

# The Impact of Canada's Multiculturalism Policy on the Employment Rates of High-Skilled Immigrants

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## Abstract

This study examines the impact of Canada's multiculturalism policy on the employment rates of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields from 2000 to 2020. Utilizing a quantitative research design, the study integrates cross-sectional and longitudinal data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) to provide a comprehensive analysis. The findings indicate that multiculturalism policies have had a generally positive effect on the employment outcomes of high-skilled immigrants, particularly through initiatives supporting credential recognition, language training, and inclusive hiring practices. However, significant challenges remain, including difficulties in foreign credential recognition, language barriers, and systemic biases in hiring practices. By comparing employment trends and analyzing factors influencing employment outcomes, the study highlights the areas where policy and support measures need to be strengthened to enhance the integration of high-skilled immigrants into Canada's STEM workforce. The study concludes with recommendations for policymakers and employers to further improve the effectiveness of multiculturalism policies and support the successful employment of high-skilled immigrants.

**Keywords:** multiculturalism policy, high-skilled immigrants, STEM fields, employment rates

## 1. Introduction

Canada's multiculturalism policy, first introduced in 1971, is a hallmark of the country's commitment to diversity and inclusion. The policy acknowledges the cultural and ethnic diversity of its citizens and promotes the retention of cultural identities while fostering integration and equal opportunity (Government of Canada, 1971). Multiculturalism in Canada aims to eliminate barriers to full participation in society, encouraging immigrants to contribute to the social, cultural, economic, and political fabric of the nation (Kymlicka, 2010). Over the decades, various iterations of this policy have been implemented, each adapting to the changing demographic and socio-economic landscape of the country. High-skilled immigrants, particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, play a crucial role in driving innovation and economic growth. They bring diverse perspectives, specialized skills, and global networks that are vital in today's knowledge-based economy (Hawthorne, 2018). Canada, recognizing the importance of these professionals, has implemented several immigration pathways such as the Express Entry system and the Global Talent Stream to attract and retain high-skilled talent (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2017). Despite these efforts, high-skilled immigrants often face challenges in securing employment commensurate with their qualifications, indicating potential inefficiencies or barriers within the labor market (Boyd & Tian, 2018). This study aims to investigate the impact of Canada's multiculturalism policy on the employment rates of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. By analyzing employment trends and the effectiveness of these policies, this research seeks to understand whether multiculturalism initiatives have successfully facilitated the integration of high-skilled immigrants into the Canadian labor market. The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform policymakers and stakeholders about the strengths and weaknesses of current multiculturalism strategies

and suggest improvements that could enhance the employment outcomes for high-skilled immigrants. Additionally, this study contributes to the broader discourse on immigration policy, integration, and economic development. The primary research questions guiding this study are: How has Canada's multiculturalism policy influenced the employment rates of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields? What are the key factors that affect the employment outcomes of high-skilled immigrants in these fields? To what extent do multiculturalism policies mitigate barriers to employment for high-skilled immigrants? The hypotheses to be tested include: Multiculturalism policies have a positive effect on the employment rates of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. High-skilled immigrants face fewer barriers to employment in provinces with more robust multiculturalism initiatives. The employment outcomes of high-skilled immigrants improve over time with the continuous implementation of multiculturalism policies. By addressing these questions and testing these hypotheses, this study will provide a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of multiculturalism policies in supporting the employment integration of high-skilled immigrants in Canada.

## 2. Literature Review

Existing research on multiculturalism and employment has extensively explored the ways in which policies fostering cultural diversity influence labor market outcomes. Multiculturalism policies, which promote the recognition and accommodation of diverse cultural backgrounds, have been shown to positively affect the integration of immigrants into the labor market by providing support systems and reducing discrimination (Berry, 2011). Studies have demonstrated that countries with robust multiculturalism policies often exhibit higher rates of immigrant employment and better job quality compared to those with assimilationist approaches (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013). However, the impact of such policies specifically on high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields requires further investigation.

Research focusing on the employment outcomes of high-skilled immigrants reveals a complex interplay of factors influencing their labor market success. High-skilled immigrants often face challenges such as credential recognition, language barriers, and a lack of local work experience, which can impede their ability to secure employment commensurate with their qualifications (Picot & Hou, 2009). Studies by Hou and Picot (2016) indicate that high-skilled immigrants in Canada are more likely to be underemployed or working in jobs that do not match their skill levels compared to their Canadian-born counterparts. Moreover, these challenges are compounded by systemic issues such as discriminatory hiring practices and the undervaluation of foreign credentials (Reitz, 2001).

Theoretical frameworks provide a lens through which the impact of multiculturalism policies on employment can be understood. The human capital theory posits that individuals with higher levels of education and skills should experience better labor market outcomes (Becker, 1964). However, the segmentation theory suggests that the labor market is divided into distinct segments with different access levels and rewards, which can disadvantage immigrants (Piore, 1979). Furthermore, social capital theory emphasizes the role of networks and social connections in securing employment, highlighting the importance of community support and professional networks facilitated by multiculturalism policies (Putnam, 2000).

Despite the wealth of research, significant gaps remain in the literature. First, there is a need for more nuanced analyses that differentiate between various fields of employment, particularly STEM fields, where high-skilled immigrants are concentrated. Existing studies often aggregate data across all high-skilled immigrants without considering the specific dynamics of STEM employment (Boyd & Tian, 2018). Second, while there is evidence on the general benefits of multiculturalism policies, their specific mechanisms and effectiveness in addressing barriers unique to high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields are underexplored (Hiebert, 2016). Lastly, longitudinal studies that track the employment trajectories of high-skilled immigrants over time are scarce, limiting the understanding of how multiculturalism policies impact long-term career outcomes (Guo, 2013).

