

2016

# Perception of job satisfaction and over qualification among African immigrants in Alberta, Canada

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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2016

Abstract

Perceptions of Job Satisfaction and Over-Qualification Among African Immigrants in

Alberta, Canada

by

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MA, University of Antwerp, 2007

BA, University of Dschang, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

May 2016

## Abstract

African-trained landed immigrants in the Alberta labor market are faced with employment over qualification and professional devaluation. Researchers have documented the precarious labor market position of this cohort and efforts undertaken by federal and provincial Canadian governments to address it. Little is known, however, about how these African immigrants perceive job satisfaction and over qualification. Guided by human capital theory, this phenomenological study focused on the perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification among 11 landed immigrants of African origin in Alberta, Canada. Data were collected using semi structured interviews. Hatch's 9-step technique was used to analyze data, resulting in coded domains, master outlines, and themes. Findings indicated that labor market initiation, quality of life, labor market practices, and reeducation contributed to the immigrants' perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification. Findings also suggested that labor market introductory programs and skills refining may influence labor market performance. Results may be used to enhance socioeconomic integration services and programs run by immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this research to family and friends whose loyalty was a galvanizing force during the years I spent at Walden University.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The labor market performance of internationally trained newcomer landed African immigrants in Alberta is rife with over qualification, job mismatch, deskilling, devaluation, and underemployment (Banerjee 2009; Bauder 2013; Mavromaras, Sloane, & Wei 2012; Pratt 2008). Four years after arriving in Canada, over 51.6 % of internationally trained immigrants are engaged in occupations inferior to pre-immigration employment (Chen, Smith, & Mustard, 2010). In addition, Bauder (2013), Couturier and Schepper (2010), and Islam (2009) showed that labor market outcomes are better for native-born Canadians with similar educational and professional backgrounds compared to their internationally trained newcomer counterparts. Statistics Canada (2013) reported that the labor market performance of internationally trained newcomer immigrants in Canada improves over time with a narrowing in income gaps when compared to native-born Canadians. Furthermore, Smith (2002) postulated that in a free market economy, labor market outcomes and labor market realities can be the same to all actors and that educational and professional experience are not always perfect predictors of labor market performance. The few studies mentioned above highlight the presence of job mismatch in the labor market performance of internationally trained immigrants in Canada. Additional studies will be reviewed in Chapter 2.

The point is that there is over qualification and job mismatch for newcomer internationally trained immigrants in the Canadian labor market. Despite decades of over qualification among newcomer African landed immigrants in Canada, there has been a steady increase in the number of those who choose Alberta as residence (Statistics Canada, 2014). Extant research has concentrated on over qualification and its impact on

immigrant socioeconomic performance and how immigrants report quality of life in Canada. However, how landed African immigrants articulate job satisfaction and over qualification has not been investigated (Randall et al., 2014).

### **Background**

Economic integration and labor market facilitation have been the preoccupation of countries that rely on international labor migration to increase their human capital. Canada is one such country. Preibisch (2007) reported that “one of the most striking trends in this regard is the growing use of foreign workers” (p. 420). In the Canadian case, Chen et al. (2010) reported that “skilled workers (immigrants coming to Canada specifically for the purpose of employment) now comprise almost 60% of all new permanent residents in Canada” (p. 602). There is no indication that the Canadian federal government or provincial governments will stop programs on labor immigration in the near future. There might even be an increase in the need for foreign labor in the Canadian labor market in the next decade when the baby boomer population retires. Iacovino and Leger (2013) cataloged some of the causes and solutions to the poor labor market performance of immigrants in Canada, suggesting a review of some normative foundations.

However, little is known about how newcomer landed immigrants of African origin perceive over qualification and job satisfaction. Extant literature on over qualification focuses only on education and professional credentials obtained outside of Canada. Perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction need to be understood in addition to education and professional credentials. This gap is necessary to investigate (Randall et al., 2014).

This study was needed for a couple of reasons. First, provincial and federal governments in Canada select internationally trained immigrants under the skilled worker program on the basis of their educational and professional credentials, presuming that such individual will do well in the Canadian labor market. There is a similar preference by most Canadians for immigrants from the landed immigrant category than for immigrants from other immigration classes (Boyd, 2014). Newcomer landed immigrants do not always do well because most of them wind up in occupations that are inferior to the ones they exercised prior to relocating to Canada. However, the number of African trained newcomer immigrants is on the rise in Canada and in the province of Alberta. However, there is a lack of understanding of why this trend continues and how over qualification and job satisfaction have been theorized. Second, because education and professional credentials have proven not to be good predictors of labor market performance, there is a flaw in the human capital immigration policy design by Canadian federal and provincial governments. There could be a mismatch between policy intent and outcome.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The economic integration of internationally trained newcomer immigrants of African origin in the Canadian labor market is rife with job mismatch and over qualification (Bauder, 2013; Pratt, 2008). This problem has persisted over the last decade as Canada continues to welcome internationally trained immigrants to increase its human capital. With the current labor market trends and institutional prescriptions regarding the selection and integration of newcomer immigrants in Canada, their labor market

aspirations are not always fulfilled. Over qualification continues to be reported because the number of newcomer landed immigrants in Alberta is on the rise.

There is evidence that public policy preferences are still focused on recruiting more internationally trained immigrants despite the widespread presence of over qualification. Boyd (2014) discovered that “migration data and policy overviews confirm that Canadian permanent residency policy is oriented to the recruitment of high skilled labor, particularly through its skilled Worker class” (p. 51). Chen et al. (2010) offered that devaluing the expertise of internationally trained individuals does not only nullify the potential for an optimal utilization of labor but it also compromises the intent of the landed immigration program. From a policy perspective, this depicts a mismatch between policy intent and policy outcomes. The performance of internationally trained immigrants in Alberta and in Canada in general has been associated with factors such as language, social capital, political capital, and point of labor market initiation (Smith, Glazier, & Sibley, 2010). There are also numerous governmental and nongovernmental agencies providing integration services to immigrants with a mandate to economically empower them. The potential of such interventions to optimize the integration experience for immigrants and reduce incidences of over qualification is debatable.

From a comparative perspective, labor market outcomes are not the same to all groups in the Alberta labor market. There is disparity in income gaps among immigrants from different countries and continents, and between native-born Canadians and newcomer landed immigrants (Phythian, Walters, & Anisef, 2011). Disparity in income still exists between native-born Canadians and their African counterparts with equivalent educational and professional credentials. Within the immigrant circle, underemployment



and over qualification are higher than within the native-born Canadian circle (Couturier & Schepper, 2010). The Survey of Labor and Income Dynamics showed that over qualification decreases over time with a narrowing in income gaps between native-born Canadians and newcomer immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2013). Recent immigrants tend to perform poorer in the labor market than those who have lived in Canada for over 5 years and who were occupationally active. Over qualification, however, persists because of the increase of newcomer landed immigrants who choose Alberta as residence. It was important to investigate how over qualification can be minimized from a policy perspective and from the perspective of those who are recruited under the landed immigration category.

This study was warranted because (a) policy design used for the selection and integration of newcomer landed immigrants engenders over qualification and (b) there was an increase in the landed immigrant African population in Alberta despite widespread reports on over qualification. There was also a lack of research addressing why these two scenarios have persisted.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do landed African immigrants in Alberta articulate job satisfaction? Under what conditions does this articulation change?
2. How do landed African immigrants describe the Alberta labor market? What context do they give to it in light of their experiences with other African labor markets?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to foster understanding of job satisfaction and over qualification as experienced by newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in the Alberta labor market. Executed as a phenomenological study, the focus was on the lived experiences with over qualification and job mismatch as articulated by landed African immigrants in Alberta. A phenomenological study was the most appropriate approach for this investigation because the focus was on the lived experiences of a particular group of people regarding over qualification and job satisfaction. The method of data collection and analysis is presented in Chapter 3. The interview questions are also provided in Appendix C.

### **Nature of the Study**

This study was a qualitative investigation carried out with a post positivist philosophical perspective. The fact that issues of labor market integration have been present in public policy and immigration platforms in Alberta is proof of the poignant nature of over qualification and the need to understand how it is perceived alongside job satisfaction. I sought to generate understanding from internationally trained newcomer African immigrants as they navigate the Alberta labor market and deal with over qualification. Executed as a phenomenological study, I focused on the beliefs and perceptions from newcomer internationally trained immigrants of African origin and how they self-reported job satisfaction and over qualification. A phenomenological study was the most appropriate approach because my focus was on the lived experiences of a particular group of immigrants and their experience of over qualification and job mismatch. Data were collected from a sample of 11 newcomer landed immigrants of

African origin; this research population met the criteria for participation. Semi structured interview questions were used. The longest interview lasted 1 hour 5 minutes and the shortest lasted 33 minutes. Hatch's (2002) 9-step model of inductive data analysis was used to analyze the data.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was framed by human capital theory. The basis of selecting and granting permanent residential status to newcomer landed immigrants by the Canadian provincial and federal governments is a function of human capital. Immigrants' educational and professional backgrounds serve as a pointer to the Canadian government that such individuals will easily integrate and find meaningful employment once in Canada. Several schools of thought have espoused human capital theory; one commonality in these schools is that education and training account for net income differentiation and labor market performance.

As an expansion on Adam Smith's notion of economic productivity, human capital theory has been revisited and re-theorized in modern days with several views emerging. First, Becker (1964) argued that human capital is based on the production process and task differentiation. This perspective asserts that in a one-dimensional production line, a set of skills and education are the sole determinants of production line outcome. Schultz (1967) and Nelson-Phelps (1966) presented human capital as the capacity to adapt to market shocks and disequilibrium. Another school of thought was proposed by Gintis and Bowles (1988) argued that education is not the great equalizer as perceived by the society but that education can contribute to class bias and inequality because those who cannot afford it are disadvantaged. Additionally, Gardner (2011) focused on the modeling of

intelligence and cognitive ability. Gardner argued that human capital is multidimensional because individuals present with a myriad of skill sets and abilities, which affect their mental and physical abilities and therefore their level of productivity.

Canadian federal and provincial governments run a number of immigration programs including the federal skilled worker program in which immigrants within and outside of Canada are granted permanent Canadian residential status primarily because of their educational and professional prowess. My research participants were immigrants of African origin who were granted permanent residential status and who are residing in Alberta, one of Canada's 10 provinces. A theoretical proposition on human capital was an appropriate lens to investigate over qualification and job mismatch because the federal and provincial governments of Canada grant permanent residential status to landed immigrants hoping that they will find similar employment as what they had in their countries of origin. Human capital theory was used to elicit an understanding of the labor market position of internationally trained newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in Alberta. This theory will be explained further in Chapter 2.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Landed immigrant:* A person who has been granted the right to live permanently in a state other than where he or she originally holds citizenship, by a new host state's immigration authorities (Dulhaime's Law Dictionary, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2011)

*Job over qualification:* This refers to a situation in which an individual's occupational status is inferior to his or her professional training, skill set, or professional experience (Chen et al., 2010).

### **Assumptions**

I assumed that the skill sets, educational experiences, and professional experiences of newcomer landed immigrants of African origin were equal to those of native-born Canadians and other landed immigrants in Alberta. This assumption was necessary because educational systems and labor markets around the world differ.

I also assumed that a formal university degree or professional training certifications were quintessential predictors of labor market performance. This assumption was necessary because the Canadian federal and provincial immigration authorities appoint landed immigrants based on their educational and professional backgrounds, and also because landed immigrants are made to believe they will do well in the Canadian labor market because of their educational and professional prowess.

### **Scope**

The study was limited to landed immigrants of African origin who (a) received their permanent residential status while living outside of Canada, (b) have lived in Alberta for at most 5 years, and (c) have experienced or are experiencing over qualification. Participants resided in Alberta and were ready, willing, and able to work. Eleven newcomer landed immigrants of African origin were interviewed. The phenomenon under investigation was the lived experiences with over qualification and job satisfaction. The lived experiences with over qualification and job satisfaction was limited to Alberta, but the results of my findings resonated with investigations on landed African immigrants in other Canadian provinces.

### **Limitations**

From the moment of data collection right up to data analysis, I suspended judgment of participants' experiences and observed objectively as data was collected. All interview questions were open ended and only served as a structural guide. As such, participants shared only the experiences of over qualification and job satisfaction they wanted to share. As a researcher, I did not approach participants with bias or preconceived ideas. The focus was on participants, and my experiences in Alberta were consciously minimized.

The results of this investigation are directly applicable only to the 11 landed immigrants of African origin who participated. However, this study is an important part of the puzzle and a significant contribution, for academicians and non-academicians, to understanding perceptions of over qualification and articulations of job satisfaction in the province of Alberta, Canada.

### **Significance**

Employment over qualification among internationally trained immigrants has been reported in Alberta and in many parts of Canada. There is still a need for internationally trained workers in Alberta and in Canada in general (Government of Alberta, 2015). Despite decades of over qualification among newcomer African landed immigrants in Canada, there has been a steady increase in the number of individuals who choose Alberta as residence (Government of Alberta, 2011). Canadian immigration policy also shows a preference for highly skilled immigrants because, based on their education and professional credentials, they can "settle in Canada and take part in the economy" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015, para.1). It is therefore significant to

Canadian immigration policymakers to revisit the recruitment procedure and integration programs of internationally trained immigrants of African origin because, although it is predicted that they will perform well in the Canadian economy, over qualification and job mismatch persist. This could be a signal of a mismatch between policy intent and outcome.

Immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta could benefit from the thick descriptions of job satisfaction and over qualification to inform the design of their integration and economic empowering programs. There is expected to be an increase in highly skilled immigrants from the African continent, and their voices should be factored into the design of integration programs aimed at them (Burstein, 2010). Perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification can inform policy and program designs from the federal to the provincial levels.

This study has significant social change implications for my research participants as internationally trained landed immigrants. The landed immigrant program of the Canadian government may be impacted and its effectiveness scrutinized thanks to this research. Furthermore, perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification could impact decisions by other immigrant cohorts planning to migrate to Canada. Some light was also shed on the need for pre-immigration preparedness initiatives by the Canadian provincial and federal governments.

There was also a theoretical significance to this investigation. There is consensus that the constant reliance on foreign labor to increase domestic production by host countries is partly because there is an underutilization of existing immigrant skills in Canada (Frank, 2013; Fuller & Martin, 2012). From a theoretical point of view, a caveat

can be introduced on how over qualification and job satisfaction have been theorized. Education, professional credentials, and income levels have been the dominant indicators of labor market performance. Taking cognizance of the results of this research, labor market performance is also contingent on labor market point of entry, quality of life, and duration in the labor market.

### **Summary**

The labor market performance of internationally trained newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in Alberta is precarious, and there was a need to investigate this problem using a phenomenological approach. How this cohort articulated job satisfaction was important to know because this had bearings on how they recounted and lived with over qualification. Human capital theory was an appropriate framework for understanding their lived experiences. Through an exploration of over qualification and job mismatch, newcomer landed African immigrants may become better equipped to navigate the Alberta labor market. Immigrant-serving organizations and Canadian provincial and federal governments could also benefit when enacting immigration policies. The number of landed immigrants is on the rise in Alberta, and there is no indication that this trend will cease in the near future. This chapter is followed by a review of relevant literature in Chapter 2.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The labor market performance of internationally trained newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in Alberta is rife with over qualification, job mismatch, deskilling, devaluation, and underemployment (Banerjee 2009; Bauder 2013; Mavromaras et al, 2012; Pratt 2008). Like most provinces in Canada, Alberta depends on foreign labor to remedy its labor market personnel shortage, and there is no indication that this trend will cease in the near future. However, after landed immigrants arrive in Canada, their hopes and aspirations are not always met. Most of them end up in occupations different from what they were trained and educated to do before immigrating to Canada. Others accept jobs inferior to their education and professional experiences. As new entrants into the Alberta labor market, their labor market position is precarious because finding a job, getting promoted, or being retained after a probation period is not likely. Labor market outcomes are better for native-born Canadians with similar educational and professional backgrounds compared to their internationally trained newcomer counterparts.

Statistics Canada (2013) reported that the labor market performance of internationally trained newcomer immigrants in Canada improves over time with a narrowing in income gaps when compared to native-born Canadians. Furthermore, Smith (2002) postulated that in a free market economy, labor market outcomes and labor market realities can be the same for all actors and that educational and professional experience are not always perfect predictors of labor market performance. There is a dearth of literature exclusive to newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in the Alberta labor

market. The over qualification and job satisfaction experiences of landed newcomer immigrants of African origin in Alberta have not been addressed in current scholarship.

In this chapter, I present the research strategy used to identify relevant literature. References focused on human capital and international labor migration with an emphasis on Alberta in particular and Canada in general. I looked at articles that problematized immigration and economic integration of foreign trained individuals in Canada and around the world with a special focus on immigration policies and human capital acquisition. Reviews provided a holistic understanding of the Alberta labor market and foreign trained individuals of African origin. The reviews also broadened my understanding of labor and migration in other parts of the world and how researchers have investigated them.

### **Research Strategy**

The literature search strategy for this study was eclectic. I used Statistics Canada's annual report on labor force characteristics by immigrant country of origin and residential status. Three major Canadian resources on immigration and employment were used: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), and the Survey of Labor and Income Dynamics in Canada (SLID). The Walden online library was also used; articles by topic were searched within the Academic Search Complete and ProQuest databases. Search terms such as *immigrants and over qualification in Canada*, *Canadian Immigration policy*, *Canadian Labor market*, and *Immigrant labor in Alberta* were used.

The same search terms were used with Google Scholar, and this led to the discovery of authors who had written extensively on immigrant labor and the Canadian labor

market. The works of authors with the most citations were searched using the Walden online library. I discovered a large amount of literature on foreign trained labor supply, Canadian provincial and federal immigration policies, and the Canadian labor market. However, there was no articles that addressed job satisfaction and over qualification among internationally trained newcomer landed immigrants of African articulation. The literature review presented in this chapter focused on key concepts of my research: job satisfaction, over qualification, immigration policy, labor market performance of landed immigrants of African origin, the Alberta labor market, and the political economy of Canada.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

I used human capital theory to frame the study. The basis of selecting and granting permanent residential status to newcomer landed immigrants by the Canadian federal and provincial governments is a function of human capital. The educational and professional backgrounds of immigrants serve as a major indicator that they will easily integrate and find employment in Canada. Human capital theory has been espoused by several schools of thought that agree that education and training account for net income differentiation and labor market performance. An expansion on Adam Smith's notion on economic productivity, human capital theory has been revisited and re-theorized with several modern views emerging.

Becker (1964) supported a view of human capital that is based on the production process and task differentiation. This perspective asserts that in a one-dimensional production line, a set of skills and education are the sole determinants of any production line outcome. Skills that individuals bring into the labor market are both innate and

acquired; they are innate in the sense that people are endowed with skills by virtue of an inborn intellect. Acquired skills are learned over time by virtue of education and training. Other attributes of Becker's thesis on human capital influences are school quality and pre-employment influences. In economic terms, these are critical factors in the demand and supply of labor. The skills and professional credentials that job seekers possess should be skills that employers are looking for. Debate on pre-employment influences is abundant in the policy arena; there is, for example, a debate on classroom sizes and the optimization of learning experiences. Pre-employment initiation can predict how an individual fares in a one-dimensional production line. A key element of this approach is the return on investment in education and training that can be measured in pecuniary or employment advancement terms. In a one-dimensional production line, a return on human capital investment can expose differentiation biases if compensation is unequal among employees. Becker's view has been critiqued for a rigid focus on the one-dimensional production line because wage differentiation, for example, depends on other factors with exogenous influences such as occupational or task differentiation and market shocks.

Schultz (1967) and Nelson-Phelps (1966) described human capital as the capacity to adapt to market shocks and disequilibrium. Education, training, and pre-employment influences vary across labor markets. The ability to adapt and reallocate resources in the face of different political economies is an important aspect of the return on human capital investment. Immigration policies are influenced by socioeconomic trends in Canada (Ferrer, Picot, & Riddell, 2012). Market shocks and economic disequilibrium are mostly caused by external factors, and no organization is completely sheltered from such

interferences. Schultz and Nelson-Phelps focused on adaptability and market shocks but did not paint an exhaustive picture on human capital and the return on human capital investment differentiation.

Gintis and Bowles (1988) proposed another school of thought, arguing that education is not the great equalizer as perceived by society, but that education can contribute and reproduce class bias and inequalities. The focus of this view is on occupational hierarchy and markets in capitalist societies. Schooling and training are not ends to themselves but means to equip individuals with appropriate labor market protocols and philosophies. Gintis and Bowles (1975) highlighted that:

And with steadily increasing levels of resources devoted in the preparation of labor, in the form of child rearing, education, health, and training, the shift toward treating the worker more precisely as a capital good seems, at least in hindsight, to have been virtually inevitable. (p.74)

Bowles and Gintis embraced the principal-agent logic: that is, more economically viable actors (principals) attract less viable actors (agents) to subservience because of a higher human capital investment exhibited by the former. In this case, it is assumed that the principal is more doctored than the agent, which results in creation of inequality in human capital returns. A critique of the Bowles and Gintis's theory on human capital is that the ability to make the right educational and training choices and to inculcate ideologies formally or informally is beyond any predetermined hierarchy or market philosophy.

Gardner's (2011) view is focused on the modeling of intelligence and cognitive ability. Gardner argued that human capital is multidimensional because individuals

present with a myriad of skill sets and abilities that affect their mental and physical abilities, hence their level of productivity. The multiple intelligence theory undergirds Gardner's view on human capital in the sense that it demonstrates how different sets of skills are modeled. Skilled labor does not necessarily produce more than unskilled labor because mental and physical abilities are not equivalent with all human capital investments and returns. Gardner's view on human capital is arguably the most influential on employment and human resource management (Manuti, 2014).

