

Abstract

This dissertation examines the experiences of visible minority migrants as they attempt to integrate into the local work force in Ottawa, Canada. Prior research on this targeted group's access to economic opportunities and success in the local workforce has been largely quantitative, focusing primarily on percentages of unemployed and underemployed. Research has paid little attention to the social, economic, and cultural experiences of the visible minority migrants who are looking for work, and even less attention to their accounts of these experiences. In this qualitative grounded theory research, migrants consistently tell stories of long-term struggles to find and keep a job—of sensing that they are unwanted. This work interpreted participants' perceptions, utilizing many of the words of the migrants themselves. Their words were gathered through intensive interviews of between one and two hours with 6 visible minority migrants and one focus group interview with 4 visible minority migrants, for a total of 10 participants. The intensive one-on-one interviews were followed by a group interview with four other participants for about 3.5 hours, in which the same questions used in the intensive interviews were asked. The actual interviews started in the middle of March 2010 and continued through June 2010. Using the grounded theory method, interviews were transcribed, coded, and categorized. Analysis included a partial Situational Analysis Matrix, triangulations, constant comparisons, interrelation of concepts, categories and memos which led to seven key themes. The outcome revealed perceptions of the migrant job seekers on multifaceted employment barriers as causes of unemployment and underemployment in Ottawa.