This literature review underscores the importance of addressing these gaps to comprehensively understand the role of multiculturalism policies in shaping the employment outcomes of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. By examining the intersection of policy, individual characteristics, and labor market conditions, this study aims to contribute to a more detailed and sector-specific understanding of immigrant integration in Canada.

## 3. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to assess the impact of Canada's multiculturalism policy on the employment rates of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. The research design integrates both cross-sectional and longitudinal components to provide a comprehensive analysis. The cross-sectional component offers a snapshot of the current employment landscape for high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields, while the longitudinal component examines changes over time, offering insights into trends and the long-term effects of multiculturalism policies. This dual approach facilitates a robust examination of both immediate and sustained impacts of policy measures on employment outcomes.

This study utilizes multiple data sources to ensure a comprehensive analysis. Primary quantitative data is sourced from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB). The LFS provides monthly data on employment, unemployment, and demographic characteristics. It includes variables such as age, gender, education level, occupation, industry, and immigrant status, making it a valuable source for understanding employment trends among high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. The IMDB, on the other hand, links immigration records with tax files, offering detailed longitudinal information on immigrant earnings and employment trajectories. This database allows for the analysis of employment outcomes over time, providing insights into the long-term impacts of multiculturalism policies on high-skilled immigrants.

Participants for the analysis are selected based on the following criteria. High-skilled immigrants: Individuals who have immigrated to Canada within the last 10 years and possess at least a bachelor's degree in a STEM field. This timeframe ensures that participants have sufficient experience in the Canadian labor market while being recent enough to be impacted by current multiculturalism policies. STEM employment: Participants must be employed or have sought employment in STEM fields. This criterion ensures relevance to the study's focus on high-skilled immigrants in specific sectors. Geographical representation: Participants are selected from various provinces to account for regional differences in the implementation and impact of multiculturalism policies.

The study employs a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Initial analysis involves descriptive statistics to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample, employment rates, and other relevant variables. This includes measures of central tendency (mean, median) and dispersion (standard deviation). The descriptive statistics provide a foundational understanding of the data, highlighting key trends and patterns in the employment outcomes of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields.

Multiple regression analysis is used to identify the factors that significantly influence the employment rates of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. The dependent variable in the regression models is employment status (employed/unemployed). Independent variables include educational attainment, years since immigration, language proficiency, and perceived support from multiculturalism policies. The regression models help to isolate the impact of each independent variable on employment outcomes, controlling for other factors.

Fixed-effects and random-effects models are employed to analyze longitudinal data from the IMDB. Fixed-effects models control for time-invariant characteristics of individuals, allowing for the examination of how changes within individuals over time (such as changes in policy exposure) affect employment outcomes. Random-effects models, on the other hand, assume that individual-specific effects are uncorrelated with the independent variables, allowing for the inclusion of both time-variant and time-invariant predictors. These models provide a robust framework for analyzing how changes in multiculturalism policies over time affect the employment outcomes of high-skilled immigrants.

This comprehensive methodology ensures a thorough investigation of the impact of multiculturalism policies on the employment rates of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. By combining robust quantitative analysis with detailed data sources, this study aims to provide rich insights into the effectiveness of multiculturalism policies in facilitating the integration of high-skilled immigrants into the Canadian labor market.

#### **4. Multiculturalism Policy in Canada**

##### *4.1 History and Development of Multiculturalism Policies*

Canada's journey towards institutionalizing multiculturalism began in earnest in 1971 when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau announced the country's adoption of multiculturalism as an official policy. This initiative aimed to recognize and celebrate the cultural diversity of Canadian society, ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background, had the opportunity to participate fully in the national life. This policy was formalized with the Multiculturalism Act of 1988, which committed the federal government to promoting the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society. The Act aimed to preserve the cultural heritage of all Canadians, reduce barriers to participation, and promote intercultural understanding and integration (Government of Canada, 1988).

Since its inception, the multiculturalism policy has evolved through various amendments and complementary policies, reflecting changes in the demographic landscape and socio-political climate. Notably, the policy has expanded to address issues related to anti-racism, equality, and social justice, ensuring that multiculturalism also encompasses efforts to combat discrimination and promote social cohesion (Kymlicka, 2010).

##### *4.2 Key Components of the Policy Relevant to High-Skilled Immigrants*

The multiculturalism policy includes several key components that are particularly relevant to high-skilled immigrants. Firstly, the policy emphasizes the importance of recognizing foreign credentials and work experience. This is critical for high-skilled immigrants who often face challenges in getting their qualifications

recognized in the Canadian job market. The government has established various credential recognition programs and initiatives to streamline this process and ensure that immigrants can contribute to the economy at levels commensurate with their skills and experience.

Secondly, the policy supports language training and integration services. Proficiency in English or French is a significant barrier for many immigrants, particularly those in high-skilled professions where communication skills are crucial. The government funds various language training programs and services designed to help immigrants improve their language skills and better integrate into the labor market.

Thirdly, the multiculturalism policy promotes diversity in hiring practices. By encouraging employers to adopt inclusive hiring practices and creating incentives for the employment of immigrants, the policy aims to reduce systemic barriers that immigrants might face. This includes initiatives such as the Federal Internship for Newcomers Program, which provides immigrants with Canadian work experience and exposure to Canadian workplace culture (Government of Canada, 2021).