The Canadian government runs several immigration programs among which is the landed immigrant scheme, also called the skilled worker program, whereby individuals within and outside of Canada are granted permanent Canadian residential status primarily because of their educational and professional prowess. Human capital theory has played a great role not only in labor economics in Canada, but it has also shaped and continues to shape the Canadian immigration and integration policies since the 1920s (Clifton, 2010; Vanderplaat, Ramos, & Yoshida, 2012). All of these theoretical propositions will generate a better understanding of the perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification among newcomer African immigrants in Alberta.

### **Review of Literature**

Over qualification and job mismatch characterized the labor market performance of internationally trained newcomer landed immigrants in Canada. Immigrant educational and professional credentials are sometimes not recognized, and this has consequences for immigrants, immigrant-serving organizations, and Canadian immigration policies. A review of the relevant literature on the Canadian labor market and internationally trained

recent immigrants provided a picture of where the current debate on immigration policies is concentrated. There has been minimal disagreement on the need for foreign human capital to feed the Canadian labor market, but there are divergent conceptual and political philosophies on what works best in the interest of internationally trained immigrants. Several labor market actors and agents have suggested that some changes have to be made at multiple levels and that institutional and political economic issues will be significant in reducing over qualification experiences for internationally trained newcomer immigrants.

### **Employment Over qualification**

Recent research on over qualification within immigrant circles in the Canadian labor market is not meager, but experiences of over qualification and job satisfaction among international trained immigrants of African origin in the province of Alberta have not been addressed. Some researchers use the terms *over education* and *deskilling* when referring to over qualification. No studies, however, have been carried out on perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction articulation by landed African immigrants in Alberta.

Chen et al. (2010) defined over qualification in the labor market as a situation in which an individual's employment status is inferior to his or her level of education, training, and professional experience. In such a case, lesser education and work experience are needed to perform the tasks associated with the position. In addition, over qualification has a wage dimension in which one gets paid less than his or her counterparts with the same education and schooling in the same industry. This proposition tilts toward the normative definition of over education, which focuses on the

return on investment in education. Over qualification tends to be more severe with internationally trained recent immigrants in Canada, especially at the moment of labor market inquiry and initiation. New entrants of African origin into the Alberta labor market have not been investigated with a concentration on over qualification and job satisfaction.

Research indicated that several factors determine the labor market position of internationally trained recent immigrants in Canada. Newcomers to the Canadian labor market represented about 60% of the total population growth by 2009 (Dean & Wilson, 2009). Furthermore, Statistics Canada (2013) revealed that 4 years after arrival in Canada, 54% of immigrants continue to look for full-time employment; among those who wound up finding a job, 60% wound up with employment that was inferior or devalued their education, professional training, and professional experience. There is consensus among researchers that the causes of over qualification for recent internationally trained immigrants in the Canadian labor market are threefold. Arguments are compelling but in no way exhaustive.

The first explanation that accounts for labor market over qualification is the no recognition or devaluation of foreign-earned degrees and credentials. In Canada, provincial and federal governments set their own standards of evaluating credentials that are not obtained in Canada. In a province like Alberta, there is the International Qualification Assessment Agency (IQAS); in British Columbia, there is the International Credentials Evaluation Service (ICES); and in Ontario, there is the Internationally Credential Assessment Service (ICAS). If one leaves one's province for another, an evaluation might be carried out again by the receiving province for labor market and



education purposes; some provinces have compatibility agreements, and some provinces do not. Some credentials are determined to be inferior compared to degrees earned in Canada despite the same length of study periods; other credentials are downright unrecognized, and holders are expected to undergo placement tests or recommended to take some other courses in a Canadian institution for homologation purposes. Regulated sectors in Canada, such as the health care and engineering sectors, exhibit the most over qualification and job mismatch. Some occupations are subjected to rigorous board exams, and others are subjected to lengthy fine-tuning that most internationally trained immigrants give up. The consequence is that post immigration occupation becomes inferior to premigration employment status.

The second argument is that newcomer immigrants lack the Canadian work experience, also referred to as soft skills or labor market cultural capital. Canadian experience is a political economic and institutionalized cultural artifact with labor market discriminatory agendas (Hanlon, 1998). Pratt (2008) shared a similar view by acknowledging that labor market discriminatory artifacts such as soft skills have transcended the labor market to infest how society constructs the meaning of occupation and work. The third and last barrier identified by a large number of researchers is the language barrier. It cannot be gainsaid that language skill is quintessential for success in the labor market. African-trained immigrants whose mother tongue is neither English nor French find it even harder to avoid over qualification and job mismatch. In modern economies and industrialized countries, country-specific language skill is a game changer for immigrants in the labor market (Adamuti-Trache, 2011; Guerrero & Rothstein, 2012; Guo, 2013).

Whatever the reasons for over qualification among African-trained immigrants in the Canadian labor market might be, I argued that the labor market position of newcomer immigrants of African origin in the Alberta is problematic. This line of argument entails subjective and objective paradigms which appeared over the years to be of concern to both African immigrants and Canadian immigration and labor authorities. Employment over qualification has been identified to have an effect on the mental and general health of immigrants (Chen et al. 2010; Dean & Wilson, 2009). Furthermore, over qualification is not limited to newcomer internationally trained immigrants. Extant literature showed over qualification among recent graduates from Canadian universities. Education and enlightenment historian such as Israel (2012) reported that over education will always exist in the labor market because of individual characteristics and labor market schemes. Over qualification in the labor market could be a function of (a) labor market point of inquiry and orientation, (b) labor market characteristics, (c) duties and tasks characteristics, (d) ethos of employment and unemployment, and (e) the chime between education and employment (Israel, 2012)

### **Labor Market Performance**

Positive or negative change destabilized internationally trained newcomer landed immigrants after they settled in Canada. For some newcomers, the decision to relocate to Alberta is a leap in the dark and for others it is a well-calculated move. There is an assumption among internationally trained immigrants and Canadian policymakers that personnel with postsecondary education credentials possess a recipe for better labor market performance than those without. There is disagreement among researchers that education and professional experience can perfectly predict labor market performance.

Islam (2009) discovered that higher education had the potential to drive internationally trained immigrants into unemployment or into a precarious labor market position. His argument was that, immigrants with postsecondary education credentials tend to be less flexible in choosing employment than those without. The cream of highly educated internationally trained immigrants in Canada is less tolerant to education versus occupation mismatch. Six out of 10 newcomer landed immigrants in the Canadian labor market left Quebec province to other provinces of Canada because of reasons including, the search for better labor remuneration (Akbari, 2011).

Theses on labor market performance can be summarized as employability; that is, the ability or the potential to enter the job market, the ability and potential to retain a job, and finally, the ability to gain promotion into a managerial position or higher rungs of employment. For African newcomer immigrants, employability measured within these parameters mentioned above were unattainable. Labor market theorists argued that employability is an individual assessment and should be carried out contextually taking into account labor market practices and hegemonic policies. In Canada, public policy interferes with labor market dynamics for economic and sometimes for political reasons (Wang, 2010). Wang (2010) further critiqued public policymakers for generalizing, simplifying, and calculating socio economic realities. The point is that, institutionalized labor market interferences affect labor market performances in ways that are sometimes unintended.

Some researches argued that the presence of newcomer personnel in the Canadian labor market was a threat to native-born Canadians. However, no empirical evidence was discovered in the literature. New entrants into the Canadian labor market performed

poorer than old entrants, and little was known as to what point in the labor market was performance optimal for newcomers. If education was the exclusive measure of labor market performance, then propositions that the Canadian labor market was being sold out could be valid. Wahl (2000) supported this proposition because most internationally trained newcomer immigrants had educational credentials which were higher than those of their Canadian counterparts. A counter proposition by Islam (2009) debunked the substitutability of immigrant labor with native-born Canadians. He argued that the introduction of new personnel into an existing production system acted as a motivator to those already in that system.

There was consensus among researchers that the Canadian labor market had 2 performance arenas namely, a periphery and a core arenas. These arenas were ideological, and in some provinces and sectors of the economy, structural. Bauder (2013) and Voltonen (2001) described these partitioning as labor market monopolistic practices. These authors argued that, because the Canadian labor market culture is segmented, labor market agents can only perform within these frames thus robbing them of the possibility to perform optimally. The core arena was highly bureaucratic, with an exclusionary executive and political culture. This core arena was also impenetrable for new entrants into the labor market. Access into the core labor market arena was mostly by appointment and not by election or merit. Labor market praxes at the core arena were characterized by political heritage especially in a province like Alberta where a single political party had been the ruling government for over 40 years (Cohen, Coval, & Malloy, 2010). Party politics changed but party ideology and policy idiosyncrasies persisted.

On the other hand, in the peripheral arena employment was fraught with uncertainty and volatility; employee benefits and pension plans were few. The peripheral labor market arena is where most African immigrants were found. This arena was an artifact of social and structural segregation, and affected the mental and general health of immigrants. Researchers showed that most newcomer landed immigrants accepted jobs which were physically debilitating and mentally exhaustive in order to make ends meet. This was the case with immigrants whose employability capacities were weak during periods of economic slump.

Furthermore, general health consequences of deskilling and job insecurity have been documented (Chen et al. 2010; Dean & Wilson, 2009; Kim, Carrasco, Muntaner, McKenzie, & Noh 2013). A study by Antecol and Bedard (2006) provided a picture of work related hazards and recent immigrants in recipient countries. These authors extrapolated on the healthy immigrant effect, namely that, newcomer immigrants tend to be healthier and prepared to take on dirtier and risky jobs than native-born or old comers in the labor market. Most internationally trained immigrants in Canada reported episodes of over qualification or job mismatch. Creese and Wiebe (2012) described survival employment as employment that is undertaken as a last resort. Survival employment had occupational health and safety consequences because it is considered the worst form of deskilling and job mismatch.

Cotton (1998) proposed a threefold approach to improve the labor market performance of internationally trained newcomer immigrants in Canada. His approaches were by no means exhaustive and did not serve as a panacea for the labor market issues faced by African-trained newcomer immigrants. Cotton identified networking, cultural

integration, and social participation as cornerstones to success in the Canadian labor market. Networking according to Hoye, Van Hooft, and Lievens (2009) is crucial for job seekers with weak or no social capital. For most newcomer immigrants, the first point of labor market inquiry was an individual with an identical socioeconomic background. Some newcomer immigrants were introduced to their ethnic communities or to an immigrant serving organization after arriving in Canada (Dean & Wilson, 2009). This introduction was crucial in understanding how newcomer immigrants perform over time in the labor market. Some communities and organizations of introduction were limited in professional and labor market network capacities. Furthermore, networking was considered quintessential because the Canadian labor market was intractable, meaning that, employment opportunities were hard to come by.

Cotton's second proposition to improve the labor market performance of internationally-trained newcomer immigrants in recipient countries was through cultural integration. Debates on culture and integration had the potential to incite value judgment by polarizing cultures. However, cultural antagonism was not left out of the debate on the labor market performance of internationally-trained immigrants in the labor market. Cultural integration was suggestive of other integration modes such as diversity, multiculturalism, and assimilation. Ersanilli and Koopmans (2010) identified the rewards of cultural integration among settler communities in host countries; one of the rewards was an increase in the likelihood to be employed and to understand labor market dynamics. Moreover, a sense of belonging and the acquisition of political capital came with cultural integration. In the last decade, Canadian policymakers have demonstrated a

preference for multiculturalism because of a strong human rights foundation in formal and informal institutions in Canada.

Cotton's third proposition was social participation. That is, the accumulation of social capital in building resilience and employment competitiveness. Chilton (2011) supported this line of thought as a good way to manage migration. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century Canadian policymakers enacted immigration and integration policies for admitting, integrating, and economically empowering immigrants. There were a host of provincial and federal agencies mandated to provide integration services to newcomer immigrants. A central vision for these agencies was community engagement and social participation. Considered as visible and no visible ethnic minorities, the participation of immigrant communities in host countries was manifested in cultural modes of expressions (Casanova, 2007; Phung, 2011). However, there were philosophical and ideological differences among immigrant serving organizations in Canada. There were organizations that believed that, immigrants should be socially integrated as guests who did not have equivalent labor market performance capacity as native-born Canadians. A study carried out by Goldring and Landolt (2011) showed that the labor market performance of internationally-trained immigrants was precarious especially during times of economic downturn. Xie and Gough (2011) identified 2 kinds of newcomer immigrants (a) those who participated in socioeconomic activities, and (b) those who were enclaved in ethnic milieus. The former cohort, they argued, performed better in the labor market.

### **The Canadian Labor Market**

The Canadian labor market was one of the most diverse and multicultural in the world. Recent trends in Canada showed that, the influx of skilled persons with no

Canadian academic or professional credential was on the rise (Bauder, 2005; Smith, 2002). According to Statistics Canada, in 2012 alone, over 60% of new entrants into the Canadian workforce were foreign-born and, settled in Canadian under the skilled worker program. Personnel demography and concentration in the Canadian labor market was characterized by episodes of shifts starting from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the early 1900, the wheat boom brought about in a brief period of labor supply sufficiency. A few years later, a period of severe labor shortage necessitated an aggressive drive to recruit foreign labor force. The result was that, by 1913, there were about 7.2 million immigrants in the Canadian labor market. The labor market activities during this period were mostly agricultural and spin-off agricultural businesses. Around the 1920's, the labor market started to shift towards a manufacturing industry.

By the mid 1950's, a service economy started and at the beginning of the 21st century, an information technology industry followed. During these periods, the population of the labor market changed dramatically as a results of skills that were no longer in demand. In recent times, the labor market outlook in Canada is positive but the labor market position of internationally-trained immigrants of African origin remains precarious. An indicator of the robustness of the Canadian economy was an overall reduction in unemployment rate, an increase in full-time employments, and an average weekly earnings of \$914.8 Canadian dollars (Government of Canada, 2014). However, researchers showed that labor market outcomes are worst for internationally-trained newcomer African immigrants when compared to immigrants from other continents (Bauder, 2013; Islam, 2009).



The percentage of foreign-born workers in Canada was the second largest in the world; second to Australia. Reitz (2012) pointed out that, with the recent global immigration trend, governments around the world are faced with numerous policy challenges. International labor and migration caused a continuous review of existing policies and labor market practices in Canada. International labor migration and the competition for global human capital acquisition to increase domestic workforce was a trend that was familiar to Canadian policymakers. With a long history of enviable immigration laws and policies, Canada was second only to Australia in terms of the percentage of foreign-trained individuals in the workforce.

Internationally-trained individuals were granted permanent residential status because of their academic or professional background. A higher education and many years of professional training presented by immigrants were indicators that, the chances to be occupational active in Canada were great. There were a number of immigration programs which immigrants could apply for in order to relocate to Canada. Canada's relationship with other countries in the world differed and would sometimes be reflected in trade or in diplomatic agreements. Walton (2011) investigated Indo-Canadian trade agreements over 2 decades and discovered that international trade networks exhibited potentials for labor migration between countries with some partnership dynamisms. Globalization and the interconnectedness of goods and services networks facilitated the transfer of labor. In Canada, burgeoning sectors such as the information technology and healthcare, demanded an increasing need for foreign expertise.

Bauder (2003) termed a situation of over qualification of foreign skills in recipient countries as brain abuse. Hoag (2008) described brain drain of healthcare professionals in

Canada and reported broad practices of deskilling and devaluation of immigrant academic and professional credentials. In 2012, more than 20,000 of all licensed nurses working in Canada were foreign-born, and the number of foreign-trained physicians is also on the rise (Girard & Smith, 2013). This trend was predicted to continue in the next 2 decades and will pose challenges to Canadian authorities. This trend left immigrants from developing countries in a bad shape because, healthcare professionals who wound up in Canada, were needed in their countries of origin.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Immigrants made up two thirds of Canada's population growth and the number of African-trained newcomer immigrants in Canada had steadily increased since the 1980s (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012; Tannock, 2011). Statistics Canada (2014) reported that, most Canadians were in favor of immigrants from the economic and skilled worker immigration programs. That is, preference for immigrants who were internationally-trained and in possession of postsecondary degrees. The arrival of African-trained immigrants into the Canadian workforce triggered a demographic shift. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2012) reported that 70% of Canada's labor force between 1991 and 1996 were immigrants, and immigrants accounted for a net labor market increase by 2011. In 2011, 60% of immigrants in Canada were highly skilled and recent arrivals (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). Furthermore, the labor market aspirations of internationally-trained immigrants were unmet because most of them did not succeed to acquire employment in their areas of expertise.

There was a gap in extant research on landed African immigrants in Alberta and their perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification. In addition, the labor market

position of newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in the province of Alberta was understudied. In light of these gaps in extant literature, perceptions of employment over qualification and job satisfaction by landed immigrants from Africa in the province of Alberta, was necessary to investigate. To investigate the labor market performance of internationally-trained African newcomer immigrants in Alberta and their experiences with over qualification, a phenomenological approach was chosen. In the next chapter, I provided how the study was carried out, how participants were identified and selected, and how data was organized and analyzed.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to foster understanding of job satisfaction and over qualification as articulated by newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in the Alberta labor market. Executed as a phenomenological study, I focused on the lived experiences of landed immigrants regarding their over qualification and job satisfaction. A phenomenological study was the most appropriate approach for this investigation because the focus of the research was on the lived experiences of a particular group of individuals regarding over qualification. This chapter presents the methodology that was used to foster an understanding of this research problem.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

I identified 2 overarching research questions to address the research problem:

1. How do landed African immigrants in Alberta articulate job satisfaction? Under what conditions does this articulation change?
2. How do landed African immigrants describe the Alberta labor market? What context do they give to it in light of their experiences with other African labor markets?

In phenomenological studies, the researcher works collaboratively with research participants to generate firsthand data. This implies that a back-and-forth engagement with inductive reasoning was necessary because of the complexity of co-constructing lived experiences. Creswell (2013) noted that phenomenological studies should “involve collaborating with participants interactively; so that they have a chance to shape the themes or abstractions that emerge from the process” (p. 45). Abstractions were collected using Hatch’s (2002) inductive model of data analysis. With Hatch’s 9-step methodology,

a cross-examination of over qualification and job satisfaction perceptions among newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in the Alberta labor market was carried out. I was attentive to emergent themes necessitated by the inductive nature of this study and facilitated by the varied realities that were described by research participants. I engaged in heuristic and descriptive phenomenologies that mirrored the structural analysis espoused by Hatch (2002); the objective was to understand over qualification and job satisfaction perceptions among my research participants. Maxwell (2013) argued that “an important issue in designing a qualitative study is the extent to which you decide on your methods in advance, rather than developing or modifying these during the research” (p. 88).

The rationale for choosing a phenomenological approach for this study was strategic. Exploring over qualification and job satisfaction articulation among newcomer landed immigrants in the Alberta labor market could be best achieved through a qualitative investigation. Qualitative studies are inductive and exploratory while quantitative studies test hypotheses and establish relationships among two or more variables. This investigation was beyond a narrative approach because narrative research is focused on one or two individuals giving accounts of an event or action (Creswell, 2013). Grounded theory approach is focused on theory discovery. Ethnographic research emphasizes culture sharing in groups requiring the investigator to immerse him or herself within the setting of research participants. Case study research is used to understand intrinsic issues bounded by space and time. A “case study can be composed to illustrate a unique case, a case that has unusual interest in and of itself and needs to be described and detailed” (Creswell, 2013, p. 98). By comparing the phenomenological approach with

other approaches, I chose the phenomenological approach as the most appropriate method to answer my research questions.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The crux of phenomenological studies is data emanating from the lived experiences of a phenomenon by an individual or group of individuals. This calls for a complete focus on research participants and a consistent awareness of the researcher's bias. I strove at all times to relegate my beliefs and opinions to the background, and focused all of my attention without prejudgment on research participants and their data. As Patton (2002) observed, "knowing what you want to find out means being able to recognize and distinguish appropriate from inappropriate responses. It is not enough just to be able to ask the right question" (p. 376). I used epoche and bracketing at all times by making sure that I did not prejudge or lead my research participants. Keeping an open mind during the data collection and interpretation process warded off any personal bias.

### **Methodology**

Phenomenological research is a scientific method of inquiry that allows for inductive exploration and collection of scientific evidence thanks to a rigorous and purposeful selection of research participants who are information-rich and who fit the selection criteria. My methodology was guided by a mixture of what Moustakas (1994) termed epoche, imaginative variation, synthesis generation, and phenomenological reduction. These guidelines were used intermittently and strategically throughout the data collection process. Hatch's (2002) 9-step technique of inductive data analysis was used as a framework for data analysis. However, I understood that data collection and analysis in

qualitative studies is exploratory and should not be limited by the scope of a predesigned analytical tool or framework.

I interviewed 11 landed immigrants who were trained in Africa, who had lived in Alberta for 5 years or less, and who had experienced or were experiencing job over qualification. Sampling was purposeful with three requisite criteria. The lived experiences of this sample population generated data for my descriptive study. Interviews were semi structured with open-ended questions to allow for the emergence of themes and patterns essential to the research problem (see Appendix C.). These questions were designed in a manner that triggered and generated data from perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction. This was important because in qualitative studies, interview questions should be sanctioned by the kind of data that the researcher wants to collect and the conclusions that can ensue (Maxwell, 2013).

Survey interviews were used to explore participants' perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction. The survey questions were open-ended. The 14 questions were followed by further questions depending on the emergent themes. It is important that survey interviews as an instrument of data collection be amenable to data collection of lived experiences. The semi structured research questions were meant to elicit participants' responses, giving room for the reconstruction of realities with the topic under investigation. Because research participants had to reconstruct meaning from a lived experience, this provided a suitable medium to do so. Survey questions were therefore an appropriate way to promote conversations.

