and that of the larger societal group (Berry & Hou, 2019).

Second generation immigrants who have a **strong sense of belonging** to both their ethnic group and Canada have higher life satisfaction and mental health (Berry & Hou, 2017).

Students from racialized groups can experience **barriers** to education and opportunities (Baum & Flores, 2011).

Research finds that high diversity content about ethnicity, race, and background within classrooms can **foster new-perspectives and confidence** when engaging with peers (Lee et al., 2012).

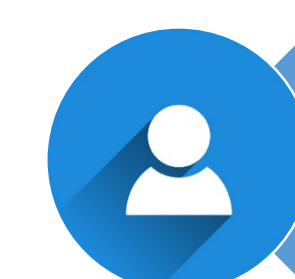
PURPOSE

This study aims to evaluate this intersectional identity (Canadian and Ethnic Minority Background) on **lived experiences** regarding identity, stressors, misconceptions and representation for this specific community of students.

Additionally, this research aims to accurately highlight the experiences of second-generation immigrants to help inform **educational tools**.



METHODS



Twenty-six undergraduate students



Preliminary demographic and self-advocacy questionnaire



Small focus group discussions on their intersectional identity



Post-discussion questionnaire on focus group experience



Qualitative data coded (two-coders) based on transcripts from participants



Overlapping and emerging themes discussed with other coder

DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

The implications of this research include interventions to help integrate second-generation students into campus life and overall support students through many domains such as:

- Fostering a multicultural **campus community** that embraces diversity to improve integration of social identity
- Offering students support through both **student and faculty mentors** to promote discussion about opportunities regarding education, and employment
- Having greater **financial and language support** for students (ie. grants, campus groups with same language speakers)
- Greater representation in classrooms through **group discussions, and course content** on these social identities
- Informing the development of an accurate **educational tool** through highlighting student feedback

RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS

Identity Formation

- Students reported their identity reflects the hard work of their immigrant parents
- Growing up in a multicultural community made integration of their social identity easier into the mainstream culture
- For others, cultural differences between their parents impacted their identity growing up

Challenges: Stressors & Misconceptions

- Students reported barriers and stressors around “opportunities” (i.e.. job, education), “language”, “parental expectations” and “financial” situations
- There were voiced misconceptions about “language”, “autonomy in education” and “overgeneralization of cultural background”
- Students reported that in mainstream media representation is built upon both positive and negative stereotypes

Importance of Representation

- Many students reported not hearing about their social identities within their university classrooms
- Students expressed the need for an accurate representation of this intersectional identity across disciplines through professors, course content, or open discussions
- Students reported wanting greater representation of their social identities beyond stereotypes within mainstream media

Educating Others

- Students want others outside this intersectional identity to acknowledge their privileges, exhibit empathy and have an open mindset around different social groups
- Students expressed that an educational tool should have realistic and holistic representation that is not stereotypical, while accurately highlighting intersectionality (language, culture, family)



Fostering Campus Community



Supports and Resources



Accurate Educational Tools



Mentorship Opportunities



Representation in Classrooms

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