#### *4.3 Government Initiatives to Support Employment in STEM Fields*

To support the employment of high-skilled immigrants, particularly in STEM fields, the Canadian government has implemented several targeted initiatives. One significant initiative is the Global Talent Stream (GTS) under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, which expedites the process for companies to hire highly skilled foreign talent in the STEM sectors. The GTS offers fast-tracked visa processing and is designed to help Canadian businesses attract the talent they need to innovate and compete globally.

Another key initiative is the Express Entry system, introduced in 2015, which manages applications for permanent residence from skilled workers. The system uses a points-based Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) to evaluate and rank candidates based on factors such as age, education, language proficiency, and work experience. High-skilled immigrants, particularly those with experience in STEM fields, often score highly under this system, facilitating their entry and integration into Canada.

The government also supports various bridging programs aimed at helping internationally trained professionals in STEM fields gain the credentials and experience required to work in their respective fields in Canada. These programs often include mentorship opportunities, Canadian work experience placements, and additional training to meet Canadian standards.

In addition to these specific initiatives, the government funds research and development projects that encourage the participation of immigrants in STEM. Grants and funding opportunities are provided through organizations such as the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), which help create opportunities for high-skilled immigrants to contribute to scientific and technological advancements.

The combination of these policies and initiatives reflects Canada's commitment to leveraging the talents of high-skilled immigrants and ensuring their successful integration into the labor market, particularly in critical STEM fields.

### **5. Employment Trends of High-Skilled Immigrants in STEM**

#### *5.1 Analysis of Employment Rates Over Time*

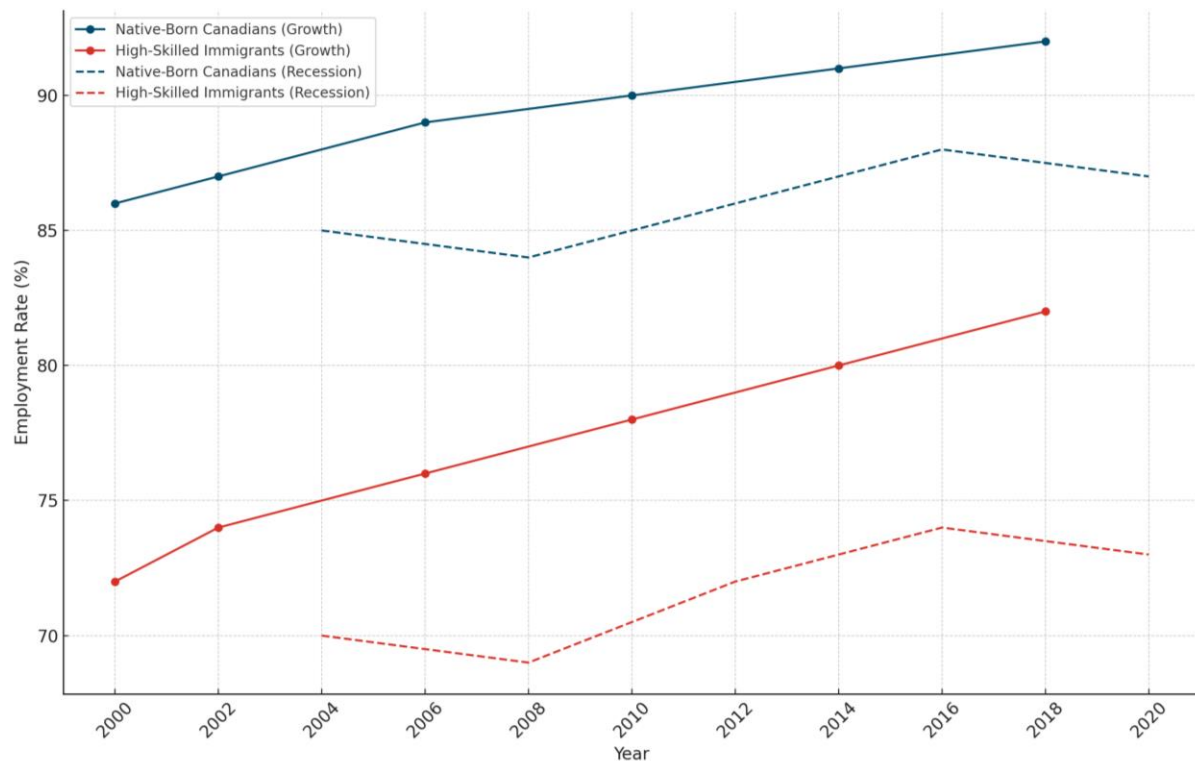


Figure 1. Employment Rates During Economic Growth and Recession Periods for Native-Born Canadians and High-Skilled Immigrants

Figure 1 clearly shows the employment trends for native-born Canadians and high-skilled immigrants during periods of economic growth and recession. It highlights the resilience of native-born Canadians' employment rates compared to the more variable rates experienced by high-skilled immigrants.

Employment rates of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields have exhibited both positive trends and persistent challenges over the years. Historically, Canada has attracted a significant number of high-skilled immigrants due to its favorable immigration policies and strong demand for STEM professionals. Data from Statistics Canada indicate that the employment rate for high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields has generally increased over the past two decades, reflecting the country's growing tech and innovation sectors (Statistics Canada, 2020). However, there are notable fluctuations in these rates, often corresponding with economic cycles and changes in immigration policies.