In-depth interviewing as a survey instrument has three distinctive features that increases the potential to capture lived experiences. These features are (a) a focus on life

history, (b) reflection and framing of meaning, and (c) a focus on rich experiential details (Creswell, 2013). In the case of the focus on life history, participants' experiences are put into a particular context bounded by space and time according to the research topic. Phenomenological research is about participants' life histories captured within other histories and how they perceived those histories. The role of the researcher is to use survey questions to forage for information about this phenomenon, namely the personal setting. Reflection and framing of meaning are also amenable to survey interviews in phenomenological studies. Individuals might experience the same phenomenon but feel differently about it. Framing and reflection on meaning helps the researcher understand how research participants understand affectively and effectively. The crux of meaning reflection and framing resulted in an accumulation of rich and concrete description.

Rich experiential details were obtained from participants' descriptions, the meaning they proffered, and the elicitation of what they have become because of their lived experiences. By responding to inquisitive questions and probing, research participants had the opportunity to provide concrete details regarding their lived experience in their own terms. Survey interviews are also easily amenable to memoing. Unlike electronic surveys, in-depth teleconference interviews provide the opportunity to listen to participants' words and tonalities and observe their nonverbal cues. Field notes taken during the interview processes also add to the descriptive data provided by research participants.

2 overarching research questions were identified.

1. How do landed African immigrants in Alberta articulate job satisfaction? Under what conditions does this articulation change?



2. How do landed African immigrants describe the Alberta labor market? What context do they give to it in light of their experiences with other African labor markets?

My research participants were African-trained immigrants from the landed immigrant category who were living in Alberta for less than 5 years and who had experienced or were experiencing job over qualification in the labor market. Research participants were recruited via a snowball technique and via cooperation with a host of immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta such as the African Center Edmonton Alberta, Bredin Institute Edmonton Alberta, Catholic Social Services Edmonton Alberta, and the Mennonite Center for Newcomers Edmonton Alberta. In total, 11 landed immigrants of African origin were recruited and interviewed. Below is a comprehensive guide showing the steps of recruiting participants, informing participants, collecting data, and validating my findings.

1. I contacted managers of the three prominent immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta via phone or in person to provide them with information about my study.
2. I provided an informative letter with details of the study to managers describing how they could assist with disseminating my research. Interview questions were reviewed with two managers of partner organizations for clarity and alignment with the research problem. Managers gave permission to hang recruitment posters of my project in their precincts.
3. I phoned and emailed contacts who met the selection criteria. This was also an opportunity to answer questions about participation.

4. I set up individual interview dates during the informative phone and email meetings.
5. All participants were interviewed once. During the initial contact with participants, they were educated on the proposed study and given a consent form to read and sign.
6. The next step was the interview appointments set up by each participant. All interviews were conducted at the participants' homes at their preferred times. All interviews were conducted via the phone.
7. Interviews were audio taped, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed according to Hatch's 9-step inductive data analysis technique.
8. Three colleagues at Walden currently enrolled in the dissertation course and undertaking qualitative investigations assisted in validating the themes identified from the transcripts. My dissertation chair approved of these colleagues.
9. Final contact with research participants was via email. The purpose was to provide them with my findings in order to gain validation.
10. All written and audio material will be destroyed once the research is published on ProQuest.

My study was a description of how internationally-trained newcomer landed African immigrants perceived over qualification and job satisfaction. Data analysis was inductive.

### **Sampling and Participant Selection**

There are multiple sampling strategies in qualitative studies, and most of them could be used for a phenomenological investigation. Sample size in phenomenological studies is not standard; however, phenomenological researchers recommend that any sample size chosen should saturate data that is possible to achieve. That is, new themes and perspectives may not emerge after sampling a certain number of participants. I therefore had a sample population of 11 newcomer landed immigrants of African origin who had experienced or were experiencing over qualification and who had lived for 5 years or less in Alberta.

Sampling was purposeful and limited to participants who met the selection criteria. There are 10 provinces in Canada, and a review of the relevant literature demonstrated that a large population of landed immigrants who are impacted by over qualification and job mismatch are scattered all across Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011). The majority of newcomers in Canada select the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta as their primary residence (Statistics Canada, 2011). Identifying newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in Alberta was therefore possible; 9.5% of the 6.8 million immigrants in Canada in 2011 lived in Alberta, and over 144,000 of them were recent arrivals (Statistics Canada, 2011).

### **Data Collection**

Data collection started after IRB approval. IRB approval number for this research is: 11-20-15-0298367. In phenomenological studies, data collection is a recursive interaction between the researcher and the participants. It is also important that the procedure allows for concomitant data analysis because in phenomenological studies,

processes and procedures should guide data collection. To maximize data collection, it is necessary for the researcher to employ as many data collection methods and opportunities as possible (Creswell, 2013). By so doing, the risk of missing tacit data is reduced. Semi structured in-depth interviews were used when interviewing participants. I used interview questions to guide the data collection procedure and not to confine the interviewees. The questions were open ended and probing in nature, and were posed via teleconferencing. The intention of the open-ended questions was to give respondents freedom to dwell on matters of their choosing, thereby providing pertinent data on their perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction.

The interview questions served as a guide and were sometimes followed with more questions as necessary. All participants were interviewed once because there was no need for a second interview. This form of interview technique was aimed at checking for clarification and elaboration and the exposure of data that was hidden in details. Only probes that were directly related to experiences of over qualification and job satisfaction were made. It was important to observe neutrality throughout the data collection process. That is, I was neither for nor against what research participants described. Examples of probing questions included (a) what makes you say that? (b) why do you think that is important? (c) can you elaborate on that? (d) would it be a fair conclusion to say that...? Each participant was probed differently according to the direction of each interview. The number of questions posed and the probe style and interval varied. All probes were geared toward exploring perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction. The purpose of the main research questions was to elicit salient and rich description of what the phenomenon under investigation meant to research participants.

Each participant was given an identification code that masked his or her real identity during and after data collection. Each participant was given a pseudonym starting with the letter P. The first participant was coded as P1, the second as P2, and so on and so forth. They were 11 participants in total. A close attention was given to participants' word choices and tonal expressions during each interview. A great deal of communication is nonverbal, and can be observed in body language for example, when a participant makes facial expressions or hand gestures. Field notes were taken during all interview sessions, and each interview was recorded in a retrieval audio tape that was later transcribed verbatim by a specialized transcription agency. The transcribed texts were carefully compared to the audio version for consistency. Furthermore, to verify that the data was a true transcribed copy of the interview data, each participant received a transcribed copy of his or her own interview. No participant reported significant modification to their transcribed interview. Finally, I sent out emails thanking participants for their time and data.

The purpose of phenomenological study is to bring out meaning from a lived experience by a group of individuals who experienced an identical phenomenon and report it as they perceive and relate to it. Interviews are important in phenomenological studies because, they scientifically engage the interviewer and the interviewee in discussions that expose rich data from the point of view of the interviewee (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2013).

The interview questions in Appendix C were appropriate in regards to the overarching research questions. Firstly, the purpose of my research was to investigate the perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification among landed African immigrants

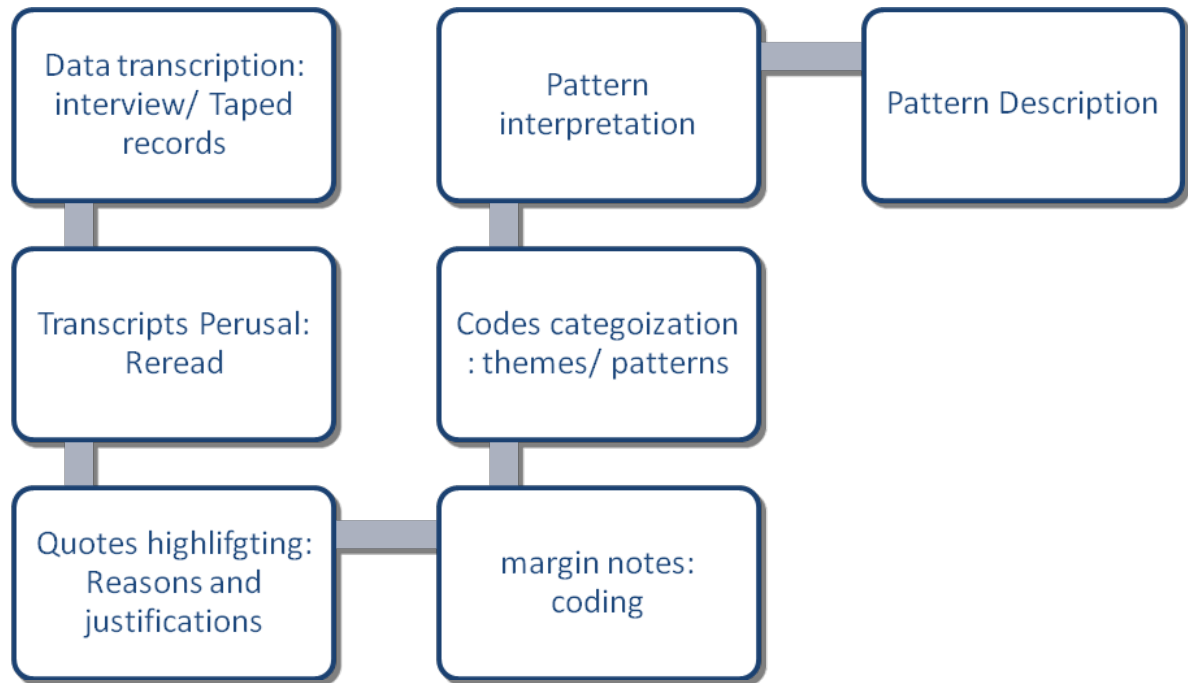
in Alberta. Interview questions were formatted to be applicable to this context, and to those who experienced over qualification in Alberta. The interview questions mainly probed for beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, meaning constructions, and behaviors.

Secondly, investigating lived experiences with a phenomenon, it was important to be interactive with participants. Interacting with participants during the data collection period maximizes the discovery of detailed, rich, and thick data (Ioannidis & Siegling, 2015). Interview questions in this research generated data that could be analyzed by Hatch's 9-step inductive techniques of data analysis. The research and interview questions were open-ended and exploratory in nature, giving room for over qualification and job satisfaction to be articulated freely.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation Plan**

Data analysis in qualitative studies occurs simultaneously with data collection. Making preliminary codes and annotations is important as soon as data become available. Creswell (2013) observed that “building on the data from the first and second research questions, data analysis go through the data” (p.82). Phenomenological research has a signature pattern for data analysis; I borrowed from that pattern to guide my data analysis process (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Pattern of phenomenological data analysis and interpretation.



However, I used Hatch's (2002) 9-step inductive data analysis model as a tool for data analysis and interpretation. Hatch (2002) provided a model that guides data analysis through a step by step process. This model is described below:

1. Data reading and frames of analysis identification,
2. Domain creation on basis of frames of analysis,
3. Salient domain identification and coding,
4. Data reread and salient domain refining,
5. Verification of domains supported by data; counter evidence notification,
6. Within domain analysis,
7. Across domain analysis,
8. Master outline development of within and across domain relationships, and

9. Narrative development undergirding master outline.

The first step in the data analysis process consisted of reading the data several times and identifying frames of analysis. By so doing, a holistic picture of how perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction was noted. The manner in which participants worded their perceptions and beliefs was also recorded. It was important to remain open-minded and nonjudgmental to what participants described. To achieve the full benefit of this phase, researchers must immerse themselves into the details of the data (Hatch, 2002). Reading and identifying frames of analysis began during the initial phase of the data collection process. This meant that reading and framing the data did not only occur after all interviews had been completed. Creswell (2013) argued that “the process of data collection, data analysis, and report writing are not distinct steps in the process – they are interrelated and often go on simultaneously in a research project” (p.182).

Identifying frames of analysis included collecting how over qualification and job satisfaction were defined, interpreted, described, constructed, and articulated by internationally-trained newcomer landed African immigrants in Alberta. Frames were conceptual at this stage and were eventually confirmed as the data analysis process unfolded. My frames were (a) labor market initiation (b) quality of life (c) labor market practices and changes, and (d) training and reeducation. These 4 concepts constituted my frames as I read and reread the data that introduced me to the next level of Hatch’s 9-step analytical model.

The second step was the creation of domains. Domains are wording relationships found within and between the 4 conceptual frames. Examples of domains discovered are found in tables 3 and 4 in Chapter 4. Hatch (2002) identified 9 semantic relationships



with domain analysis. The first is called strict inclusive relationship and states that a domain X is a kind of, or derivative of domain Y. The second kind of domain relationship is spatial and it depicts that X is a place in Y. The third relationship is the cause-effect relationship, which denotes X as being the result of Y. Fourthly, Hatch (2002) identified the rationale relationship which states that X is a reason for doing Y. The fifth is called relationship action location denoting X as a place that Y can be done. The sixth is a functional relationship depicting X as being used for Y. The seventh is the means-end which holds that X is a way that Y can be done. The eighth is a sequential relationship describing X as a step in Y. The last one is called the attribution relationship which analyzes X as a characteristic of Y.

Analysis based on semantic relationships was important because relationships in and between data illuminated the research problem. Terminologies in data were either inclusive or covering in nature. That is, “inclusive terms name the members of a category and cover terms name the category into which all the included terms fit” (Hatch 2002, p.165). This second step in Hatch’s (2002) inductive data analysis resulted in the creation of many inclusive terms. Domain analysis showed which domains were salient and which ones were not. Salient domains were those that were linked to other domains. Salient domains were salient not because of their preponderance and encompassing nature, but also because they informed and instructed the phenomenon under investigation.

Salient domains identification and coding was the third step according to Hatch’s (2002) 9- step inductive data analysis. Domains identified as salient were manually coded, and inclusive terms added to them as the analytical process evolved. There were several ways domains were coded. They were coded in accordance with their inclusive

natures, through their semantic relationships, or in accordance with their encompassing natures. Using Table 3 as a domain example, coding was as follows: Labor market initiation (Cover term) code as “1”, labor market initiation as a place in of networking coded as “1A”. Labor market initiation is a used for building new relationships coded as “1B”. The result was a catalogue of codes with many categories. A deeper exploration was achieved by rereading and refining the salient domains.

The fourth step was to reread and refine salient domains making a note on where they were located. At this point, salient domains were used as common denominators to include other inclusive terms that were found in other domains. The goal at this stage was to look for cohesion among domains by taking into account their inclusive terms, so that all inter and intra domain relationships were identified.

The fifth step was to verify identified domains for evidence in data collected. During this stage, data that did not match or ran contrary to relationships in the created domains were singled out. Deductive reasoning was employed to achieve optimal verification because elements that conformed and those that did not conform, were significant to the study. Hatch (2002) postulated that “this step involves examining the quality of data that have been included in constructing your domain” (p.170). The first achievement of data saturation was discovered at this stage of the analysis. No emergent data category was discovered after all domains were reexamined for relationship content. Data saturation was discovered when elements of domains became repetitive. This was a significant observation, meaning that the relationships documented in created domains were congruent with data.

The sixth step of the inductive analysis was focused on within domains. This required a rigorous analysis and interpretation of domains; digging deeper for richness and complexities. Hatch (2002) advised that “the object is to study the data that have been organized into domains in ways that allow the discovery of new links, new relationships, and new domains” (p.172). For example, with Table 4, a within domain analysis was carried out for a relationship between optimism and confidence, anxiety and uncertainty. The reason for this type of analysis was to fine-tune each domain, so that a comprehensive understanding of over qualification and job satisfaction could be achieved.

The seventh step was an across domain analysis. I searched for themes and patterns across domains while asking questions such as “what does all this mean?” what could I make of these relationships and linkages among and within the domains that were created? Drawing from Tables 3 and 4, I wanted to understand the social implications of staying positive (inclusive term) and building new relationships (another inclusive term), in case a relationship was noted between them. Another example was to make an inductive data-informed meaning out of attending workshops (inclusive term) and labor market initiation (cover term), in case a semantic relationship existed between them. It was also at this stage that common denominators and differentiators were determined in order to piece them together thematically, and in an attempt to understand the whole.

The eighth step of data analysis comprised of creating a master outline or taxonomy showing relationships that existed across, within, and among domains. This step set the ball rolling for reporting the findings of the data collection and analysis effort. It was the summation step, and it was also composite and comprehensive. By using taxonomy, I

was able to virtually map patterns of relationships and causalities among and within domains. The ninth step consisted of developing a narrative that supported the master outline. Excerpts of data were presented verbatim and sometimes by paraphrasing. Precise quotes supporting master outlines were written down to provide a compelling write-up. The result was an information-rich analysis and synthesis of perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction described in 12 themes presented in chapter 5.

### **Validity and Trustworthiness**

It is fundamental in phenomenological research for researchers to provide quality of evidence with the process and results of their investigation. I provided validity of the research methodology and results by using 3 techniques. They are (a) member checking, (b) transferability, and (c) colleague review. These techniques contributed to the credibility of process and finding. Because phenomenological research method is used to investigate lived experience of a targeted group, findings must be congruent with data collected from participants (Creswell, 2013). Member checking, transferability, and colleague review also added to the dependability and conformability of results. It was important to establish validity because findings could give issue to other quantitative or qualitative research problems.

Member checking is the process of verifying respondents' data with the resultant interpretation made by the researcher (Creswell, 2013). It consists of having respondents read transcripts of their interviews and the themes and interpretations that are drawn from them. All participants received copies of their interview via email and were requested to confirm or correct their statements. No significant changes were reported by participants and they all validated the data and themes presented them.

Results were validated in terms of transferability. Trochim (2006) described transferability as “the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings” (Para.4). Throughout the data collection process, the goal was to produce descriptions of lived experiences with over qualification, and descriptions of how job satisfaction was perceived by newcomer landed African immigrants in Alberta. Data generated was possible for reuse or application in similar contexts. A literature review showed that, there were investigations on immigrants and labor market performance, but there was a lack of understanding on how job satisfaction and over qualification were perceived by landed African immigrants in Alberta. The results of this investigation were limited to 11 participants who were interviewed for the research. However, the results resonated with migrants and the labor market in Canada.

Finally, I employed colleague review to check for validity. Colleague review is the process of availing oneself with disinterested input from peers with similar analytical insight in order to maximize multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2013). Two principal benefits can be accrued from colleague review. They are (a) to have an outsider with no vested interest, yet with a critical analytical mind validate the chime between transcripts and themes, and (b) to have a researcher critique findings and provide unbiased feedback. I requested 3 scholar colleagues to give feedback as part of my colleague review strategy. Their feedbacks did not provided any significant disharmony from the themes and data they were given to review. These colleagues were doctoral students at Walden and were endorsed by my research chair.

### **Ethics and Participants' Protection**

Adhering to scholarly ethical standards and protecting participants during data collection process was taken seriously. During contacts with prospective participants, I informed them about the protocol of the research, and about the protection of their rights and the data they provide. The informed consent form (appendix C), provided information about the project and the protocol of the interviews. Participants were informed that participation in the research was voluntary and their identities remain anonymous. No harm was identified with participating in this study.

Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of participants when quoting directly or when paraphrasing. The audiotape and transcripts were stored in a locked closet in my house. No one but I had access to this closet. Data in the audiotape and transcripts are destroyed once my project is completed and published.

### **Summary**

By investigating perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction among internationally-trained newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in Alberta, a contribution to scholarship is made. Within the parameters of public policy and administration, Canadian provincial and federal governments enacted the landed immigration program to recruit international human capital. The outcome of this policy created unforeseen consequences. The purpose of this research was to understand how newcomer landed immigrants under an immigration policy, lived and made meaning of over qualification and job satisfaction in the Alberta labor market.

The research approach was phenomenological, and sampling was purposeful criterion. Eleven participants were selected across the province of Alberta. Participants

met the criteria to participate in the project. They were (a) participants must have lived in Alberta for the last 5 years or less at the time of their interview, (b) they must be newcomer landed immigrants who migrated to Canada under the landed immigration program (c) they must be actively looking for employment, and (d) they must be experiencing over qualification or have experienced it within the last 5 years.

Data was collected through telephone interview and all participants were located in their homes. The interviews were recorded, de-identified, and then sent out for transcription by a specialized transcription agency. Recruitment of research participants was through a snow ball technique and consultation with immigrant-serving organizations across Alberta. Open-ended questions (appendix C) were used during data collection. Data collected was analyzed using Hatch's (2002) 9-step inductive data analysis technique in qualities studies. The following research questions were explored:

1. How do landed African immigrants in Alberta articulate job satisfaction? Under what conditions does this articulation change?
2. How do landed African immigrants describe the Alberta labor market? What context do they give to it in light of their experiences with other African labor markets?

The next chapter is Chapter 4, and it contains the results of the investigation plus elements such as setting, demographics, data collection and data analysis.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification by newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in Alberta, Canada. The study was a qualitative study that focused on the lived experiences with over qualification and descriptions of job satisfaction by landed African immigrants in the Alberta labor market.

Guiding this study were two overarching research questions:

1. How do landed African immigrants in Alberta articulate job satisfaction? Under what conditions does this articulation change?
2. How do landed African immigrants describe the Alberta labor market? What context do they give to it in light of their experiences with other African labor markets?

At the start of each in-depth interview, I thanked participants for voluntarily accepting to participate. I then informed them about the interview protocol and gave an introduction of what the interview would explore. Participants were also told that the interview was being recorded and that notes would be taken as they spoke. Finally, I told participants that they would receive transcribed copies of their interviews. They were also advised that they could withdraw at any point during the interview without any consequences. Participants also said they had read and understood the consent form and gave a signed and dated copy to me.

All of the in-depth interviews were conducted via teleconferencing with participants safely located at their homes. Data collected on the tape recorder were de-identified and sent to a professional transcription agency for word verbatim transcription. Each



participant was sent a copy of their interview for review. No modification was made by any participant. During each interview, participants were asked to give examples to illustrate their responses, and some responses were repeated back to participants to ensure clarity.

