COPING STRATEGIES AND SKILLS THROUGH ADJUSTMENT AND TRANSITION: A STUDY OF NEW AND PROFESSIONAL IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA

by

Devina Daya

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Clinical and Counselling Psychology
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
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2016

ABSTRACT

The present study explored the lived experience of new and professional immigrants in Canada, and the coping skills and strategies they employed through life-career adjustment and transition. A qualitative methodology examined in-depth transcripts that were analyzed using a grounded theory approach to data analysis. The findings reflected the use of engagement coping, which included primary control coping (i.e. social support and action-taking – networking, retraining/re-education, seeking out resources), secondary control coping (i.e. adaptability and positivity), as well as proactive coping, religious coping and an external form of coping (i.e. luck). The implications of these findings extend to the field of coping psychology, immigrant adjustment and vocational psychology. Moreover, this research applies to those in helping professions (i.e. counsellors) who can better facilitate the population of new and professional immigrants with an increased understanding of the challenges they face and the coping strategies that facilitate their transitional process.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Charles Chen for his unwavering guidance and support throughout my thesis research and graduate training. I value his dedication, insight, and research skill, which facilitated my ability to complete this project. I would also like to thank Dr. Michele Ferrari for being a committee member on my thesis. I greatly value his time and appreciate the feedback he offered toward this study.

I would also like to thank the participants of this study for their willingness to share their experiences of migration and transition. I hope they recognize their contribution, as well as their courage and resilience, which they aptly demonstrated as they pursued their life-aspirations.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their unconditional love and support. Without them none of this would be possible. To my parents you stand in testament of the vision, fortitude and ambitious resolve that is required to create a life of meaning and purpose. To my brother, I am eternally grateful for his mentorship, guidance and his continued belief in my ability to succeed. I have tremendous respect for my family; I owe much of my drive and determination to them. I thank them for the values they have passed down to me.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Viewed as a place of opportunity, peace and democracy, many individuals from around the world immigrate to Canada to pursue new life goals and career endeavours. Known as a diverse and multicultural society, statistics reflect that 1 in 5 individuals across the country are foreign born (Statistics Canada, 2015). In fact, Canada is known to have one of the highest immigration rates in comparison to any other G8 nation in the world. Over the years, immigration has contributed to Canada’s culture, society and economy, and has supported economic prosperity and nation growth (Bloom & Grant, 2001). More specifically, in recent decades, new immigrants have been an important factor in addressing Canada’s aging population, shrinking birthrate and shortage of skilled labour (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013). In 2014, Canada welcomed approximately 260,000 new immigrants, which translates to approximately 712 immigrants arriving everyday, one of the highest levels in over 100 years (Statistics Canada, 2016). Of these new immigrants, 63% were economic class immigrants who were admitted to Canada based on their skills and ability to contribute to the economy. Overall, most new immigrants, 36.8% settle in the province on Ontario, followed by 16.3% in the provinces of Alberta and 13.5% in the province of British Colombia (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Once newcomers arrive in Canada the process of resettlement begins and new and professional immigrants must adjust and adapt to life and work in Canada. The term professional migrant describes economic class immigrants who are admitted to Canada largely due to their educational skills and qualifications. New and professional immigrants are skilled in their respective fields, and are granted permanent residence in Canada based on their ability to settle in Canada and contribute value to the economy (Statistics Canada, 2016b). For new and professional immigrants the process of adjustment often requires overcoming social, cultural and
employment challenges, as reflected in the research regarding the systemic barriers that new immigrants face (Downie, 2010; McIsaac, 2003, Yakushko et al. 2008). It is well documented that many new and professional immigrants experience difficulties, such as: unrecognized foreign credentials, unrecognized work experience, acculturation difficulties, language differences, financial constraints, and discrimination (Becklumb & Elgersma, 2008; Houle & Yssaad, 2010; Downie, 2010; Yakushko et al. 2008; Berry, Phinney, Sam and Vedder 2006). For many new immigrants the transition to a new life requires considerable adjustment and one that relies on the ability to overcome barriers and cope with transition and change. In light of the journey experienced by new immigrants how do they cope with the challenges and difficulties that occur during resettlement? It is apparent that new immigrants eventually do integrate and overcome, considering Canada’s multicultural society whose population has largely been shaped by immigrants and their descendants. However, how does this process unfold, and what are the specific coping strategies and skills that new immigrants rely to facilitate adjustment to life and work in Canada?

The preceding questions are driven by research regarding the psychology of coping, which posits that individuals have the adaptive ability to use coping mechanisms to relieve the burden of undesirable experiences (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). In other words, coping strategies or skills are available to facilitate integration and to overcome challenges. Several models have been proposed to conceptualize the adaptive process of coping; from early two-dimensional models that categorized coping into problem-focused and emotion-focused coping, to more recent forms of coping that include: engagement coping, disengagement coping, accommodative coping, meaning-focused coping and proactive coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Synder, 1999; Roth & Cohen, 1986; Carver & Conner-Smith, 2010). Of interest, in the present study is how new immigrants adjust and resettle in a new country. What are the specific
coping strategies and skills they utilize when faced with difficulties? To explore these queries the present research studies the lived experience of immigrant professionals and the coping styles and strategies they employ.

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study extends to the information it provides regarding how individuals cope with challenge and difficulty. There are limited number of studies that examine coping strategies and skills in a population actively undergoing transition and change, such as the population of new immigrants. This is especially relevant to the research on new immigrants in Canada, which would benefit from an increased exploration and understanding of psychological coping, and immigrant adjustment as it relates to Canadian society. The present study also provides a unique opportunity to study psychological coping in both career and life endeavours during a time when career adjustment is imperative, especially to the many immigrants who migrated to pursue career opportunities in Canada.

Alongside the relevance of the adaptive process of coping, the emphasis on understanding the population of new immigrants is important considering their continued entry into Canada and the role they play in Canada’s economy. New and professional immigrants contribute to labour market needs, as well as to Canada’s social and culture heritage. The importance of meeting labour market needs is reflected in statistics that suggest that Ontario is at risk of facing a shortage of 364,000 skilled workers by 2025 (Conference Board of Canada, 2007; Banerjee and Robson, 2009). In fact, it has been proposed that immigration would need to be more than 2.5 times greater than it is today to offset the decline in Ontario's labour force, caused by its aging population and its low domestic birth rate (Statistics Canada, 2016a; Banerjee and Robson, 2009). Statistics suggest that the number of ‘working age’ (15-64) individuals for every senior (aged 65 and older) is expected to drop from 4.9 in 2011 to 2.7 in
2031, and then to 2.3 in 2061 (Komarnicki, 2012). The most significant aging of the populating is said to occur before 2031. Lower fertility rates are also projected to remain below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman. Consequences of an aging population include slow labour force growth, increased demand on certain sectors such as health care, and slow growth in sectors such as manufacturing. As such, immigration is considered essential to meet the demands of changing population statistics (Bloom & Grant, 2001).

The relevancy of immigration also extends to the valuable contributions immigrants make towards innovation, as well as to social and cultural heritage. According to a 2010 report on Canadian innovation, immigrants are an important contributing factor to Canada’s ranking on ‘innovation input,’ as determined by a study conducted by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), the U.S. Manufacturing Institute and the National Association of Manufacturers (Downie, 2010). Canada ranked 14th out of 110 countries, with immigrants being described as a significant contributing factor. The study suggested that new immigrants win proportionally more prestigious literary and performing arts awards in Canada (i.e. immigrants comprise 23% of Giller Prize finalists and 29% of winners; as well as 23% of Governor Generals Performing Arts Awards) than their Canadian born counterparts. Immigration is also an important part of Canada’s identity, which prides itself as a multicultural and diverse nation. Individuals often come to Canada aware of Canada’s reputation as an inclusive society, and seek the increased opportunity for a better life, and the chance to pursue career and life goals.

**Applicability of Findings**

The applicability of the present study lends itself to new immigrants, counsellors, educators, employers and government officials who would benefit from hearing how individuals coped with the challenges of immigration. Since the present study employs a qualitative methodology and the use of in-depth interviews, the authenticity of each participant’s experience
is captured. Similarly, the words used to define the experience of coping, as described first hand by participants, is retained. Considering the continued entry of new immigrants into Canada, it is beneficial to understand the barriers new immigrants face and the coping styles and strategies that support them. Moreover, to facilitate adaptation and transition upon arrival to Canada the coping skills and strategies reported by new and professional immigrants could potentially be considered before migration. The opportunity to learn from the experience of others also provides a valuable transfer of knowledge of benefit to those undergoing transition and change. Knowing the coping strategies and skills that those in a similar situation relied upon can be an encouraging factor that can convey a perspective of understanding, empathy and hope. Lastly, the findings are applicable to not only the population of new immigrants, but also the broader population, who undergo adjustment and transition in a multitude of ways. The concept of coping is highly relatable, as managing unfavorable situations with greater ease is applicable at all stages of life and through many transition and adjustment phases.

**Research Question**

The primary research question in the present study is: “What are the coping styles and strategies that new and professional immigrants rely on as they adjust and transition to life and work in Canada?” The literature on the psychology of coping presents a wide variety of coping paradigms and various types of coping strategies and skills, thus the present study seeks to clarify the coping mechanisms that emerge for new and professional immigrants through life-career transition. It should be noted that the term life-career refers to the interaction, between vocational life and other domains of well-being, such as the social, personal and financial pillars of a person’s life (Chen, 2002). Thus, a focus on psychological coping in new and professional immigrants provides an opportunity to study the adjustment process as one begins to build a new life in a new country.
The following chapters seek to explore the aforementioned research question through the proceeding chapters. Chapter II will explore the context of the Canadian immigration system, and the barriers that new immigrants face, such as language difficulties, unrecognized foreign credentials and work experience, acculturation stress and health impacts, as well as discrimination and wage differentials. This chapter also explores the research on psychological coping and the main paradigms of coping, along with relevant career theories and views on career coping. Chapter III explores the rationale for qualitative design and the methodological approach taken. Chapter IV presents the themes and results that emerged from the lived-experience of new and professional immigrants. Finally, Chapter V discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the findings and its relation to broader coping psychology research.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will present the relevant research pertaining to immigrant adjustment, life-career development and psychological coping. To begin the Canadian context of immigration will be presented, along with an exploration of the common barriers immigrants face. Secondly, a review of the literature on coping psychology will be discussed, including the main paradigm of psychological coping. Lastly, career development theories as they pertain to career coping and psychological coping will be explored.

**Canadian Immigration Policy**

In Canada there are three broad categories of immigrants: family class, economic immigrants, and refugees (Citizen & Immigration Canada, 2015). Family class includes closely related persons of Canadian residents living in Canada, such as spouses/partners, sons/daughters, and parents/grandparents. Economic class includes individuals selected for their ability to contribute to the Canadian economy. This category includes the Federal Skilled Workers (FSW) Program, the Federal Skilled Trades (FST) Program, the Canadian Experience Class, the Provincial Nominee Program, and the Business Immigration Program. Refugee class refers to those escaping persecution, torture or cruel and unusual punishment. As of 2006, Canada has been focusing its immigration policies on economic class immigrants. The objective is to find individuals who have the skills and experience to meet economic and labour market needs (Statistics Canada, 2016). According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, economic immigrants received 63.4% of permanent resident visas, the majority of which were awarded under the Federal Skilled Workers Program (Citizen & Immigration Canada, 2015).

Applicants applying for entry to Canada are ranked through a comprehensive ranking system or ‘points system’. Individuals applying as a skilled worker are rated based on six
selection factors: proficiency in English and/or French (Canada’s two official languages), education, work experience, age, the presence of a valid job offer, and adaptability (how well an individual is likely to settle in Canada). The ‘points system’, which was first introduced through the 1967 Immigration Act, has undergone various transitions and revisions over the years. Recently, revisions to the points system have included greater emphasis on official language knowledge, youth and the presence of a Canadian job offer and less of an emphasis on work experience. In addition, applicants without a Canadian job offer must now have experience in a particular occupational category in current demand, regardless of their total points. As of January 2015, further revisions were made in order to better manage how individuals with skilled work-experience apply to Canada. Under this system, called Express Entry, individuals fill out an online profile that includes their language test scores, their Educational Credential Assessment (if needed) and their work experience. There is no cost to complete and submit an Express Entry profile. Based on their profiles, candidates deemed eligible are ranked and top ranking candidates are issued to apply for permanent residence (Statistics Canada, 2016b).

Many skilled workers who come to Canada are highly educated and skilled in their respective fields. According to the National Household Survey (2013), immigrants are more educated upon their arrival to Canada compared to their Canadian-born counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2015). In fact, while immigrants make up only a quarter of the population, they hold approximately one-third of the university degrees in the country. However, despite the statistics, immigrants are generally under-employed in the Canadian workforce and often have to settle for low-skilled work outside their field of expertise (National Household Survey, 2013). Statistics reflect that while 80% of new immigrants find full-time work within two years of arriving to Canada, only 42% find work in their area of study (Statistics Canada, 2015). Downie (2010)
suggests that not all immigrants are living up to their true potential due to systemic barriers that limit the contributions of new immigrants.

**Barriers to Career Development**

There are a variety of key barriers that commonly interfere with immigrants’ careers and professional development, including lack of Canadian work experience, language difficulties, the non-recognition of foreign credentials, lack of workplace integration as well as discrimination.

**Language**

Language barriers can greatly affect work-life adjustment and can make it increasingly difficult to adapt to a new culture. All immigrants who apply under the Federal Skilled Worker Program and the Canadian Experience Class must prove their language skill by submitting results of a language test approved by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. For English speaking applicants this includes: the International English Language Testing System (IELTS); and for French speaking applicants: Test d’évaluation Francais (TEF). However, a single test score may not capture the range and quality of language uses that are fundamental in Canadian society (Cummings, 1994). Despite the presence of these assessments, language barriers have been reported to be a major difficulty for new immigrants in Canada. Statistics report that 95% of new immigrants perceive learning or improving their ability to speak English to be an important issue (Statistics Canada, 2005). In addition, 26% of new immigrants feel that official language knowledge remains a significant challenge even four years after their immigration to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2007). Language proficiency is essential for adequate communication; it is necessary not only for everyday interactions and daily living, but also for more complex and technical activities, such as working in professional settings (Chen, 2006a). As such, effective communication is a key component of success in the workplace; it plays an important role in the initial job selection process, as well as overall job retention and career
advanced (Adamuti-Trache, 2011).

Not only can general language proficiency present itself as a career barrier, but difficulty with language can impact understanding cultural norms and can further prevent workplace integration. Difficulty with social connectedness and building social networks can be a disadvantage in regard to job entry and career progression (Lu, Samaratunge, & Härtel 2015). Proficiency in a dominant language is key to integration and adjustment to life and work in Canada. Difficulty with language ability can also impact one’s sense of self, and can contribute to feeling inferior, confused and disconnected.

Thus, poor language skill has been shown to negatively affect health outcomes of new immigrants. According to a 2015 report by Statistics Canada, limited official language knowledge was significantly associated with the self-reported health decline of both men and women, even when pre- and post-immigration risk factors were taken into account. Suggested reasons for the influence of language proficiency on health include: impairing access to health services, creating economic difficulties, and reducing social participation (Statistics Canada 2015). Thus, the benefits of acquiring official language skills may not only be social and economic, but are associated with the maintenance of health.