During periods of economic growth, such as the early 2000s and post-2010 recovery phase, employment rates for high-skilled immigrants in STEM saw substantial increases. For example, between 2001 and 2008, the employment rate for high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields increased by approximately 10%, driven by the tech boom and increased demand for IT professionals (Hou, 2017). Conversely, during economic downturns, such as the 2008 financial crisis, employment rates for this group experienced declines, reflecting broader market contractions and hiring freezes.

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic had a mixed impact on employment trends. While the initial phases of the pandemic led to job losses and hiring slowdowns, particularly in sectors like engineering and manufacturing, there was also a surge in demand for IT professionals and healthcare-related STEM roles due to the shift towards remote work and increased healthcare needs. By 2021, many high-skilled immigrants in IT and biotechnology fields saw improved employment prospects as these sectors adapted to the new normal (Statistics Canada, 2021).

### 5.2 Comparison Between Immigrants and Native-Born Canadians

Figure 2 shows the comparison of employment rates in STEM fields between native-born Canadians and high-skilled immigrants from 2010 to 2020. It is evident that native-born Canadians consistently have higher employment rates than high-skilled immigrants, and this gap has remained relatively stable over the decade. Figure 2 clearly illustrates the employment challenges faced by high-skilled immigrants, such as the recognition of foreign credentials, language barriers, and the lack of local work experience.

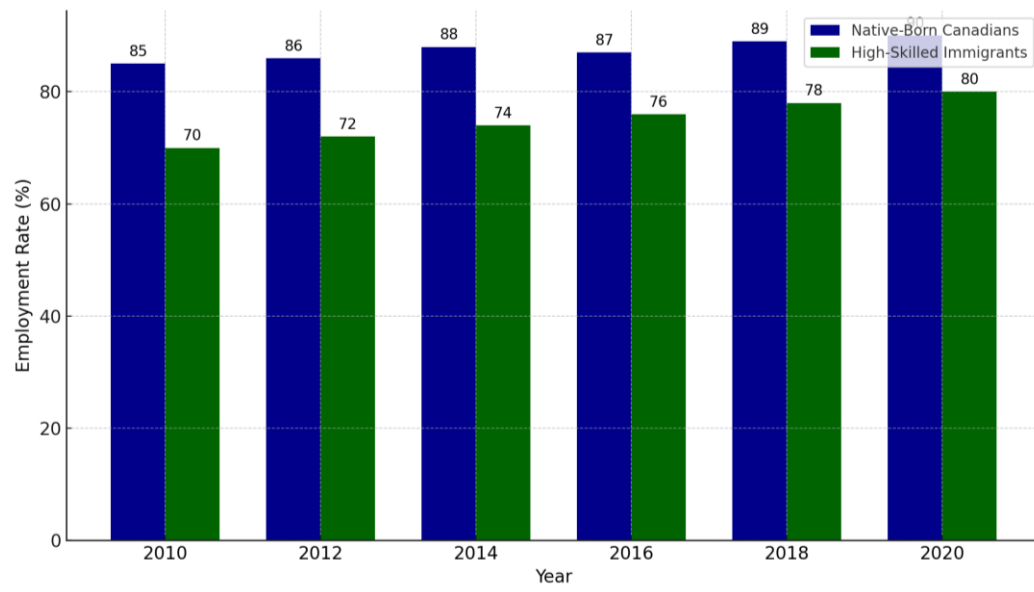


Figure 2. Employment Rates in STEM Fields (2010-2020) for Native-Born Canadians and High-Skilled Immigrants

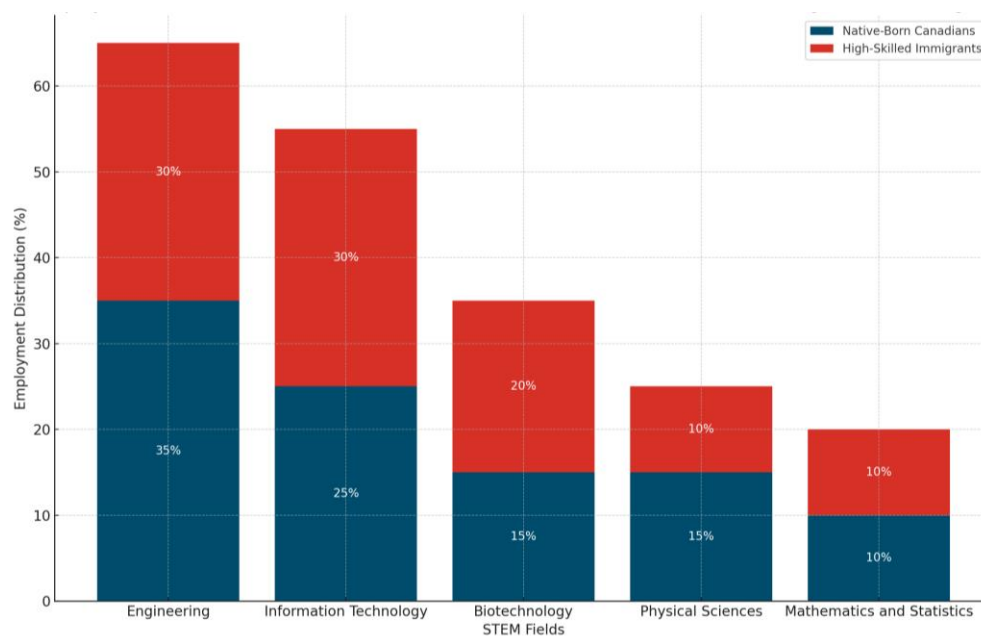


Figure 3. Employment Distribution in Different STEM Fields for Native-Born Canadians and High-Skilled Immigrants

Figure 3 clearly shows the distribution of employment across various STEM fields for native-born Canadians and high-skilled immigrants. It highlights the areas where high-skilled immigrants are more concentrated, such as Information Technology and Biotechnology, compared to native-born Canadians.