Eleven participants were interviewed. The longest interview lasted 1 hour 5 minutes and the shortest lasted 33 minutes. I used semi structured interview questions to probe participants and document responses. The average interview time was 42 minutes.

### **Pilot Project**

There was no pilot study for this research. The two main research questions and subsequent interview questions were reviewed by a specialized research reviewer at Walden and found to be sufficient in answering the research question. Furthermore, two community partner managers read the interview questions and found them to be adequate for exploring the research problem. Modifications were made during all reviews; however, once the proposal was submitted and approved by IRB, no further changes to the research questions and interview questions were made.

### **Population**

The population of this study was defined as African immigrants from the landed immigration category residing in the province of Alberta, Canada. Residence in Alberta must have been less than 5 years, with no prior residence anywhere outside of Africa by the time of immigration to Canada. Participants were experiencing or had experienced job mismatch or over qualification in Alberta. It took close to two months after the IRB approval to recruit and interview participants. Potential participants were screened and certified to meet the participation criteria. In total, 19 participants expressed interest in

participating in the project. Only 16 were eligible after a criteria screening, and in the end 11 participants accepted and responded in time to participate. All participants stated that they read and understood the consent form sent to them via email. Most participants disclosed that they saw the poster of my research project on notice boards of some immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta. Others were informed by friends and by referrals about the project. No changes were made to the participants' inclusion criteria. Participants' demographic details is shown below (see Table 1)

Table 1

*Participants' Demographics*

	Gender	Age	Country of Origin	Academic Credentials	# of years in Alberta
P1	F	32	Ivory Coast	Doctorate in Medicine	3 years
P2	F	36	Ivory Coast	Masters in Engineering	3 years
P3	F	33	Nigeria	Masters in Accountancy	8 Months
P4	M	42	Nigeria	Masters in Physiotherapy	3 years
P5	M	35	Ivory Coast	Doctorate in Geography	3 years
P6	M	47	Uganda	Masters in Engineering	4 years
P7	M	35	Niger	Masters in Accountancy	4 years
P8	F	32	Sudan	Masters in Engineering	2 years
P9	M	42	Ethiopia	Masters in Governance	3 years
P10	F	30	Nigeria	Bachelor in Food Sciences	3 years
P11	M	35	Cameroon	Masters in Accountancy	4 years

The focus of this study was African immigrants from the landed immigrant category residing in Alberta, Canada. My purpose was to investigate participants' perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification in the Alberta labor market. There were no changes to the interview instrument after IRB approval because this instrument satisfied the objective of the study.

## Data Collection

The purpose was to interview up to 20 immigrants of African origin in Alberta. In total 16 participants met the inclusion criteria, and after 11 were interviewed, data collection ended because saturation had been attained; no new themes were being generated by the 11th interview, so no further interviewing was necessary. Data collection started by identifying five immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta. These organizations were considered the hub for newcomer immigrants in Alberta. Managers were emailed and informed about the project. A telephone call followed seeking permission to hang posters promoting the study and begin the call for participation. Permission was granted in writing for this collaboration (see Appendix A). The managers were advised that their role was only to facilitate publication and dissemination of the posters.

Interested participants contacted me via email and phone. I thanked them and advised that they would be contacted again with more details and a consent form. After the IRB approval was granted on November 20, 2015, an email was sent to participants who had shown interest, asking them for a prescreening telephone interview. After screening, 16 were deemed acceptable for participation. Participants who did not meet the criteria were eliminated. The 16 eligible participants were sent an email with the consent form attached requesting to set a date and time for the interview. All participants said they wanted a phone interview. They were advised that in the case of teleconference calls, they had to be located in a safe and quiet area at the time of the interview.

All 11 interviews were conducted over the phone with participants located in the comfort and quiet of their homes. Most interviews took place during the weekend or on

weekday evenings. All interviews were recorded on two audiotapes; the second tape recorder was a backup. An hour before the interview, participants were called and asked to charge their phones before the interview.

Interviews occurred once with each participant. The same interview questions submitted to IRB were posed, and occasionally follow-up questions followed. The first interview took place on November 24, 2015, and the last one took place on January 4, 2016. The longest interview lasted 1 hour and 5 minutes, and the shortest lasted 33 minutes. All questions were open ended allowing participants to answer as they wished. Often their responses were paraphrased and read back to them to ensure clarity.

There were no unforeseen circumstances during the data collection process except for two participants who had not signed and sent back copies of the consent form prior to their interviews. These two participants, however, stated that they had read and understood the consent form. The signed forms were received after the interviews were conducted.

The in-depth interviews gave participants the opportunity to choose their focus in depth and in breadth. As such, participants provided information on how they experienced job satisfaction and over qualification in Alberta. These lived experiences were recorded on an audiotape and were later transcribed. Notes were also taken during the interviews to record voice oscillation and emotional expression such laughing and distress.

### **Interview Data Analysis**

Data analysis was consistent with phenomenological research, with Hatch's (2002) 9-step technique as the analytical tool. Participants provided data about their experiences

with job satisfaction and over qualification in Alberta. In addition, participants provided detailed descriptions of their occupational experiences in their countries of origin and how these experiences compared to those in Alberta, Canada.

As described in Chapter 3, Hatch's (2002) 9-step data analysis technique includes the following: (a) data reading and identification of frames of analysis, (b) domains creation in function of the frames of analysis, (c) salient domain identification and coding, (d) data reread and salient domain refining, (e) verification of domains supported by data and identification of outliers, (f) creation of a within domain analysis, (g) completion of an across domain analysis paying attention to emergent themes, (h) development of master outlines of within and across domain relations, and (I) development of a narrative with citations to undergird the master outlines.

In accordance with Hatch's (2002) 9-step technique, data frames of analyses were created during all interview sessions. The aim at this stage was to create a comprehensive picture of participants' experiences and expressions of meaning. This exercise was carried out during and after each participant was interviewed. Field notes and transcribed version of participants' responses were the bases of analyzing these frames. The data were read and reread for a holistic impression. Frames were important because they provided the foundation for subsequent analyses. Holistic frames created were:

- Labor market initiation
- Quality of life
- Labor market changes and practices
- Training and reeducation

These frames were tied to both research questions as a result of an iterative and concomitant analysis of both research questions and interview questions. These frames were conceptual categories giving rise to further salient analysis.

The second step was to reduce these frames into domains. Domain categorization resulted in codes that were assigned to relationship within domains. These relationships were semantic relationships connecting the domains as inclusive terms or cover terms. Cover terms were names that were assigned to all categories, while inclusive terms were all elements of a particular category. During this process, the frequency of meanings from the responses and process notes were manually written down. Only domains that were directly related to the research questions were considered.

The third step was to identify salient domains, assign them a code, and put aside no salient ones as outliers. At this point, the frequency or emphasis of data was noted and coded. These were data that were either verbal or nonverbal. No salient domains were those that did not fall in line with the main focus of the research questions. Salient domains were then coded into taxonomies. The next step was to delve into these taxonomies.

The fourth step, according to Hatch (2002), was to read, reread, and refine salient domains. This was an attempt to increase the depth and richness of salient domains. All salient domains were critically examined for relationships, and codes were given to represent areas of these relationships. A reread of these domains produced no new domain but necessitated some modifications by way of refining and fine-tuning.

With the fifth step, I conducted a verification to find out if all domains were supported by data. This step was also the time to find those data that did not chime in or

that ran contrary to those relations that were identified within domains. It was important at this point to employ deductive reasoning to ensure that there was sufficient data undergirding the domains created. The result was a production of domains that were succinct and apposite in developing a description of perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification. Details of this description are available in Chapter 5.

The sixth step involved a reexamination of relationships within domains. The data was read over five times paying attention to emergent relationships within domains. Two principal elements were achieved at this stage: (a) the domain outline was expended even when no new domains were discovered, and (b) within domain scrutiny yielded relationship discoveries between included terms. This provided more clarity and substance to the data analysis. Below is an example of a deeper level of relationships with inclusive terms and domains:

- Networking : semantic relationship with labor market
- Building new relationships : a place in labor market initiation
- Attending career workshops : a place in , and used for labor market initiation
- Friendly attitude : a place in , and used for labor market initiation
- Staying positive : a place in, and used for labor market
- Being culturally aware : a place in, and used for labor market

Below is a sample table showing relationships between or among inclusive terms (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Sample Table of Within Domain Analysis*

Included terms	Participants	Semantic Relationships	Cover Terms
A. Optimistic	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	Label: Function of	Outlook on future
B. Anxiety	P6, P7, P8, P9, P10 P1, P2, P10, P11	Academic credentials: used for	
C. Uncertainty	P2, P11		
D. Frustration	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P10, P11		
E. Confidence	P2, P3, P7, P8, P9		

With the seventh step, I conducted an across domain analysis. The purpose was to synthesize the relationships and linkages within and among domains. Special attention was given to the social implications between cover and included terms. I searched for similarities, differences, overlaps in domains, and began constructing meaning from them, in preparation for reporting. I searched for common denominators in order to piece domains together thematically into a comprehensive whole.

The eighth step was the creation of a master outline; outlines consisted of a taxonomy of the relationships among and within domains. This taxonomy was a composite reporting of perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification among landed African immigrants in Alberta. This step provided an opportunity to virtually compose salient domains and themes while identifying outliers. At this stage, the first member checking described in chapter three was carried out as a validation step.

The ninth step consisted of producing a narrative from the master outlines, and to support the narrative with excerpts. Excerpts were vital quotes because they fell directly in line with the main research questions. I mapped out 5 important elements at this stage namely



(a) job satisfaction articulations, (b) under what conditions these articulation changed, (c) perceptions and descriptions of the Alberta labor market, (d) contexts given to the Alberta labor market, in light of experiences with other African labor markets, and (f) meanings and beliefs generated from these experiences.

By employing Hatch's (2002) 9-step technique of inductive data analysis, I was able to produce information-rich and thick descriptions of perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification. The main research questions and subsequent interview questions were sufficient to produce data that aligned with the research problem. The discussion of the results produced from the data collection is presented in Chapter 5.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

#### **Member checking**

Member checking is the process whereby respondents' data are verified for consistency with the interpretations made by the researcher (Creswell, 2013). At the start of each interview, participants were informed that a transcribed copy of their interviews will be sent to them. Participants received a copy of their interviews, plus details of the themes and interpretation that were drawn from the interviews. No significant change to transcripts was requested by participants. In addition to making sure that member checking was optimal, identical interview questions were asked participants with occasional variations depending on the responses. Furthermore, no participant was influenced or led in answering questions; all questions were open-ended. The transcription was done verbatim by a professional transcription agency. When a participant's response was not clear, he or she was asked to give an example or to explain in other words. Participants could read, write, and understand English language.

### **Transferability**

Transferability in qualitative research is the extent to which data and the resultant analysis can be transferred from one setting or context to another (Trochim, 2006). Data collection instrument was survey interviews, and this instrument was approved by a Walden university research reviewer. Research questions were also approved to be appropriate in exploring perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification. Conclusions drawn were therefore validated. Transferability was further achieved because respondents occasionally provided similar responses even though they were of different nationalities, and different professional and academic backgrounds. There were 5 female and 6 male participants from 7 different African countries. The oldest participant was 47 years old, and the youngest was 30 years of age. Length of stay in Alberta varied from 8 months to 4 years. All participants came to Canada under the landed immigration program. Immigrants from Africa settled in other provinces in Canada, and a review of the relevant literature showed that over qualification has been reported in other provinces.

### **Colleague Review**

The final technique that I used to gain trustworthiness of data was colleague review. Data used for colleague review was de-identified. That is, no demographic detail or participants' personal information were shared with colleagues as stipulated during the IRB review process. I recommended 3 colleagues to my dissertation chair and she approved the nomination for colleague review. Colleague researchers reviewed the

transcripts of the interviews, comparing them to the themes and interpretative analyses I provided. Reviewers did not find any discrepancy between the data collected, and the themes and interpretations that I created. Below are statements made by participants.

These statements were related job satisfaction, and changing perceptions (see Table 3)

Table 3

*Themes Pertaining to Articulations of Job Satisfaction and Changing Perceptions*

“Statements relating to”

Participants

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1. Expressed feelings and perceptions related to work environment, recognition of prior occupational experiences, wage, career development, and relevance to educational and professional training.	11 out of 11
2. Experienced dissatisfaction with previous or current occupation status in Alberta	11 out of 11
3. Experienced anxiety, uncertainty, and frustration in their articulations, and for their situation	11 out of 11
4. Experienced optimism and a change in attitude because of hope for a brighter future in Alberta	10 out of 11
5. Believed that the skilled worker immigration program could prepare African-trained immigrants for Canada and for employment	11 out of 11

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A similar process was used in creating themes emanating from research question 2 which addressed participants’ descriptions of the Alberta labor market and the context they gave to in light of their experiences with other African labor markets. In all, 7 themes emerged (see Table 4)

Table 4

*Themes Related to Descriptions of the Alberta Labor Market in Light of Experiences in Africa.*

“Statements regarding ”

Participants

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1. Believed that new entrants into the Alberta labor market have difficulties because of no Canadian experience	11 out of 11
2. Experienced over qualification, devaluation, and nonrecognition of premigration educational and professional credentials.	11 out of 11
3. Experienced a change in attitude, and labor market performance to be influenced by prevailing economic climate, and labor market practices.	11 out of 11
4. Experienced improvements in other aspects of their lives in terms of quality of life, and brighter future for their families.	10 out of 11
5. Believed that assistance or labor market initiation is need to navigate the labor market	11 out of 11
6. Experienced more opportunities in Alberta in terms of employment than in respective African countries	10 out of 11
7. Believed that reeducation and training in Canada can have a positive impact on employment and general labor market performance.	11 out of 11

---

The themes from tables 6 and 7 above were discovered from the research questions, and the subsequent interview questions. Data resulted in information-rich inductive analysis on job satisfaction and over qualification presented in Chapter 5. Below are the results of data collected, matched with themes that emerged in relation to Research Questions 1 and 2.

### **Results**

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to explore perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification by newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in Alberta, Canada. The study was a qualitative research that focused on the lived experiences with over qualification and descriptions of job satisfaction by landed African immigrants in the Alberta labor market.

## Research Question 1

Research question 1 was: How do Landed African immigrants in Alberta articulate job satisfaction? Under what conditions does this articulation change?

1. Participants expressed feelings and perceptions related to work environment, recognition of prior occupational experiences, wage, career development, and relevance to educational and professional training.

- P1: I want to have something in my field...So I'm looking for something like that, and something for my level of study, but not really – even if it's not really my level of study, but not too low compared to my school level, yeah...Good salary, a good environment, and work and hopefully a job where I can learn something new. For example, when I arrived here I had a doctoral degree in medicine so I expected to do something related to that.
- P2: And if you found a job, especially in your background, it's like a big gift you receive. Because I have found, for most of immigrants, it's not easy to find a job in your field...I consider the contents of the job, first, to know exactly what kind of job is it? But for me, for example, I prefer to take my background because it would be easy for me to do. The second thing, I just look at the salary because they know that you are new and sometimes they want you to ... to pay you less than your qualifications. And, the third, I consider the environment of the company.
- P3: Okay, for me job satisfaction is a job you love doing, and something you've been trained for, a job you have a passion for, a job you have the necessary skills for, a job you enjoy, a job that you want to go every day to

and don't feel bored, you don't feel angry going to work. You have good colleagues, you have good working condition. To me that is job satisfaction. Yeah, those are the factors. Good working conditions, good pay, good environment, something you enjoy doing and something that is from your profession, doing something out of your profession. Those are the things I consider.

- P4: Recognition of the prior experience, like what I've done in the past. How well it is recognised? Yeah, that thing will be ... because I have to do a proper placement. If you're getting a job, if I'm properly placed, it gives me joy...of course, the pay is important, you know? If one is going into a position and you are earning less than you were earning back home, of course I wouldn't be satisfied with that job, yeah.
- P5: First thing to job satisfaction is I would say the salary. Salary and then job satisfaction will follow and let's say the good mood in your, people around you, friendly, when you're working like paying respect and all the stuff. And also a job that you love, that you want to do.
- P6: Well, it's a job where I will be happy, where I will be able to apply my knowledge, and a job which will also compensate me accordingly well, compensating me well and the job which has good opportunities. Well if it's the one issue that brings me the bread, puts the bread on the tray, yeah, I don't mind. I would do it. Yeah, but I would prefer to do a job which is in my line of qualification

- P7: I consider that the job situation is good. Then I'll consider also consider the requirement in if I have the requirement in. After that I consider also the salary or all these things.
- P8: To me, to be in my - working in my field in a professional job. To work as an engineer. I consider the position itself, does it - is it going to take me to career success, or I will be stuck for a long time. The second thing is the company itself.
- P9: Well, the job security, the work culture in that particular organization or in that particular unit or branch that I'm looking for. So yeah, those are the two main things. And there are of course the pay also would be a considered – I will also consider the pay. As long as I feel like I'm contributing something to the position and as long as I feel like I'm appreciated or that my supervisors or the organization appreciate my contribution and I have enough things to do which challenge me.
- P10: What I consider satisfactory is especially a job that is related to what you did that's in your background. So probably to the level of your qualifications... what you've studied and probably in the capacity and level that you - what is your level of education - might be practicing in. And also security, job security and maybe the package, benefits, and also the time.
- P11: "For me, only one is important. To me, an accounting job."

2. Experienced dissatisfaction with previous or current occupation status in Alberta.

The following quotes and statements from the interview buttress this stance.

- P1: But I found myself working at Target, like cashier. So I think that I'm over-qualified for this kind of job. Mm-hmm, even right now I'm working as a teller in the bank, but I am over-qualified for that because it's kind of boring. I should not be in this position.
- P2: I'm working not as a mechanical engineer but a mechanical... if I can consider administrator, I can consider it administration in industrial area... But I'm planning to move to other position in the same company if for me I ... if the job is, like, satisfied me. If not, I will move to another company.
- P3: Being trained as an accountant and coming to Canada and my first job was working in a coffee shop as a customer service. For me, I was overqualified to do the job because my education, my experience, my job experience was far more than that.
- P4: So I did that, you know, in the evenings mainly, you know, because it was the home care ... I did this home care therapy, so we used to go see patients at home. I was overqualified for that job, because that job was meant for people who are a therapy assistant. So I was getting \$30 per hour, but that included driving because most of the ... you have to go to the residential home...if I were working fulltime it will actually better my ability to get a mortgage approval, to be able to get a home.
- P5: I don't have a choice. But if I have a choice, I would prefer to work in something I took training for it. I've been in school for a lot, lot, a lot of time in my life so at least I want this to reflect what I'm doing. Because I



spent a lot of time going to school...So I want to have something that reflects the times that I spend going to school. Biggest challenge, is coming next – what can I say? Maybe to force myself and to do things that I was over qualified for in order to have my – for my family to live. I have to do things that I've never done before or things that were not related to what I am supposed to do just because I needed money for my family.

- P6: Working as a technical support at present. Partially satisfied, but it's good. It's within my line of training, but yeah, I'm good.
- P8: I'm in a casual job, yes, which I think this - the casual job is good for like making money but it's not good to like - I mean it will take time from me to - to schedule like Job Search, interviews, going out there, joining Job Search. Yeah, so this really can support me not to get like depressed or something, just to keep on and hopefully I can get what I want some day.
- P9: "Right now, no. I just started a new position two months ago. Right now, no, but in a few months' time I'll probably be looking because this is a one year temporary position so yeah."
- P10: I'm not satisfied. I feel I'm wasting and I feel like I shouldn't be here, you know. Mentally it – psychologically it's affecting you and I feel like this is not – you know, after all the studies and all that is this what you ought be doing and that and meanwhile so ... So the money is not enough if there's any – when you don't have a full time job and it's not enough for the family and all of the bills and for us Africans we have expectations from home and all that.

- P11: when they want you to come, they let you know they want you. But once you're here, it doesn't seem like – it doesn't seem like they really want you in the job.

3. Experienced anxiety, uncertainty, and frustration in their articulation. The following data support this position.

- P1: I don't know because it's really impossible to be a physician here. I have to return to school... But don't let people come here and have to work for Starbucks or for Wal-Mart. That doesn't make sense... Some days it's really difficult because I spend time complaining – spend time complaining, saying that I could do better, I can do something better. And sometimes in a bad mood when I come back from work I'm really in a bad mood because – you will see some people giving you order to say – but you have to do that just to do that. And you know now. They should not be in this – I should not be in this position.
- P2: And that is not ... sometimes is not fair, over qualification, if I can say like this. And you are just, like, frustrated and ... it depends how courageous you are, what you want to take ... what you want to take from the job.
- P2: And for me was, like, big frustration because I received a call from the company, that's why they wanted to hire me. And they say that I have to wait. I waited until after one month and just have to follow up, you know what, at the same time they have hired another person. Yeah. So this kind of thing is very frustrating. And the kind of discouragement from people who want work.

- P3: I had to search work for eight months and I didn't get anything in my field. So I was discouraged... I think there are so many people out there and they have too many choices to make; for a new immigrant it's very difficult to move through the system. It's highly competitive now... They should give you a chance to try. How do you know? Everybody keeps saying you need an experience. Well who would be the first to give you the experience you need? At least one should be able to accommodate you and give you that chance to get the experience.
- P4: Most employers request for Canadian experience, and if you don't work in Canada, and you are just an immigrant from any country, then it makes it difficult to get the job because you don't have the experience. So you don't have the experience you can't be employed. So it's a cycle. In terms of the housing, I had a better house back in Nigeria than here, in terms of, you know, like back home we had two good cars in Nigeria. Here we have to buy a used car and then we don't have a new one and, you know, it's difficult.

Dissatisfaction with current or previous employment status in Alberta meant that, participants were not satisfied with their investments in education.