The Non-Recognition of Foreign Credentials and Prior Work Experience

The non-recognition of foreign credentials and prior work experience is another barrier commonly encountered by new immigrants (Houle, 2010; Mata, 1999). Lack of Canadian experience was listed by immigrants participating in Canada’s Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants in Canada (LSIC) as the number one barrier to finding employment in Canada (Downie 2010; Statistics Canada 2001). Qualifying for a high-level job position requires experience, which is impossible to achieve if the job criterion is necessitating Canadian experience. This prevents new immigrants from integrating into the workplace and limits the
contribution that immigrants can make to the labour market. Compacted with the non-recognition of prior work experience is the non-recognition of foreign credentials that further contribute to the systematic barriers new immigrants face.

The devaluing of immigrant credentials often occurs by those in positions of power, which includes employers who typically play a primary role, as well as those involved in the re-accreditation of foreign credentials (i.e. post-secondary education institutions, provincial governments, and professional self-regulating bodies) (Sumption, 2010; Mata, 1994). One of the difficulties faced by new immigrants is that employers may be unfamiliar with foreign degrees. This can result in foreign credentials being viewed with greater uncertainty or ambiguity and can deter the hiring of a new immigrant with foreign credentials. In addition, international differences in education, training, and skills may make it more difficult to compare foreign credentials with equivalent Canadian credentials. An employer may choose to hire a Canadian-born candidate over an immigrant if they assume that foreign credentials are of a lower caliber than equivalent domestic qualifications (Houle, 2010; Mata, 1999).

Furthermore, some professions require licensing or registration, which creates barriers in terms of examinations, application fees, or supervised training requirements (Sumption, 2010). While an accreditation system may appear to simplify and aid new immigrants, it too has its drawbacks. One of the problems for professional bodies is what is called the "statistical" discrimination of professional credentials (Mata, 1994). This refers to the fact that credential assessments are often made on the basis of ‘imperfect’ information regarding the international markets of professional credentials. This lack of systematic information on international degrees has lead to an increase in the subjective methods of evaluation used by review panels. A subjective evaluation leaves many highly skilled immigrants in jobs far below their skill level.
A further complication is the extent to which discrimination or prejudicial attitudes play into the determination of whether or not a new immigrant is hired. A study by Shinnaoui and Narchal (2010) found that employers utilized “foreignness of credentials” as a way to rationalize their decisions to not hire or promote immigrant workers (p. 428). Thus, the role of prejudicial attitudes cannot be underestimated, and will be explored in greater detail in the following sections.

The resulting trend that occurs is foreign education and work experience is deemed less applicable or seen as problematic to those in positions of power, especially employers. The consequence of the devaluation of foreign credential and work experience is the underutilization of the ‘human capital’ of many immigrants who were selected on the basis of their skills and work experience (Boyd & Schellenberg 2007; Mata, 1999). Many newcomers turn to unpaid work (volunteering or internships) as well as ‘survival jobs’ - low-skill work outside of their field of expertise – to meet the requirement for Canadian experience (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013). However, a newcomer will find it harder to integrate into Canadian society, and to contribute meaningfully to society, if they cannot earn a sufficient wage (Houle, 2010; Mata, 1999). Decent employment is needed for socio-economic well-being, which in turn affects health, access to education and access to services. Overall, newcomers, employers and Canadian society at large do not benefit from the true caliber of skills and qualifications available when new immigrants are not able to work to their true potential.

**Acculturative Stress**

Cultural adjustment is a significant concern affecting the experiences of new immigrants. Starting over in a new country requires finding housing, navigating a new environment, securing transportation, adjusting to a new climate, finding employment, adjusting to new social networks, all while coming into contact with new languages, norms and customs (Reynolds &
The difficulty of adjusting to a new culture is referred to as acculturative stress. Acculturation describes the interaction of individuals within different cultures and the resulting changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups (Berry, 2007). Acculturation can affect either group, though changes tend to occur within one of the groups more than the other (termed the acculturating group). For example, a study by Sanou et al., (2014) described dietary acculturation and the resulting effect it had on the health outcomes of new immigrants in Canada. The study concluded that dietary acculturation negatively impacted the ‘healthy immigration effect.’ The healthy immigration effect refers to the fact that new immigrants upon their arrival to Canada tend to have fewer chronic conditions compared to the Canadian-born population (Sanou et al., 2014; McDonald & Kennedy, 2004). This is primarily due to the selection of immigrants to Canada - in order to immigrate to Canada immigrants must undergo medical screening and those with comprised health generally do not qualify to immigrate (Sanou et al, 2014). The deterioration of health after resettlement is attributed to new immigrants adopting the dietary and lifestyle changes of the host country. Of course, the extent to which dietary acculturation takes place is dependant on the degree to which new immigrants maintain their former cultural identity in comparison to the extent to which they adopt the cultural practices of their new homeland. However, in this instance change occurred to a greater extent within newcomers or in other words the acculturating group, and created acculturative stress that impacted health outcomes.

Acculturation can involve adopting dietary habits, the learning of each other’s languages, adopting forms of dress and social interactions that are characteristic of each group, and engaging in one another’s cultural activities (Berry, 2005). Sometimes adaption can take place easily through culture shedding or cultural learning. Cultural shedding refers to the deliberate or accidental loss of cultural features or ways of being, while cultural learning refers to the
deliberate or accidental attainment of new cultural habits and novel ways of being (Berry, 1992). However, at other times, adaptation can create culture conflict or acculturative stress. In a study on Korean immigrants (Oh, Koeske & Sales, 2002), researchers found that higher levels of acculturation in domains of language and interpersonal relations were associated with lower levels of acculturative stress, however on domains measuring cultural identity and adherence to cultural values, higher levels of assimilation to the host country resulted in higher levels of stress. Thus, retaining some level of cultural identity so as not to undermine personal and cultural identification, while still acculturating in other ways to the host country was linked to better outcomes for newcomers (Oh, Koeske & Sales, 2002).

Other factors that influence acculturative stress or the ability to acclimatize to a new country include how different the previous country and culture may be compared to the new country (Berry, 2005). A greater difference between cultural norms and ways of being often result in more acculturative stress. In addition, the presence of other stressors such as lack of social support and financial difficult can compound the acculturative stress experienced (Thomas, 1995). Individual pressures to assimilate, and individual traits are also influencing factors. Individual traits such as resiliency and the ability to manage and cope with the adjustment process overall can further impact the extent of acculturative stress experienced (Kuo, 2014).

**Discrimination, Women and Wage Differentials**

Social inequity is described as the primary source of differential distributions of health and wellbeing (Noh et al., 1999). The General Social Survey (GSS) (2009) suggested that one-fifth of landed immigrants face discrimination in Canada with the most prominent bases of discrimination being ethnicity, race, and language. The difficulty in addressing discrimination is that it is likely to be hidden or covert. Many Canadian express disapproval of racism and discrimination; however, according to Beck, Reitz & Weiner (2002) public disproval of racism
does not “render Canadians colour-blind to intergroup relations” (p. 3). Instead, it is suggested that racial hierarchies exist through preferences for neighbours, coworkers and potential spouses for sons and daughters (Retiz & Banerjee, 2014; Beck, Reitz & Weiner, 2002).

Perceived discrimination as expressed by visible minority groups sheds light on the scope of discrimination and racism that is present in Canadian society. An Ethnic Diversity Survey (2002) demonstrated that 34% of racial minorities in Canada reported experiences of discrimination compared to 19% of European immigrants (Retiz & Banerjee, 2014). The study also noted that immigrants who had been in Canada longer perceived a larger racial gap than more recent immigrants, suggesting a greater perception of racism with more experience in Canada. To the extent that discrimination translates to difficulties in attaining employment, a study by Henry and Ginzberg (1985) demonstrated that individuals poised as actors from different racial groups received differential treatment when approaching employers. More recently, a study by Esses et al., (2006) found that assessments of foreign qualifications were rated lower among those individuals who demonstrated evidence of racial bias or prejudice. As such, when assessing new immigrants for employment prejudicial attitudes can prevent the hiring, retention and promotion of new immigrants. Notwithstanding, discriminatory hiring practices can also be seen through ‘cloning,’ which describes the process of hiring those similar to oneself (Beck, Reitz & Weiner, 2002). Cloning is often rooted in an employer’s belief about his/her own competence and its relation to group membership. Thus, an employer hires an employee that may share his same cultural affinities while devaluing those of other heritages.

Overall, prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices compound the barriers that newcomers face as they attempt to adjust and successfully adapt to a new country.

Another point of contention includes wage differentials, which have been well described in the literature, between native and foreign-born individuals. Canadian statistics suggest that
recent arrivals earned 30% less than their native born counterparts (Canadian Statistics 2001, Frenette and Morissette, 2003). Some level of wage disparity can be expected for new immigrants due to lack of familiarity with the labour market, language barriers and other difficulties associated with the settlement process. However, researchers note that such differences could reflect discriminatory practices based on race, ethnicity or false stereotypes (Reitz & Banerjee, 2014).

Wage differentials are also especially concerning when considering gender differentials between new immigrants; for example women are expected to earn less than their male counterparts, even when controlling for educational credentials and work experience (Reitz & Banerjee, 2014). Banerjee and Phan (2014) concluded that female professionals who had arrived as dependent applicants within the family unit experienced the biggest challenges to employment integration. Principal applicant professional women tended to have greater human capital relative to their spouses, but did not achieve similar gains in occupational status over time as principal applicant men (Reitz & Banerjee, 2014; Banerjee & Phan, 2014). In fact, one-third of immigrant men had their credentials recognized within four years after landing, compared with only 22% of women. Men were also more successful in having their work experience recognized - 51% compared with 23% of women. While discriminatory practices affect new immigrants, the effect is even greater for immigrant women.

**Coping**

In psychology, coping refers to efforts to overcome, reduce, or tolerate the demands created by stress or conflict (Weiten & Lloyd, 2008; Taylor and Stanton, 2007; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It describes the way individuals employ psychological coping mechanisms, otherwise termed coping styles or strategies, to aid in the process of managing, minimizing or overcoming stress. Often coping mechanisms arise in situations that are appraised as taxing or
exceeding of one’s resources (Thompson & Greve, 2013; Taylor and Stanton, 2007). The effectiveness of an individual’s ability to cope depends on the coping strategy employed, the type of stress/conflict encountered, and the situational circumstances. Coping strategies and styles often vary in their adaptive value with some forms of coping being highly adaptive and constructive in their ability to mediate or reduce the impact of a stressor. Over the years, psychological coping has been categorized into several different coping styles each with overlapping and distinct characteristics. The preceding section will discuss the main paradigms of coping as identified in the literature on psychological coping and explore the evolution of this broad and complex field.

**Problem-focused Coping and Emotion-focused Coping**

Early research separated coping into two broad dimensions, which included problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping (Lazarus, 1984). Problem-focused coping is aimed at problem solving and altering the source of stress: taking steps to remove, evade, or to diminish its impact. For example, if layoffs are expected, an individual may apply for other jobs or work harder at their current job to reduce the likelihood of being let go (Carver & Conner-Smith, 2010). Emotion-focused coping is aimed at minimizing the emotional distress that is associated with or caused by the stressor. Emotion-focused coping included a wide range of responses, such as self-soothing (e.g., relaxation, seeking emotional support) expression of negative emotions (crying, yelling), focusing on negative thoughts (e.g., rumination) and attempts to escape stressful situations (e.g., avoidance, denial and wishful thinking) (Carver & Conner-Smith, 2010).

According to Lazarus (1984), emotion focused coping dominates when stressful conditions are viewed as difficult to change; however when they appear as controllable by action, problem focused coping dominates. In addition, the same goal (e.g., seeking support) can be both emotion-focused and problem-focused depending on the type of support that is sought after. It
would be classified as emotion-focused if the desire is to obtain emotional support and reassurance, but problem-focused if the goal is to obtain advice or instrumental help (Lazarus 1984; Carver & Conner-Smith, 2010). As such, emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping are not two distinct and independent coping strategies; they complement and support one another. To illustrate, emotion-focused coping used effectively can diminish negative emotional distress, making it possible to problem solve more calmly and possibly allow for better problem-focused coping. Moreover, problem-focused coping can diminish the threat, and while doing so can reduce the negative emotional distress. While, the distinction between problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping is an important one, the research on coping psychology has evolved towards a much broader and more in-depth understanding of coping styles and strategies (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989). Paradigms of coping that soon followed emotion and problem-focused coping included engagement and avoidance coping, as well as meaning focused coping and proactive coping.

**Engagement and Disengagement Coping**

Engagement/approach oriented coping is aimed at dealing with the stressor or related emotions, and includes problem-focused coping and some forms of emotion-focused coping (Carver & Conner-Smith, 2010; Thompson & Greve 2013). Within engagement/approach coping attempting to directly control the stressor has been termed primary control coping or assimilative coping. On the other hand, attempts to adjust or adapt to the stressor has been termed accommodative or secondary control coping. Within primary control coping an individual may try to maintain their goal when confronted with obstacles. They may engage in direct problem solving (e.g., taking action to find ways to fix or better the situation), or seeking out information or support to improve the situation (Compas, Champion & Reeslund, 2005). Primary control coping also involves emotion regulation (engaging in activities to calm oneself), as well as
emotional expression (e.g., talking or writing about one’s feelings and emotions) (Carver & Conner-Smith, 2010; Compas, Champion & Reeslund, 2005). Secondary control coping is best understood when individuals are confronted with situations that cannot be changed or obstacles that cannot be overcome. Secondary control coping involves adaptation to the stressor through acceptance, positive thinking, and cognitive restructuring (e.g., revising one’s goals to meet the current situation, reframing loss into a different perspective, focusing on different opportunities).

In contrast to engagement/approach oriented coping is disengagement/avoidance-oriented coping. Disengagement coping is aimed at escaping the threat or related emotions, and involves responses such as avoidance, denial, and wishful thinking (Carver & Conner-Smith, 2010). It is often more emotion focused, as it involves attempt to escape feelings of distress. Sometimes avoidance coping is almost literally an effort to act as though the stressor does not exist. In this way the stressor does not have to be behaviorally or emotionally reacted to. Often wishful thinking, fantasy creation and denial, distance the person from the cause of stress and create a boundary between reality and the individual experience. However, escaping distress is often an ineffective way to reduce distress over the long-term, as it does nothing to address or reduce the threat (Carver & Conner-Smith, 2010). To illustrate, an individual experiencing a threat in their life might respond by going ‘to the movies’ however the threat will remain to be there after the movie is over and in essence the stressor will not have been dealt with. Studies have shown that engagement coping is often associated with more positive psychological outcomes and less distress compared to disengagement coping (i.e. denial, avoidance, and wishful thinking) (Varani et al., 2012).

A study on adolescent mental health showed that those who transitioned over a one-year period from disengagement to engagement coping had a significant decrease in depressive symptoms (Herman-Stabl, Stemmler, & Petersen, 1995). While those who changed over time
from engagement to disengagement coping evidenced a significant increase in depressive symptoms. The study implied that the adolescents who engaged in social support, cognitive restructuring and problem solving were more likely to successfully negotiate the challenges that they encountered.

**Meaning-focused Coping**

Another coping mechanism is meaning-focused coping where an individual attempts to re-evaluate a situation and infuse ordinary events with positive meaning (Tennen et al., 2007). It has been proposed that meaning-focused coping is distinct from problem-focused and emotion-focused coping (Park & Folkman, 1997; Gan, Guo & Tong, 2013), as it does not attempt to change a problematic situation, nor does it have a direct influence on decreasing the pressure caused by negative emotions or distress. Instead, it may include drawing on beliefs and values (e.g., religious, spiritual, social justice beliefs), as well as existential goals (e.g., one’s purpose in life or guiding principles) in an attempt to sustain well-being during stressful times (Folkman, 2008). However, meaning focused coping is said to relate to engagement coping, as it can involve reappraisal and accommodating to life’s constraints. In the same way that engagement coping describes adaptation to the stressor (i.e. secondary control coping) or changing one’s perspective instead of trying to influence the stressor, meaning focused coping can include viewing a situation from an alternate viewpoint. In meaning-focused coping one can look to the lessons learnt from an unfavourable experience, or ascertain the benefits of misfortune, such as a sense of personal self-growth or an increase in wisdom and patience (Folkman, 2008; Gan, Guo & Tong, 2013). The result of meaning-focused coping can also include gaining a greater appreciation for life and a knowing of what is truly important in one’s life.