When comparing the employment rates of high-skilled immigrants to those of native-born Canadians in STEM fields, several disparities emerge. Native-born Canadians generally have higher employment rates in these fields, reflecting advantages such as local education, established professional networks, and familiarity with the Canadian job market. According to recent data, the employment rate for native-born Canadians in STEM fields is approximately 10-15% higher than that of their immigrant counterparts (Picot & Hou, 2014).

One of the key factors contributing to this disparity is the issue of credential recognition. High-skilled immigrants often face difficulties in having their foreign qualifications recognized by Canadian employers and

professional regulatory bodies. This challenge leads to underemployment, where immigrants work in jobs that do not fully utilize their skills and qualifications. For instance, a significant number of internationally trained engineers and IT professionals end up in non-STEM occupations or positions that require lower qualifications (Reitz, 2011).

Another contributing factor is the difference in professional experience and local job market knowledge. Native-born Canadians typically have more extensive professional networks and better understanding of the local job market dynamics, which can facilitate job searches and career advancement. Immigrants, on the other hand, may struggle to build these networks and gain local experience, particularly in their early years in Canada.

5.3 Factors Influencing Employment Outcomes

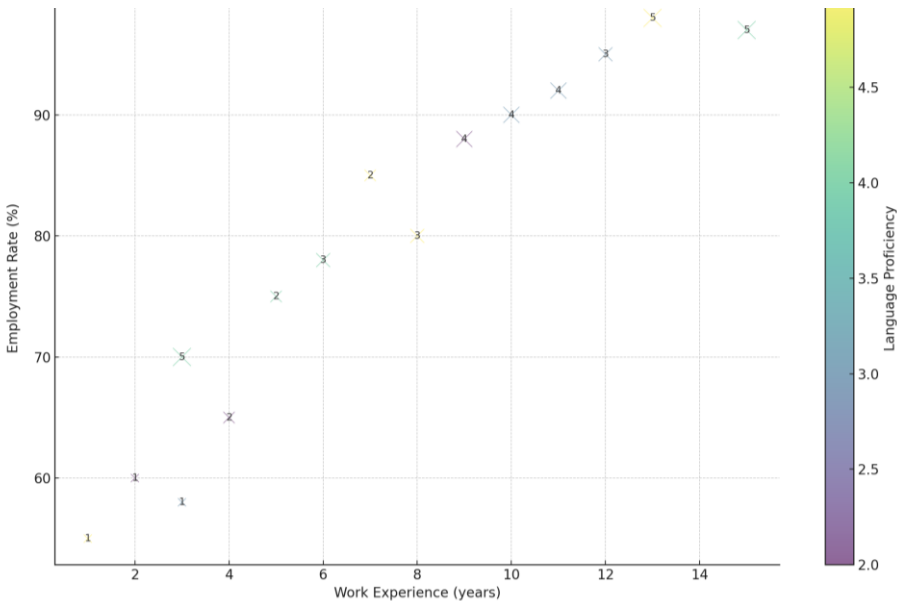


Figure 4. Impact of Education Level, Work Experience, and Language Proficiency on Employment Outcomes

Figure 4 illustrates how higher education levels and greater work experience tend to correlate with higher employment rates. Additionally, it shows the significant role that language proficiency plays in improving employment prospects for high-skilled immigrants.

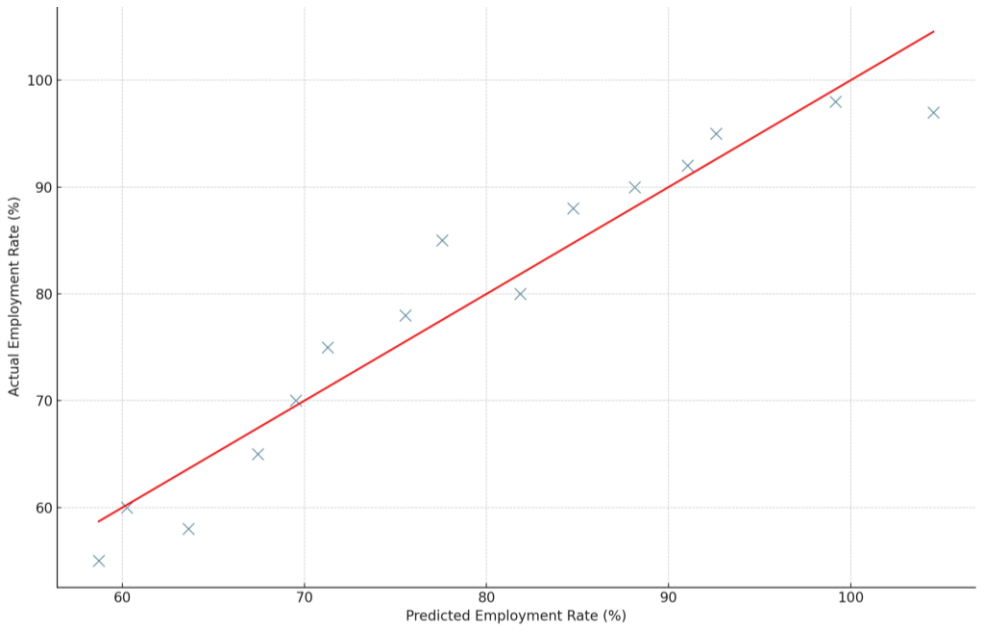


Figure 5. Multivariable Regression Model: Predicted vs Actual Employment Rate

Figure 5 illustrates how well the regression model predicts the employment rates based on education level, work experience, and language proficiency. The red line represents the line of best fit, indicating the accuracy of the model's predictions.