- P5: So money wasn't coming enough, now that's my first barrier. So I'm not saying like going back looking for job now. I want to secure something. That's why I'm sticking with that trade... I can start thinking about maybe going back to what I was supposed to do but for now, my biggest concern is having money to put my family out of this mess.

- P5: “There was no fairness, it wasn’t here. I’m African whether you like it or not, it’s just – yeah.”
- P6: “I worked for a company there, a small company, about four months. Then I got another job with a big company. Then at big company, I worked for them for nine months, and then I went, I had to travel back home. By the time I came back, they had laid me off”. Well, it’s really affected me much because by the time I got a job, I was contemplating on going back home, to pack up my stuff and go back to Uganda. Yeah, because nine months without a job was just too much, so that’s because I got a job in time before I made my final decision to go back home. Yeah.”
- P7: “Do not expect that things will be easy and don’t have big expectations either. Yeah.”
- P8: I have been applying many times, doing networking, going - I take every reason going to Job Search but unfortunately I don’t see good results... So it’s still like - it looks sometimes not fair but this is how it works.
- P9: I think it’s mainly the experience which I had in my home country is not valued by many – most employers, many employers. That’s my understanding...Well, it’s difficult. It’s very difficult for internationally trained immigrants.
- P10: “Most of the times you see so many jobs being posted. You send an application in 10s and 20s and then you feel you’re qualified and you don’t even get an interview. So you – it’s a bit confusing to know exactly what

they want”. I was like okay, whatever happens. Whether it’s going to happen or not I don’t know.

- P10: “The greatest challenge is sending in applications without getting any response, you know. You look for a job. You see jobs and you see the requirements and you feel you are qualified for the job and you send in applications, you don’t get any. That’s been – that is frustration. If you are called in for interview, I mean if you know oh, they are recognizing what you have you understand that.”
- P11: “No. I gave up. There is job but not for everybody.”

4. Experienced optimism and a change in attitude. The following statements support this position.

- P1: But I prefer to be here because I have an advantage because I speak English. That was not possible two years ago, so I’ll try stay positive about that, you know. After that, continue to see if I can find something. And I will say that people are really nice here, and they understand that you just arrived and they are welcoming, so. People here accept you as you are. And I think – yeah. I love it.
- P2: “Here, for the employment, you have a lot of opportunity in Alberta. This is the reality ... not the reality but is a good thing that you can have here, that if you are strong, if you are motivated you can have something, even though this is not your background. But you can have something to survive or to change your field or your career.”

- P3: That's a good one. I really don't - I don't fear for the future well. I'm optimistic, especially for an accountant like myself, a lot of people feel the great impact not getting a job getting a good job and going back into their professional area. I'm hopeful and I'm optimistic and I know that the future is bright, but it takes time and I'll be back as an accountant to where I was before I came here. I'm optimistic yeah... So, but I feel better because even though you can't get a professional job, you can still get something that at least can put food on your table, can clothe you, can pay your rent, one that puts food on the table, here you're still able to do a menial job, you can have two or three. So even though you don't get the professional one, I would say, yeah it's still better. You can still get something that will put food on the table.
- P4: So by November we moved. So we stayed in that basement for two months. The only good experience actually, I would say, comparing that we're coming from a very warm country. In the basement it was always very cold. Everybody was complaining, you know? So I would say quality of life-wise, now that we're more settled, I've got me a part time job. I've been able to get the car for myself, got one for my wife. We are beginning to pick up again, and hopefully by the time I'm done with my program, we'll be moving into our own house, you know? So that will be ... yeah, so, you know, for coming in ... I'll say in the last one or three years, quality of life has been lower than what we had before, but things are beginning to pick up

now, so it's as if we're coming up fine now, and I know that it will get better.

- P5: I'm not doing what I wanted to do but I guess yeah, when you come in a different place, you have to do things differently. So I am happy because at least I can work and I can plan things with my family. So I'm happy about that... Oh, I'm optimistic because I got lots of opportunities in the trades because a lot of people are here and trying to get in the trade but they can't because people make a lot of money in trade, right? So I was lucky to enter that. So I would say it's because of my competency. So I guess I'm lucky and I'm happy and I think the future is bright.

In some cases, optimism was expressed as dependent on other things. In spite of facing challenges in the labor market, perceptions on over qualification and job satisfaction changed.

- P6: "Well, the future, it will be dependent on the job, if I have a job and how the job is going, and if it's not really going well or satisfactorily, then I might make some changes in my future. Right now, I'd say I'm not so sure."
- P7: Yeah, I believe that there are some possibility here, it's just a matter of time. I'm very optimistic about this city... So you have to see things from your own perspective and from your own effort. Because I believe that if you want something nobody can stop you. The only person who can stop you is yourself. As I told you before I'm very optimistic about the future here. I'm going to school right now. I will not be surprised by not getting the

job right away after school but I believe that I will get what I want, do everything that is required to get the job.

- P7: “So I believe that I’ll have a bright future here.”
- P8: “I think in a few years I see myself working in the position that I’m looking for, professionally in a company that can provide me good development - career development. But till then I think the main key will be like to get first that Canadian experience. Second, the economy can get up - maybe if a booming happened or something, I can get that chance easier.”
- P9: “Well, the main reason is that I believe that I’m in a good situation in terms of my career. So that’s the main thing which yeah. So I believe that I’m headed in a good direction.”
- P10: I wouldn’t discourage anyone from coming because I think they need like – you know, amidst all this there are still some people who still get jobs with their certificates and all that and there’s still prospects I believe, but the main thing is once they come in try to do a program already. I think that’s the key.
- P10: “I’m very optimistic. Yeah, I’m optimistic.”

5. Believed that the skilled worker immigration program can do more to prepare African-trained immigrants for Canada and for employment. The following specific quotes and statements support this position.

- P1: Because you have the feeling that when you really arrive here you can do the job that you were doing in your country, and when you arrive here it’s a big deception because you’re not really in reality. For me they only



really need people for labor jobs, not for ... any profession – professional job, no. They need really laborers, not people who have the really big diploma, big degrees to come here. It is difficult for those kinds of people. I don't know why they open that to people with a good work experience, with good degree. And when they arrive here you have to do labor. Why don't they take laborers in Africa to come? It's better. Well, I don't know. Because when we were in Africa, you don't have really the information to change anything. When you arrive here you are really living in the real – real life. You discover so many things. But I don't know if I can change or do differently, things. Don't let them come here. That's the first thing. If you were to come – if you think that you have a job for them, then they arrive here. You have to try to find something for them, even if it is not the same level of education. But you have to find something in their field. If you say that for example, we have to recruit for example, 2,000 immigrants this year in Alberta, you should be able to find jobs for at least 1,500 of them.

- P2: The skilled worker can be improved but ... could be improved to be more efficient, to give information to people outside of Canada because most of the people when they came they are, kind of, shocked. Because they have some dream of Canada. And there is a big shock when they came. Because when you came is, like, you are in the ... how you say ... in the forest and you have to fight by yourself to find a way... Is not the reality that you have ... you receive from the session? It depend who is leading the session.

Some participants had recommendations for government immigration authorities. All recommendations were reported as propositions to alleviate the poor labor market performances for African-trained landed immigrants.

- P3: I feel the government can mandate employers to keep space for new immigrants when they're coming. That's one of the main things they can do to force that when immigrants come in, they should be a way for the employers - they should try to shove new immigrants into their companies, employer would invite you for saying that he needs your services before you can apply. I think it's also good if you get a job before you come when you land, if you have something. They should enforce that employers should absorb at least some good percentage of immigrants into their companies.
- P4: if not that I had friends, like I said, I wouldn't have known that I should have started my credentialing like, well ahead of time. It does take close to three years to complete that process. So I think it would be beneficial if there is like, a package for every profession, you know, I mean in the old system they had that ... you know, it was based on shortage of professionals and things like that, but now no way, so I don't know what is in there. So I think it would be nice if there's something like a package outlining the best practices for every profession, or any professional who is coming in. Like, you need to start your credentialing, you know, way ahead of time. You know, you need to do your exam ... once you come in you need to do your exam. If there are two components, that needs to be specified. If there are three, like for some I think there are three.

Participant 4 added that:

- You know, so things like that will have been nice if it's spelled out and, again, for job experience, that's a very big problem. Even when you do pass the exams, they will be asking you do you have Canadian experience? So on the job post it will say ... it will be x experience in Canada, and there's no way you have that because you're just coming in. So I think that's one big challenge. So government can help. You know, in a sense of ... I know that Bredin is doing a great job there, and all that services like that, but there's a way to make it more structured, that people who are coming in can receive ... at least get someone to give them a reference letter when they are looking for work. You know, that will be helpful in looking for a job.
- P6: Well the thing is, they just provide you with a visa, and then whatever you do is up to you. It's up to you to settle yourself. It's up to you to look for your job. It's up to you to fend for yourself. So in a way, it's just allocating you a visa and trying - a visa and getting here to Canada. That way if you have everything that they want, it's effective in getting people here, but the rest is up to you. So they are not responsible for settling you up. They're not responsible for looking for your job, so all that is up to you. For you, you have to show them that you have enough money that will take you up to, up for six, I think, six or one year. I think by now it's about one year. Yeah. So if you have that money and show it to them, then they give you the - and you have everything they need, then they give you

the visa - take you through the process after going through the process, then you're through. At first you land here, it's, everything is up to you.

- P7: Sometimes the immigrants from back home don't have enough information about life here in Canada. Like about challenges that are waiting for them so I think this is the missing part of this process. I think if the Canadian government can give more information like in the real life that will be waiting for immigrants when they came here I think they will be more prepared. It's not that easy so if somebody can face those challenges anybody can face them. So it's just to be aware and to be very prepared here.

There was consensus among participants that African-trained landed immigrants should be granted a safety net in the face of experiences with over qualification.

- P8: I would like if they can have some kind of considerations for people who are coming as skilled workers that they have zero experience in Canada, zero Canadian experience, and so not to give up - I think the employers are more scared of those people because they know they have been working in different circumstances, different weather, different everything, and this experience will be challenging for them. So giving them more chance and can show how successful results they can get.
- P9: Well, the time it took was very long. It took me five years. I almost gave up on it the last – in the last few years. In terms of preparing, yeah, there are lots of information on the website about the job possibilities, what I may encounter after I came here, how I should prepare for the job market

here and those kind of things. So there's like I'm getting lots of information from the website but yeah, it's the time. It's very long and for someone – for me, I was ... For somebody who start a different kind of life after applying, waiting five years and thinking to come here it's maybe difficult. But other than that it's good, yeah. The timeline should be definitely a bit shorter. And the information – in terms of information, the process that allow what you process, at what stage process agent, how long you might have to wait. There is no information given to you during the process. So you just have to wait. It may be in two years, it may end in five years, three years, and one year. You have no idea so it's difficult to get ready or to just plan ahead just for your journey here. So yeah, if they give better information in terms of how long it may take you. But it's a lot of information on the website, it may take this much, this much, this many years and so specifically it's – you know, it may take you one year, it may take two or three, four years, five years, but we don't know. Difficult to plan ahead.

- P10: Yeah. Why I say that is like okay, when you fill in the forms they ask you for your skills and if you make up this criteria and you just put the comment and what one was thinking is that oh, you're coming in and you – they will treat you as someone who's got this experience, that you will immediately probably get into – you'll be accepted into the labor market and all that. I think what they are looking at is people who got skills and experience is that who can come in and probably be trained or be able to

adapt and adjust to the city, to development or something like that. So it doesn't really could be you. I think it should be clear that as you're coming in don't expect to get a job with your skills but what you can be trained or do something and be able to get in. So that impression that okay, they are presenting you are the skilled worker and you're coming in and you will get a job as a skilled worker in your field, no, immediately. That's what they're thinking but...

- P10: I think there should be an enlightenment. I don't know. Maybe what we are thinking - they will say it's an assumption or something like that but I don't know whether I will say the same thing, but the assumption I have and the feeling I have is that you have just been brought in because you can improve, you can retrain, you can provide, you can find a way, you know, get into the market but not that you are coming in as an engineer and you are going to be employed here as an engineer immediately. So but if people, you know, get that understanding that even though they are engineers and when they come here they should also not expect the labour market to just absorb them immediately, they also need some training. People should be enlightened. People should be enlightened. People should be made aware that they still need some Canadian training to be able to get into the labour market so they have it in mind as soon as they're coming in. They look for work they want to do, one training or the other and get in.
- P11: Just – when they want you to come, they let you know they want you. But once you're here, it doesn't seem like – it doesn't seem like they really

want you in the job. And I know the government spent a lot of money to – in some agency, to help immigrants who – to get into the job. But it really seemed to me that those agencies didn't do their jobs. My suggestion would be to – the money the government gave to the agency? Maybe give that money to immigrant, with maybe zero percent interest. Like a loan. But no interest to pay for their education.

### **Research Question 2**

The following quotes and list were created from the master outline, audio tapes, field notes, and transcripts of the interviews. With Research Question 2, I aimed at investigating how landed African immigrants described the Alberta labor market, and the contexts they attributed to it in light of their experiences with other African labor markets.

1. Believed that new entrants into the Canadian labor market have difficulties because of no Canadian experience. The following citations supported this thesis.

- P1: Because I noticed that my experience outside Canada brought in nothing really when I arrived here. I had to build my own experience of jobs here so I started as a cashier. So I don't know. But for a Master's in public health I have the same issue because most of the people who are doing a Master's in public health have the professional experience in public health. And when I use my medical background, saying that I have experience in public health, they say that no, that's not sufficient. You have to have the work experience here, you don't have any work experience in Canada.

- P2: That's why I say I would just wait for three or five years, because it will be easy for me to have five years of more experience. And I have heard, for example, for the association professional designation, if you have lot of experience ... lot of experience recognized ... they can evaluate your assessment very quickly without asking a lot of question, a lot of background, or asking you go to the university... sometimes when I talk to some people they just know that you came from outside Canada, you don't have anything in your background, in your country.
- P3: I think the one thing is that no Canadian experience. For many of the places I've been going, they notice that you're new to the country. A lot of them give me feedback why am I not being considered for the position because I match everything, the criteria needed. I didn't understand Canadian culture, the workplace culture, and in Canada ethics. Canadian experience I think that's the biggest thing, the necessary experience for many of them from someone who is already familiar with Canadian workplace culture. Canada experience is the big one for me. Or there are too many other people, Canadian experience, whatever that might be: Language, communication, understanding and some other things. Communication has not been introduced to me. I just think it's a lack of Canadian experience.
- P3 : I think when I went for an interview and as I said the lady called back and she went like I can't get a job, and I knew that I got all the things needed in the job. So when she called and she went like you can't get it. There should be a first time. They should give you a chance to try. How do



you know? Everybody keeps saying you need an experience. Well who would be the first to give you experience you need? At least one should be able to accommodate you and give you that chance to get the experience.

All participants were occupationally active prior to relocating to Alberta. Their expectations were that, their professional experiences would be considered in Alberta.

- P4: So I did get the part time position with Capital Care and I was able to get them to recognize my experience, so they recognized that I've worked for some time, you know, certain number of years, and nine years was the mark they would recognize... So when I got called for this interview with Capital Care and I told them I have some experience, we worked with the elderly, so that will be a plus because they thought okay, this guy have little experience in Canada, in the Canadian context, and yeah, so that is why I got hired.
- P4: "That was the one big thing, having Canadian experience is considered very important, yeah."
- P5: You got the degree like and your experience is compared to someone who is in Alberta but the fact is that when you go to get a job; you won't get the job because they will like say that you don't have the Alberta experience. You never had to work in that country so you don't have the Alberta experience.
- P6: "The greatest barrier is just experience. It would be the greatest barrier because wherever you call, they're looking for someone to give them the paper. They're interested in you, but after going for the interview and

talking to them, they realize you don't have most of the things. You are basically inexperienced, and they want someone who is hands-on, basically. So the greatest barrier was experience, and mostly they want to know somebody's got experience."

The demand of Canadian experience was reported by some participants to be a firsthand experience while other participants were told about it.

- P6: Yes. It's not an assumption, but it's what is basically on the ground. It's not only from me, but several other friends of mine who are also coming from different parts of world have experienced the same.
- P7: Yeah, because, I mean, there's a, I believe that I can see there are some opportunity here but you need something to get the job. So that extra, extra experience or extra training or I don't know what to call it that you need to, you need to cover and get the job. So I can say that yeah there is some opportunity. Even when I move here I receive some call like when I was applying for accounting job I receive some call. But I think it's because the lack of experience or the skills that they need here I didn't have that at that time. So I decided okay I know that I need something, I decided to go to school to get that extra skill that I need... But what I understand here is like we have a lack of soft skills like how to deal with people in the workplace, understanding the culture or experience.
- P8 : "And the other reason is the - they really need one who has Canadian experience - at least one year, and because we're immigrants, it's - it's really like we cannot come out of Canada with a Canadian experience - if

you can understand it. So it's just to find that person who can give you this chance then you can step over this border, you know... this is the conclusion that I got, that they - yeah, because almost all the job advertisements asking for like at least one year of experience, so in Canada, so it looks like, yeah."

- P8: Yes, I would like if they can have some kind of considerations for people who are coming as skilled workers that they have zero experience in Canada, zero Canadian experience, and so not to give like - I think the employers are more scared of those people because they know they have been working in different circumstances, different weather, different everything, especially African immigrants and this experience will be challenging for them. So giving them more chance and can show how successful results they can get.
- P9: "I think it's mainly the experience which I had in my home country is not valued by many – most employers, many employers. That's my understanding."
- P10: But it's kind of – you know, this means that you have to like start all over again. That's just the way it is. No matter what you've got, no matter your background, it's very difficult for them to accept you, you know, based on your qualifications if you lack Canadian experience, Canadian certificate and all that.

- P11: “The first one is Canadian experience... That to have a job, you have to have Canadian experience. Someone has to give me that opportunity to have that experience.”

2. Experienced over qualification, devaluation, and no recognition of premigration educational and professional credentials. The following statements and quotes substantiated this notion.

- P1: Yeah, over qualification. For example, when I arrived here I had a doctoral degree in medicine so I expected to do something related to that, even if it's not really crazy to take care of people, but something in this level. But I find myself working at Target, like cashier. So I think that I'm over qualified for this kind of job... Because I noticed that my experience outside Canada was nothing really when I arrived here.
- P1: It happened to me many times that I mentioned that I'm physician, and potential employers they never called me. Because I did that for BMO and I put that I was physician – I have a background of physician. They never called me. For Scotia bank I haven't put that. I said in my résumé – like I have a background of cashier and I worked for – as a cashier at Target. That's it. And they called me and they asked me have you ever studied outside Canada? Have you done something? I said no, just my high school. And that worked, so.

No recognition and devaluation of professional skills were experienced in several ways. Sometimes tasks and responsibilities were not challenging, and other times employment was manual.

- P2: Because before I came to Alberta I was working as project lead. Like, I was leader in the project. So it's not the same. You are not working directly in the production. You are working, like, far away and make some study, some research, talking to the supplier, do some ... I can say ... some process, some report, like that... I was little bit sad because, it's like below your degree.
- P3: "Okay. Over-qualification is like, for me, being trained as an accountant and coming to Canada and my first job was working in a coffee shop as a customer service. For me, I was overqualified to do the job because my education, my experience, my job experience was far more than that. So doing something that you've been trained for, what education and experience is more than it. You are overqualified; you've been overqualified for that job."
- P4: Yeah, so that, again, was ... I was overqualified for that job, because that job was meant for people who are a therapy assistant... So I was getting \$30 per hour, but that included driving because most of the ... you have to go to the residential home.
- P4: So that was one big thing for me, because I did find initially they were like, I should go do some assessment at that time. I said I already did the credential assessment because the Canada Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulation recognized my degrees in Canada, and they used it for their own assessment, so I felt that it will be strange for them to ask me to do another assessment again, after I have done one ... you know.

- P5: You get the degree like your degree and your credentials are compared to someone who is in Alberta but the fact is that when you go to get – you want to get a job; you won't get the job because they will like... that you don't have the Alberta experience. You never had to work in that country so you don't have the Alberta experience. That's the first thing. And the second thing is that is okay you can go and get a job pretty much everywhere but when you want to get the job, let's say educated job, looks like you got to know some people otherwise you can put all the resumes that you want but you will never get the job... So it's still like you got to know some people to introduce you or to talk good of you I don't know because maybe they are suspicious, they don't really trust your degrees or competency. So you won't really get those kinds of educated job or job offer from somewhere because there is no trust. They're suspicious so yeah, you won't get it because of that.

It was common for participants to be employed in fields that had nothing in common with their occupations prior to moving to Alberta. Participants needed to make ends meet.

- P6: Because I was new, it was very hard to enter in to my line of studies. I had to do some other jobs to survive. So I joined the health industry, and I was working as a life instructor.
- P7: But what I understand here is like we have a lack of soft skills like how to deal with people in the workplace, understanding the culture or norms.