Meaning focused coping is suggested to occur most often when stressful experiences are uncontrollable or are going badly, such as when illness or loss is involved (Folkman &
Moskowitz, 2000). Research suggests that engaging in meaning making can reduce distress levels and allow individuals to become more resilient in the face of loss (Davis, Harasymchuk & Wohl, 2012). Additional studies have suggested that failing to engage in meaning focused coping can lead to long term distress, especially in the face of sudden loss or unexpected events (Davis, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Larson, 1998). For some individuals meaning-focused coping arises more easily, though for others meaning-making is a discussion and strategy that when reminded of can facilitate adjustment to unlikely events.

**Religious coping**

Religious coping is related to meaning focused coping, but is distinct from nonreligious styles of coping due to its involvement of religious practices and beliefs (Sanchez, et al., 2012; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Religious coping can include engaging in contemplative prayer or the belief in a higher power to support how one gathers meaning from an event (internal religious coping) (Sanchez, et al., 2012). It can also involve social behavioral strategies, such as attending religious places of worship, seeking guidance from religious leaders or becoming involved with religious events (external religious coping). Further research on reveals three methods of religious coping (the collaborative style, the deferring style, self-directing style) (Pargament, 1997). The collaborative style is based on viewing God as a partner in the problem solving process. It consists of working together with God to sustain oneself through difficult times. The deferring style includes feeling that one has less personal control over situations and delegating all problem solving to God. The self-directing style involves the belief that God endows individuals with the skills for problem solving and one must actively use those skills (Petruța-Paraschiva & Turliuic, 2011). Those with a self-directing style are described as not necessarily feeling a close relationship with God. By examining these styles of religious coping, the collaborative style of coping has been found to have the greatest psychological benefits, related
to increased self-esteem and lower levels of depression (Phillips et al, 2000). Individuals deal with traumatic events in a myriad of ways, and for some turning to religion can be a highly beneficial avenue of support. A national survey taken three months after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks showed that 75% of Americans turned to religion or spirituality to cope (Schuster et al., 2001). An additional study showed that 62% of undergraduate and graduate students reported that prayer helped them to cope with the stress that followed the attacks (Ai et al., 2005). The impact of religious coping has also shown to have a compounded effect depending on the level of religiosity. A study by Gall and Guirguis-Younger (2013) found that religious individuals reported less pain splitting migraines when they were exposed to meditations with religious content in comparison to non-religious content. Overall, when individuals endorse religious coping it seems to result in less anxiety, greater optimism and more positive outcomes (i.e. closer relationships with family and friends) (Ai, Ti & Peterson, 2005). While religious coping/spirituality may not resonate with every individual, it can be a helpful strategy to facilitate adjustment to challenging experiences.

**Proactive Coping**

While, many constructs of coping discuss how individuals respond to a threat or stressor, some coping can occur proactively before the onset of a threat or stressor (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Carver & Conner-Smith, 2010). In essence, proactive coping seeks to prevent threatening or harmful situations from arising. Proactive coping is often problem focused, as it involves an accumulation of resources that can be used to detect if problematic events may surface or if a threat arises. If a threat is perceived, a person can engage in strategies that will prevent or remove the threat. The anticipation of the threat can also help a person to avoid the stressor, or mentally prepare for its possible arrival if it cannot be avoided. In addition, proactive coping has
been shown to reduce the number of stressful episodes or the intensity of the experience, as one is able to prepare beforehand and engage in any steps necessary to diminish its impact.

In career pursuits, proactive coping has been related to personal initiative and the ability to solve problems in the workplace (Crant, 2000). It has been further conceptualised as an aspect of self and job-improvement; for example, a sales employee might ask for feedback on their technique for closing a sale with the goal of improving their job performance. Crant (2000) further emphasize that a proactive individual will seek out opportunities in the workplace instead of adopting a more passive or reactive approach. Research has also described proactivity as a personality construct, whereby an individual with a proactive personality is relatively unconstrained by situational forces and effects environmental change. A study by Crant (1996) demonstrated a positive correlation between entrepreneurship and a proactive personality. The study controlled for gender, education and whether or not one’s parent was an entrepreneur, and found that the intention to own a business was positively influenced by a proactive personality.

Proactive coping behavior is often contrasted with other work behaviours, such as proficiency and adaptability (Bateman & Grant, 1993; Campbell, 2000). Proficiency refers to the ability to fulfill predictable requirement of one’s job. While, adaptability refers to the ability to cope with change initiated by others; this is contrasted with proactivity is which concerns initiating change instead of responding to it.

In summary, various paradigms of coping mechanisms exist including problem-focused and emotion-focused coping, engagement/disengagement coping, meaning focused coping, religious coping, as well as proactive coping. Within those paradigms of coping individuals may engage in wide array of processes as a method to cope with stress, difficulty or conflict. To illustrate, one may engage in direct problem solving or seek out information/resources as in problem focused or engagement coping. Additionally, an individual may attempt to seek out
social support as means of both problem solving and emotional expression/regulation. Alternatively, acceptance or positive thinking may occur as a form of secondary control coping/engagement coping. The use of prayer, seeking guidance or drawing on other values or beliefs as in religious or meaning-focused coping is another form of coping that would allow for sustained coping through difficulty. The ability to use multiple coping strategies, termed coping flexibility, has been related to positive psychological health effects, as well as reduced depression, anxiety and distress (Kato, 2012). It is suggested that more flexible coping will produce more adaptive outcomes.

**Career Development Theories and Career Coping**

The proceeding section examines career coping and adjustment from three frameworks that shed light on how individuals cope with career transition and adjustment. Firstly, a career management model (King, 2004; Crites, 1969) is discussed that provides insight into how individuals strategize and cope with the pursuit of career endeavours. In addition, the notion of career adaptability, as presented through a career construction theory framework (Savickas, 1997, 2002, 2005), is explored that elucidates the adaptive resources that can facilitate career adjustment. Lastly, a social cognitive career theory (SCCT) framework is presented, which describes person-cognitive factors or psychosocial aspects of career coping (i.e. self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals) that influence career transitions. A focus on career management, adaptive resources and person-cognitive factors that can impact career coping are particularly relevant for new and professional immigrants, as they pursue career endeavours in a new country.

**Career Management**

The concept of career management examines individual actions and how they influence the probability that career goals will be achieved (Noe, 1996). The questions investigated by models of career management seek to explore how individuals can strategize and better cope
with career transitions, career conflicts and the achievement of career ambitions (Noe, 1996; Abele & Wiese, 2007). Researchers suggest that career transitions of any form require career management skills in order to allow individuals to cope with career challenges and to evolve with ever changing labour markets (Abele & Wiese, 2007). For newcomers in Canada this is especially relevant as they adjust to a new country and engage in career endeavors. Three broad domains of career management include career exploration, the development of career goals and career strategy implementation.

Career exploration includes activities that elicit information about oneself and the environment, thus facilitating the development of self and how one envisions their career path (Noe, 1996). Career exploration is described as a necessity for those individuals who wish to progress in their individual careers (Phillips, 1982; Noe, 1996). Generally, individuals obtain career information by exploring values, interests, skills, and understanding their strengths and weaknesses, as well as conversing with family, friends and colleagues. Career exploration results in an increased knowledge of opportunities and a greater awareness of the skills and behaviours that an individual may need to develop. Thus, career exploration is also related to personal growth and a willingness to participate in developmental activities.

The development of goals is another component of successful career management. According to goal setting theory, goals direct attention, motivate and maintain effort, and facilitate strategic development of goal attainment. A goal can be a career related outcome, such as a promotion, salary increase or skill accomplishment that an employee seeks to obtain (Greenhaus, 1987; Noe 1996). Often the more focused an individual is on achieving a certain goal the more likely they are to engage in behaviours that will help achieve their goal. Researchers suggest that individuals with the most effective careers utilize extensive career
planning and goal setting, as it avoids uncertainty and helps an individual to clarify thoughts (Lee, 2002).

The third aspect of career management is the development of career strategies. Career strategies are activities or behaviors designed to help a person meet career goals. Research has identified three groups of career management behaviours: positioning behaviours, influence behaviours and boundary management (King, 2004; Chan Boon Lee, 2002). Positioning behaviours are concerned with acquiring the contacts, skills, and experience to achieve desired career outcomes. It includes deliberate action towards pursuing opportunities that are of value. It describes seeking out ways to increase ‘human capital’ (e.g., degree qualifications that are valued by employers). In addition, it includes developing active networks, which provide information, as well as career guidance and advocacy for employment (Lee, 2002). Lastly, positioning behaviours are concerned with job innovation or making substantive changes to methods or procedures used to perform job tasks that influence efficiency or task effectiveness (King, 2004).

Influence behaviors are concerned with actively attempting to influence the decisions of those in positions of power. One type of influence behaviour is self-promotion, which is concerned with the manipulation of how performance is perceived (King, 2004). Often self-promotion is used to present an individual in a favourable light. A second influence behaviour is ingratiation, which describes the idea that an evaluation of an individual will be influenced by whether or not a superior, or person in power, holds a favourable opinion about said individual (King, 2004; Lee, 2002). Essentially, it is suggested that likability can enhance positive rewards in career endeavours. A third type of influence behaviour is upward influence, which includes increasing a superiors’ understanding of one’s desired outcomes and their obligation to fulfill
them (King, 2004). These tactics come through in negotiation or bargaining with employers, or when leveraging one’s skills or knowledge to achieve desired outcomes.

Boundary management is concerned with balancing the demands of work and non-work domains. It includes ensuring that the performance of roles in each domain is effective, and navigating the transition between work and non-work roles. For example attaining support from one’s partner or asking a colleague to cover work duties in order to attend non-work responsibilities (King, 2004; Lee, 2002). It facilitates the ease of work and non-work roles, and resolves conflicts by managing the expectations of colleagues, family and friends.

The role of positioning behaviours, influencing behaviours and boundary management are also related to career strategies put forth by other vocational and career psychologists (i.e. Crites, 1969; Gould & Penley, 1984; Lee, 2002). Lee (2002) describes seven similar career strategies, which include creating opportunities, extending work involvement (e.g., working outside of hours), self-nominating (e.g., expressing one’s desire to assume greater responsibility and presenting oneself as a favourable choice), seeking career guidance (e.g., the guidance of a more experienced person or mentor), networking (connecting with individuals in/outside the organization), conforming to others' opinions (e.g., holding similar viewpoints as those in superior positions), and ingratiating oneself with one's supervisor (e.g., expressing a favourable evaluation).

Overall, the strategies and behaviours involved in career management are beneficial to new and professional immigrant populations as they adjust and adapt to life and work in a new country. Their ability to cope with career challenges and progress towards career goals that likely motivated their migration to Canada are influenced by their use of career management strategies.
Career Adaptability

A second framework that elucidates career adjustment and coping is the notion of career adaptability. Career adaptability is defined as the ability to change or fit into career-related circumstances (Savickas, 1997). It represents the readiness to cope with the unpredictable changing of work and working conditions. Adaptivity is also related to celerity as described by the Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1968), which refers to the quickness with which a person responds to disequilibrium. From a career construction theory framework, career adaptability resources, otherwise known as the ABCs of career construction theory include: concern, control, curiosity and confidence. Concern about the future helps individuals to look to the future and prepare for what might come next. Its role as an integral dimension in career adaptability is noted in its presence in other theories of vocational development (i.e. Super’s (1980) concept of planfulness, Crites’ concept of orientation etc.). Concern reflects the importance of a future orientation and brings awareness to future occupational transitions and eventual choices that must be made (Brown & Lent, 2004). Control is a second dimension of adaptability, which refers to personal liability and taking responsibility for one’s environment (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). It describes intentionality regarding activities and behaviours and taking responsibility for how they are executed. A lack of control is termed career indecision and reflects indecisive attitudes and reduced decisional competencies (Brown & Lent, 2004).

Curiosity includes exploring possible selves in various roles and situations. In relates to other vocational concepts of inquisitiveness, exploration and information seeking (i.e. Super’s (1974) exploration life stage). When acted on, curiosity produces a fund of knowledge and allows for a fit between self and situation (Brown & Lent, 2004). A lack of career curiosity can produce naiveté about the working environment and inaccurate images of one’s self. The final dimension is career confidence, which describes the anticipation of success when encountering obstacles
and challenges. The role of confidence is reflected in theories on self-efficacy, self-esteem and encouragement. The exploration of new experiences and the engagement in information seeking activities promotes confidence so that a person can manifest choices and implement their life design (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). A lack of career confidence can lead to career inhibition that hinders actualizing roles and the achievement of goals (Brown & Lent, 2004).

These career adaptability resources (concern, control curiosity, confidence) are defined as the strengths or capacities a person may draw upon to solve “the unfamiliar, complex and ill-defined problems presented by developmental vocational tasks, occupational transitions, and work traumas” (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). These resources are said to be at the core of the individual and an aspect of human capital – the accumulation of knowledge gained through education and experience (Sullivan & Sheffrin, 2003; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

In considering the immigrant professional population, career adaptability provides an understanding of coping with career transition and adjustment, which emphasizes the role of constructing a fit between a changing self and a changing environment. While a willingness to adapt can be characterized as a personality trait researchers prefer to conceptualize career adaptability as a set of behaviour that can be learned (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). However, it is important to note that the performance of these behaviours can be influenced by environmental supports (e.g., family, friends) and social-cognitive factors (e.g., self-efficacy). Nonetheless, personal agency and career adaptability behaviours are viable methods of pursuing career goals and coping with career transitions.

Social cognitive career theory

A final framework in which to examine career coping is through a social cognitive career theory (SCCT) framework, which highlights person-cognitive factors or psychosocial aspects of career coping. SCCT traditionally focuses on the content of career behaviour, such as career
interests, career choices, as well as satisfaction and wellbeing (Lent & Brown, 2013). However, SCCT also lends itself to an understanding of the process of career development, including how individuals cope and manage with the challenges involved in career entry, preparation and adjustment. Anchored in Bandura’s (1967, 1997), social cognitive framework, SCCT proposes that career outcomes, career exploration and job finding are influenced by self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals (Zikic & Saks, 2009). Within cognitive-person factors, self-efficacy or coping efficacy refers to personal beliefs about one’s ability to perform particular behaviours or actions (e.g., the belief about one’s ability to complete an academic course, or the belief about one’s ability to negotiate obstacles and difficulties in the workplace). Another form of self-efficacy, relevant to career adjustment, is process efficacy, which refers to the perceived ability to manage specific tasks related to career preparation and adjustment across various occupational paths (Lent & Brown, 2002). Both self-efficacy and process efficacy are related to self-regulatory behaviors, which refers to the ability to motivate oneself to perform self-enhancing behaviors, such as studying despite deterring conditions. The impact of these various forms of efficacious behaviour extends to the influence these personal beliefs have on an individual’s behaviour when engaging in career endeavours. Bandura (1989) viewed self-efficacy beliefs as, “the most vital and all-encompassing explanation of personal agency” (Segal, Borgla and Schoenfeld, 2002). The likelihood of a person initiating an adaptive behaviour or action is influenced by their belief in whether or not they can effectively perform the behaviour. Self-efficacy not only contributes to workplace success, but it also influences outcome expectations, as people expect more desirable outcomes in activities they see themselves as being more efficacious (Segal, Borgla & Schoenfeld, 2002; Lent & Brown, 2002).

