

Belongingness among newcomers in Canada: Associations with settlement outcomes

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Introduction

To best serve newcomers to Canada, it is important to understand factors that influence positive settlement experiences.

A sense of belongingness can improve economic, health, and social outcomes. (e.g., Walton & Cohen, 2007)

We studied whether belongingness contributes to positive settlement outcomes among newcomers to Canada.

Method

We analysed data representing 155,723 people over 15 years old who immigrated to Canada between October 2000 and September 2001.

Independent variable

Belongingness in Canada (e.g., "How strong is your sense of belongingness to Canada?"; $\alpha = .83$)

Dependent variables

Job satisfaction
Stress
General health
Satisfaction with life in Canada

Covariates

Belongingness to family
Belongingness to ethnic group

Results

Dependent variables	Omnibus effects		Effect of belongingness in Canada		
	Wald's χ^2	R^2	β (SE)	z	95% CI
Job satisfaction	93.55**	.019	+.14 (.01)	+9.36**	(+0.09, +0.13)
Stress	153.06**	.024	-.16 (.02)	-11.98**	(-0.22, -0.16)
General health	91.28**	.016	+.13 (.02)	+9.36**	(+0.11, +0.17)
Satisfaction with life in Canada	284.87**	.045	+.22 (.01)	+16.14**	(+0.19, +0.25)

Note. All analyses controlled for the effects of belongingness to family and belongingness to ethnic group.

Conclusion

Among newcomers to Canada, higher levels of belongingness in Canada are associated with greater job satisfaction and satisfaction with life in Canada, better general health, and lower levels of stress.

These effects emerged even when controlling for participants' belongingness to their families and ethnic groups.

Policy and programming tailored to increase belongingness among newcomers to Canada may enhance settlement experiences and strengthen society.

Future research is needed to determine causality (e.g., does belongingness lead to job satisfaction?).

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