- P7: “And before that I was not able to find a job in accounting so I was doing like security agent, all, working in the night.”
- P8: “It’s different over there – it’s totally different - works totally different. So in Sudan, since you get like, let’s put it like that - in Sudan it’s more appreciated to get certificate, so or a post-graduate education. So if you have a Master’s degree, PhD, then it’s easier for you to get a job, rather than the experience. Plus the referral. Here in Canada, it more about the experience and what you know to do. More about what you have because you can be, as you said, easily over qualified if you have a Master’s degree or a PhD.”
- P9: My worst experience would be – well, I – when I started first, when I came in my – within three weeks I started my worst job in a supermarket. So the way – and I was new to the country and it was – since it was the first few days where there was my worst experience since I didn’t – I wasn’t treated well. Like the people were not so nice in terms of training and maybe they didn’t know they were not – I don’t know the reason that they are – the way that they train you and the way they treat employees initially and new employees was a mess – that was my worst experience and I started my first work in Canada.
- P10: Well, let’s say you were doing a job – like somewhere there was a job I did previously such was administrative job – the basic requirement is good job, but I have a master’s. So you’re being paid to work in doing a job that is not commensurate while you have a master’s degree and most times you had been looking for a job and if you put in your qualifications they will not call you because you are over qualified. I think, yeah, you are hired and what they look

at is we can pay you but you might not be able to stay. Yeah. And the ones you are qualified for, they might not consider you because it's not a Canadian qualification or something like that but your qualification is you are doing something that is way below that what your qualifications are. As I said before, I think the major barrier it's not having a Canadian certificate. That's what I feel that's the major barrier because I did not study in Canada here. So actually, I studied in Africa. It's not a Canadian certificate that they believe. That is maybe one of the reasons you apply for job and no one has even called you for interview and that.

- Q: "So do you think that Alberta is still a good place for immigrants to come to?"

P11: "A good place if you are ready to do any kind of jobs. But if you want to work in your field, I think you have to think twice."

3. Experienced a change in attitude and labor market performance to be influenced by prevailing economic climate, and labor market practices. The following statements and quotes confirmed this proposition.

- P1: If you don't know anyone – no one says I just apply and they call me. They didn't even. Most of the people, you have to know someone, someone to refer you and you can find a job. But ... because even when we apply on the internet they say that there's a lot of networking. If you apply, but they already found the person for the job. That's my feeling, yeah. The fact that if you don't know someone you can't really do what you want to do, do what you want to be. If I were to work for example as a physician, this is up



to me, and the person who can introduce me. And for anything you have to do that before – an immigrant is really difficult because you are new here and you don't know anybody.

- P1: For example, two months ago I met a lady from Alberta Health in a conference and we started discussing, and she said oh, you know what? There is some jobs and sometimes we already find the person for the position before we put that online. She told me that, and that's true. Instead give me your résumé and I will see if I can see someone and maybe you can have an interview or something like that. That was a one monthly ago. And last week I received a call for an interview. So that makes me really – I say what if I don't know anybody. I would never have an interview. That's not normal.
- P2: “I know that in January ... or December, January last year when they have some ... shut down ... not shut down, the decrease of the gas and petrol”. Yeah. You know, that there is lots of people were laid off. And this is a big ... the big disadvantage, because if the economy is down most of people can lose job.
- P2: “Even if you are brave, even if you are intelligent, to get the job you have to know somebody in the company. And there is a lot of discrimination here but is not, like, open.”

In the face of labor market practices, participants worked out means to navigate challenges. Most participants were conversant with the Alberta economic climate.

- P3: I'd say it's highly competitive. And from the experience I had, even before we came in, the lawyer we used to go through the immigration process confirmed. Alberta had one of the highest employment rates. But I don't know. I think it has to do with the oil prices, the falling oil prices, I think. Alberta has, I think, depends on oil, so I don't know if that really affects it from what I've been hearing from the media and government. Most people lost their jobs recently and the population of people unemployed is increasing and everybody's struggling. It's very competitive, very competitive. Before if you're coming, usually the employers will actually come and they will train you. I think there are so many people out there and they have too many choices to make; for a new immigrant it's very difficult to move through the system. It's high competitive now.
- P4: "Like, if not that I had friends, like I said, I wouldn't have known that I should have started my credentialing like, well ahead of time. It does take close to three years to complete that process. So I think it would be beneficial if there is like, a package for every profession."
- P4: And I must say it was good for me, because this is what I know. When we landed we landed in Calgary. There's one of my friend who lives in Calgary. She has been here for about ten years, so she was the one giving me information on what to do, what not to do, and I must tell you, that helps a lot. Having someone to guide you in terms of giving you information on what the current job market is like. What steps to take before you can even get like that, to practice all that is very essential.

- P5: “Maybe the referral, I would say referral. If you don’t have good referral, you won’t get the job.”
- P5: From what I see, it’s just a matter of networking, knowing people who work because my wife has a brother who had some degree from United States because he was living there. And he came in Canada, he was looking to find a job and then my wife was also looking for a job and she didn’t have something – nothing for more than one year until because of her brother who was working in a bank, she got an appointment to go in the bank and she got a job just like that. But she’s been applying for long, long time. And she’s not even experienced to work in the banking sector because she’s a physician. But just because she knew someone who introduced her, she got the job. And this is the same thing for me, I would have never got something in the trade if it wasn’t for a friend of mine who’s working in a company as a foreman. So I would say the most important thing here is not your degree, it’s your network. If you issue the degree to do the job, that doesn’t guarantee you that you will get a job until someone introduces you. So it is network first and then qualification. This is for the job, that’s it.
- P6 : Well, depending on which industry you are really interested in, but maybe it seems that in the last couple of years, it was really, the economy was doing well, and for most of the jobs in the trades and oil industries. So if you have skills in one of those trades, and then the job market was really good, but if you didn’t have any skills, then it was bad for you... Right now it’s in bad shape. The economy is in bad shape because the economy is based on oil, basically, but now

prices, oil prices are low so our economy is also slowing down and they are laying off people here everywhere.

- P7: Right now about Alberta labor market you can say that it's in bad shape, it's, yeah, the job market is not as healthy like the previous years. But still there are some opportunities. So if people are, those who are looking for a job they should be, they should be flexible to accept the lower job or something. But because of the economy in Alberta is oil based, there is a job problem.
- P8: The reason, yeah, and the reason is the same as the one that why I couldn't get like a professional job, the Canadian experience, and the economy, since it's getting it down, it's getting difficult - more difficult.
- P9: "Probably for jobs it is not easy, but I think it's still better than other provinces. There are more opportunities. But now there is sort of things – oil price came down and I think it's ... It's not getting better. It may be getting worse now. But yeah, compared to other cities, other provinces, I would still advise people - if there are people coming to Canada for employment purposes, I will advise them to come to Alberta. It's better to find a job. It's easier. Not easy but yeah, it's better than – I think it's – I haven't seen other provinces but that's my understanding from what I heard in the workplace and from others."
- P10: "written media is complaining about the oil industry and all that and it's – most of the times you don't see so many jobs being posted."
- P11: "Because they encourage skilled workers to come in, but they don't give those jobs to the worker. So what's the point?"

4. Experienced improvements in other aspects of their lives in terms of quality of life, and brighter future for themselves and for their families. The following statements and quotes support this position.

- P1: I think it is better, yeah. Alberta is better. I won't say that it's not because – here you can – even with lots more jobs you can maybe dream to have your own house, buy your perfect car you want to buy and all... Well ... maybe today I'm really happy that at this time that I can speak the language. I can exchange with people, I can discuss with people. I wasn't able to do this when I just arrived for example, two year ago. So I think I've been very fortunate. Because you have this ability to learn the language. Because if I have to work as a physician directly, I was fortunately to learn the language as I learned when I started working as cashier, a teller. And I will say that people are really nice here, and they understand that we just arrived.
- P2: I'm working in my first job now. And so, for me, is a relaxing job, very relaxing job. So it's not like ... I can ... it's not best-best for me. But I know that I have to do something more or to move in what I am on, because this is very relaxing for me. And the best thing I have gained or experience in that company is the environment, the team.
- P3: I'm not just looking at now; I'm looking at the future for my kids, because that was one of the things worth pursuing. We didn't really see much there for the kids. So for me it's still a dream of pursuing ... But quality of life, I will say it's still better here. Back in Nigeria, you don't guarantee working and it's really expensive and paying the children's school

fees. , so it's really getting some quality of life that is better than Nigeria. So employment, I would say Alberta is still better because really that was one of the things that I feared so much about Nigeria. Millions graduate, come out every day and they can't really find a job. I know friends, colleagues - I know many friends, we were all at school together unable to get a job. It's really very tough getting a job.

- P4: "So I would say quality of life-wise, now that we're more settled, I've got me a part time job. I've been able to get the car for myself, got one for my wife. We are beginning to pick up again, and hopefully by the time I'm done with my program, we'll be moving into our own house, you know? So that will be ... yeah, so, you know, for coming in ... I'll say in the last one or three years, quality of life has been lower than what we had before, but things are beginning to pick up now, so it's as if we're coming up fine now, and I know that it will get better."
- P5: "It's different but yes, now that I'm finding myself, yeah, I'm not – it is okay for now, yeah. I can't say that I'm really happy because I'm not doing what I wanted to do but I guess yeah, when you come in a different place, you have to do things differently. So I am happy because at least I can work and I can plan things with my family. So I'm happy about that."

General quality of life in Alberta was reported by all but one participant. When participants commented on their quality of life, their general outlook for the future seemed to be positive. When asked how participants would compare Alberta in terms of

employment and their quality of life to other African countries, the following data was collected:

- P5: “No question about that, no question. It’s way better than those countries. So yeah, yeah, it’s way better than those countries. No question.”
- P6: “Of course quality of life, I mean everything is better.”
- P7: I really don’t complain about my life quality here. Even though I don’t have a job that I like I am satisfied with my life quality. Yeah. And about the job I, I am on the way to get what I need to get the job. So, for the job I am very positive and for my, for my quality of life I’m really satisfied... In Niger I had a job, yeah, but the life quality is very different from here because even if you have money to buy everything you want you cannot get everything you want. Only thing that I miss is my family being with me here... when I decided that I want to go to school I got like help from everybody from Catholic Social Services and all these agencies, they all helped me to, to go to school. So I am really grateful for getting their help.
- P8 : “I think in a few years I see myself working in the position that I’m looking for, professionally in a company that can provide me good development - career development”... I think that we have to think broadly, beyond the job, we have to take into account the education and the healthcare and the safety advantages here.
- P9: “The quality of life is here – it’s much better here even if you are employed in a minimum wage position. The quality of life is better than what you get with a degree, qualification, employment in Ethiopia, you

know, so for affording – renting a proper apartment, living and those kind of things. In terms of employment to get employment it's – for me with experience back in Ethiopia with the experience in Ethiopia and with my education and qualification in that position it was easier to get some employment for me in Ethiopia than here like with my qualification. So yeah, in terms of getting employment it's better in Ethiopia for me, but after I get employed the living standard is – there is a very big difference in the living standard.”

- P10: I wouldn't discourage anyone from coming because I think they need like – you know, amidst all this there are still some people who still get jobs with their certificates and all that and there's still prospects I believe... In all fairness ... In all fairness, I think it's a bit better, with all the issue back in Nigeria. There's a lot of things, security, amenities, social life. Yeah, the standard is much better here than in Nigeria.

5. Believed that assistance or labor market initiation is needed to navigate the labor market. The following quotes and citations support this perception.

- P1: Yeah, I didn't refer to organization. I did it by myself and my friends helped me. So those two jobs I got, the first one was a friend who told me that knew someone working at Target; he can help me to be cashier there. That's the way I entered there, and for the bank it was my brother... The government has to try to find something for them, even if it is not the same level education. But you have to find something in their field.



- P2: “These were the two organization who helped me to understand the Canadian market or the Alberta market. And gave me some, like, interview face to face with some company” ... For the ministry, before coming, they have to make sure that the diploma can be recognized. That’s the big thing. That be sure that the diploma can be recognized or they can have some kind of evaluation. And when we arrive, for example, they have to organize more session to prepare, to give the reality to the people when came new in Canada or in the province... What ... how they have to struggle to get ... their own life or the very first job.
- P3: When I first came in, I joined the bridging programme with the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers and the job office to help me to reconstruct my résumé. It’s different from back home. You need to make sure every job, you need to get the key words and all that. They helped me to restructure my résumé. I also went to Bredin Institute. So these are some of the things I used... There should be a policy for employment for new immigrants, there should be enforcement so at least immigrants can be shoved in the work place.

Experiences with immigrant-serving organizations were diverse. Comments showed that there was a potential in any kind of labor market initiation, and some participants who had never signed up with an immigrant-serving organization were prepared to do so.

- P4 : You know, in a sense of ... I know that Bredin is doing a great job there, and all that services like that, but there’s a way to make it more

structured, that people who are coming in can receive job search assistance at least get someone to give them a reference letter when they are looking for work. You know, that will be helpful in looking for a job.

- P4: As part of the immigration program, once the government approve or, you know, accepts someone or considers someone is coming in, do they already have the professional coach for that person? It would beneficial. I would think about what you need to do, and one thing would be if the person is an engineer, for instance, then I'm going to give that person a step-by-step process of what to do to be able to do the engineering job, you know, exam. So for physiotherapy, the steps will be do credentialing ... even before you plan to arrive, begin that in your own country. Then when you come in you have do exams. Secondly, you know, providing a means to help immigrants with getting jobs, like a reference for employment so that they can hired.
- P5: "Maybe the referral, I would say referral. If you don't have good referral, you won't get the job"... In the beginning, when I arrived here I was being assisted by an organization called Access Emploie.
- P6: "Well, when I moved to Canada, I joined Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. They had a program for professional, foreign professionals, for integration in the Canada system. They ran it in conjunction with NAIT, so I did that course, and then after that, after doing the course, then I got a job in November. I worked for a company there, a small company, about four months. Then I got another job with a big company. Then at big company, I

worked for them for nine months, and then I went, I had to travel back home.”

- P7: “When I arrived here I contacted the Catholic Church service, I contacted them actually. I went to Alberta Employment Agencies. So I got help from all these agencies... Like for sure it’s not the employment experience but my best experience here is like when I decided that I want to go to school I got like help from everybody from the Catholic Social services and all these agencies in Alberta. They all helped me to, to get to school. So I really was grateful for getting their help.”

Q: Okay. Now is there anyone or any organisation assisting you or helping you to find employment in Alberta?

- P8: Yes - it is working, they give me like good information and I think that my mentality is changing now. I’m thinking about the job and the job descriptions, if you can get me. So now I'm thinking differently in terms of how to do like networking, how to do - so they are giving me tips and tricks to do it.
- P9: “Just I appreciate the different organizations which are here to support new immigrants or newcomers to Canada whether it’s for those educated in another country with a degree from other country or whether it’s just serving the immigrants here. Actually, the service they provide, that’s the information they give, I found it very valuable. So if you are willing to look for the information it may take time but they will be able to support you and give you the necessary information to be successful.”

- P9: When first I – the first time I joined the government of Alberta I was referred by Bredin Institute, by an employment advisor and then I got the job. They advised me on my resume. Then after that, once I got that position – so that’s how I joined the government of Alberta for – but to be specific - now the current – my current position, I applied after I joined at a lower position at that time, then internal advertisement come up. I applied and I got my current position.
- P10: At the moment no agency is helping me, just within friends and probably colleagues and my employers. No one actually is. But no, when I came I went to Bredin Institute for employment anyways. But yeah, I didn’t follow it up that much. I got something I wanted.
- P10: So if like we come in and there are some programs or degrees or some upgrade you know, enlightenment or just such programs for people to – you know, if you are into this short program, two, three months or whatever so you can understand how the Canadian environment is and so you can be – I mean so you – to make it easy for you to fit in, you understand. Then that could help. That could help. But I don’t know, I think there are some programs that have helped... set up the standard training in order to bridge the gap and then once they are done then you know they can fit into the Canadian system and – I think, yeah. So maybe so they can transition a little bit more after that kind of thing.
- P11: “Someone has to give me that opportunity to have that experience.”

6. Experienced more opportunities in Alberta in terms of employment than in their respective African countries. The following citations and statements supported this proposition.

- P1: “Alberta is better. I won’t say that it’s not because – here you can – even with lots more jobs you can maybe dream to have your own house, buy your perfect car you want to buy and all. That’s not possible in Ivory Coast today, now. Ivory Coast is really difficult now.”
- P2: Realistically, it depends what kind of employment. For my educational background Alberta is the good place, because mechanical engineering is a part of industrial sector, or gas or petrol... Here, for the employment, you have a lot of opportunity in Alberta. If you are strong, if you are like motivated, it’s easy for you to get something.
- P3: So employment, I would say Alberta is still better because really that was one of the things that I feared so much about Nigeria. Millions graduate, come out every day and they can't really find a job. I know friends, colleagues - I know many friends, we were all at school together who are unable to get a job.
- P4: The way I see the market if I may speak about myself, then I talk about in relation in the holistic sense. So for me, the way I perceive it is that I think the different market for physiotherapy is good. Good in terms of you still being able to be employed, that you’ll find lots of openings. I’ve been told that the jobs are really there so, you know, for me I perceive the Alberta market as one that is still good. You know, in terms of job opportunities as a

physiotherapist. Yeah, so at that point ... so I did get ... when I applied to jobs.

- P5: Oh, I'm optimistic because I got lots of employment opportunities in the trades because a lot of people are here and trying to get in the trade but they can't. People make a lot of money in the trades, right? So I was lucky to enter that. So I would say it's better than my country of origin because of my competency. So I guess I'm lucky and I'm happy and I think the future is bright.
- P6: Maybe it seems that in the last couple of years, it was really, the economy was doing well, and most of the jobs are in the trades and oil. So if you have a skill in one of those trades, and then the job market was really good... Well, maybe just getting this job which I have right now because they hired me for one project and that was just for a three months. We were to last for three months and then after three months, they decided to keep me on.

It was important for participants to be employed. However, they were more satisfied if they were employed in their areas of specialization.

- P7: But still there are some opportunities. So if people come here, those who are looking for a job they should be flexible to accept the lower job or something transitional... Yeah. And about the job, I am on the way to get what I need to get the job. So I, for the job I am very positive... Canada is possibility country, Alberta specifically has more opportunities.

Q: “Do you think it is possible that you will one day work as an accountant here in Alberta?”

- P7: “Yeah, sure, I have no doubt about it.”
- P8: So I believe that if I work harder, I can get what I want one day. And I have seen like many success stories of people who have started like me, so this gives me support here. I’m sure what I can do and I’m sure there will be a - there will be a chance one day in the labour market as it gets up and I - I can see those job advertisements. Many of them like - like to have what I can do, so - yeah I think there is good chances over there.
- P9: “Well, it’s difficult. It’s very difficult for internationally-trained immigrants, but still I would think that it’s better than the other provinces in my opinion. But yeah, if they are coming I would advise them to come to Alberta. But yeah, it’s not that easy. But yeah, I think it’s better here.”Currently in terms of professional – in terms of work, I believe that’s in the right direction so I don’t want to go to another province and start all over again looking for work.
- P10: What I see is that there are so many jobs out there and openings around and most of the times when you look at them you see oh, I am qualified for this, this is exactly what I want to do ... the issue back in Nigeria is unemployment, that’s the main thing, you know. You finish, you look for a job, you are not able to get a job, but if you really get a job you do well.
- P11: “A good place if you are ready to do any kind of jobs.”

7. Believed that reeducation and training in Canada can have a positive impact on employment and general labor market performance. The following statements and quotes were suggestive of this belief.

- P1: “I was thinking about doing nursing or doing a Master’s in public health.”
- P1: I made the decision. For example, last year I applied for the nursing school and they didn’t accept me because they said that my – some of my courses I took at university, they didn’t recognize them here. So they told me that I have to pay for those courses first, go to university to do that first and after it apply for the degree. So I don’t know. But for a Master’s in public health I have the same issue because most of the people who are doing a Master’s in public health have the professional experience in public health. And when I used my medical background, saying that I have experience in public health, they say that no, that’s not sufficient. You have to have the work experience here, you don’t have any work experience in Canada, it’s better to find a job first.
- P2: Because there is a lot suggestions, like, big struggle for me because they asked lots of questions, lots of paper. And I wanted to go back to the university to get some diploma to find some profession. There’s a lot of requirements that, for me, was very strange.
- P3: I have to go back to be an accountant programme. I have to take it for eight months because I didn’t get anything in my field. So I was enrolled in



the programme so at least I'll be able to go back in my field as an accountant. Yeah, found a school which provided such programme.

- P4: "I was staying here because for me I was able to get back to practice physiotherapy because I've been able to do my exam, my national exam. For me it's been good but for my wife it's not been as good."
- P4: "So as soon as we landed I started on my program. It provided a soft landing for us."
- P4: And then the other thing was ... when we came in ... there was the therapy program that they do at Bredin Centre for learning, you know, they organise the prep classes and help people to prepare for the labour market. I thought okay, that guy should enrol in that program, and that was how I got some credit, you know? So I did have like, two practice before my written exam, and then after I passed. I also did about four or five practice for the clinical exam. So I think it was helpful, because you meet other people, and you learn from their experiences and, again, they helped me to form like, a practice group for the clinical exam, and then when I was looking for a job, I didn't come back to Bredin that day, because at that stage I knew that I could easily get the job.
- P5: "So your fastest way would be at least to go back to school here to get the degree from Canada. I applied for another degree or at least a diploma and this is money."

Training and reeducation was reported to be important in changing experiences in the labor market. Participants had experienced the changes that reeducation and training made in the lives of other immigrants from Africa.

- P5: Yeah, it's not like easy really finding a job for me but I always have to go through process. Then when I was talking, I kind of felt like the best way was to go to school regarding what they were saying to me. To go school at least to get a Master degree because if you get a Master degree for example in Geology and you want to work at the Geology department at least this is considered at your first year as experience. And it's 4 years of apprenticeship and if you go to school, your Master is considered as the first year of your apprentice. So I kind of think that it was the best place to do it because I've been looking for a job, putting my resume but nothing was coming.
- P6: "Well, when I moved to Canada, I joined Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. They had a program for professionals, for integration in the Canada system. They ran it in conjunction with NAIT, so I did that course, and then after that, after doing the course, I used to look around, and then I got a job in November."
- P6: Well, I would give them a chance. I mean, I would try to see if the system can change and give them a chance for on-the-job training, like a trainee, but not just to demand everyone for work experience because right now what the market is doing, they hire you to start working tomorrow. Even if you don't have experience, they can hire you and give you about a

year or two of training. You're working as a trainee, which is not here. Here most companies, they want their money. They want to get money out of you right there and then. So that's why they are hiring someone with experience. They don't, well they don't have time for you to train. They don't have time to train you.