Outcome expectations form as a result of an individual’s expectations about the consequences of performing particular actions; for example the belief that a specific action will
result in an unpleasant outcome or will be a poor reflection of one’s self. As such, outcome expectations play an important role in motivating individuals towards or away from certain tasks. While self-efficacy centers on the question, “can I do it,” outcome expectations are concerned with “what will happen if I try.” SCCT assumes that individuals are more likely to be successful at behaviors when their beliefs about the likelihood of achieving a valued outcome are congruent with their beliefs about their own abilities (Lent & Brown, 2002; Segal, Borgla & Schoenfeld, 2002). When individuals think less of their true abilities or anticipate neutral or negative outcomes they may engage in avoidance, procrastination, or put less effort into tasks and give up quickly. In career pursuits, both self-efficacy and outcome expectations are viewed as promoting adaptive career behaviours, such as engaging in job search behaviours and setting goals in order to achieve career success (Lent & Brown, 2002).

Alongside self-efficacy and outcome expectations, SCCT also notes the role of goals, as individuals tend to develop goals in careers they believe will have a desirable outcome. Goals are indicated as a strong predictor of planned behaviour and help individuals to direct and organize their behaviour in a sustained manner (Segal, Borgla & Schoenfeld, 2002). Environmental influences (e.g., support of others, financial support, job market conditions) also play a role as they have the ability to codetermine the outcome of adaptive behaviours (Lent and Brown, 2002).

SCCT is especially relevant when considering the career development of new immigrants. Their confidence in obtaining employment and developing in a career path is influenced by both personal-cognitive factors, as well as environmental influencers (Yakushko et al., 2008). The extent that these factors, especially self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals impact an immigrant’s success influences how they adjust and cope with the pursuit of new career endeavours.
CHAPTER III
METHODS

The purpose of this study is to investigate psychological coping in a population undergoing life transition and adjustment. New and professional immigrants are one such population who are faced with the process of work-life adjustment. Research suggests that this process can present with various difficulties and challenges, including various employment and social/cultural difficulties (Aycan & Berry, 1996; Sinacore & Lemer, 2013; Yakushko et al. 2008; Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder 2006; Lueck & Wilson 2010). Given the challenge of adjusting to life and work in Canada, of interest is how new and professional immigrants are able to cope with the experience. In order to further understand the construct of coping a qualitative methodology was used. Thus, this chapter presents the rationale for qualitative design, as well as an explanation of the grounded theory approach. Lastly, the chapter describes participant characteristics and descriptors.

**Rationale for Qualitative Methodology**

Qualitative research uses descriptive data as a means of understanding human behaviour and psychological processes. Descriptive data captures in detail, the way individuals think or feel. In addition, it provides greater context towards understanding the individual narrative experience (Braun & Clarke, 2013). A qualitative methodology was chosen for the present study, as it facilitates a detailed examination of rich narratives and individual stories. With descriptive data an in-depth analysis can take place that is more suitable for understanding the lived-experience of each participant. In other words, a qualitative approach seeks to understand the subjective experience of an individual, and to capture the unique voice of those involved in the study (Jones, Kriflik & Zanko, 2005). Given that the present study seeks to understand how new and
professional immigrants describe their coping behaviour a qualitative approach was deemed the most appropriate methodology.

The methods used to gather data in qualitative research often include interviews, open-ended questionnaires, observation, documents, or historical interaction (Jones, Kriflik & Zanko, 2005; Myers, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In the present study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to generate narrative data that could then be examined for meaning. There are several advantages using narrative data as it relates to the context of this study. Firstly, individual narratives would uncover the experience of coping as described first-hand by participants recounting their transitional journey. While participants convey their stories the complexity and individuality of their experience can be retained; in addition how they may or may not have coped can be captured. A second benefit is that the data gathered through individual narratives is not limited by the existing literature in the field. It was important to allow each participant to frame their own experience rather than having it pre-framed by the researcher, for example through a questionnaire. A coping questionnaire or any predetermined measure of coping style may not capture the nuances of psychological coping as they present in life transition and adjustment (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Lastly, the benefit of individual narrative data extends to developing a greater understanding of new and professional immigrants as they adjust to life and work in Canada. This is an area of research that would benefit from greater study, especially as the career development and career coping process in Canada is not well documented in the current literature. Some of the methods used by qualitative methodology include Grounded Theory, Case Study, Ethnography, and Phenomenology. The present study used grounded theory as explained in greater detail below.
Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), and is often described as the construction of theory through the analysis of data (Smith, 2005). Through grounded theory, the researcher gathers, analyses and conceptualizes qualitative data to construct theory, as opposed to implying preconceived concepts or hypotheses (Charmaz, 2008; Smith, 2005). The inductive nature of grounded theory adopts a more neutral view of human action and allows the data to direct the development of theory (Simmons, 2006). As such, researchers using grounded theory tend to begin with a general topic or research question and work toward building a theoretical understanding of the research. Usually, after a theoretical conceptualization of the data takes place, the researcher will examine the literature to explain the findings. The results of grounded theory tend to not provide factual descriptions; rather the results after analysis are grounded theoretically in basic social/behavioural processes. Thus, grounded theory is often described as being best suited for the study of human behaviour, complex social phenomena, and adaptive processes (Charmaz, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In grounded theory, data collection often focuses on gathering rich descriptions and detailed accounts of the lived-experience of the population being studied. In the present study, semi-structured phenomenological interviews captured the lived-experience of new immigrants as they transitioned to life in Canada. Thus, grounded theory was deemed the most effective method in order to produce a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the various coping strategies that aid in life adjustment of new immigrants in Canada.

Over the years grounded theory has evolved with the original authors differing in their perspectives on approaching qualitative research, as well as their analytic procedures. The classical grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) described allowing the theory to emerge from the data, and approaching the data with an ‘empty mind.’ As such, researchers were
advised to refrain from conducting literature reviews until the very end of analysis to limit influencing the authenticity of the data. The analytic techniques involved constant comparison, which describes the concurrent process of coding and analyzing the collected data. In addition, coding of the data was often more simple with categories and properties being developed along the way. Glaser and Strauss eventually diverged, with Strauss and Corbin (1990) formulating a version of grounded theory (Straussian grounded theory) that emphasized creating theory rather than having the theory revealed through the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) endorsed having a general sense of the literature with theory being developed by the researcher rather than being grounded in the data. Straussian-grounded theory also involved a more rigorous coding technique that emphasized a micro-analysis of the data, which included word-by-word analysis. Alongside the forming of categories and themes, coding also included relating codes to one another and developing a core category to continue the relation between themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998). Overall, Straussian-grounded theory represents a post-positivist paradigm, whereby all observation is susceptible to error and all theory is revisable.

Charmaz (2000, 2006) a student of Glaser and Strauss, developed another version of grounded theory, organized around a constructivist paradigm (referred to as constructivist grounded theory). Charmaz (2003) has noted that constructivist grounded theory takes a middle-ground approach between post-modernism and positivism. It acknowledges that data and theory are created by the interaction between individuals and external objects. From a constructivist perspective, meaning does not lie dormant waiting to be discovered, but reality is constructed as individuals assign meaning to the world. A constructivist approach to grounded theory inserts that there is a mutual creation of knowledge between researcher and participant. As such, a central tenet is to give voice to participants, rather than to simply describe patterns of behaviour (Charmaz, 2006). Incorporating the views, vision and lived experience in order to gain an
understanding of participants is central to constructing a mutual reality. Constructivist grounded theory also endorses a systematic literature review in order to better frame and conceptualize the research (Charmaz, 2006).

The current study utilized constructivist grounded theory to analyze the data. Approaching the data with a conceptual understanding of the literature on psychological coping, provided an opportunity to gather which coping strategies and skills were most utilized and apparent in the data. Moreover, the inductive nature and appreciation for the lived-experience of participants continued to facilitate and promote the opportunity for an open view of the data.

**Data Collection**

This study used archival data from Dr. Charles Chen’s Professional Immigrants Worklife Adjustment project (2008). Dr. Chen and his research team conducted semi-structured interviews with 100 individuals who immigrated to Canada. The interviews explored the lived-experience of professional immigrants and included their (1) life-career experiences before coming to Canada, (2) life-career experiences after initial arrival, and (3) present life-career circumstances. The interview transcripts were read by myself the researcher, and were coded using Nvivo 11, which is a qualitative design software and database.

The individual narratives capture the transitional journey and adjustment process experienced by new immigrants in Canada. Reflected in their stories, the researcher noted the challenges and difficulties experienced by participants as they transitioned to work and life in Canada, alongside their ability to cope with these difficulties. Questions that directly assessed coping included: (1) how have you coped with the changes that have occurred since your immigration to Canada (2) what strategies have helped you deal with unanticipated/stressful events. Participants also indirectly expressed coping as they responded to various questions that required them to recount their work-life adjustment process and experience in Canada. In these
instances, participants relayed how they responded to adversity and their coping style. The subsequent coding of interview transcripts allowed for themes to be developed that represented the styles of coping most relied upon by participants in the study. These themes contribute to the understanding of psychological coping, career coping and life adjustment among immigrants.

**Selection Criteria**

The target sample for this study was Canadian professional immigrants who resided in Toronto or the Greater Toronto Area. Details of the participants were as follows: (1) they were not born in Canada (2) they immigrated to Canada under the skilled workers category (3) they had been full-time workers in a professional field in their country of origin before coming to Canada (4) they had post-secondary education (5) they had immigrated to Canada between the years 1994 and 2006 (6) they had been living in Canada for at least 1 year (7) they had been employed in Canada on either a full-time or part-time basis (8) they were 25 years of age or older (9) they spoke English with reasonable fluency in order to communicate effectively with the interviewer and 10) they had not previously participated in any of Dr. Charles P. Chen’s research projects to date.

The first four criteria determined that the participants were newcomers to Canada, and ensured that they had socialization, education, and career experience prior to coming to Canada. The fifth and sixth criteria helped to ensure that participants had time to experience life in Canada, and to begin a process of adjustment and settlement. It also allowed time for participants to begin to look for employment and to attempt career development. This would also increase the likelihood of exposure to transitional challenges that would require coping skills. The seventh criteria was further included as a means to increase the likelihood that participants would experience the career barriers that are commonly experienced by skilled workers, and as a result relied on coping strategies to facilitate their transition. The eighth criterion was included in order
to limit the participants to adults. The ninth criteria was included as English was the primary language spoken by the research team. While, the experience of non-English speaking participants may have differed from the experience of English-speaking participants, regrettably it was beyond the resources of the study. Lastly, the tenth criterion was included to ensure Dr. Charles P. Chen’s studies do not contain duplicate information.

**Sample Size**

An important consideration in gaining quality data is determining the sample size. A guiding principle in qualitative research when determining sample size is the concept of data saturation - where the collection of new data does not further expand on the topic being studied (Smith, 2007). Additional factors that can also affect the sample size include the nature of the topic, the population of interest, the selection criteria, the scope of the study, the quality of the data, as well as the heterogeneity of the population (Ritchie et al., 2003; Morse 2000). Groups of special interest or topics that involve intensive study may require a larger sample pool in order to reach data saturation, as well as a sample that is more heterogeneous and varied in nature.

Typically a sample size between 15 and 30 individual interviews appear to be the most common in research aiming to identify patterns and themes across data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Though this is not consistent across all studies using qualitative methodology. In a study by Thompson (2004), 560 studies were analyzed that used qualitative approaches and qualitative interviews. Results demonstrated a mean sample size of 31, with samples ranging from five to 350. A further examination revealed 34% of studies used sample sizes between 20 and 30, and only 22% used a sample size of more than 30. While some studies used a larger sample size and exceeded what is typically found in qualitative studies, other studies used a sample size in the range of 30 participants. While it appears that samples sizes within qualitative data may be smaller than those typically found in a quantitative study an important factor to consider is that
of principle of data saturation. Within qualitative studies there is often a point of diminished return – where more data does necessarily lead to more or ‘new’ information (Smith, 2007). Thus, data saturation is achieved with what appears to be a smaller sample size, especially in comparison to a quantitative study. Overall, researchers contend that sampling for data saturation and completeness is the preferred method rather than defining a set rule for determining sample size. (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Patton, 2002; Glaser, 1998). Thus, as themes begin to emerge the researcher works toward data saturation and redundancy.

The present study is based on the Professional Immigrants Worklife Adjustment project as a part of Dr. Charles P. Chen’s research at OISE, the University of Toronto. Access to the Professional Immigrants Worklife Adjustment project yields a large data set of n=100. While, the sample size exceeds the typical sample size found in qualitative studies, the use of the entire sample size was deemed appropriate for a number of reasons. First, use of the entire sample would maintain heterogeneity and diversity within the study. The selection criteria used for the study allowed for a varied sample representing new and professional immigrants in Canada; captured in the population demographics were participants from a range of ages, life stages, career backgrounds and life experiences. In addition, participants ranged from diverse countries reflecting various cultural backgrounds. In addition, since the data used was apart of a larger study that was also based on the same sample it was deemed appropriate to maintain the current sample size and to not alter the size of the sample pool.

**Participant characteristics**

**Sex/Gender.** Fifty participants self-identified as male, and fifty self-identified as female. No participants self-identified with another gender identity.

**Age.** The average age of the participants was 38.5 years, with a range of 27-59 years. The average age of male participants was 39.4 years, with a range of 27-59 years. The average age of
female participants was 38.0, with a range of 28-52 years.

**Country of origin.** Participants originated from a wide variety of countries; in total there were 53 countries represented in the study. Seven of the participants were from North America (United States of America and Mexico), 17 of the participants were from South America (Peru, Argentina, Columbia, Ecuador and Brazil), 12 participants were from South Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka), 9 participants were from Africa (Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mauritius, Sudan, Republic of Congo, Egypt, Tanzania), 16 participants were from Asia (China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan), 12 participants were from South East Asia (Thailand, Philippines, South Korea), 8 participants were from the Middle East (Lebanon, Israel, Iran, Jordan, Syria), 1 participant was from Australia, and 24 participants were from Europe (England, Ireland, Serbia, Hungary, Germany, Russia, Romania, Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, Poland, Bulgaria, Albania, Ireland). Only 7 of the participants stated that their mother language was English.

**Education.** The highest levels of education completed by participants were Doctorate degrees for 6 participants, Master’s degrees for 30 participants, Bachelor’s degrees for 37 participants, college diplomas for 6 participants and professional/practical certifications for 4 participants.

**Length of time in Canada.** The average number of years participants spent in Canada was 10.1 years, with a range of 5 to 13 years.

**Pre-Canada educational level.** All of the participants recruited for this study had obtained post-secondary education in their countries of origin, across a diverse range of fields. The types of degrees included were those in business fields (e.g., business administration, commerce, business management), health care (e.g., Medicine, dentistry, mental health), technical fields (e.g., chemistry, information technology, engineering), public service sector, law, and education.
The remaining participants held training in non-technical and other fields such as liberal arts, language, and psychology.

**Canadian education.** Retraining and re-education was completed by 43% of participants.

**Occupations.** The types of occupations participants held at the time of the interviews included: office administration, business analysis, banking, healthcare/medicine insurance administration, marketing, law and legal services, public service, teaching/education, research, information technology, finance, quality assurance, management, engineering and sales/retail.