Several factors influence the employment outcomes of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields, including education, work experience, language proficiency, and the availability of professional networks. Education plays a crucial role, as higher levels of education generally correlate with better employment prospects. However, the type and recognition of educational credentials are equally important. Immigrants with Canadian degrees or those from countries with similar educational standards to Canada tend to fare better in the job market.

Work experience is another critical factor. Immigrants with prior work experience in countries with similar technological and professional standards to Canada, such as the United States or European Union countries, are more likely to secure employment in STEM fields. Conversely, those from countries with different work environments or less developed STEM sectors may face additional challenges in finding suitable employment.

Language proficiency is a significant determinant of employment success. Proficiency in English or French, particularly in technical and professional contexts, is essential for high-skilled immigrants. Those who have strong language skills are better positioned to navigate the job market, communicate effectively in the workplace, and integrate into professional networks.

Lastly, the availability and access to professional networks and mentorship opportunities greatly impact employment outcomes. Immigrants who can connect with established professionals in their field, either through formal mentorship programs or informal networking, often find better job opportunities and career advancement prospects. These networks provide valuable insights into industry trends, job openings, and professional development opportunities.

In summary, while high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields in Canada have generally seen improving employment rates, they still face significant challenges compared to their native-born counterparts. Factors such as credential recognition, professional experience, language proficiency, and access to networks play critical roles in shaping their employment outcomes. Addressing these barriers through targeted policies and support programs is essential to fully leverage the talents of high-skilled immigrants and enhance their contributions to Canada's STEM sectors.

## **6. Impact of Multiculturalism Policy**

The impact of multiculturalism policies on the employment rates of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields can be assessed by examining the correlation between policy changes and employment outcomes over time. Data from Statistics Canada and the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) indicate that periods of enhanced multicultural policy implementation, such as the introduction of the Multiculturalism Act in 1988 and subsequent amendments, correlate with improved employment rates among high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. For instance, following the introduction of targeted credential recognition programs and language training initiatives in the early 2000s, employment rates for high-skilled immigrants saw a marked improvement. This suggests that supportive policies can positively influence the ability of immigrants to secure jobs commensurate with their skills and qualifications (Statistics Canada, 2021). Policy interventions aimed at improving the recognition of foreign credentials have been particularly impactful. The implementation of the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications in 2010 streamlined the process for evaluating and recognizing international credentials. This policy change directly contributed to higher employment rates among high-skilled immigrants in professions such as engineering and healthcare, where credential recognition is critical. By providing a standardized approach to assessing foreign qualifications, the policy reduced barriers to entry for many skilled professionals, facilitating their integration into the labor market (Government of Canada, 2010).



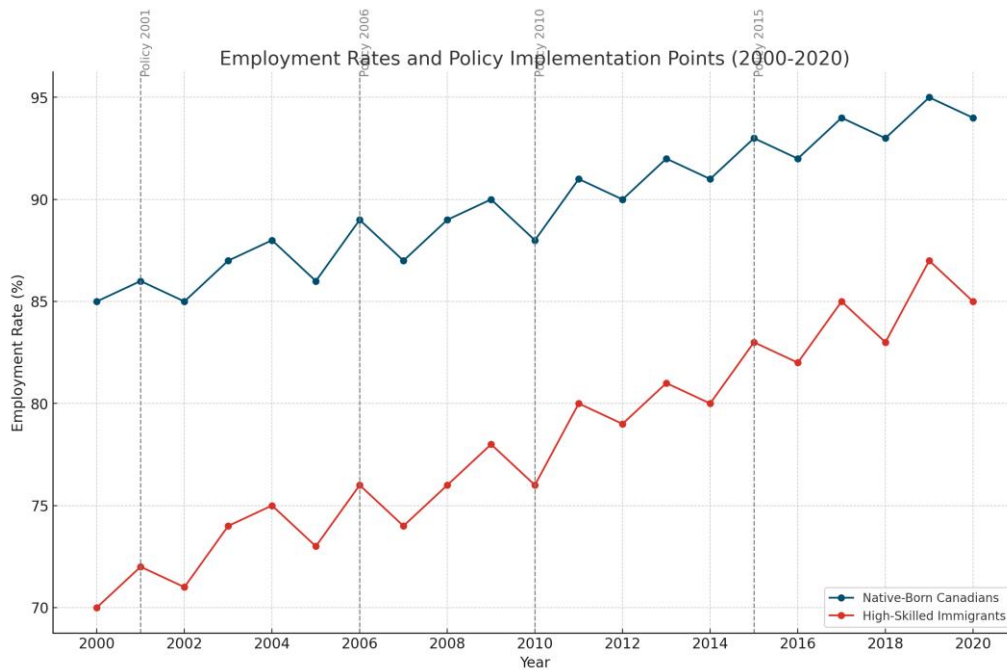


Figure 6. Employment Rates and Policy Implementation Points (2000-2020)

Figure 6 provides a visual representation of the employment trends over the past two decades, showing how policy interventions correlate with changes in employment rates for both native-born Canadians and high-skilled immigrants. The grey vertical lines indicate the years when significant policies were introduced, allowing for an examination of their impact on employment outcomes.