- P7: Yeah, because, I mean, there's a, I believe that I can see there are some opportunity here but you need something to get the job. So that extra, extra something or extra training... So I decided okay I know that I need something, I decided to go to school to get that extra skill that I need... right now I'm just focused on the studies... I need to train to get me there to the job that I'm reaching for.
- P8: "And since we get the visa, we plan to come directly to Edmonton as my husband got like acceptance in a programme in the University of Alberta, so that's how we choose to land in Edmonton."
- P8: For now I will just like keep up and just support myself by educating myself on how to do like better job search, how to stay in this level of spirit and how to stay positively - this is what I can do now.
- P9: Bredin center for learning provided me with some workshops for the labor market prep. This was helpful because I was equipped for employment and referred by an advisor. That is how I got the job with the government of Alberta.
- P10: "That's just the way it is. No matter what you've got, no matter your background, it's very difficult for them to accept you, you know, based on

your qualifications if you lack Canadian experience, Canadian certificate and all that. So it's been a bit difficult. You will have to start a program again so it can be able to get into the system.”

- P10: There's still prospects I believe, but the main thing is once they come in try to do a program already. I think that's the key. That is the key to it. So but if people, you know, get that understanding that even though they are engineers and when they come here they should also not expect the labor market to just absorb them immediately, they also need some training, you know.
- P11: when I moved here, Bredin Institute and Mennonite Centre for newcomers were helping prepare to get a job....I attended employments works workshops and took some resume writing sessions. ...trainings are good because one is new.

### **Nonconfirming and Unrelated Data**

During the data collection process, some comments and statements by participants did not fall in line with the themes that were generated. Anomalous data were however important in providing insight on job satisfaction and perceptions of over qualification. These statements are provided below according to corresponding themes. The following themes are from Research Questions 1 and 2.

5. Believe that the skilled worker immigration program can do more to prepare internationally trained immigrants employment.

Q: “Okay. So are you saying that this program prepared you for Canada?”

P5: No matter how we got you prepared, it won't be enough. I know a lot of people here who came here and were really surprised. So no, I'll say no. Nothing can prepare you because you have to come here to see the reality of the things. Yeah, that's what I believe.

Q: "Okay. So I guess from what you say, you might not have any suggestions on how this skilled worker program can be improved by the federal government?"

P5: Because no matter how much information you can have from the provincial or federal government, it won't be the same as the physical reality that you need. It will never be the same.

4- Experience improvements in other aspects of their lives in terms of quality of life and brighter future for themselves and for their families. Participant 11 was categorical about being unsatisfied in terms of employment and could not perceive of any improvement in his life since he moved to Canada.

P11: "Not getting the job, zero. Zero, zero, zero good experience. You make more money, your quality of life better. Money and quality of go together".

4. Experience optimism and a change in attitude. The following statements support this position.

Participant 11 expressed no optimism living in Alberta and no possibility of ever working as an accountant. This discrepancy was in relation to Research Question 1, theme 4.

Q: "So are you optimistic or are you pessimistic?"

P11: "Pessimistic would be the one. Yeah. No, I gave up."

## **Summary**

The data collected during the interview sessions sufficiently answered the 2 research questions and shed light on the research problem. The phenomenological study focusing on perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification in the Alberta labor market produced strong generalization of experiences, beliefs, and meanings across participants with few variations. There were in total four frames of analysis namely (a) labor market initiation, (b) quality of life, (c) labor market changes and practices, and (d) training and reeducation. There were 11 comments supporting each of the four themes. These themes were directly related to the research questions, and were framed within the four conceptual frames of analysis. Research Question 1 produced 5 themes, and Research Question 2 produced 7. These themes were supported by statements and comments from participants. These themes and their relationship with both research questions formed the basis of the master outline according to Hatch's (2002) 9-step technique of data analysis. From a qualitatively research tradition and phenomenological point of view, this data analysis tool was appropriate.

In the next chapter which is Chapter 5, the purpose of the study will be reintroduced. A summary of the findings will be provided as illustrated by the 4 frames of analysis. This summary will be supported by evidence in the form of comments and statements supplied by participants in function of the 2 main research questions and interview questions. Finally in Chapter 5, some conclusions and recommendations for further studies plus impact for social change will be considered.

## Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification by newcomer landed immigrants of African origin in Alberta, Canada. The study was a qualitative study that focused on the lived experiences with over qualification and descriptions of job satisfaction by landed African immigrants in the Alberta labor market.

Guiding this study were two overarching research questions:

1. How do landed African immigrants in Alberta articulate job satisfaction? Under what conditions does this articulation change?
2. How do landed African immigrants describe the Alberta labor market? What context do they give to it in light of their experiences with other African labor markets?

These questions produced statements that resulted in the creation of four conceptual frames of analysis with fundamental themes. The population was defined as landed or skilled worker immigrants of African origin who were experiencing or had experienced over qualification in Alberta, and who had lived in Alberta for not more than 5 years. Participants were identified via a snowball technique and through the collaboration with three immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta. These organizations gave permission for posters to be placed in their precincts. A total of 11 participants were interviewed.

Data were analyzed using Hatch's (2002) 9-step inductive techniques of data analysis. Data collected resulted in a thick description of labor market experiences, beliefs, and perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction. Themes generated were supported by statements from participants' interview responses. A full description and

interpretation of the results are presented in this chapter. The two main research questions are also discussed together in a thick and information-rich synthesis. Finally, recommendations for immigrant-serving organizations, for the provincial and federal governments, and for foreign-trained immigrants from Africa are presented. Recommendations for further studies and implications for social change are also provided.

### **Conclusions**

The frames of analysis guided the creation of the master outlines as shown in Chapter 4. The conclusions are the results of an analysis of all five themes discovered in Research Question 1, and the seven themes discovered in Research Question 2. The conclusions describe the four frames: (a) labor market initiation, (b) quality of life, (c) labor market practices and changes, and (d) training and reeducation.

#### **Labor Market Initiation**

Literature reviewed for this study showed that the labor market performance of internationally-trained immigrants in any given recipient country improved over time. An indicator of the change was evident in the narrowing of the income gap between native-born individuals and immigrants born and trained outside of Canada. However, getting a first job in Alberta as an immigrant with academic and professional credentials obtained outside of Canada proved to be difficult for my study participants. Literature also showed that for new entrants and new graduates, labor market experiences are different from those who are already employed and accrued employment dynamism by way of work experiences.



Old arrivals in the Canadian labor market perform better in obtaining and retaining employment than newcomers (Bauder, 2013; Wang, 2010). Federal and provincial governments in Canada have recognized the need to provide transitional services to newcomers. In the province of Alberta, there are a dozen immigrant-serving organizations providing programs and services such as labor market preparation workshops, career fairs, bridging, and mentorship programs.

When participants stated the importance of having introductory or assisted access into the labor market, they became emphatic. Participants stated that they experienced obstacles navigating the labor market partly because it was very competitive and different from labor markets in their countries of origin. Some suggestions were made in terms of making the labor market induction possible. Most participants relied on immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta, and some used their network of friends to access information about the labor market. P4 stated that “as soon as we landed, I started on my program.” The program mentioned here is the certification program taken to become a certified physiotherapist in Alberta. Three other participants also experienced hardships finding a job because they had to be board certified.

In general, participants with academic degrees who needed regulation to practice in Alberta experienced difficulties finding a first job. Three participants had post-secondary degrees in accounting, and three others were engineers; these are highly regulated occupations in Alberta. To be able to work in Alberta as an accountant, the Labor and Employment Code requires that one be CPA certified. CPA stands for certified professional accountant. To be able to work as an engineer, one has to be APEGA

certified. APEGA stands for the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta.

In relation to working in occupations that did not need licenses or board certification, the story was the same: namely, the inability to get a first job without assistance. Participants were unanimous about feeling frustrated because employers discounted their professional experiences obtained outside. Participants believed this to be the reason why they are not given a first chance by employers. P10 spelled out that “That’s just the way it is. No matter what you’ve got it, no matter your background, it’s very difficult for them to accept you, you know, based on your qualifications if you lack Canadian experience, Canadian certificate and all that. So it’s been a bit difficult.”

Two participants recounted that being introduced to the right people and organizations can affect how fast a first job can be found. Literature on economic empowerment and integration showed that ethno-cultural minority individuals find comfort and support from members of identical cultural groups. New entrants into the labor market who access professional resources and assistance outside of their ethno-cultural boundaries tend to have a better labor market experience introduction particularly in term of opportunities (Dean & Wilson, 2009).

In cases where participants ended up getting a first job in Alberta after arrival, their on-the-job training experiences were turbulent and long. Also noteworthy was that all participants stated job satisfaction as having good colleagues at work and working in a healthy work environment. Job satisfaction articulations changed when participants felt bored or felt that their efforts were not properly rewarded. Job satisfaction, according to P3, is “good working conditions, good pay and environment, something you enjoy

doing.” Two participants lost their first job; one was laid off and stated that it was his opinion that he did not fit in with coworkers and the work culture. The other lost his job because he took some time off and went back to his native African country for a visit. When he came back to Alberta, he was informed that there was no job for him.

According to what participants said they experienced in Alberta, labor market initiation is just as important as staying employed. Participants also mentioned that they thought they were on the right path even though their premigration dreams had not been met. Only P11 was not optimistic about eventually getting a job that was commensurate with his professional and academic credentials. There were varied comments from participants about their labor market initiation experience. Below is a sample from the interview with P1:

P1: “The fact that if you don’t know someone you can’t really do what you want to do, do what you want to be. If I were to work for example in the healthcare, this is up to me for one who worked there... an immigrant is really difficult because you are new here and you don't know anybody.”

Q: So did this happen to you? Can you cite an instance where you did not know anybody and you did not achieve what you wanted?

P1: “I went in to find a job, any kind of job related to my field. I spent time – I don’t know if I sent more – I think that I sent more than 200 résumés. I never received any calls, even for an interview, never. But for a person with a doctoral degree, maybe I can't work as a physician but I should be able to work in administration, so. But never, never get any interview, nothing, so ...”

Q: “Yeah, okay.”

P1: “And two ago before I met a lady from Alberta Health and we started discussing, and she said oh, you know what? There is some jobs and sometimes we already find the person for the position before we put that online. She told me that, and that's true. Instead of give me your résumé and I will see if I can see someone and maybe you can have an interview or something like that. That was a one month ago. And last week I received a call for an interview. So that makes me really – I say what if I don't know anybody. I won't have an interview. That's not normal.”

All participants expressed that the Alberta labor market is very competitive. This is supported by extant literature that showed that there is preference by Canadians for immigrants with postsecondary academic credentials than there is for immigrants without (CIC, 2010). According to the literature reviewed, Alberta's two largest cities, Calgary and Edmonton, have received a record number of highly skilled immigrants in the last decade and Alberta's workforce is shown to be one of the most culturally diverse in Canada (Cross, 2015).

The difficulty in securing employment upon arrival in Alberta, as experienced by participants, made them second-guess their choice of Alberta as a destination of residence. Experiencing hardship in the face of finding a job did not, however, blur participants' view of the future. Articulation of optimism was common among all but one participant. P11 stated, “No, I gave up. There is job but not for everybody.” The reason why P11 said he had given up hope was because he had never been invited for an accountant job interview since he and his wife moved to Alberta 4 years ago. The only jobs he had been able to get were manual labor jobs.

Job search and employment acquisition experiences varied across participants. However, the meaning they made of these experiences was similar. There were expressions of frustration and experiences of not being self-actualized. Eight participants could not find a job during the first 6 months after arrival in Alberta. Of the three participants who did, one got a job because his friend was his boss, and the other two worked as laborers in a manufacturing company. Survival employment or transitional jobs are not unusual to newcomer immigrants in Canada (Chen et al., 2010). Participants felt that they needed to survive and make ends meet, especially those who had financial commitments in Canada and in their countries of origin. Survival employment was also experienced as degrading and devaluing by participants.

### **Quality of Life**

There was a significant change in the articulations and experiences of participants in regards to their labor market performances in Alberta and their countries of origin in terms of perceived quality of life. All participants were occupationally active before relocating to Alberta. The youngest participant at the time of the interview was 33, and the oldest was 47. According to the literature reviewed for this study, age and premigration occupational status are important factors for continuous occupational activity. The Canadian federal and provincial governments consider age and premigration occupation before granting permanent residential status to immigrants.

Two participants stated that the Canadian government selects foreign-trained immigrants with a postsecondary degree not because these individuals will find work in the same capacity as they did back home, but because this category of immigrants has the baseline capacity to be retrained and re-educated. P10 mentioned that “the feeling I have

is that you have just been brought in because you can improve, you can retrain, you can provide, you can find a way, you know, get into the market but not that you are coming in as an engineer and you are going to be employed here as an engineer immediately.” With this in mind, all participants but one said that there is the potential to experience a better quality of life in Alberta than in their respective countries of origin. Participants stated that even though they were not overly satisfied with their occupational status at present or at some point in the past, they enjoyed better attention to their health, social security programs, training, and a future for their children.

The narrative of a better quality of life in industrialized countries in the world resonated with the literature reviewed for this study and constituted a pull factor for most low-income countries. However, participants’ experiences went beyond income to include safety, healthcare, and social security for themselves and their descendants. Perceptions of quality of life were instrumental to a change in attitude despite misfortunes in the labor market. Participants also reflected on how job satisfaction could change in a given context. Other contexts in which job satisfaction articulation changed included, for example, when a job was closer to home or when working hours enabled a balance between work and family responsibilities.

### **Labor Market Changes and Practices**

Literature on the labor market performance of newcomer immigrants in Alberta and other Canadian provinces showed similar factors affecting immigrants in industrialized economies in the world. During interviews, articulations of job satisfaction, experiences of over qualification, and perceptions of the Alberta labor market were

shaped by several factors. All participants shared a sense of being affected by labor market practices, employment cultures and norms, and most of all labor market changes.

Participants were conversant with the Alberta economic climate and shared their impressions of what the economic future looks like and the implications for prospects of employment. Participants were aware of the economic downturn Alberta was going through because of the fall in oil prices. This was the first economic bust in Alberta that all participants experienced in the previous 5 years. Diversification of economic activities was echoed by participants as a way for Alberta to get out of the downturn. No participant had an economic background, but they believed that if the economy was doing well, their chances of finding better jobs would increase. Furthermore, participants said they had experienced a slowdown in economic activity and hiring.

Two participants with engineering degrees who worked in the energy sector confirmed that they experienced the consequences of the downturn firsthand. They stated that they had seen colleagues being laid off and there were few new employees coming into the workforce. P6 said that “right now it is in bad shape. The economy is in bad shape because the economy is based on oil, basically, but now prices, oil prices are low so our economy is also slowing down and they laying off people here everywhere.” Although not all participants had a background in the oil and gas sector, they expressed a hunch that external factors also affected their ability to get hired. They also felt that, as newcomers in Alberta, the situation could be more adverse for them because they had not built enough resilience for economically challenging times.

Economic boom and bust is characteristic of the Alberta economy. How much impact a bust had on participants was reflected in what they had to say. Participants

shared that, as newcomer immigrants, they were most vulnerable. P2 expressed that “yeah, you know, that there is lots of people were laid off. And this is big...the big disadvantage, because if the economy is down most people can lose jobs.” There was, however, a sense of optimism among all but one participant that the economy would pick up again. When asked why participants felt that way, they said the boom and bust cycle was normal for the Alberta economy. Theme 3 under Research Question 2 provided evidence of this belief.

Participants agreed that a common practice among employers in Alberta was the requisition of a Canadian work experience as a condition for hiring. Regardless of participants' background and country of origin, participants stated that they had experienced the lack of a Canadian work experience, and identified this lack as the greatest challenge finding a job. Participants said they felt frustrated and anxious about this labor market practice. However, P10 expressed some understand and justification for the constant demand of a Canadian work experience by employers. She stated that it could be chaotic if newcomer immigrants were just, in her own words “shoved” into the labor market. She further said that, the work culture in Canada is different from that of her country of origin, and most African countries.

Of special interest, was how participants narrated their experiences with the demand for Canadian work experience as a prerequisite for employment. Some participants were told by employers during job interviews that they did not have enough Canadian experience. Others were advised by colleagues, and immigrant-serving officials that, a lack of Canadian work experience was the reason they were not getting hired. One participant said she no longer applied for jobs because she lacked a Canadian work



experience. An example of an interview stream relating to Canadian experience was with P8.

Q: Okay. So are you currently employed?

P8: No.

Q: Okay. And are you actively looking for work now?

P8: Yes.

Q: Okay. So why you are not employed at this moment?

P8 : I think it's mostly like mainly the market itself, the economy, this is the conclusion I got because I have been applying many times, doing networking, going - I take every reason going to Job Search but unfortunately I don't see good results.

Q: Okay.

P8: So it looks like it's all about the economy.

Q: Okay.

P8 : And the other reason is the - they really need one who has Canadian experience - at least one year, and because we're immigrants, it's - it's really like we cannot come out of Canada with a Canadian experience - if you can understand it. So it's just to find that person who can give you this chance then you can step over this border, you know.

What meaning did African immigrants make of their experiences with labor market practices such as the requisition of a Canadian experience, and how did they go about it? The answer to this question is found in the responses participants gave as they grappled with labor market barriers. Culture and employment philosophies are imbedded in formal and informal educational systems of every civilization (Bauder, 2013). Networking as a means to gain a Canadian work experience was employed by some participants. Three

participants described how they experienced practices of nepotism; one of them said in Alberta it was called networking and not favoritism. Participants had different ways of networking. Participants who had signed up with an immigrant-serving organization said they received professional services, and eventually met employers. Other participants used their network of friends or members of their ethno cultural groups to search for employment.

Experiences attending networking events such as career fairs were reported by all participants. Career fairs were organized by the government of Alberta or by immigrant-serving organizations. Attending a career fair yielded promises of employment for 2 participants. During the fairs, participants met managers who invited them for job interviews. P1 stated that “two months ago I met a lady from Alberta Healthcare and we started discussing and she said oh, you know what? There is some jobs and sometimes we already find the person for the position before we put that online... Instead give me your resume and I will see if I can see someone and maybe you can have an interview or something like that. That was one month ago. And last week I received a call for an interview.”

One participant who relied on an immigrant-serving organization for labor market preparation training and networking, reported experiences of frustration. He said, he had never been invited for a job interview as an accountant since he moved to Alberta 4 years ago. He expressed his frustration by saying that “and I know the government spent a lot of money to...in some agencies to help immigrants who...to get into the job market. But it really seemed to me that those agencies didn’t do their job”. Immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta were government subsidized, and provided programs and

services to immigrants. Subsidy recipient organizations were mandated by the government to provide economic and social integration programs.

Participants expressed the need to be treated with dignity in the labor market. Recognition for prior work experiences were considered important to participants. There was a general feeling that foreign-earned academic and professional credentials were devalued by employers, and by other labor market agencies such as the International Qualification Assessment Service of Alberta. Labor market practice of devaluation was felt by all participants as a significant challenge in Alberta, and affected articulations of job satisfaction. One participant with a doctorate degree in Geography had this to say: “so it’s like you need to know some people to introduce you or to talk good of you I don’t know because maybe they are suspicious, they don’t really trust your degree or competence. So you won’t really get those kinds of educated jobs...because there is no trust. They are suspicious so yeah, you won’t get it because of that.”

A commonality of experience reported by participants was that, the federal and provincial landed immigration program could be more effective. When asked about the effectiveness of the program in term of preparing them for Canadian labor markets, all participants stated that they did not feel prepared. Feelings of disappointment with the program came from the fact that, participants were selected to settle in Canada primarily for employment. Information about employment realities in the Alberta labor market would have prepared them emotionally and psychologically. P1 observed that: “you send physicians to Canada, and they come to work in the bank, doesn’t make sense.”

Literature reviewed for this research showed that public policies did not satisfy everyone. Furthermore, it was not an anomaly to experience unwanted consequences of a

policy that had good intentions during implementation. Mismatches between policy intent and policy outcomes are not uncommon in public administration (Dunlop, 2010).

Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the landed immigration program because in terms of what they had experienced in Alberta, this program was misleading. At the time of the interviews, participants were either working part-time, enrolled in a training program or working fulltime.

### **Training and Reeducation**

All participants made efforts to change their situations in Alberta in terms of finding employment in their areas of specialization. Training and personal development are important because they increase resilience in economically bad times, and help sustain human capital (Fenesi, 2015). Participants expressed the desire to take specialized training or to further their education. They believed that this could change their labor market experiences in Alberta given what they had already experienced. At the time of the interviews, 4 participants were taking a career bridging program; this program was an 8 months program sponsored by the government of Alberta for those with an accounting background. Five other participants were enrolled in a postsecondary program, taking credit courses required for board certification exams. Two other participants said they were considering to enrol in a program in 2016.

There was a common perception among participants that, a Canadian certificate or on-the-job training could be a game changer in terms of how participants were perceived by employers, and by other labor market actors. Statements supporting this notion are located under theme 7 of Research Question 2 in Chapter 4. Participants also believed that further training or reeducation could open doors for them, and increase their chances

of finding employment. Some participants said that, because the Alberta labor market was different from those in Africa, being retrained before stepping into the market would make them more confident.

Participants who had experienced more than a year of unemployment felt that, a radical change of career was the best option for them. Two participants with doctorate degrees portrayed this volition. One of them had a doctorate in geography, and the other was a trained physician. The geographer said he had come to terms with the realities of the labor market after 3 years of employment dissatisfaction, and was ready to move on. He decided to pursue another career path, and was in training to become a heavy equipment technician.

P5: “Now I’m in the trades, I’m working as an apprentice in trades training.”