**Procedure**

The following procedure described below occurred as a part of the Professional Immigrants Worklife Adjustment project (2008) under principle investigator Dr. Charles P. Chen. The participants interviewed for Dr. Chen’s study resided in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Areas (GTA). The interviews were conducted at OISE, which is located centrally in the City of Toronto.

**Recruitment**

The recruitment process occurred over 6 to 9 months. Posters were placed in public spaces, such as subways and on community notice boards (see Appendix A). Community agencies were also contacted by phone and mail, and following their consent, were provided with recruitment posters. The community organizations further aided in recruitment by distributing the poster advertisement, and by sharing information about the study.

**Research Interviews/Data Collection**

Potential participants were instructed to call a recruitment hotline, and were asked to leave their contact information on the available voicemail service. Members of Dr. Chen’s research team responded to messages to determine the willingness of potential participants to participate in the study, as well as the appropriateness of their inclusion in the study. Research
team members were trained in the screening of participants and a script was used to ensure the nature and purpose of the research, as well as information regarding confidentiality, privacy, and reimbursement were provided to potential participants (see Appendix B). Prospective participants were informed that discussing their immigration and worklife adjustment could cause distress. Thus, options for supportive resources (i.e. counselling/psychotherapy and psychological services) were offered to participants should they experience any undesirable effects from the interviewing process. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Once the initial contact and screening process was completed, suitable and interested participants were offered the chance to take part in the study. Interview appointments were then scheduled.

Interviews were conducted at OISE, the University of Toronto, with the interview sessions lasting approximately 2 hours in length. Remuneration was provided for participants’ at $35 for time and travel expenses. In order to ensure participant anonymity, individuals were assigned identification numbers, which were then used on all audio and written records. All materials generated from research were locked in a filing cabinet that was accessible only to Dr. Charles Chen, and the research team members.

At the start of every interview, participants were again briefed on the purpose and goals of the study and the general content of the interview was outlined. They were also informed that interviews would be audio recorded. Participants were provided with a consent form (see Appendix C) that included audio consent, as well as the limits to confidentiality, and their ability to withdraw from the study at any time. The consent process involved allowing participants to read and discuss the consent form, ask any questions, and an opportunity to decline proceeding with the interview. With participants’ verbal and written consent, interviews were then conducted (see Appendix D). All 100 individuals completed their interviews; no one withdrew
Data Analysis

Using grounded theory, the initial stage of data analysis is to immerse oneself in the data and to engage in the reading and re-reading of individual transcripts (Walker and Myrick 2006). This allows the analyst to become fully aware and involved in the lived experience of the participant/s (Smith, 2008). In the present study, the first phase of data analysis included an in-depth reading of interview transcripts. Subsequently, preliminary notes including initial thoughts and observations made by myself, the researcher, were recorded. The second phase, included the use of NVIVO 11, a specialized qualitative research software program. NVIVO 11 facilitated the organization of the data, and allowed for more effective line-by-line coding. According to Charmaz (2004), coding is the process of defining the data and is the essential link between data collection and the development of an emergent theory to explain the data. Line-by-line coding allows the researcher to take an ‘analytic stance’ toward the data, and build the theory from the ‘ground-up.’ In the present study, line-by-line coding was used to examine the data and guide the development of themes, categories and subthemes. Through the use of NVIVO 11, phrases and key excerpts were noted and added to the formation of themes and subthemes. Data saturation was noted to have occurred well in advance as certain themes became quite poignant. Though all 100 transcripts were coded in order to capture the heterogeneity and retain the completeness of the sample within the Worklife Adjustment Project (2008).
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The present chapter discusses the various methods and styles of coping that facilitated the transition to life and work in Canada for new and professional immigrants. The common themes that arose included both primary and secondary control coping. Primary control coping was exemplified through the theme of social support, as well as through the theme of action taking (e.g., seeking out resources/information, retraining/re-education). Secondary control coping was exemplified through theme of adaptation, as well through the theme of positivity. Other paradigms of coping included religious coping, proactive coping as well as the role of luck. These themes are explored in the next section.

Social Support

Social support as a method of coping highlights primary control coping - a component of engagement coping. Primary control coping involves attempts to influence the stressor through both problem focused and emotion-focused coping. As an emerging theme, social support highlights the various ways in which participants relied on friends, family and others to support them through challenge and difficulty. In the present study 50% of participants (n=50) endorsed the theme of social support which facilitated the sharing of information/resources, the ability to problem solve, and provided an avenue for much needed emotional and psychological support.

Social support included receiving support from family, friends and others (e.g., acquaintances, work colleagues). For some participants, family support was essential in order to facilitate their adjustment to Canada, for example P44 initially had a difficult time adjusting to life in Canada, however she relied on the support she received from her extended family in Canada.

“It was very difficult. Extremely difficult; there were many days I wanted to go back home; there were many days I cried. I never knew I would make it this far…I was able to
cope because my brother was here, my sister in law was also very good. I had very, very
good family support; I have two aunts, my mom’s two younger sisters… I felt blessed
because I had my family support here. ” (P44).

For some participants, family support facilitated employment and the ability to meet
basic needs. For example, P2 was recommended for a job in a day-care through a family
connection: “My mother in law’s co-worker, she knows I worked in China as a teacher, and I was
really good with kids so she recommended this job at a daycare where her daughter was.”
Financial support was also possible through the social support from family, as was evidenced by
P45: “Thank God I have my parents! They’re still sending me money. They’re putting me
through school now…They bought me an apartment.”

The role of friends was also a very important avenue for support, as evidenced by P7 who
stated the following in response to how he coped with his migration to Canada:

Well, I made a few good friends. I joined the International Study Body. I spent a lot of
time doing activities with them, so I made a good bunch of friends through that. And that
really helped a lot. How else did I cope? I think for me it was just important to have a
support system and a social network, and I made that. And that was what I did to cope: I
created a support system around myself, with friends. (P7).

Similarly, P26 described living with friends and the supportive role they played when she first
arrived to Canada from the Republic of Moldova:

When we came, we lived with our friends for three weeks, I would say. They helped us to
adjust, explained us transportation, and even simple things, because it’s a totally different
world than back home. They showed us the office for applying for a permanent resident
card, and for a SIN card. They explained where you can go, and where you shouldn’t go.
And also, they helped us to find a place to rent. (P26)

P1 also stated the important role of friends, especially those of a similar cultural and ethnic
background when she stated: “One of the things that helped me was that I found other Argentinian
people that became my friends, and they helped me a lot…Because if not, I would not be here.”
P18 also received support in regard to finding accommodation through his friend networks: “I had
one or two old friends who were living here and they helped me with finding the apartment, they
helped me with buying the furniture.”

Social support also provides an avenue for much needed mental and emotional support. For example, P45 reached out to family who still resided in her home country for emotional and mental support, P45 stated:

“Thankfully, I had my mum. I talked on the phone with my mum every day, just on the phone to her, just trying to cope. I mean, I knew it was going to be hard. I wasn’t under the illusion that it was going to be a walk in the park, but when all these people who I thought would be around me to help me, just sort of slipped away, then who are you left with?

Social support can also enhance the mental health of new immigrants by reducing loneliness and providing the opportunity for emotionally expression. This is illustrated by P25 who stated: “Me and my husband, we helped each other very much. It means very much when you have somebody to talk to.”

**Religious Coping/Spirituality**

In discussing how they coped with transitioning to life and work in Canada, some participants described finding strength and fortitude through spiritual beliefs or their belief in God. In fact 26% (n=26) described the role of God and spiritual practices in helping them adjust and cope. P48 demonstrated the strength she found through prayer when she stated: “One thing is my spiritual strength; I said, God, I just can’t take it, give me the strength.” In describing how she coped with the barriers and difficulties she encountered, P48 then went on to say,

“How well you perform in the interview is not key, because you are discriminated on some level or another. I feel it’s just your grace of god, for me it is that. Some of the experiences can be very, very shattering, I’m telling you. It is my faith… It’s only at that time your faith can pull you up” (P48).

In addition, P3 attributed his belief in God in helping him find a job:

“I came here broke, I had no money, absolutely no money. Whatever money I had was borrowed, I had to give it back. I am a very lucky person god helped me, I got a job in 1½ months. The day I have SIN, the day I have a job.” (P3)
Some participants also described their work ethic alongside their belief in God and described a collaborative style of religious/spiritual coping. For example P14 stated: “You have just to trust God and work hard, and try to do what we can do”. Similarly P22 stated:

“God always helps those who help themselves, so really I’m thankful to God that he helped me a lot, and we never had a bad time, just a couple of months, as I said, when I did non-related jobs.”

P36 also believed that God alongside her determination helped her to overcome the difficulties she faced when transitioning to Canada: “I tried to overcome whatever I didn’t like, or whatever was difficult, I tried the most I could and God helped me.”

Some participants, such as P24 used his religious views to help him gain perspective. P24 described how his religious views allowed him to adjust to a life that lacked some of the comforts that were available to him in his home country.

“I’m also a religious person, so this world is not the topmost priority for me. As long as I live in modest, moderate conditions, my wife and myself, that’s enough for me. So when you look from that perspective, it was okay for me” (P24).

Lastly, some participants were able to better cope by being able to visit religious institutions. P33 in response to how she coped noted that finding a Mosque was one of the first steps she took when arriving to Canada; as finding a Mosque and continuing with her religious practice was one avenue of support for her.

“When I came to Canada, and because I’m living with my friend, the first thing I was trying to find is a Mosque. And I found that there are a few mosques here, so this is good, sort of a natural place to start with” (P33).

Likewise, P48 expressed the support she received from joining a church.

“I got into a nice church, which I liked; people were so happy, so welcoming. It’s a real kind of church, I always wanted to be. I was so happy, I was so absorbed, oh yeah, it was so supportive. I really enjoy it. Even today, that’s my home church now, and I just enjoy being part of it. It’s like a family, very supportive.”
Adaptability

Another theme endorsed by participants was their fondness for change and their ability to adapt to new environments and situations. Adapting to a stressor rather than attempting to control or influence a stressor describes secondary-control coping. A large number of participants 35% (n=35) described their ability to embrace change and their adaptable nature. For some participants adaptability was a trait that participants believed inherently described them. To illustrate, P19 stated the following: “It depends from person to person; for some people it’s very difficult to adapt, but for me, you can put me anywhere, I can adapt. Similarly, P65 stated: “Well, I think the changes are difficult, but I think the person has to be adaptable. I think I’m a really adaptable person.”

Participants also described themselves as being inherently fond of change. P52 who described the difficulties he initially faced in finding a job, as well as the language barriers he encountered, stated the following:

“I love changes. That’s why I came here, because in the Ukraine, in Kiev, after 1-2 years it was a good company, but it was much too stable. So I like changes, I love it, and I believe it’s good” (P52).

Similarly, P33 who described his initial living experience in Canada as “very challenging” stated the following in regard to how he was able to cope: “I’m very open to change, because if I wasn’t open to change, I wouldn’t be here.” Likewise, P53 who immigrated to Canada on her own leaving behind her husband and children stated:

“I’m good at changes; I think I’m trained to be good in that sort of field. I like challenges, that’s why it’s not hard for me. Some participants attributed their adaptable nature to having “travelled alot before,” and allowed them to “adapt easily” (P5).
Likewise, P29 stated the following: “Dealing with change is quite normal for me, because I did that when I was in Thailand, when I was in England. So it’s normal, you have to adjust your life.”

In addition to participants describing themselves as adaptable and fond of change, adaptability was also demonstrated through employment and career adaptability. To illustrate, P3 initially struggled to find a job in his previous profession but demonstrated his adaptability when he stated the following:

“When I found that my profession was no longer recognized in this country, I changed my profession. So I’m a very adaptive and resilient person, and I think I made a good decision, because the field I have now chosen, the financial field, it’s quite massive in Toronto. You get jobs quite easily” (P3).

Career adaptability also resulted in some participants taking on ‘survival jobs,’ which were often below their skill level and outside of their primary field of expertise. To illustrate, P13 who had a Bachelor’s degree in Business and worked in quality control in Brazil, took on the job of a building cleaner when she first immigrated to Canada: “This kind of work is so hard to do. But I have to survive, I have to pay the rent, I have to buy the food, and that job was the only thing I had available at that time.” P13 then went on to say that adapting and embracing change was necessary in order for her to move forward with her life in Canada: “But if you really want to stay here, you have to change too, to absorb the new life, the new things here.”

The Role of Luck

Another theme that arose in regard to how participants managed and coped with the transition to life and work in Canada included the role of luck or chance. Luck refers to the belief that events are not controlled by one’s own actions, but by chance, fate or powerful others (Folkman, 1984). The role of luck suggests that for some participants their ability to cope lay outside of their own control. In other words, coping was due to an external influencer and not a result of their actions either behaviorally or psychologically. In the present study 36% (N=36)
Participants endorsed luck in their ability to overcome difficulties and adjust to life in Canada. To illustrate, Participant 46 reflected on his job search experience and the role of luck in facilitating a smooth transitional experience.

“So I’ve had a couple of interviews in Sick Kids, one at Mt. Sinai, and one at U of T. So I think these were excellent places, all of them. Maybe it was beginner’s luck…I think that overall, things, from the beginning as I said, I was lucky; things ran really smoothly for me” (P46).

Similarly, in regard to how she coped with the changes occurring in her life, P70 described the role of luck alongside her perseverance and action-taking: “You’ll eventually get to that place where you want to go. Because it doesn’t fall in your lap. Jobs don’t fall in your lap; it’s a matter of luck and perseverance.” P40 echoed a similar sentiment when she said: “I must say that I was fairly lucky, when I see my friends, or other immigrants. It’s not always that easy to get to your profession… At least I was lucky that I had found a job by the time summer arrived here.

Likewise, P(33) shared the role of luck in his transition to Canada when he stated:

“I consider myself to be very lucky, because I know that many people don’t have this opportunity… And my first days in Canada, I was quite lucky; when I hear the experience of other immigrants, I didn’t really suffer that much. I was able to find a nice accommodation, a nice place to live; actually, we were four friends coming together, so we rented a fully furnished house” (P33).

P18 emigrated from Iran as a journalist/research officer and endorsed the role of luck, as well as action-taking in her attainment of a various job positions related to media and journalism. “I have to be honest... I consider myself extremely lucky because I met so many people at the right time, at the right place, and I grabbed the opportunity.”

Positivity

Another coping strategy endorsed by participants was the importance of maintaining a positive outlook. A positive outlook highlights secondary control coping – a component of engagement coping. In the present, study 28% (n=28) Participants endorsed a positive outlook and attitude as important in facilitating their transition to Canada. P28 who emigrated from
Egypt responded that a positive attitude helped her to cope with the challenge of being away from her family and friends.

“I was missing my family suddenly, not seeing any friends, any family, nobody. But very much excited about starting my life. I felt like the sky is the limit. I had a very positive attitude, I guess” (P28).

P50 relayed his positive outlook and perspective on life in response to how he coped with the transition to a new life

“I think it’s a lot down to the individual; if you come to a new country, and you think in a negative way, and that everything is against you, then that will hinder your advancement. I’ve tried getting the most out of my experience here...I wanted to be open to new experiences, so I thought that was the best way to cope with things. Just Because things are a bit different here, that doesn’t mean that’s a bad thing. So I had an attitude like that in order to cope with things” (P55).

Similarly, P34 who immigrated from Romania described her positive outlook in the face of adversity:

“Well, these were the main difficulties; the lack of job, and all kinds of other disappointments. And I always try to count the positive things, which this move might have brought to my life, and there was, and there still is only one issue that is better; people like to avoid open conflicts, and that’s good. The place I’m working at, the Royal Bank, I didn’t hear a voice raised ever since I am working there. And this is different from the European way” (P34).

