

International Students' Intentions to Transition to Permanent Residency and Work in Canada

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Background

- International students are seen as ideal candidates for permanent residency due to their language proficiency, Canadian education credentials and Canadian work experience (IRCC, 2017)
- Policies designed to encourage international students to stay: e.g., increasing the length of post-graduation work permits, developing specific provincial immigration programs for international students, allocating extra points for international students under Express Entry

Research Questions

What are prospective international students' expectations regarding their transition to permanent resident status in Canada?

Once in Canada, what factors predict international students' intentions to seek permanent resident status and to work in Canada postgraduation?

Two Surveys

- World Education Services (WES) survey of prospective international students prior to their arrival in Canada
- Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) survey of international students in Canada

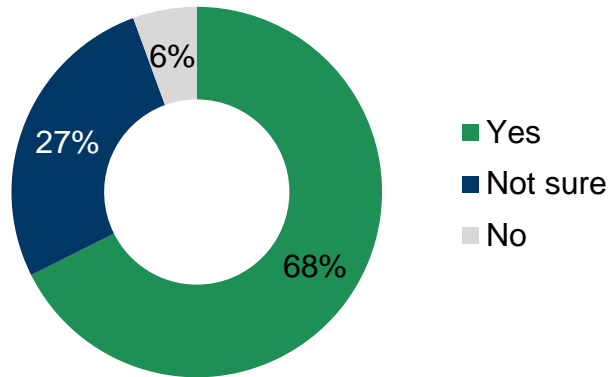
Survey of Prospective International Students

A survey of individuals who contacted WES for an educational assessment during June - September 2017

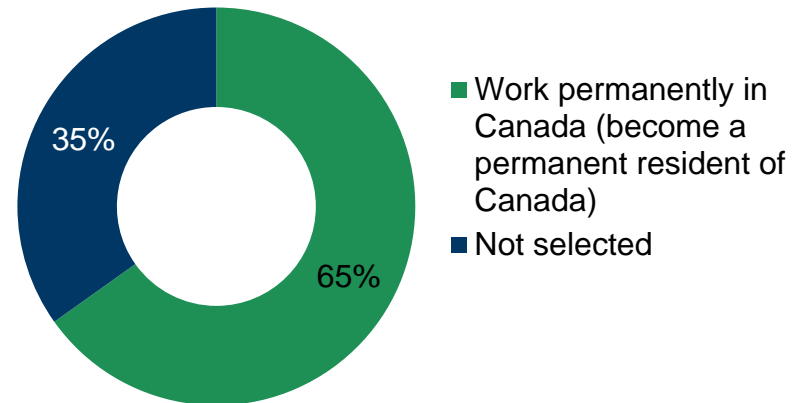
- International student status self reported
- 287 prospective international students responded
- Majority from India, Nigeria and Brazil

Results

International student's plans to apply for permanent residency



International students' plans to work in Canada after graduation



Results

Two reasons why international students have plans to apply for permanent residency are:

- 1) Canada has better job opportunities than their home country (52% provided this reason)
- 2) Canada has a better standard of living than their home country (59% provided this reason)

Results

59% of international students who intend to apply for permanent residency expect to receive institutional help to make this transition

- In particular, they expect their educational institutions to help them create professional connections in Canada

Survey of International Students in Canada

A survey by CBIE about the international student experience in Canada's post-secondary institutions

- Data collection: April and May 2015
- 35 of CBIE's member institutions participated
- Over 4,000 responses were obtained

Analyses

- Intention to seek permanent resident status in Canada
 - Yes vs. No/Not Sure
- Future employment plans
 - Plans to Work in Canada vs. No Plans to Work in Canada

Analyses

Variables used to predict international students' intentions to seek permanent resident status in Canada and future work plans:

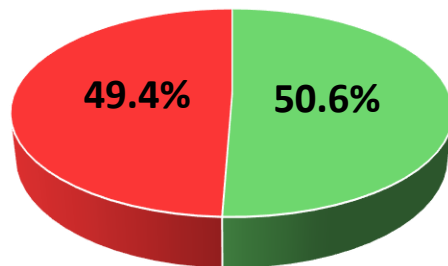
Variables	Examples
Demographics	Region of origin
Economic characteristics	Financial support from work income, co-op or paid internship
Socio-cultural characteristics	Friends in Canada
Academic characteristics	Field of study