Q: “Okay. So this is completely new training for you?”

P5: “Nothing compared to what I was doing and how I’ve been doing that. Go back to zero so yeah, I started it last year so I was a laborer first and then I get to what they call the apprentice in the trade and I became 3rd apprentice, and now 2 weeks ago, I became 2nd apprentice. But yes, this is really good to me, it has nothing to do with my field of competence.” P2, who was a trained physician from Ivory Coast, had made 2 attempts to reeducate. The first attempt was to become a nurse, and the second was to obtain a master’s degree in public health. She did not succeed in both instances. She was considering relocating to Saskatchewan, a neighboring province to Alberta. She reported that, it was easier to become a physician in Saskatchewan.

When in training or taking a postsecondary course, participants remained occupational active. Their occupation activities during periods of training were part-time,

evening work, or weekend employments. When inquired of them how they managed school and work, and why they stayed employed, participants said they needed money. Those with families in Alberta said they needed to take care of their families. Some participants had financial responsibilities back in Africa. The belief that taking an extra training or being reeducated in the Canadian culture from a holistic perspective, was considered important to participants. This belief was common because immigrants who had been schooled in Canadian culture, and who had lived in Canada for over 5 years, tend to do better in the labor market. The literature reviewed for this research was in line with this proposition. Participants enrolled in training had a long term perspective of where they wanted to be; reflective of the shared feeling of optimism expressed by all but one participant. The aspiration to have a career, and not only a job was strongly articulated by participants.

### **Recommendations**

Results from the interviews and process notes yielded recommendations that could be directed to (a) Canadian provincial and federal immigration authorities, (b) immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta, and (3) landed immigrants of African origin in Alberta. When perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification were presented by participants, the focus was on the Alberta labor market, and how they had experienced it, in light of experiences from other African labor markets. There was a focus on government subsidized immigrant-serving organizations that assisted participants to integrate in Alberta. Comments on participants' capabilities and limitations as newcomers in Alberta with foreign-earned academic and professional credentials, were frequent.

### **Canadian Federal and Provincial Authorities**

The journey to Alberta began with an application for permanent residence visa by participants, either via the provincial or federal government landed immigration programs. There were over 10 immigration programs in Canada aimed at streamlining immigration to Canada. Of interest to this study was the landed immigration program also known as the skilled worker program. Over the last decade, there had been an increase in the number of landed immigrants who chose to reside in the province of Alberta (Statistics Canada, 2014). From a policy perspective, it was important that the outcomes of these programs were in line with the intentions behind them. If the experiences and perceptions of my research participants are taken into account, Canadian provincial and federal authorities could make the landed immigration program more effective.

During the interview sessions and going through the fields notes, comments were made by participants about the immigration program they employed to migrate to Alberta. Participants agreed that knowing what they knew now, there were things they would have done differently before moving to Canada. When asked what participants would do different, if they were the minister of immigration and employment, they commented that Alberta labor market awareness would be very important before departure to Canada. Specific information on the nature and characteristic of the Alberta labor market, and realistic expectations premigration to Alberta were important to participants.

There was consensus among participants that immigration program administrators should follow up with newcomers as soon as possible after they arrived in Alberta. Participants felt abandoned after visas were issued them, and after arrival in Canada. The

experiences with job mismatch, and in some cases lack of employment post-migration, left participants frustrated. Researchers have shown that old entrants into the labor market perform better than new entrants, in terms of obtaining and retaining employment. Although some participants utilized the services of immigrant-serving organizations, others did not because they did not know which organizations could help them. A recommendation was that, federal and provincial immigration policymakers should consider customized pre-immigration programs for participants after visas are issued. Customization should take into account countries of origin, degree types, skills transferability, and labor market initiation programs.

Another stumbling block identified by participants was the lack of Canadian work experiences, and the constant demand from employers for such experiences as a prerequisite for hiring. Participants agreed that, they had difficulties finding a first job in order to build up such experience, reasons why most of them resorted to bridging programs or were enrolled in training programs. Some suggested that the provincial and federal governments could work together with employers by enacting policies that encouraged the hiring of newcomers. Because introduction into the labor market proved to be a challenge for research participants, governments could consider incentivising the hiring of newcomers, and promote such with tax breaks and on-the-job training cost sharing. P1 commented that “if you say that for example, we have to bring in for example 2,000 immigrants this year in Alberta, you should be able to find jobs for at least 1,500 of them.”

In cases where participants experienced over qualification and dissatisfaction with their jobs, they were unhappy about it, and less optimistic about the future in Alberta.



Dissatisfaction was as a result of the devaluation or no recognition of academic and professional credentials from Africa. Sometimes foreign earned postsecondary degrees were unrecognized or downgraded by evaluation and assessment agencies. When this was the case, participants experienced anger and frustration saying that, they were selected to migrate to Canada because of their academic credentials, and then when in Canada, the credentials are devalued. Participant 2 commented that, “That’s the big thing. That be sure that the diploma can be recognized or they can have some kind of evaluation.” It would therefore be less frustrating to participants if governments considered carrying out an evaluation of academic and professional credentials prior to granting residential visas to landed immigrants. Participants agreed that it was important to them to know the value of their education and profession in Canada, and what their chances were in the labor market.

During the selection process to move to Canada, participants had no knowledge of the Canadian educational system or knowledge about the equivalence of their degrees to Canadian ones. Furthermore, sectors such as the healthcare, financial services, and energy are regulated in Canada. To be able to work in regulated sectors, board certifications or entrance exams were required. The process of completing these exams, and passing the final certification exams challenged to participants. Two participants experienced long preparation periods to meet the requirements for board exams, and 2 others said they had to start from scratch because their education in Africa was discounted for credits. P4 reported that:

“Like, if not that I had friends, like I said, I wouldn’t have known that I should have started my credentialing like, well ahead of time. It does take close to three years to

complete that process. So I think it would be beneficial if there is like, a package for every profession, you know, I mean in the old system they had that ... you know, it was based on shortage of professionals and things like that, but now no way and sort it out, so I don't know what is in there. So I think it would be nice if there's something like a package outlining the best practices for every profession, or any professional who is coming in. Like, you need to start your credentialing, you know, way ahead of time. You know, you need to do your exam ... once you come in you need to do your exam. If there are two components, that needs to be specified. If there are three, like for some I think there are three.

You know, so things like that will have been nice if it's spelled out and, again, for job experience, that's a very big problem. Even when you do pass the exams, they will be asking you do you have Canadian experience? So on the job post it will say ... it will be experience in Canada, and there's no way you have that because you're just coming in. So I think that's one big challenge. So government can help. You know, in a sense of ... I know that Bredin is doing a great job there, and all that services like that, but there's a way to make it more structured, that people who are coming in can receive ... at least get someone to give them a reference letter when they are looking for work. You know, that will be helpful in looking for a job." Considering to give an equivalent academic credentials presented during the selection process could assuage feelings of frustration and anger for immigrants. Some participants said the decision to migrate to Alberta would have been different if they knew the value of their academic and professional credentials.

### **Immigrant-Serving Organizations**

Immigrant-serving organizations played a significant role in the settlement, economic, and social integration of immigrants in Alberta. There are about 55 immigrant serving-organizations in Alberta. The 2015-2016 budget of the Alberta government had a significant increase in services and programs earmarked for job creation and skills training for immigrant population (AAISA, 2016). AAISA stands for Alberta Association of Immigrant-Serving Associations.

During the interviews, all but one participant had never used the services of an immigrant-serving organization in Alberta. The participant did not know about them, and used only her network of friends and the internet to look for jobs. Some participants were enrolled in bridging programs provided by the Edmonton Mennonite Center for Newcomers. Those participants who had contacts with immigrants-serving organizations reported varied experiences. It is recommended that immigrant-serving organizations do more, in terms of bringing participants closer to employers. Because of the leverage these organizations had as intermediaries between the private and the public sectors, participants felt that, more labor market destined program could be offered. Exposure of immigrants' skills and labor market transitional trainings should be given more attention. Immigrant-serving organizations could assist business and industries to create workforce training programs.

Participants recommended the creation of jobs solely for the purpose of acquiring Canadian work experiences. The way to start this process is to create awareness, and promote diversity in the workplace. Furthermore, immigrant-serving organizations should consider preparing immigrants for particular employers, and not just for the general

workforce. This could be a viable option because participants believed that fear and suspicion for no Canadian talent kept employers away. P9 shared that:

“I think it’s a matter of creating awareness among the employees, employers that the experience which you get in other countries can be applied here. Yeah, it’s my – I believe that’s mostly in the minds of the employers that when they look at the resumes from other countries they don’t even consider it. So they need to focus more on, people can learn a new environment and can adapt to that environment and apply the experience they have back home but in a different – in another – other countries. So it’s just creating awareness among employers, which would be my understanding.” Immigrant-serving organizations should consider lobbying and advocating for those they served.

### **Newcomer Landed Immigrants from Africa**

A report on Canadian social trend published by Statistics Canada in 2014 stated that, “education does not improve employment opportunity for recent immigrants as much as it does for Canadian-born” (p.17). All participants had a postsecondary degree and work experience in their countries of origin. My research participants testified to a devaluation of their academic and professional credentials in Alberta. Participants shared that, it could have been wise to consider the differences in education systems, and pedagogic philosophies before making the move to Alberta. Participants could not undo the decision to move to Canada and had developed individual coping mechanisms. Strategies of gaining socioeconomic and political capitals should be considered. Knowing people at the right places, and working hard to be culturally integrated could make a difference. When one is new in a labor market, and unsatisfied with occupational status,

volunteerism can help showcase skills and eventually market one to hiring managers (APA, 2012)

A recent study by Rose (2013) showed that Canadian recent graduates also faced some of the challenges that newcomer immigrants in Canada faced. In a complex and globalized market economy, recent immigrants are considered new entrants into the workforce. Canadian universities should do more in preparing graduates for post academic world (Rose, 2013). Immigrants of African origin should consider accessing service and programs at university levels, aimed at preparing fresh graduates for the labor market. There should be an engagement with local community organizations, and participation in values that drive the community. Being engaged as a group or as an association, immigrants could create platforms or forums to discuss and channel their needs.

Finally, studies reviewed for this research identified language barrier as a top ten issue affecting the labor market performance of most immigrants. Landed immigrants from Africa were not excluded. While all participants in this study could read, write, and speak English, there were episodes of unclear elocution during the interviews. Communication in the workplace is important for teamwork, and health and safety roles. (Werwing & Munro, 2009). Immigrants in Alberta should consider investing in their language skills. Investment should be deliberate.

### **Recommendations for Further Studies**

Investigating perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction among African immigrants in Alberta yielded 2 recommendations for further studies. The literature reviewed for this research showed that, the number of landed immigrants with

postsecondary degree was on the rise in Alberta, and in Canada in general. Over qualification and unemployment prevailed more among immigrants from Africa than among native-born population. During the interviews, all but one participant expressed feelings of optimism in Alberta despite experiences of frustration and dissatisfaction in the labor market. This supported the notion that, there is a need to understand this paradox, along lines of gender, age, degree type, and country of origin. Worth researching is whether perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification vary among immigrants of different nationalities in Africa. Perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification could also be investigated in regards to landed immigrants from other continents.

Secondly, this study was an investigation of the supply side of labor, and the experiences of those ready and willing to supply their services. As evident in the literature reviewed for this study, and as stated by participants, there were many factors, and actors involved in their labor market experiences in Alberta. It is therefore apposite that, research be carried out to explore whether labor market skills demand exceed African immigrant worker capacity. There could be an exploration from employers' perspectives in Alberta in regards to why landed African immigrants perceived the Alberta labor market the way they said they did.

### **Social Change Implications**

Positive social change implications were associated with this study. Firstly, 11 participants contributed information-rich data, and thick descriptions in regards to lived experiences in the Alberta labor market. The result of their statements fostered understanding of perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification unique to the

province of Alberta. Eleven participants from 7 different African countries provided insights on the subjective nature of job satisfaction; their coping mechanisms in a labor environment fairly new to them is worth emulating. From a phenomenological point of view, their lived experiences, and firsthand encounters with labor market actors can be shared by landed immigrants from other continents.

Secondly, the fact that participants stated they were not fully prepared for the realities in Alberta implied that, there was room for improvement or need for an intervention. The nature and expanse of this intervention could be carefully considered. Participants were landed immigrants, and came to Alberta via the landed immigration program also known as the skilled worker program. This was one of the selection criteria to participate in this project. My plan is to disseminate the findings in academic and non-academic forums. A target group would be government immigration officials, and policymakers. The government of Alberta runs a social policy blog on its website that could serve as a medium for dissemination. The need to reexamine the landed immigration program has been made, thanks to the empirical evidence discovered during this research. Participants unanimously stated that pre-migration preparation programs could change post migration labor market performances, and perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification.

Thirdly, during consultations with managers from immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta, 3 managers welcomed the idea of a presentation of my research in their organizations. These organizations were the hub for settlement and integration services to immigrants. Organizations were strategically chosen because they were subsidized and mandated by the Alberta government to serve newcomer immigrants. The research

problem was important to immigrant-serving organization for 3 reasons (a) organizations were reinventing services and programs and, they were seeking to know more about perceptions, and how their clients experienced the Alberta labor market, (b) immigrant-serving organizations in Alberta did not have research departments to inform programs and services design, and (c) there was a need to confirm or refute assumptions when providing services to landed immigrants from Africa.

### **Conclusion**

This study was conducted to explore perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction by landed African immigrants in Alberta, Canada. There were 2 overarching research questions, and 14 interview questions guiding this process. Perceptions of over qualification and job satisfaction indicated that (a) labor market initiation programs were crucial to new entrants into the labor market, (b) landed African immigrants experienced a quality of life in Alberta that was better than that in their countries or origin, (c) Alberta labor market practices significantly impacted labor market performances, and (d) training and reeducation in the Canadian context impacted labor market performance.

There was consensus among research participants that premigration preparation programs could change post migration labor market perceptions and experiences. According to findings from this investigation, immigration policymakers of the skilled worker immigration program should consider designing programs and services for landed African immigrants that are destined for the labor market. Perceptions of job satisfaction and over qualification among landed African immigrants could be reported different, and their experiences of the Alberta labor market could differ from the ones gathered during this research.



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## Appendix A: Letters of Collaboration from Community Partner Organizations



Date: September 28, 2015

1713 - 82 Street NW  
 Edmonton, Canada T5B 2V9  
 Fax: 780.424.7736  
[www.emcn.ab.ca](http://www.emcn.ab.ca)

**RE: DOCTORAL RESEARCH PARTICIPATION**

I, Oliver Kamau, Program Manager at Edmonton Immigrants Services Association (EISA), have accepted to collaborate with Benard Chuba in the recruitment of research participants for his doctorate project titled "Perceptions of job satisfaction and over-qualification amongst African immigrants in Alberta, Canada".

EISA looks forward to the results of this study and we hope it will provide insights as we do our best to provide services to immigrants and refugees to Canada.

nite

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Kamau', is written over a horizontal line.

Oliver Kamau  
**Program Manager (Settlement Services)**

10720 - 113 Street, Suite 201  
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Tel: 780-474-8445  
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Working together for full participation.



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September 28, 2015

To Mr. Benard Chuba

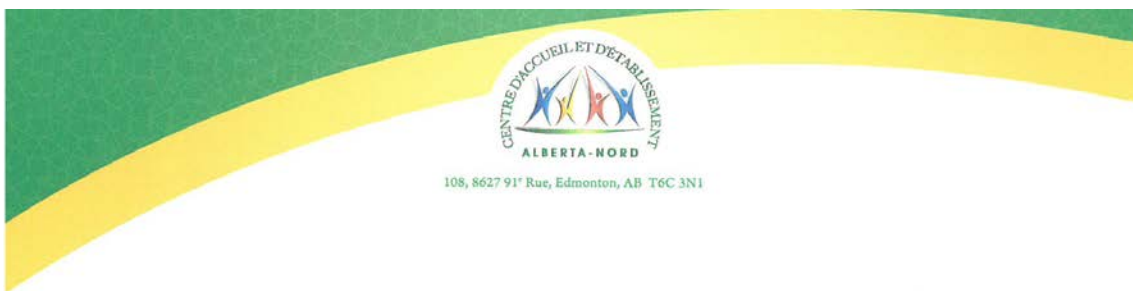
This letter is to confirm that the staff of the Bridging and Training Programs at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers is willing and able to collaborate with you in the recruitment of research participants for your doctorate project titled "Perceptions of job satisfaction and over-qualification amongst African immigrants in Alberta, Canada".

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie Hauer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "L".

Laurie Hauer  
Stakeholder Relations Coordinator, Bridging and Training Programs  
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers  
780-945-2294  
lhauer@emcn.ab.ca

Working together for full participation.



Edmonton, September 29, 2015

To whom it may concern

Subject: **Collaboration agreement**

I, Georges Bahaya, Executive director of Centre d'accueil et d'établissement du Nord de l'Alberta (The Welcome and Settlement for French speaking Immigrants in North Alberta, have accepted to collaborate with Benard Chuba in the recruitment of research participants for his doctorate project titled "*Perceptions of job satisfaction and over-qualification amongst African immigrants in Alberta, Canada*" by allowing our office to facilitate his recruitment of participants in hanging his poster with his contact.

Georges Bahaya

Executive director



## Appendix B: Information and Consent Form:

Perceptions of Job Satisfaction and over-qualification amongst African Immigrants in Alberta, Canada.

### Part A: Information

Investigator: Ben Chuba, PhD Candidate, School of Public Policy and Administration, University of Walden, USA

### Background

The federal and provincial governments of Canada designed several immigration programs to target certain categories of immigrants. One of such programs is the landed immigrant program also known as the economic class category. This immigration program targets internationally trained immigrants with post-secondary credentials and high professional trainings. Immigrants under this category are granted permanent Canadian residential statuses principally because they can easily find meaningful employment once in Canada. While in Canada their labor market expectations are not always met. This has an implication for themselves, labor market actors and agencies, and the holistic Canadian provincial and federal immigration policies.

### Purpose

This interview is an integral part of my PhD dissertation project with Walden University. In this research, I intend to learn about your experiences with over qualification - this refers to a situation where an individual's occupational status is inferior to his or her professional training and or educational level e.g. you worked as engineer in your country of origin but now you are working as a cab driver - and how you articulate job satisfaction. I also want to talk to you about your work and education history before and

after you arrived in Canada. Your contribution will help me understand your labor market performance and how you articulate job satisfaction in the Alberta. This research will be beneficial to immigrant serving organizations and to Canadian provincial and federal immigration policy makers. The research will inform them on the services and program deliveries destined for internationally trained immigrants.

#### Procedure

This interview could take up to 2 hours, and I ask if I may audio record our conversation. There might be a second and a follow up interview. I will ask questions about your work experiences before you moved to Canada, your educational background, how you look for work in Canada, challenges in looking for work, and what you think can be done to improve the situation. I will use codes for your name and store the information collected encrypted.

#### Compensation

There will be no monetary reward for participating but a \$10 nonrefundable gift card will be given as compensation for participating.

#### Risks

There is no risk with this interview and it will be just you and I having a conversation as I ask questions. If you feel stressed about an issue or question, feel free to let me know and I can assist you or refer you to someone or organization who can help. Your participation poses no risk to your immigration nor employment position and will not lend you access or favors from any one or parties. Your information will not be passed on to anyone or any authority. Communication via the internet poses no greater risk than the ones we encounter with our daily use.



### Freedom to withdraw

Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. You may be interviewed more than once and you may choose not to answer any questions or stop with the study at any time without any penalty. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal details and information will be deleted upon your request.

### Additional Contact

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, or how this study is being conducted, you may contact: [irb@waldenu.edu](mailto:irb@waldenu.edu). This office has no affiliation with the research investigator.

### Part B: Consent

Your signature on this form means that you have understood the information for taking part in this project. You can sign this form electronically or manually when we meet. I can also go over it with you and send it via email for signature. You are advised to keep a signed copy for yourself. You are free to stop the interview at any time and you may decide not to answer any questions. If you have any concerns about this project itself, I welcome you to contact me at 780.934.0019 or via email ([benard.chuba@waldenu.edu](mailto:benard.chuba@waldenu.edu)). You may also contact my supervisor Dr. Mbaye Heather ([heather.mbaye@waldenu.edu](mailto:heather.mbaye@waldenu.edu)) for more information. Walden University's approval number for this study is 11-20-15-0298367 and it expires November 19, 2016.

I.....consent to participate in this research project, and I have read and understood the above information.

Interviewee's Signature.....

Date.....

Please initial

## Appendix C: Interview Questions

Interview Protocol

Date:

Name of Interviewer:

Name of Interviewee:

Interview Number:

1. Let me begin by asking you why you came to Alberta and how long you have lived in Canada? Are you happy about the decision?
2. What are your educational and professional credentials? For how long did your work in your country of origin and it what capacity?
3. Have you been able to work in Alberta since you arrived? What exactly did/do you do for work?
4. Have you been able to secure similar employment to the one(s) you had before moving to Canada?
5. How would you describe your job satisfaction?
6. What does over qualification mean to you?
7. How would you describe the Alberta job market? In what ways is it similar or different from the labor market of your country of origin?
8. How does your current employment status affect you and your family? Is there something that you can do about it?
9. Have you ever contemplated of leaving Alberta to another province or leaving Canada for another country or leaving to go back to your country of origin? Why or why not?
10. What would you tell an international trained immigrant who is planning to migrate to Alberta as a landed immigrant?
11. In your own words, how effective is the skilled worker immigration program that brought you to Canada?
12. How does your future look like in Alberta?

13. If you knew then what you know now about Alberta would your decision to relocate to Alberta be different?
14. Are there any items about you and your employment in Alberta that we have not covered and you will like to share? Or do you have any questions?