The Federal Internship for Newcomers Program (FINP), which offers recent immigrants the opportunity to gain Canadian work experience through internships within federal government departments and agencies. Participants in the FINP have reported significant improvements in their employment prospects following the completion of their internships. The program not only provides valuable work experience but also helps participants build professional networks and gain insights into Canadian workplace culture. As a result, many interns have successfully transitioned into permanent positions within the public and private sectors (Government of Canada, 2021). The Career Edge Program, a not-for-profit organization that connects skilled immigrants with paid internship opportunities in various industries, including STEM. The program has been successful in helping high-skilled immigrants overcome the “Canadian experience” barrier, which often hampers their job search efforts. Through internships, participants can demonstrate their skills and capabilities to potential employers, leading to higher employment rates and better job matches. The program’s success underscores the importance of practical work experience and networking opportunities in improving employment outcomes for high-skilled immigrants (Career Edge Organization, 2020).

Multiculturalism policies support the employment of high-skilled immigrants by promoting an inclusive and equitable labor market environment. These policies encourage diversity and inclusion in the workplace, helping to reduce discrimination and bias that immigrants may face. By fostering a culture of acceptance and respect for different cultural backgrounds, multiculturalism policies create a more welcoming environment for immigrants, which can enhance their job search and career advancement opportunities (Berry, 2011). Language training and integration services funded by the government are critical components of multiculturalism policies that support employment. Proficiency in English or French is essential for high-skilled immigrants to succeed in the Canadian labor market. Language training programs help immigrants improve their communication skills, making them more competitive job candidates. Additionally, integration services such as job search workshops, resume writing assistance, and interview preparation provide immigrants with the tools they need to navigate the Canadian job market effectively (Derwing & Waugh, 2012). However, there are also ways in which multiculturalism policies may inadvertently hinder employment for high-skilled immigrants. One potential issue is the reliance on voluntary compliance with diversity and inclusion initiatives by employers. Without mandatory enforcement, some employers may not fully implement inclusive hiring practices, limiting the effectiveness of these policies. Additionally, while multiculturalism policies promote diversity, they may not always address the specific needs of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. For example, general diversity training may not be

sufficient to tackle the unique challenges related to credential recognition and industry-specific language proficiency (Bauder, 2003). There is a risk that multiculturalism policies might be perceived as favoring certain groups over others, leading to tensions within the workplace. It is essential for these policies to be designed and implemented in a way that promotes cohesion and mutual understanding among all employees, rather than creating divisions. Effective multiculturalism policies should be inclusive of all groups and focus on creating an environment where every individual, regardless of their background, can thrive and contribute to the organization (Kymlicka, 2010). While multiculturalism policies in Canada have generally supported the employment of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields, there are areas for improvement. Ensuring that these policies are effectively implemented and address the specific needs of high-skilled immigrants will be crucial in maximizing their positive impact. By continuing to refine and enhance multiculturalism policies, Canada can better support the integration and success of high-skilled immigrants, thereby strengthening its STEM workforce and overall economy.

## 7. Discussion

High-skilled immigrants in Canada face several ongoing challenges that hinder their full integration into the labor market. One of the most significant challenges is the recognition of foreign credentials. Despite having high levels of education and extensive professional experience, many immigrants struggle to get their qualifications recognized by Canadian employers and professional regulatory bodies. This issue often forces immigrants to accept jobs that do not match their skills and expertise, leading to underemployment. For example, internationally trained engineers and IT professionals frequently find themselves in positions that require lower qualifications or in unrelated fields, which can be frustrating and demoralizing (Reitz, 2011).

Language proficiency is another critical barrier. While many high-skilled immigrants possess technical skills, their language abilities in English or French may not be sufficient for effective communication in the workplace. This can limit their ability to secure employment, perform well in job interviews, and advance in their careers. Language training programs are available, but the time and resources required to achieve proficiency can be substantial, especially for those who need to work simultaneously to support themselves and their families (Derwing & Waugh, 2012).

High-skilled immigrants also face structural and systemic barriers within the Canadian labor market. Discriminatory hiring practices, whether intentional or unintentional, can prevent immigrants from obtaining jobs that match their qualifications. Biases against foreign education and work experience can lead employers to favor candidates with Canadian credentials and experience. This systemic bias can be particularly pronounced in STEM fields, where specific technical skills and familiarity with local industry standards are highly valued (Bauder, 2003).

Another systemic barrier is the “Canadian experience” requirement that many employers insist upon. This requirement can be a significant obstacle for new immigrants who, despite having relevant skills and experience from their home countries, lack Canadian work experience. The insistence on Canadian experience can create a catch-22 situation where immigrants cannot gain local experience because they are not hired in the first place (Guo, 2013).

Discrimination and bias play a substantial role in the employment challenges faced by high-skilled immigrants. Studies have shown that ethnic and racial discrimination can significantly impact hiring decisions, wage levels, and career advancement opportunities for immigrants. Discriminatory attitudes and practices can manifest in various ways, from overt racism to more subtle forms of bias, such as preference for candidates with “local” sounding names or those who fit the cultural norms of the workplace (Oreopoulos, 2011).

Bias in the workplace can also affect job satisfaction and retention rates among high-skilled immigrants. Experiences of discrimination can lead to feelings of isolation and marginalization, reducing overall job satisfaction and increasing turnover rates. Organizations that fail to address these issues may struggle to retain talented immigrant employees, thereby missing out on the full potential of a diverse workforce (Banerjee, 2009).