P55 also described the importance of a positive attitude in terms of advancing in the workplace.

“If you have the right attitude, and if you want to learn a lot, it definitely helps you to advance. Because then your boss or your supervisor gives you bigger opportunities. So it definitely helps you...you have to be always positive, so if there is an organizational change, or if you get a new project to work on, you have to always be very positive”(P55).

P82 who immigrated from the Philippines as a Human Resources manager described her frustration with finding employment, but emphasized her positive attitude helping her to cope:

“I was just frustrated because I wasn’t getting the job I wanted, but there’s nothing else I can do. It’s happened to everyone who came here. But as a whole, I have a very positive attitude and very optimistic. And as long as you’re focus in life, you know what you want in life, you know why you’re here, you know why you came here, then that shouldn’t be a problem” (P82).
**Action Taking**

An additional coping strategy that was found to help aid new immigrants in their adjustment to life and work in Canada included action-taking. All participants articulated the actions steps they took to facilitate their transition to Canada reflecting their use of primary control coping or problem-focused coping. However, among the theme of action taking various subthemes emerged that further illustrated the common types of action taking that participants engaged in. The three most commons themes that facilitated the transition of new immigrants to life and work in Canada included seeking out resources (i.e. visiting employment agencies, attending workshops), networking with others and retraining/re-education.

*Seeking out resources:*

26% of participants (n=26) intentionally endorsed seeking out resources, such as visiting employment agencies, and attending workshops to facilitate with resume writing, interview skills and job searching. P16 is one such participant, who exemplified action taking in the form of seeking resources.

“First of all, I tried to find out about working in Canada, so I went to these employment resources centres from the government, and I did some workshops, because they say that some things are different…So I start going to these workshops to learn how to pass an interview here, with an employer. And also to get information about the labour market in Canada” (P16).

Similarly, P48 described the role of action taking and seeking out information in creating opportunities for herself.

“I went to an employment centre here, I attended all kinds of possible workshops on how to attend interviews, resume preparation, mock interviews, all sorts of things, everything” (P48).

Similarly, P28 described the action steps he took to seek out services in order to facilitate his transition to Canada. P28 also highlights the role of personal action to improve ones situation and the ability to successfully cope upon arrival to Canada.
“I think it’s a lot of influence on the individual to make it happen, and I don’t have any regrets, I think I did the best I can. I talked to everybody, I used the HRDC services, I was always online looking for a job, I went through the resume-writing thing, and I sat with a counsellor. I tried to attend some conferences. I made these different business cards with my home address and everything; I tried everything possible, so I have, even if I had left at the time, I would have had no regrets, because I really think that I did the best I can” (P28).

Networking:

Another common theme included networking, 37% of participants (n = 37) endorsed intentionally building networks in order to increase their likelihood of finding employment. P27 explained the role of networking:

“I think networking was important, just telling people, meeting people and telling them what you do, and that you’re looking for work. I haven’t joined professional associations, but I’ve been going to the meetings of the editors’ associations and writers’ associations. And learn things, because they have seminars; some of them are free, and some of them are very cheap. In the future, you get work out of that too, the more you get to know people. But I’ve found that in the past too; a lot of jobs I’ve gotten are through networking and talking to people I know.” (P27)

P64 echoed a similar sentiment in regard to meeting others as method of increasing employment opportunities:

“That the most important thing probably is networking; when I say networking, it’s networking with absolutely everybody. As I said at the beginning, the main thing that I got from those workshops from the government was networking with other immigrants. Because you could think, okay, these guys are in the same situation as me, so they won’t help me, and they won’t give me anything. But you never know; one of them might get a good job, and you have now somebody working in that place; it’s good.” (P64).

Some participants described the importance of networking especially if their career of choice existed in niche or specialized fields.

“Since my expertise is fairly specialized, the number of companies that I can work for directly in that field is very limited. So in terms of preparing for that, I tried to make sure that the contacts I had in Canada, both with Nortel and with other companies that I worked with over here and in North American in general, I kept those linkages and connections with people alive; it was a lot of networking, prior and after coming to Canada.” (P47).

Retraining/re-education:
An additional theme was retraining/re-education, which allowed participants to enter the workplace with some form of Canadian certification. In the present study 33% of participants (n=33) engaged in retraining in order to better their success and adjustment in the Canadian workplace. For some participants, retraining would increase their probability of finding a job and allow for greater opportunities in the Canadian workplace. P58 relayed his perspective on undergoing retraining:

“The major factor that I have to consider is Canadian education that I need to obtain. That’s why I started to take courses at George Brown College, because I thought, maybe I’ll be more successful if I add courses, or an HR management certificate gained from a Canadian institution. So I thought that would be the most important thing that would help me in my job search.” (P58).

Similarly, P18 was taking additional courses in her field of journalism, and described continually upgrading her skills and credentials:

“I went for a radio skills training, which CBC sent me to, and I have attended some leadership courses for the Journalists in Exile group that I’m working with, and I’m taking another leadership ... I won a grant award last November, and I’m going to Florida to Reuter Institute for a leadership training and other leaders.”

Lastly, for some participants retraining was beneficial to fill in the gaps regarding their previous training and the types of work they would be doing in Canada. For example, P67 found the special education training she received here in Canada very beneficial to her skill set as a teacher.

“There is a difference in terms of special education here. Children are integrated within the school system; back home, they’re separate institutions. So I didn’t really know, like, any teaching techniques, how to deal with those children. So I completed special education in order to know something how to deal with those children. So, that’s how I tried to adjust!” (P67).
Proactive Coping

Another common theme was that of proactive coping, which describes the process of preparing for future stressors. Proactive coping involves possibly preventing negative events, averting certain stressors altogether or simply being more emotionally and psychologically ready for what may lay ahead. In the present study, 34% (n=34) participants endorsed preparing beforehand for their move to Canada. Participants expressed gathering information about life and work in Canada, researching the job market, improving their language skills as well as contacting possible employers.

In order to prepare for the possibility of encountering any language difficulties, P79 prepared by studying English before he immigrated to Canada. “The first thing to do was strengthen my knowledge of English…so I went for private lessons and things like this.” P1 shared a similar sentiment: “The only thing that I did, and that is study more English.” P58 prepared by studying for the ILES (International English language testing system) test:

“The preparation was basically preparing myself for the ILES test, because ILES test, English test was required. I think that that is something, it’s a relatively new thing for immigrants. So I was preparing myself for the test, and all of the documents I already had, with regards to my previous employment, with regards to my educational background and everything” (P58).

Other participants prepared for their move to Canada by researching the job market. For example P61 not only researched job opportunities but also contacted possible employers to set up meetings.

“Before I came, I looked on all the websites, all the hospital jobs, and I started making contacts, sending my CV, emailing people. And I had actually got contacts that I made myself with the Jewish hospital in Montreal, for a possible research position. So when we left and got on the plane, it was kind of, I’ll call you when I get there, and we’ll make an appointment to meet” (P61).

In addition, some participants were proactive in mediating future stressors by looking into housing and accommodation alongside job market research, for example P33 stated:
“I did lots of research on the internet, just to see what kinds of opportunities there were for accountants, and for people in the financial industry. That was the main thing, because I wanted to move here and find a job. So I did some research on that, and some research on how to find a place to live, the rent accommodation” (P33).

Likewise, P62 also looked into securing employment in order to mediate the potential difficulty of searching for a job.

“I researched, I applied online with the Toronto School Board, the York School Board, and Peel, and submitted my resume online, did all their work, contacted the Ontario Teachers College, and downloaded their information package, and started filling that out” (P62).

Lastly, P46 commented on the mental preparation needed during transition and change by stating:

“First of all you have to prepare yourself mentally that, that’s it, you’re going to move… I started organizing my thoughts, and what I needed for the initial time of adjustment after moving here. And that’s it. And the few weeks before that, you’re just packing, doing final stuff, organizing” (P46).
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The main themes found in the present study include: social support, religious coping/spirituality, adaptation, positivity, action taking, proactive coping and the role of luck. This chapter will provide a summary of these findings and how they relate to the broader research on coping psychology and immigrant adjustment. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings will then be explored, followed by a discussion of the limitations of the present study, as well as possibilities for future research.

Summary of Emergent Themes

Social Support

Migration is often associated with the disruption of family and cultural bonds, emphasizing the need for re-establishing support in an immigrant’s new country of residence (Hernandez-Plaza et al, 2004; Stewart et al, 2010). For some new immigrants the migration to a new country and the resulting separation from family can increase the risk of psychological difficulty (Rousseau et al, 2001, Stewart et al., 2010). This is especially relevant to those immigrants who migrate alone, as was evident by P3 who migrated to Canada leaving behind his wife, son, siblings, and parents in his home country of India. However, reflecting on his adjustment, P3 emphasised how valuable establishing a “very good network of people” was to him in order to successfully assimilate and transition to life in a new country. As described by Stewart et al (2010), social support is a key determinant of health for new immigrants and is often an integral component of coping with the difficulty of migration. In the present study, social support was a common theme that participants relied on to facilitate their adjustment to life and work in Canada. Through social support networks, participants were able to find employment, meet basic needs such as housing, receive financial support when necessary, and benefit from the emotional and psychological bond formed with others. The opportunity for
emotional, material and informative support greatly increases when an individual engages in support seeking with family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances. Through social support networks, coping is facilitated and a smoother transition to life and work occurs.

**Religious Coping/Spirituality**

Religious Coping involves drawing on religious beliefs and practices in order to understand and deal with life stressors. It often involves the use of cognitive and/or behavioral techniques related to religion or spirituality (Tix & Frazier 1998; Dunn & Bien 2009). Religion and spirituality are often defined and understood as separate constructs. Some theorists define religion as “representing adherence to the practices and beliefs of an organized church or religious institution, while spirituality is seen as having a personal and experiential connation” (Shafranske and Maloney, 1990). Although, theorists advise against seeing the two as wholly separate, as this is far too simplistic considering the depth and breadth of religiosity and spirituality. In essence, spirituality can be a part of an individual’s religiosity, though spirituality can exist without religion, likewise religion can exist without spirituality (Hill et al., 2000).

Nonetheless, research suggests religion and/or spirituality correlate significantly with physical and mental health, tolerance, pro-social behaviour and positive interpersonal relationships (Dunn and Bien 2009). As a paradigm of coping, religious coping has been related to multiple aspects of well-being including physical health, psychological well-being, health behaviours, and feelings of efficacy (Dunn and Bien 2009; Harrison, et al., 2001). Evidence suggests that for many individuals religious coping comes to the forefront when dealing with stressful life events. As mirrored in the present study, the use of religious coping was an emergent theme of coping. Of interest, is that many participants who endorsed religious coping/spirituality did so while describing a collaborative style of coping. As previously mentioned, a collaborative style of coping describes a partnership between an individual and God that is based on shared problem
solving. Many participants described their work ethic, and perseverance alongside their faith in God as facilitating their transition along the way. As such, their ability to successful adjust and settle in Canada was not solely a function of God (as in self-directed coping), but a collaboration between their work-ethic and the grace of their religious/spiritual faith.

**Adaptation**

Many participants in the present study described themselves as adaptable and fond of change. In essence, their response highlighted secondary control coping - a component of engagement coping, which describes the ability to adapt to situations instead of attempting to control or influence them. Some participants demonstrated adaptability as they pursued alternate career paths. Other participants described adaptability and a fondness for change as characteristic of themselves as individuals.

Adaptability in regard to career progression and change is described as the readiness to cope with unpredictable adjustments resulting from changes in work and working conditions (Savickas, 1997b, p.254). In other words it refers to: ‘the quality of being able to change, without great difficulty, to fit new or changed circumstances’ (Savickas, 1997b, p.254). Many participants demonstrated their ability to be career adaptable; for example, P3 changed his career path in Garment Manufacturing to Finance when he found out that his “profession was no longer recognized” in Canada. Career adaptability is about being future-oriented, preparing for upcoming tasks and challenges, developing the skills, knowledge and understanding to cope with change and being open to opportunities that come along (Bimrose & McNair, 2011; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). A study examining career adaptability demonstrated that career adaptability positively predicted both career satisfaction and self-rated career performance (Zacher, 2014). In addition, it enabled employees to achieve greater career success. Employment is an important and necessary facet of resettlement, as such many participants demonstrating their willingness to
be adaptable and make changes. Participants took jobs outside of their trained field, made changes in regard to the course of their career path and endorsed adaptability as characteristic of their being. As discussed by researchers (Griffin & Hesketh, 2002), survival in the workplace includes not only developing job specific skills, but also preparing for change and having an adaptive mindset. This is reflected through the participants in the present study who demonstrated an adaptive orientation and a readiness for change.

An adaptive orientation is also related to research regarding a growth mindset in comparison to fixed mindset (Dweck, 2007). Dweck (2007) posits that individuals with a growth mindset view change and transition, as opportunities for learning and growth. They embrace change and view themselves as able to adapt and grow through experience and application. However, those with a fixed mindset avoid challenge and change, see effort as largely unfruitful and have a difficult time viewing experience as an opportunity for learning. The individuals in the present study who endorsed an affinity for adaptation and change appeared to demonstrate more of growth mindset than a fixed mindset. Their migration and pursuit of new opportunities, as well as their openness to adapt to life and work in a new country is reflective of Dweck’s (2007) concept of having a growth mindset.

In light of the relation between adaptability, a growth mindset and immigration, a study by Bütkofer and Peri (2016), suggested that adaptability, measured at age 18, was an important predictor of migration at a later stage in life. The study viewed adaptability as an enduring personality trait, similar to other perspectives on adaptability (i.e. Costa & McCrae, 1997). In fact, Costa and McCrae’s (1997) Big Five personality theory correlates adaptability with openness to experience. Aspects of openness to experience that are relevant to adaptability include, flexibility, tolerance, curiosity and a tendency to seek out new and varied experiences.
It is interesting to note that participants in the present endorsed adaptability, especially when considering the research relating migration, adaptability as well as a growth mindset on an individual’s capacity to adjust and transition to life and work in a new country.

**The role of luck**

The role of luck appears as a common response in studies on coping (Charatan, & Capotorto, 2015; Konvisser, 2013; Crisson & Keefe, 1986). Studies on Holocaust survivors (Charatan, & Capotorto, 2015), survivors of violence (Konvisser, 2013) and chronic pain patients (Crisson & Keefe, 1986) all note that luck, fate or chance played a role in how they overcame difficulty. Similarly, in the present study, the role of luck was endorsed as a recurring theme during resettlement and transition. Luck refers to the belief that events are not controlled by one’s own actions but by luck, chance, fate or powerful others (Folkman, 1984). The role of luck suggests that for some participants their ability to cope lay outside of their own control (external locus of control). In other words, coping was due to an external influencer and not a result of their actions either behaviorally or psychologically. This differs from many paradigms of coping, which focus on an individual’s active participation in their ability to cope. With ‘luck’ coping occurs as a result of chance, or as P18 described by being in the right place at the right time.

Reflecting on the role of luck an interesting study compared individuals from individualistic cultures with those from collectivistic cultures. Individuals from individualistic cultures are said to have personality traits that reflect a greater level of internal locus of control (Chun, Moos, & Cronkite, 2006). These individuals are expected to use more behavioral and engagement-focused coping strategies that reflect their desire to influence the external environment to achieve their coping goals. While individuals from collectivistic cultures, are said to have more of an external locus of control (i.e. luck), greater secondary control and rely
more on strategies that allow them to control their internal states. Chun, Moos, & Cronkite, (2006) also suggest that individuals from collectivist cultures may adopt more passive or avoidant strategies. The notion that luck may reflect cultural differences is an interesting one to consider; especially when noting that participants in the present study ranged from a wide range of cultures, both Eastern and Western countries, which is often suggested to be individualistic and collectivistic respectively.