Analyses

- Analyses of 3424 complete responses
- Logistic Regressions
 - What are the odds of a group with certain characteristics providing response A over response B compared to another group?
 - One group always set as comparator
 - e.g., International students from Africa are 3.72 times more likely to intend to apply for permanent residency (as opposed to not intend to do so or not sure) than international students from the USA

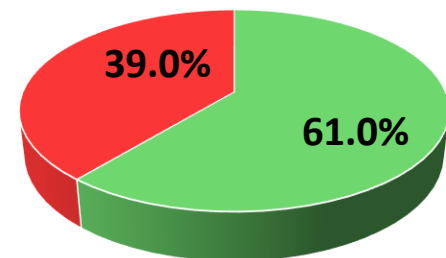
Results

Intention to Apply for Permanent Residency



■ Yes ■ No or not sure

Work Plans



■ Plans to work in Canada
■ No plans to work in Canada

Results – Intention to Apply for Permanent Residency

International students who are especially likely to intend to apply for permanent residency are those who:

Variable	Odds Ratio
Come from Africa (vs. USA)	3.72**
Come from the Middle East and North Africa (vs. USA)	2.06**
Relied on financial support from work income, a paid internship or a co-op (vs. those who did not rely on this type of financial support)	1.25*
Chose Canada because of opportunities for working and staying in Canada¹	4.44**
Have most friends who are Canadian students or a mixture of Canadian and international students (vs. international students and/or students from home country)	1.44**
See Canada as a safe place to live²	1.39**

¹ On a scale from 1 = not important to 4 = essential; ² On a scale from 1 = not safe at all to 4 = very safe; ** $p < .01$

Results – Intention to Apply for Permanent Residency

International students who are especially likely to intend to apply for permanent residency are those who:

Variable	Odds Ratio
Had previously studied in Canada (vs. outside of Canada)	1.81**
Are studying at a college or institute (vs. a university)	1.44*
Are in Engineering (vs. other fields of study)	1.34*
Are studying in the Prairies (vs. in British Columbia)	1.50*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results – Future Employment Plans

International students who are especially likely to have plans to stay and work in Canada are those who:

Variable	Odds Ratio
Come from Africa (vs. USA)	2.87**
Come from the Middle East and North Africa (vs. USA)	1.66*
Come from South Asia (vs. USA)	2.40**
Come from East Asia (vs. USA)	1.91**
Relied on financial support from work income, a paid internship or a co-op (vs. those who did not rely on this type of financial support)	1.35**
Relied on financial support from parents, relatives or guardians (vs. those who did not rely on this type of financial support)	1.35*
Chose Canada because of opportunities for working and staying in Canada ¹	3.64**

¹ On a scale from 1 = not important to 4 = essential; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results – Future Employment Plans

International students who are especially likely to have plans to stay and work in Canada are those who:

Variable	Odds Ratio
See Canada as a safe place to live ¹	1.30*
Had previously studied in Canada (vs. outside of Canada)	2.07**
Are in Engineering (vs. other fields of study)	1.60**
Are in Business (vs. other fields of study)	1.40*
Are studying in the Prairies (vs. in British Columbia)	1.78**

¹ on a scale from 1 = not safe at all to 4 = very safe; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Additional Observations

- Of interest, the following variables did not predict either of the outcomes and were thus removed from the analyses:
 - Gender
 - Academic success
 - Canada’s reputation (safe, tolerant, good education system) as a reason for choosing to study in Canada
 - Number of actions taken before arriving in Canada to prepare for studying here (e.g., planned a budget, searched for accommodation, researched the region)

Additional Observations

- There is a strong association between international students' plans to work in Canada and their intentions to apply for permanent residency: $\chi^2(1) = 1167.42, p < .001$
- The variables that predict international students' plans to work in Canada are very similar to those that predict their intentions to apply for permanent residency
- Examples:
 - Region of origin
 - The importance of opportunities for working and staying in Canada as a reason for choosing Canada
 - Perceived safety

Implications

- International students who are seeking permanent residency are likely to be planning to work here and expect their educational institutions to help them make professional connections
- In order to increase the retention of international students, efforts should be directed toward:
 - Providing pre-arrival information to potential international students about the opportunities to work and stay in Canada
 - The integration of international students during their studies (e.g., friendships with Canadians and Canadian work experience)
 - Ensuring that the environment in which international students are living is safe
 - Assisting international students with professional connections in Canada
 - Employment opportunities for international students post-graduation

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