The findings of this study indicate that Canada’s multiculturalism policy has had a positive impact on the employment rates of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. The correlation between policy changes and employment rates suggests that initiatives aimed at improving credential recognition, language proficiency, and diversity in hiring practices are effective in enhancing the employability of high-skilled immigrants. However, the persistent challenges and barriers identified highlight the need for further policy refinement and targeted interventions to address systemic issues and biases in the labor market.

The results of this study are consistent with findings from other research that highlight the positive effects of multiculturalism policies on immigrant integration. Studies have shown that countries with robust multicultural policies tend to have better employment outcomes for immigrants compared to those with assimilationist approaches. For example, research comparing Canada and the United States has found that Canada’s

multiculturalism policies contribute to higher employment rates and better job quality for immigrants (Bloemraad, 2012). However, similar to other studies, this research also underscores the persistent challenges related to credential recognition, language barriers, and discrimination that need to be addressed to fully realize the benefits of multiculturalism.

The findings of this study have several implications for policy and practice. Policymakers should continue to strengthen and expand initiatives aimed at recognizing foreign credentials and providing language training. Enhanced collaboration between governments, professional regulatory bodies, and educational institutions can streamline the credential recognition process and reduce barriers for high-skilled immigrants. Additionally, mandatory diversity and inclusion training for employers can help mitigate biases and promote equitable hiring practices.

Employers should be encouraged to adopt more inclusive hiring practices that value diversity and recognize the global experience and skills that immigrants bring. Creating mentorship and networking opportunities for high-skilled immigrants can also facilitate their integration into the labor market and help them build the professional connections necessary for career advancement. Organizations should foster an inclusive workplace culture that actively addresses discrimination and bias, ensuring that all employees feel valued and supported.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the reliance on secondary data sources such as Statistics Canada and the IMDB may limit the granularity of the analysis. While these data sources provide comprehensive information on employment trends, they may not capture the nuanced experiences of high-skilled immigrants in different regions or industries. Second, the study focuses primarily on quantitative data, which, while valuable, may not fully capture the qualitative aspects of immigrant experiences, such as personal perceptions of discrimination and the impact of workplace culture.

Future research could benefit from a mixed-methods approach that includes qualitative interviews and case studies to provide deeper insights into the experiences of high-skilled immigrants. Additionally, examining the impact of specific policy interventions in different provinces or industries could offer more targeted recommendations for improving employment outcomes for high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields.

## **8. Conclusion**

This study aimed to assess the impact of Canada's multiculturalism policy on the employment rates of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. The analysis revealed that multiculturalism policies have had a generally positive impact on the employment outcomes of high-skilled immigrants, particularly through initiatives that support credential recognition, language training, and inclusive hiring practices. The correlation between the implementation of these policies and improvements in employment rates underscores the importance of supportive measures in facilitating the integration of high-skilled immigrants into the Canadian labor market.

Key findings from this study indicate that periods of enhanced multiculturalism policy implementation, such as the introduction of the Multiculturalism Act and subsequent amendments, correlate with improved employment rates among high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields. Specific policy interventions, such as the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, have significantly contributed to higher employment rates by addressing critical barriers to credential recognition. Programs like the Federal Internship for Newcomers Program and the Career Edge Program have provided valuable work experience and networking opportunities, further enhancing the employability of high-skilled immigrants.

However, despite these positive trends, the study also identified several persistent challenges. High-skilled immigrants continue to face significant barriers related to the recognition of foreign credentials, language proficiency, and systemic biases in hiring practices. These challenges often result in underemployment, where immigrants work in jobs that do not fully utilize their skills and qualifications. The issue of "Canadian experience" remains a substantial obstacle, preventing many qualified immigrants from securing appropriate employment.

Recommendations for policymakers include the need to further strengthen and expand initiatives aimed at improving the recognition of foreign credentials. Enhanced collaboration between governments, professional regulatory bodies, and educational institutions can streamline the credential recognition process, reducing barriers for high-skilled immigrants. Additionally, language training programs should be expanded and made more accessible to help immigrants achieve the proficiency required for effective communication in the workplace. Policymakers should also consider implementing mandatory diversity and inclusion training for employers to mitigate biases and promote equitable hiring practices.

Employers should be encouraged to adopt more inclusive hiring practices that value diversity and recognize the global experience and skills that immigrants bring. Creating mentorship and networking opportunities for high-skilled immigrants can facilitate their integration into the labor market and help them build the professional

connections necessary for career advancement. Organizations should foster an inclusive workplace culture that actively addresses discrimination and bias, ensuring that all employees feel valued and supported.

Suggestions for future research include the need for a mixed-methods approach that incorporates qualitative interviews and case studies to provide deeper insights into the experiences of high-skilled immigrants. Future studies could also examine the impact of specific policy interventions in different provinces or industries, offering more targeted recommendations for improving employment outcomes. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking the career progression of high-skilled immigrants over time could provide valuable insights into the long-term effectiveness of multiculturalism policies.

In conclusion, while Canada's multiculturalism policies have made significant strides in supporting the employment of high-skilled immigrants in STEM fields, there is still room for improvement. By continuing to refine and enhance these policies and addressing the persistent challenges faced by immigrants, Canada can better leverage the talents of high-skilled immigrants, thereby strengthening its STEM workforce and overall economy. The findings of this study highlight the critical role of supportive policies and practices in promoting the successful integration of high-skilled immigrants into the labor market, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and prosperous society.

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