It remains unclear in the present study, as to the extent that collectivism influenced the notion of luck as described by participants. However, similar to the findings of other studies exploring coping (Charatan, & Capotorto, 2015; Konvisser, 2013; Crisson & Keefe, 1986), the role of luck appears to be a common theme that emerges regarding how individuals cope with change and difficulty.

**Positive Outlook**

Fredrickson’s (1998, 2001) broaden-and-build theory posits that positive emotions (e.g., enjoyment, happiness, hope, gratitude, serenity) broaden one’s awareness and promote novel lines of thought or action. This is contrasted with negative emotions, which tend to narrow an individual’s thought-action repertoire and promote survival-oriented behaviours (e.g., anxiety as a negative emotion tends to initiate fight-or-flight responses for immediate survival). Positive emotions facilitate a broadened thinking style, such that joy creates the urge to play and interest creates the urge to explore (Fredrickson and Joiner, 2002). With positive emotions broadened awareness and cognition promotes an increase in personal resources, which facilitates coping with stress and adversity (Aspinwall, 1988; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). A study by Fredrickson (2001), found that those who demonstrate higher levels of positive emotion tend to show more constructive and flexible coping, and are more likely to feel good in the future.
In the present study, a common theme endorsed by participants was positivity, which manifested as participants expressing positive, optimistic and hopeful attitudes, especially during stressful circumstances. Some participants described a positive attitude as a component of their resettlement and adjustment process, others more specifically described remaining positive as helpful when they felt alone and distanced from family and friends from their home countries. Others described remaining positive in the workplace in order to facilitate receiving further work opportunities (e.g., P55 noted that being positive was an important trait in order to facilitate acquiring new work projects). This is similar to Fredrickson’s view that positivity tends to facilitate an upward spiral of wellbeing and greater personal resources. Lastly, P50 captured the sentiment of a ‘downward spiral’ when he stated that thinking negatively tends to create a perspective “that everything is against you” unlike being open to new experiences or having a positive attitude. This reflects Fredrickson’s views where positive emotions create further wellbeing and negative emotions create downward spirals and negatively impact well-being.

Proactive Coping

Aspinwall & Taylor (1997) define proactive coping as a psychological process whereby individuals engage in strategies to prevent future stressors or to minimize their effects. Coping efforts include behavioral actions and cognitive strategies, such as planning, seeking information, and engaging in preparatory activities aimed at preventing or minimizing the stressor. Proactive coping is often active rather than avoidant, as avoidance does not help to control or minimize the stressor.

Participants in the present study researched the job market, talked with others familiar with Canada, improved their English fluency, sought information about life Canada through forums and websites, and some even began the job application process before arriving to Canada. All indicators of the preparation participants willingly engaged in order to be proactive about
their migration to Canada. An advantage of proactive coping is that when stressors are eventually encountered their impact may be lowered, as one may have developed the resources to handle the stressors or the mental preparation to cope with it better. One of the results of proactive coping is that the stressor will likely consume less resources allowing for the allocation of resources for other activities. For instance, seeking to improve one’s English fluency before migrating would decrease the possible resources spent trying to navigate in a predominately English speaking country. Through proactive coping participants can prepare and mediate difficulties that might arise, such as language difficulties, employment insecurity, as well as housing and travel uncertainty. Proactive coping has been shown to positively impact well-being, reduce stress levels and lead to greater ease though challenge and difficulty (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997).

**Action-taking**

Action taking can otherwise be described as problem-focused coping or attempting to remove or reduce the cause of the stressor. For many participants the threat of unemployment and the repercussions of not having an income necessitated the job search using as many means at one’s disposal. As such, participants attended workshops, visited employment agencies and met with support workers to aid with their interview skills, resume writing and job search methods. Alongside seeking out resources, participants emphasized the important role of networking and connecting with others to better their chance of finding employment. A study by Briscoe et al., (2012) suggests that networking and tactical career endeavours are needed in order to cope with an insecure employment environment, and facilitate individuals functioning in a self-directed fashion. Moreover, Savickas (1997) suggests that career paths no longer reflect predictability as they once did, and instead require that individuals be more self-managed and
action oriented. As such, the present study reflects this notion as participants put forth their own efforts to facilitate employment and career development.

It should be noted that action-taking does overlap with many themes of coping. However, action taking and its subthemes (networking, seeking resources, and retraining/re-education) are differentiated due to their focus on direct problem-solving, which is contrasted with other forms of coping that tend to include distinct features of coping. For example, proactive coping comprises of a future focus and a preparation of stressors to come - a rather distinct feature of proactive coping. However, proactive coping also includes taking action, and overlaps with the notion of behavioural action to better one’s situation. Despite, the presence of action-taking within proactive coping, distinct features of proactive coping (i.e. the emphasis on a future focus), suggest that action taking as a theme may be better analyzed separately. Similarly, seeking social support as well as religious coping/spirituality describes individuals engaging in behavioural action, however distinct features of these forms of coping (i.e. turning to friends/family/acquaintances as in social support or turning to religious beliefs or spiritual practices as in religious coping/spirituality), results in these themes being analyzed separately from direct action-taking. Overall, a focus on action taking through networking, retraining/re-education, and seeking resources is utilized to understand coping and its representation in the population of new and professional immigrants.

**Theoretical Implications**

In the present study engagement coping was the most employed paradigm of coping. The term engagement coping highlights both problem and emotion-focused coping and centers on an individual’s attempt to deal with a stressor, rather than disengage or avoid the stressor (Carver & Conner-Smith, 2010). Engagement coping includes primary control coping and secondary control coping, as illustrated in Figure 1. Primary control engagement coping regards the ability
to directly influence situations or circumstances that create stress or difficulty, and can include both problem and emotion-focused coping. While secondary control coping deals with attempts to adjust and accommodate oneself to the stressor. In the present study, primary control engagement coping is exemplified through the main themes of social support and action taking (e.g., seeking out resources, networking, and retraining/re-education) (see Figure 1). Furthermore, secondary control engagement coping is exemplified through an adaptive mindset and a positive outlook. Additional forms of coping, as illustrated below included proactive coping, religious coping/spirituality and luck.

**Figure 1**: Coping with transition as demonstrated by new and professional immigrants.

In regard to primary control coping individuals in the present study engaged in support seeking and action taking, and sought to mitigate the challenge or difficulty they were experiencing by seeking support from friends and family, and/or seeking out resources (i.e. attending workshops, visiting employment agencies), engaging in retraining and networking with others. In regard to secondary control coping, individuals attempted to adapt to the stressor. This
was demonstrated through their endorsement of change and adaptability. Individuals also spoke of the importance of a positive outlook as beneficial in facilitating their adjustment and transition.

Conner and Carver (2010) describe seeking social support as indicative of primary control coping and one that captures both problem and emotion-focused coping. This was reflected in the present study as through the guidance of friends and/or family participants had the ability to actively engage in problem solving, planning and the learning of new information and resources to aid in adjustment and resettlement. They were also able to rely on family and friends for emotional and psychological support, which provided an opportunity to mitigate distressing emotions (i.e. loneliness, uncertainty, doubt), and facilitate emotional expression. Social support as coping mechanism was an integral component that aided in the adjustment of new immigrants.

A number of studies have noted that social support and engagement coping tend to co-occur, where social support facilitates an individual’s engagement coping strategies (i.e. Tsai et al., 2010; Dutton, et al., 1994; Waldrop & Resick, 2004). A study by Taft et al. (2010) demonstrated that a responsive and supportive social network empowered individuals to use engagement coping strategies. In other words, individuals were more likely to engage in self-helping behaviours that would influence and improve their current situation when they had supportive social networks in place. Considering the presence of engagement coping and social support as two common themes in the present study, engagement coping may have benefitted from the presence of social support as a form of coping by participants in the study.

A second prominent form of primary control coping that individuals in the present study engaged in was action-taking. All individuals conveyed their drive and determination to rebuild their lives in Canada, and their behavioural engagement to improving their situation and overcome challenges. The main forms of action-taking included seeking out employment
agencies, attending workshops, networking with others, and engaging in retraining/re-education. Action taking as form of primary control coping highlights problem focused coping as individuals were focused on tackling challenges in a practical way.

In regard to secondary control coping, adaptability and a positive outlook were two common themes endorsed by participants. Adaptability refers to the ability to adjust to a stressor or to change oneself according to changes (Andresen & Gornau, 2005). It is also described as the ability to cope with unexpected disturbances in the environment (Conrad, 1983). Many individuals in the present study, expressed having an affinity for change and adaptability; of interest was that individuals relayed this response to how they coped without being asked about personal characteristics, rather they responded with adaptability simply when being asked about coping and overall adjustment. As such, they endorsed their ability to be adaptable and to embrace change as an important coping strategy to aid them through resettlement and adjustment. In other words they showcased a growth mindset, as posited by Dweck (2007), instead of a fixed mindset. Positivity was another coping style within secondary control coping, which highlighted adapting to situations, especially those that might be challenging, with a positive outlook. Individuals chose to maintain a positive attitude and to see the benefit in situations, which facilitated their ability to sustain themselves through difficulty. For many individuals remaining positive and optimistic was the best option or at least a way of being to emulate, as the alternative (i.e. a pessimistic attitude) would not have served or benefitted them in any way, and could potentially have led them down a negative spiral.

Other than engagement coping, another paradigm of coping that was evident was religious coping/spirituality. Individuals in the present study described their belief in God and their spiritual practices, such as prayer as helping them to cope with challenge and difficulty. A collaborative style of religious coping, as described by Pargament (1997) was most common in
many of the experiences told in the present study, as individuals regarded their religious/spiritual strength as working in tandem with their own work ethic and perseverance.

The last theme presented by participants was the role of luck. Many individuals described that luck, fate or chance was responsible for their ability to adjust to life in Canada. The role of luck speaks to the notion that for some participants control lay outside of their own influence both behaviourally and psychologically; instead challenges and difficulties were managed or overcome by an external force based on happenstance that worked in their favour.

Overall individuals in the present study facilitated their adjustment to life in Canada with a mix of engagement coping (primary and secondary control coping), religious coping/spirituality and luck. Engagement coping was the most prominent form of coping and comprised of social support, action taking, an adaptive mindset and a positive outlook.

The theoretical implications of the present study also extend to its relation to career coping and career management. As suggested by Savickas (1997) ever changing labour markets often make career paths unpredictable, and as a result necessitate that individuals embrace an adaptable, self-managed, and action-oriented outlook. This is especially relevant for immigrant professionals as they navigate the job market and cope with various social, cultural and employment barriers. As reflected in the findings in the present study many participants endorsed action-taking and problem solving as key components of their coping style. In addition, participants endorsed an adaptable mindset and an affinity for change; as for these participants it was important to remain open to different career and work ventures, and to take experiences as opportunities for learning and growth. This allowed participants to improve their current circumstances, and to create further opportunities.

As reflected in the research on career adaptability (Savickas, 1997), participants demonstrated the use of the various career adaptability resources (concern, curiosity, control and
Confidence). Concern for the future includes looking to the future and preparing for what might come next. This mirrors proactive coping, a common theme found in the present study, as some participants took measures beforehand to offset the potential stressors they believed they could possibly encounter. Curiosity, as another career adaptability resource, includes exploring possible selves in various roles and situations. Participants noted their flexibility and openness for change, especially in regard to pursuing alternate career paths; thus demonstrating their ability to explore various roles and experiences. Control as a career adaptability resource describes taking responsibility for the activities and behaviours one is engaged in, and reflects action taking, proactive coping and the overall intent to adjust and succeed in Canada. Lastly, Savickas (1997) describes confidence as a career adaptability resource and relates it to the role of self-efficacy, self-esteem and encouragement. It is likely that action taking, being proactive, seeking support (including family, friends and religious support), as well as information seeking facilitated a sense of ease and increased confidence allowing those in transition to create choices that would better their chance of adaptation and adjustment.

In line with career management theory new and professional immigrants appeared to also benefit from career strategies, such as positioning behaviours, boundary management and to lesser extent influence behaviours (King, 2004; Lee, 2002). Positioning behaviours include networking, attempting to improve one’s ‘human capital’ by obtaining further qualifications, or pursuing opportunities that are of value. In the present study, networking and retraining/re-education were two common themes endorsed by participants and reflect the notion of positioning behaviours, as a method of increasing one’s success in the job market. Influence behaviours are also described in the literature on career strategies and management, however less is known about such behaviour in the present study. In the present study it is unclear as to the extent participants may have engaged in self-promotion, ingratiating, or other forms of upward
influence, as these forms of behaviour were not specifically addressed or questioned in the present study. Nevertheless, boundary management as another career management strategy was demonstrated in the present study. The role of social support and the reliance on family and friends was evidenced as participants turned to those in their social support network for guidance and was apparent through their work-life adjustment and transition process.

The theoretical implications reflect how new and professional immigrants cope during life-career transition and adjustment. The primary research question of what coping styles and strategies new and professional immigrants rely on as they adjust and transition to life and work in Canada is addressed through the aforementioned forms of coping found in the present study, which include: primary control engagement coping (social support networks and action-taking – networking, retraining/re-education, and seeking out resources), secondary control engagement coping (an adaptive mindset and a positive outlook), religious coping/spirituality, proactive coping, and an external attribution style of luck. These forms of coping reflect the literature on psychological coping and shed light on the intended research question of how new and professional cope during life-career transition in Canada.

**Practical Considerations**

The key objectives of this study were to further provide an understanding of the coping mechanisms new and professional immigrants rely on to cope with challenge and difficulty. A focus on new and professional immigrants also conveys their adjustment experience as they adapt to new employment and career endeavours. Based on these findings, implications for intervention approaches that could potentially help immigrants adapt to the challenges caused by the disruption of migration and the reestablishment of life and work in Canada are discussed below.
The findings of the present study can inform those that work with new immigrants regarding their adjustment experience, the barriers they are likely to face and the factors that were apart of their coping arsenal. In particular, those in helping professions such as counsellors can benefit from a greater understanding of this expanding population. As is fundamental to the practice of counselling, it would of course be important for new immigrants who seek counselling, to feel heard, validated and understood. Thus, one important facet for counsellors or others that work with new immigrants to understand are the unique challenges that immigrants face, such as acculturation challenges (Reynolds & Constantin, 2007), devaluation of their credentials and work experience (Houle, 2010), as well as discrimination and racism (Beck, Reitz & Weiner, 2002). Bringing to awareness one’s own biases, and individual perspectives are also important to ensure that an objective approach is taken. Based on the findings of the present study, knowing how immigrants coped with resettlement and encouraging these factors beforehand can serve as protective factors during adjustment. For example, knowing that many new immigrants relied on being adaptable and resourceful especially in regard to employment can be a protective factor if encouraged and emphasized during adjustment. In addition, many immigrants relied on family/friends, therefore having support networks in place upon arrival or making attempts to establish those networks would be hugely beneficial. Moreover, for some immigrants the role of religion/spirituality played an important role in their adjustment, thus considering religion/spirituality can further encourage a smooth transition and would be supportive of the resettlement process.

For some immigrants seeking professional help from counsellors may present with difficulty due to financial constraints, lack of knowledge about counselling services, stigma or cultural differences, especially during the initial transition to life in Canada. However, the findings of the present study lend many facets of self-help and lessons that can be learnt from
new and professional immigrants. Though the use of written material, or resources made available through workshops or at employment agencies there is a greater opportunity to share how immigrants are able to cope and successfully transition to life in a new country.

The overall message of the present study relays that adjustment and resettlement can be facilitated by an individual’s ability to effectively cope with the changes that are occurring. The adjustment period includes many barriers and obstacles that have to be overcome, though there are ways of being and doing that can ease the process (i.e. adaptability, positivity, action-taking, networking etc.) This perspective merges with humanistic psychology and the work of Carl Rogers (1961) that posits that individuals have within themselves the capability for change, self-healing and growth. Thus, applying the findings in the present study to the existing research in coping psychology, immigrant adjustment and vocational psychology would likely help new immigrants with the challenges and difficulties they experience.

**Limitations**

There are several limitations to consider when addressing the notion of coping psychology and immigrant adjustment. First, coping was addressed in the present study within the larger context of work-life adjustment, thus additional research, could explore questions pertaining to coping with greater detail and specificity. A second limitation is that the selection criteria required participants be employed either full or part-time. As a result, these participants may be better adjusted and may adopt more positive coping strategies. New immigrants who were unemployed or experiencing other challenges may have a different experience of how they coped. Including participants at different levels of adjustment could provide a greater depth of information. Lastly, some paradigms of coping such as avoidance coping are difficult to measure, for example avoidance coping may result in new immigrants returning to their home countries resulting in their experience not being reflected in the data. Some participants did describe
returning to their home countries due to difficulties experienced in Canada, though they eventually returned in order to give life in Canada a second chance. Thus, a limitation with the current study is that those that engage in more maladaptive coping strategies may not be effectively captured in the data.

**Future Directions**

This study was one of very few studies to examine coping in new and professional immigrants in Canada, and the first of its kind to examine consider career coping and development in a population faced with the disruption of migration. Moving forward it would be beneficial for future studies to adopt a narrower focus pertaining to how individuals are able to persevere and cope with difficulty. Using a greater array of questioning tactics that can address the various ways coping can arise and be demonstrated would be helpful. In addition, using a wider range of new immigrants that captures those at different stages of adjustment will also serve to broaden the depth of study.

**Conclusion**

The findings of the present study suggest that there are a number of coping styles and strategies that new and professional immigrants rely on to support their adjustment to life and work in Canada. Social support, religious coping/spirituality, an adaptive mindset, a positive outlook, action taking, and proactive coping all provided various benefits in facilitating adjustment and transition. The opportunity to learn from the lived experience of others, and to bring awareness to the forms of coping that one may benefit from can ease the transitional process. In addition, knowing how other newcomers adjusted and the forms of coping that were helpful to them can be particularly uplifting. Considering the continued entry of newcomers to Canada the findings of the present study would also be helpful to consider before migration to Canada (the ultimate form of proactive coping). In addition, bringing awareness to how new and
professional immigrants cope and the unique challenges they face would also be beneficial to the wider public (i.e. counsellors, educators, support workers, coworkers, employers) who interact with new immigrants. For counsellors and others in supportive roles emphasizing the aforementioned forms of coping that may be lacking in an individual’s life can highly beneficial, and creates an opportunity for improved adjustment and transition. It is also plausible for the findings of the present study to extend beyond the immigration population, and to others who may be undergoing a life transition or period of adjustment. Overall, new and professional immigrants in the present study demonstrated their fortitude and determination to pursue their career and life goals through the resettlement process, all while engaging, either with or without awareness, in the adaptive process of coping.
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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT/POSTER

RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT

RE: Worklife Adjustment of Immigrant Professionals in Canada

We are looking to conduct interviews with new immigrant professionals to examine their employment and worklife experiences after coming to Canada. These interviews are part of a research project lead by Dr. Charles Chen in Counselling Psychology at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). The interview will be conducted in person, and will take approximately 2 hours to complete. A financial compensation of $35 will be provided to each participant. You are cordially invited to participate in our study if you are interested in this project, and meet the following criteria:

- You are at least 25 years of age and older.
- You came to Canada as an immigrant within the last 13 years (i.e., January 1, 1994 to June 30, 2006).
- You had a university degree and worked full-time in a professional occupation for at least one-year in your country of origin before coming to Canada.
- You are currently employed either on a full-time or part-time basis, i.e., you are holding paid employment for at least 16 hours per week.

For further information or to set up an interview, please contact:

Charles Chen, Ph.D. Name(s) of the Research Assistant(s)
OISE/University of Toronto OISE/University of Toronto
(416)923-6641 ext. 2485 Telephone number
cpchen@oise.utoronto.ca Email address

APPENDIX B: TELEPHONE SCRIPT

TELEPHONE SCRIPT (or LETTER) FOR FIRST CONTACT

RE: Worklife Adjustment of Immigrant Professionals in Canada

Thank you very much for calling, and we really appreciate your interest in our research project. First I would like to tell you a bit about the study. Then you can take some time to consider whether you would like to participate in this project or not. If you have questions, please feel free to interrupt me at any time and ask them.
You are cordially invited to attend this interview. The interview is part of a research project being conducted by Dr. Charles Chen, an Associate Professor of Counselling Psychology at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT), and his research assistants. The interview questions are designed to examine the worklife adjustment experiences of new immigrant professionals. It is expected that the results from this study will lead to a better understanding of immigrant professionals' career development experiences and needs, and of the specific barriers and opportunities present for immigrant professionals in their vocational life transition in Canada. The interview questions will cover information about your current life career goals, possibilities for career planning and development, relevant demographic information, and about the people and events in your life that affect your effort in rebuilding your vocational life in Canada.

There are no foreseeable risks in completing this interview. We hope that you will benefit from the interview process with an increased self-awareness on issues related to career exploration and planning. We also hope that you would find the exploring nature of the study an interesting process from which you might learn something. However, even if the study does not benefit you directly, we hope that it will assist us in developing career counselling programs that will be beneficial to many other new immigrant professional workers arriving in this country every year. However, even if this study does not benefit you directly, we hope it will be beneficial to many other new immigrant professional workers arriving in this country every year. We really appreciate your interest, and we are very grateful to your participation.

To follow the nature and purpose of the study stated above, research participants in this study will include a total of 90 to 100 recent immigrant professionals. All participants selected will be 25 years of age and older. Each participant is invited to complete an audiotaped interview that will last for about 2 hours. The interview will take place in a meeting room at OISE/UT. As part of the interview, you will be asked to complete and return a 2-page Participant Information Sheet that contains your contact information and basic demographic information relevant to this research project.

The term "new immigrant professionals" in this study refers to a person who meets the following criteria:

- You are at least 25 years of age and older.
- You came to Canada as an immigrant within the last 13 years (i.e., January 1, 1994 to June 30, 2006).
- You had a university degree and worked full-time in a professional occupation for at least one-year in your country of origin before coming to Canada.
- You are currently employed either on a full-time or part-time basis, i.e., you are holding paid employment for at least 16 hours per week.

As one of the participants, your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are under no obligation to complete the study, even if you finish a portion of it and then decide that you do not wish to continue. You may choose to refuse to answer any particular question or questions posed to you and still complete the interview. You may also refuse to participate or
withdraw from the study, at any time, without any negative consequences to your personal life, academic standing, and other career prospects later.

Your employer(s) will NOT be informed either of your involvement in the study or of any aspects of the interview discussion.

In recognition of the time and effort you have given to participate in this research project, we would like to offer you an honorarium of $35 if you agree to participate and complete the interview process.

While we will be making an audiotape of this interview, your responses to this interview will be kept completely anonymous. Your results will be assigned to a code number to protect your identity. Any information that could lead to identify you (e.g., name) will be removed from the data while the interviews are transcribed into written data, i.e., written transcripts of the interview session. You will be assigned a pseudonym in the interview, as well as throughout the entire research process, including in the data analysis, final research report(s), and other related presentations and publications. Any possible identifying information about you will be replaced by a code during the research process. Your contact information, such as your name, phone numbers and email address, will be coded and kept separately from other files. All written and audiotaped data will be kept in secured files, and in a locked cabinet to which only the researcher and his research assistants have access. The data will be kept for 5 years starting from the completion date of the research project. After this 5-year time period, all the data including the audiotapes will be destroyed and/or erased.

The results of this study may be used again in another study. However, they will only be used by Dr. Chen and his assistants for research related to immigrant professionals’ vocational and career development issues. These research results may be presented in public settings such as professional and/or academic conferences, and other public forums. Reports and articles based on the research may also be published in academic and/or professional journals. Under such circumstances, your identity will remain strictly confidential, and only your pseudonym and coded information may be utilized.

We will be very glad to provide you with a summary of the current study’s results if you wish to receive such a summary report when this research project is completed.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask either Dr. Chen, or his research assistant(s) (name of the prospective research assistants).

If you need more time to think about your option, please feel free to do so. You may contact me in a later time if you are interested in arranging an interview schedule with me.

If you are sure that you want to participate in this research, I can set up a time schedule with you now for the research interview.

Whether you will participate in the interview or not, I really appreciate your interest. Again, thank you very much for your time, and your inquiry about our research project!
APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

(Printed on the Letterhead of OISE/University of Toronto)

CONSENT FORM

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We will be very glad to provide you with a summary of the current study’s results after the completion of this research project. If you wish to receive such a summary report, please indicate it clearly in the Participant Information Sheet attached.

We would appreciate it that you could complete the Sheet and return it separately to the interviewer.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask either Dr. Chen, or his research assistant(s) (name of the prospective research assistants). Signing the bottom of this form will constitute your consent to this interview, as well as your consent to participate in this research project.
Thank you very much for your time and valuable assistance.

Charles Chen, Ph.D.
Counselling Psychology Program
Department of Adult Education and Counselling Psychology
OISE/University of Toronto
Tel.: (416)923-6641 ext. 2485
cpchen@oise.utoronto.ca

Name of the Research Assistant(s)
Counselling Psychology Program
Department of Adult Education and Counselling Psychology
OISE/University of Toronto
Telephone number Email:
Email address

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I understand the above information and voluntarily consent to participate in the research project described above. I have been offered a copy of this consent form for my own reference.

______________________________
(Print: Name of Research Participant)

______________________________
(Signature of Research Participant) (Date)
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

THEME QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW

RE: Worklife Adjustment of Immigrant Professionals in Canada

I. Before Coming to Canada

1) Could you tell me about your life and work experiences before coming to Canada?
   --Your family (parents, brothers and sisters, spouse/partner, children): What do they do?
   --Your educational background
   --Your work experience and vocational background
   --Your interests and hobbies

2) In general, how would you describe your vocational life and career experiences back in your home country? Could you give me some examples?

3) Why did you want to come to Canada, and how did you make this decision to come?
   --Reason(s) and rationale
   --Events and experiences that triggered your decision

4) What preparation did you make when you decided to move to Canada as an immigrant professional?
   --Anticipated difficulties?
   --Compromise you made to facilitate the immigration process?

5) What was your expectation and planning for your employment and vocational life in Canada?
   --Any information you gathered about employment in Canada?
   --Any preparation or action for this planning?

6) How important was the role of employment and worklife in your decision of immigration to Canada? Why this was so, and could you provide some reasons?

II. After Coming to Canada: Initial General Experience
1) What was your main purpose for coming to Canada? And when did you come?
   --Skilled independent worker, family reunion, refugee, etc.?

2) Could you describe your initial living experiences in Canada?

3) What did you encounter when you first came to this country?

4) How did you feel when you initially came to Canada?

5) How did you cope with changes in life?

6) What were the difficulties you encountered when you first came to Canada?

7) What were the things you enjoyed most when you came to Canada?

III. Ongoing Vocational Adjustment and Transition in Canada

1) How important was it for you to find a job when you first came to Canada? Which kind of jobs did you intend to find to get your worklife restarted in Canada?

2) What were your basic priorities when you were searching for your new employment in Canada, e.g., money, job security, fit with past experience, personal interest, level of prestige, etc.?

3) What did you do to find your initial employment in Canada? Could you tell me in sequential order the main jobs you have held since coming to this country, and your experiences with these jobs?
   --Action you took to obtain these jobs.
   --Events and/or people that led you to these jobs

4) What were the common situations you encountered during your job search in Canada?

5) What were some of the most common barriers in your job search in Canada? Could you give me some specific examples?

6) Was there a gap between your employment expectation before coming to Canada and the reality of employment you were facing in Canada? If so, what were some of the main issues
presented by this gap? How did you feel about these issues, and what did you do to deal with these issues?

7) In your job-search in Canada, how useful was your previous professional training and work experience from your home country? What did you do trying to get a job that is more related to your previous vocational and/or professional background experience from your home country?

8) What were some of the expected and unexpected events that influenced your job-seeking and vocational development experiences in Canada? And how did you deal with such events?

--Anticipated or unanticipated barriers.

--Opportunities/people that led you to a vocational choice.

9) How important is the impact of such events and opportunities on your vocational life in Canada?

10) How important is the role and function of your personal action in responding to or creating these opportunities for your vocational development in Canada?

11) What were the major compromises you made when approaching to an employment opportunity in Canada? How did you come to a decision when you had to make a compromise in finding and maintaining your new employment in Canada?

12) How did you feel when you had to make a compromise for your vocational choice in Canada?

13) What were some of the main lessons you learned from your job-search experience in Canada?

--Things that were helpful or not helpful to your worklife adjustment.

14) What were the major factors you had to consider when you were trying to find employment in Canada? Why were these factors important?

--Concerns for financial survival.
--Gain Canadian experience.

--Some relevancy to previous educational and professional background experience.

15) What was the role of retraining in your vocational development? Did you try to regain your previous professional qualification you had obtained from your home country? If so, what did you do and what happened to you as a result?

16) Did you try to enter any academic and/or professional training programs for the purpose of better employment prospects in Canada? If so, could you describe in more details about your attempt or experience in these programs?

--Formal degree and professional designation programs.
--Various certificate/diploma programs.
--Trades training.

17) If you had the experience of academic and/or professional retraining in Canada, could you describe your general impression and feeling about this training experience?

--Things you enjoyed the most.
--Things you enjoyed the least.

18) How important and useful was your retraining experience to your employment opportunity in this country? And how do you assess the outcome of this retraining experience?

--Leading to employment that was similar or close to your background experience.
--Leading to new vocational choice and opportunity.
--Leading to some employment with little or no satisfaction.
--Leading to no beneficial outcome for employment.

19) What were some of the most important factors that had an impact on your vocational adjustment process in Canada? Could you describe why these factors were important and how they had an impact on your coping experience?
--Related social, economic, and cultural factors.
--External support from the government, community, and friends.
--Family relationship.
--Other personal situations and circumstances.

20) Could you tell me about your experiences in your current employment in Canada?
   --Circumstances that led you to your present worklife.
   --The nature of your employment.

21) What was it like to be a new worker in a new country? How do you feel about your current job? Could you tell me the things you like and/or dislike about your current employment?

22) In your current workplace, what are some of the most important factors that facilitate and/or hinder your vocational advancement? How do you cope with the difficulties you counter in your current worklife? Could you provide some examples?

23) In general, how would you describe and assess your experience as a new worker in Canada? What impact does this experience have on your perception of self-worthiness as a new Canadian?
   --Pros and/or Cons, Gains and/or Losses?

24) Do you feel a sense of vocational and career identity from your current employment experience in Canada? Why or why not?

25) How satisfied do you feel about your vocational life experience in Canada?

26) In your view, how important your vocational life is in your total new life in Canada? In what way your vocational life has had an impact on other aspects of your personal and family life in Canada? Could you give some specific examples?
27) What are some of the main concerns and needs you have about your future worklife in Canada? How do you feel about your future vocational development prospects in Canada, and why do you feel this way? 

28) What will you intend to do to improve the quality of your vocational life and to enhance your career development in Canada? 

--Anticipate your vocational direction 5 years from now.